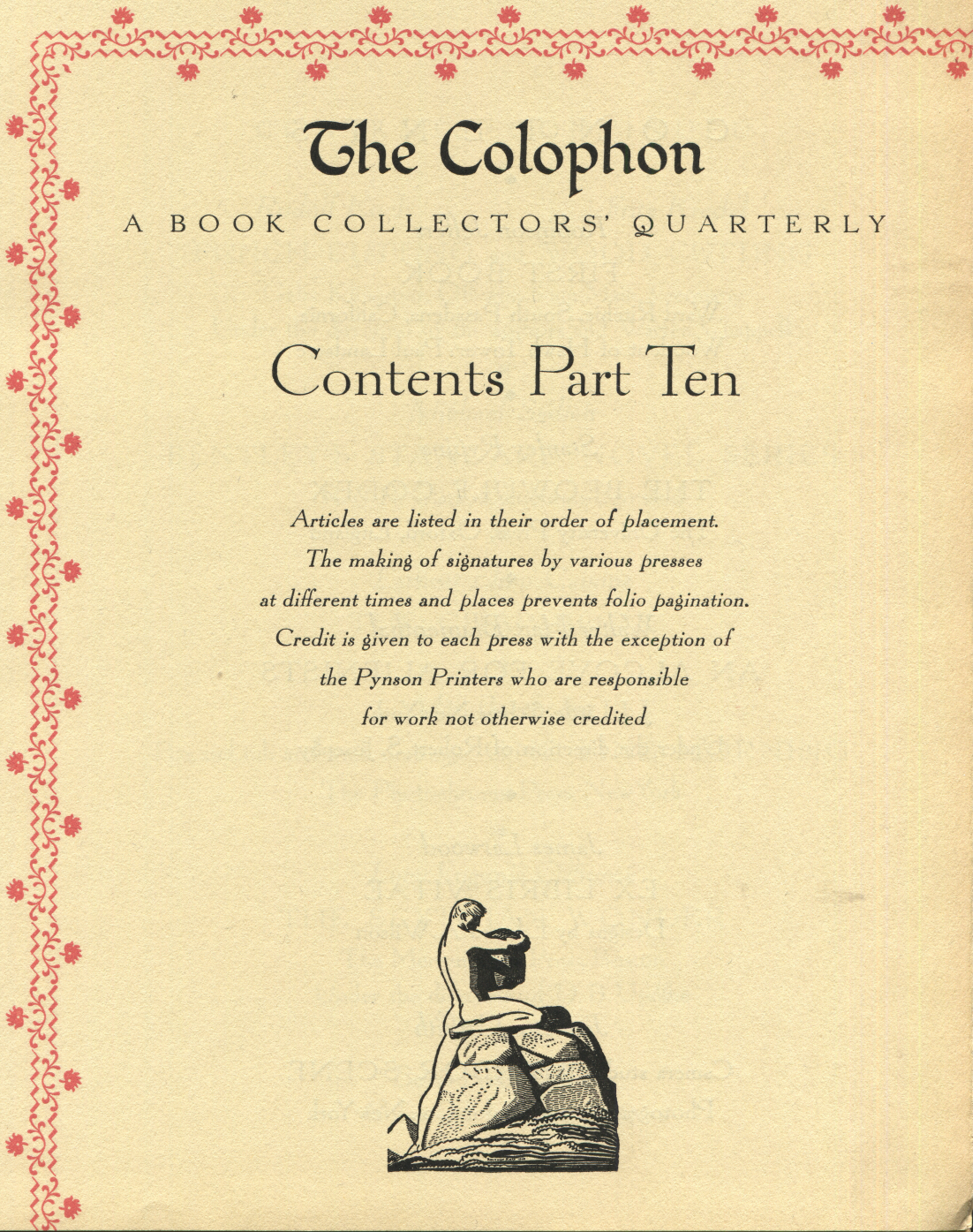


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COLOPHON

WOLFE
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The Colophon

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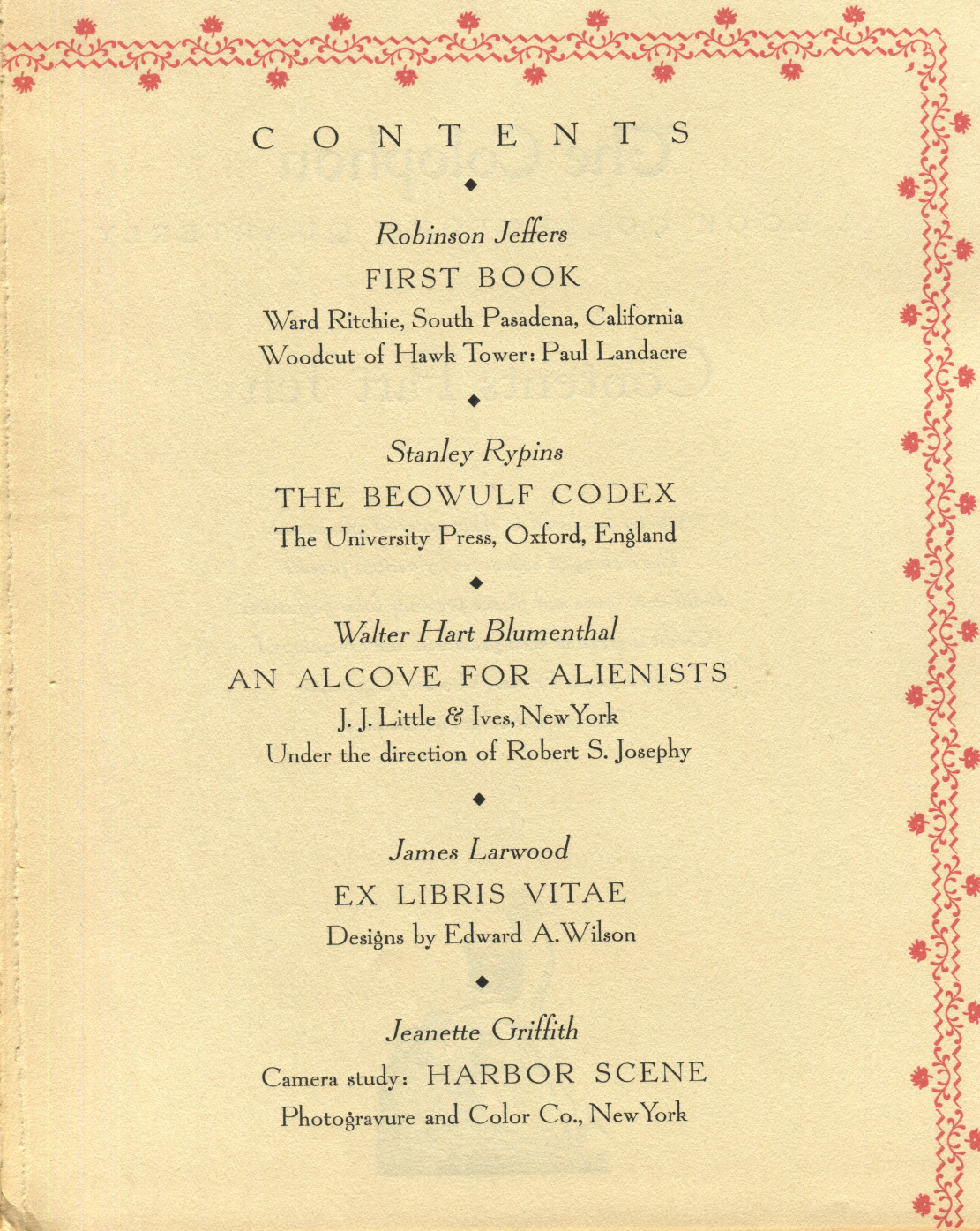
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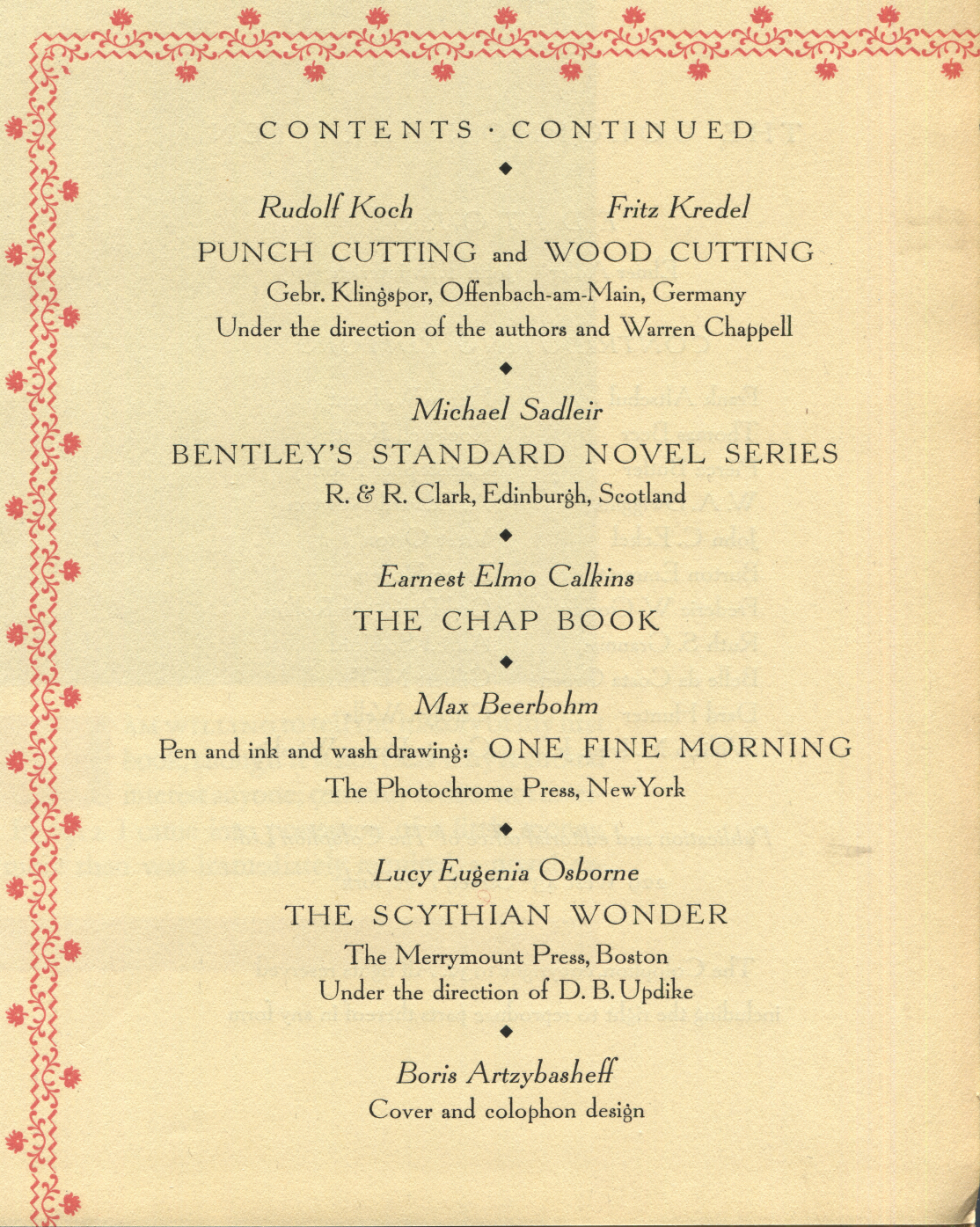
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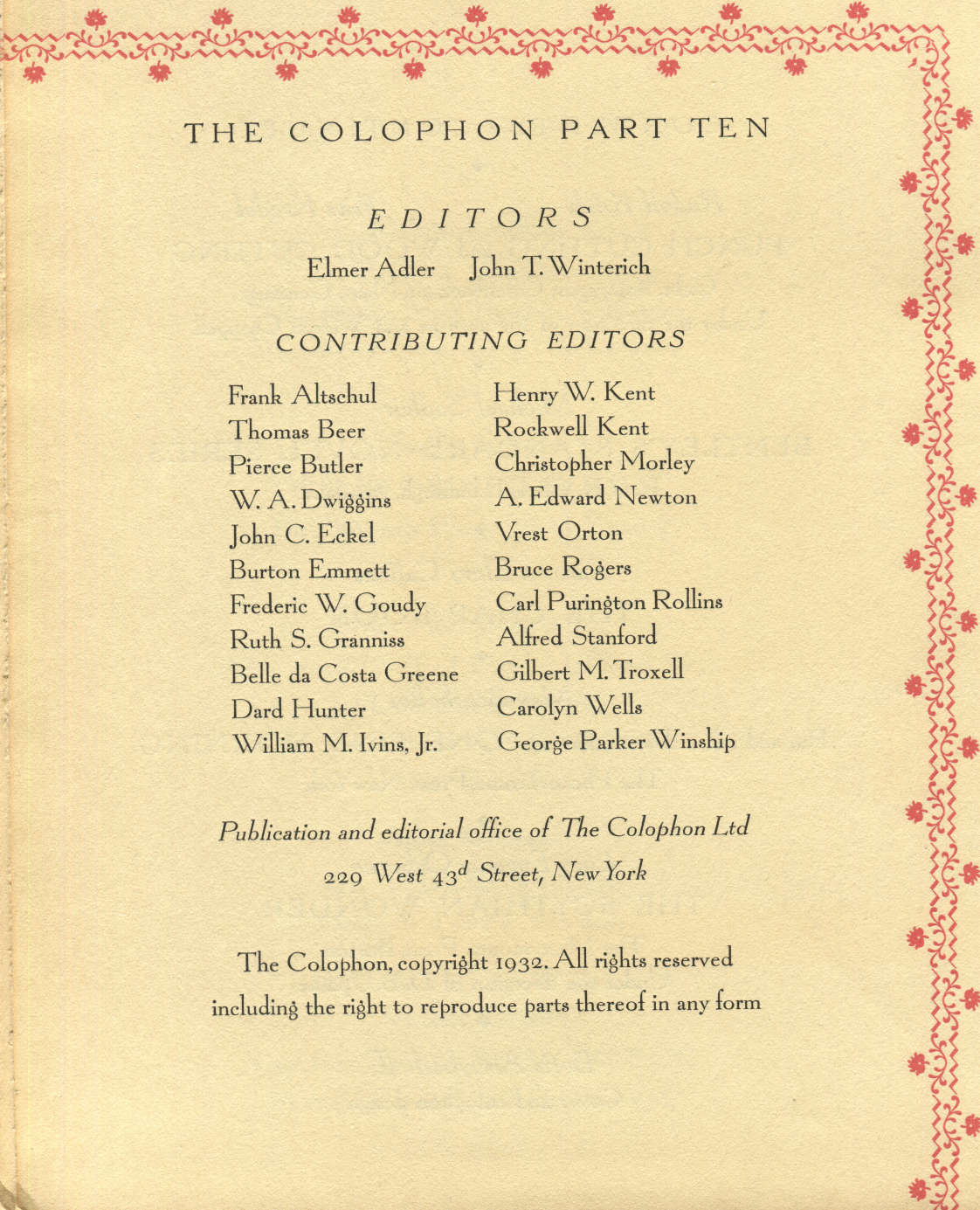
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Cover and colophon design

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ON PUNCH CUTTING & WOOD CUT TING

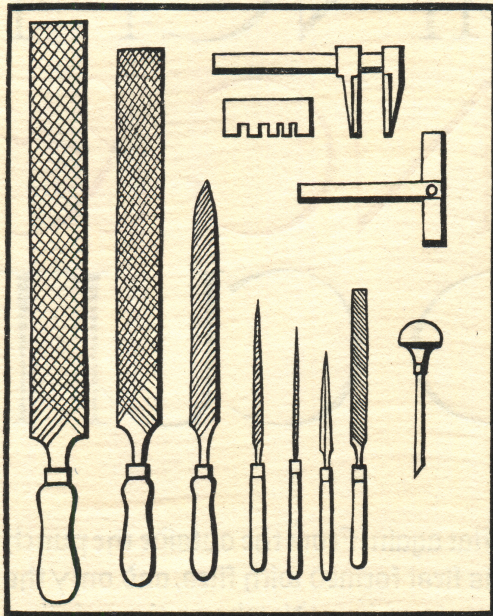
PUNCH-CUTTING
by Professor Rudolf Koch.

Today the type-cutter uses the engraving tool principally. He usually transfers the design on to the carefully polished face of the punch with the help of photography, and then engraves the contours with a sharp line. Thereafter he deepens the inner surfaces slowly and with great care through the use of different sorts of engravers. The resulting conus is carefully worked in its slope, and at a prescribed depth the surface is made

flat again. From the outside the punch is first formed with files, and only the contour immediately at the printing surface is carefully made smooth with the graver. This manner of working allows the given design to be very exactly retained, and even the finest curves may be copied.

For some decades the author has known and esteemed this method of working. Our type-cutters, with a fine feeling for form, have made many important types in this manner, and their skill has not been excelled in any former time. However, even though the design can be completely retained, there is a danger of superficiality. The technique is so finished that the character suffers; the inherent quality of the steel is not allowed to come to the

Punch-Cutting by Professor Rudolf Koch

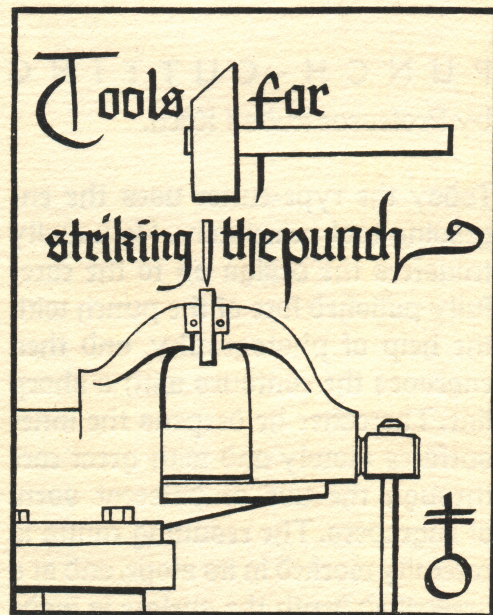


fore, for the type-cutter is pledged to retain the given design. It is unfortunate that the designer and cutter are separate persons. This was necessary for a certain time, and the series of types designed by artists show such a separation. However, we are facing different problems today. The engraving machine is seeking to displace craftsmanship, and we must bring pressure to bear in opposition. This cannot be accomplished by means of an artistic design alone, which, even though original, is made with lines on paper; instead, we must set against the ever-increasing mechanical methods a strong craftsman-

ship. The work of the hand is renounced only where it is forced by the superficial effect of the technique.

Therefore, it is well to set forth a method of working which makes possible the unity of person spoken of above, and which, in former times, was commonly used. In England, it is used at the present time, but it has been abandoned in Germany for the past hundred years.

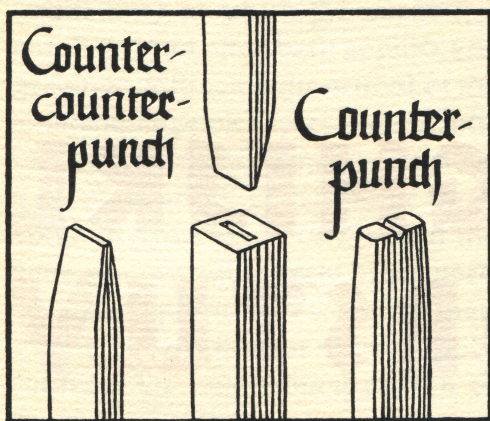
In what follows, the author's method is described; the very obvious facts are omitted. Type cutting is a plastic and metallic craft and only indirectly a graphic one. If the unworked punch should be printed it would give a full



Punch-Cutting by Professor Rudolf Koch

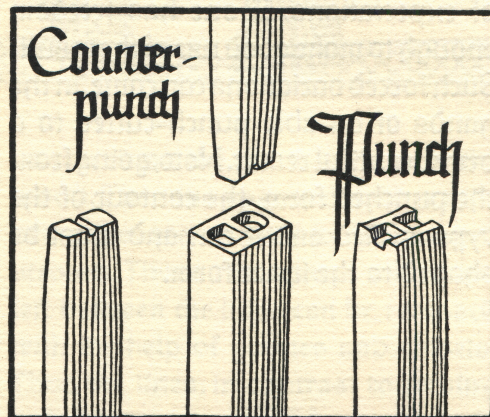
black surface. The task consists, therefore, in the removal of the unnecessary portions, cutting away those parts from which there is to be no printing. The work is from black to white, exactly as in wood-cutting, and in contrast to designing and writing, which is from white to black. That is an essential and, for the form of the letter, a decisive fact.

The tool of the copper engraver, as such, is not suited to the simple handling of the type-cutter. It is not used to produce plastic forms. Only when the graver is used as a knife, scraping or cutting instead of engraving, can it fulfil its function. In the ordinary progress of the work it is unnecessary. The tools of the punch-cutter are file and hammer.



The work is done in this manner: first, a counter-punch is filed, through

the striking of which into the face of the type-punch is made the inner form.



Often, to make this counter-punch, a second punch is necessary, which must be driven into the first to produce the form which is desired. This second punch is the counter-counter-punch. It is an old experience that the white inner space, which is made by the counter-punch, has a great meaning for the form of the type. It can be said that unquestionably the character of the old good types comes from the punch. This is the plastic basis of type-cutting; since it is impossible even with the greatest care to make the form of the punch exact, as much more often, even with long experience, variations occur, the result of counter-punching is always a surprise to the type-cutter. Often the result can not be saved, and the punch must be re-

Punch-Cutting by Professor Rudolf Koch

placed by another; often, though, it can remain, even though it falls short of expectations, if one has freedom enough to make good use of the result. Such forced variations can come, in the hands of an able punch-cutter, to a very beautiful result. Now, going from the punched form, the contour of the type is filed and it can and must be shaped to the inner form.

Viewing the counter punch as something given and unalterable serves as a very necessary check on the imagination. This produces fruit of an entirely individual sort. If we rely only upon previous experience, we are handicapped. However, if we approach the work with naïvete, a high and unknown strength flows into our work and guides our hands.

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WOOD-CUTTING by Fritz Kredel.

It is not without reason that the wood-cut, after having been neglected for centuries, has come to be appreciated again. This medium, which can be used in letter-press printing as almost no other technique, is especially suited to the real character of book-making through the medium of type.

The photo-mechanical methods of reproduction which came at the close of the last century had been preceded by a long period of wood-engraving (white line), to which the misnomer wood-cut has often been applied. Engravings, following the school of the Englishman Bewick, were made in end-grain wood, cut horizontally from the tree. Wood-cuts, of which we shall speak here, are made chiefly with the knife, gouges and chisels being used only as supplementary tools. The material is usually pear or cherry wood, cut from the longitudinal section of the tree.

The method of work is, for the most part, simple. First, the design is drawn

or traced on the plane surface of the wood. Then the spaces on either side of the lines are cut away with V-shaped strokes. Those free spaces which are left between the lines can be removed with the help of gouges and chisels. Thus the lines, in contrast to etching and engraving, are left standing in relief, so that such a cut, when it is type-high, can be printed with the text. The development of the wood-cut, as a method of reproduction, is generally known. Early designers, before the time of book-printing, adapted the wood-cuts or wood-blocks which had been used for stamping designs on cloth, to make the contour of designs which they had to reproduce in quantity. This was about 1400; exact information concerning the time and place is lacking. Prints from the first wood-cuts were colored simply. Later it was sought to enliven the contours with a few lines to give the effect of tones, and gradually the use of color was given up. In this early period, circa 1500, we find those cuts which for us are the most typical and beautiful.

Wood=Cutting by Fritz Kredel

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, in spite of all technical difficulties it was sought to use the newly developed copper engraving for book illustration. Wood=cutters, trying to follow the taste of the times, attempted to give to their work an effect similar to that of the metal. These blocks were practical and of the highest technical skill, but the real character of the wood=cut was completely lost. The fate of the wood=cut was sealed, and its use sank to inferior tasks.

The purpose of this note, however, is not to give a sketch of European wood=cutting with the knife, but rather to emphasize its close relationship with the character of letter=press printing. Alone among all techniques it approaches, in printing quality, the type itself. In the wood=cut as in the steel punch the printing surface is left standing. The final work of the punch=cutter, although it may be executed today with an engraving tool, resembles in practice the work of a knife, and indeed, at the time of such punch=cutters as Fournier and Fleischmann, a knife was actually used.

The desirability of making wood=cuts now, with photo=mechanical methods of reproduction at hand, is often questioned. The answer is that the replacing of all methods of manual repro=

duction has resulted in the loss of important cultural factors. Unquestionably there are numerous practical and highly necessary functions which must be accomplished with machines, but there are instances when an original and human technique is demanded throughout.

It is practically impossible to make a decoration for printing that will have the same sharp character of the type without cutting the line. The quality of the design or line is always irregular. Obviously, to cut the decoration in steel, as the type is cut, would be impractical, but that quality in the wood which causes the grain to resist the knife gives to the wood=cutter the care and feeling which brings his work into the closest possible harmony with the type.





Pedicularis silvatica from Das Blumenbuch

PRINTED IN GERMANY FOR THE COLOPHON

Rudolf Koch, professor of calligraphy and type-designer, was born in 1876 in Nürnberg. Since 1908 he has designed more than a score of type faces for the foundry of Gebr. Klingspor, and of these, he has cut three himself. As leader of the Offenbacher Werkstatt, he has been responsible for such printings as Das Blumenbuch, Vier Evangelien, and Zeichenbuch, and now he has in preparation a map of Germany. Fris Kredel, illustrator and wood-cutter, was born in 1900 in Michelstadt im Odenwald. In collaboration with Professor Koch, he has cut nearly a thousand blocks during his ten years of association with the Offenbacher Werkstatt. Editor