## DESIGNERS AND ENGRAVERS OF TYPE.

BY WILLIAM E. LOY.

NO. XIII.—WILLIAM H. PAGE.

THE chief events in the career of William H. Page are so intimately connected with the development of the manufacture of wood type in America that a history of his life may be taken as the history of wood type making. It is true wood type was made by others, and before his time; but it was he who reduced it to an exact mechanical art, inventing and improving machinery of such perfection that the production of faces for printing in two or more colors was possible. Mr. Page is also an interesting figure in this series of articles in that he perfected the machine which may be said to have suggested the one which is now in use in different parts of America for cutting pattern letters for type founders, besides being a designer of letters and a practical printer.

WILLIAM H. PAGE.

Wood type was first made by Darius Wells, at Paterson, New Jersey, in 1828, but his method was to first draw the letter on paper, reverse the drawing on the block of prepared wood, and with a bodkin thus make an outline drawing. The wood was then cut away by hand with chisels. Later he cut away the wood with a common routing machine, finishing by hand. Edwin Allen, of South Windham, Connecticut, was probably the first to apply the pantagraph machine to cutting wood type, somewhere in the '40s. His machinery, however, was of quite rude construction. H. & J. Bill soon after started a factory in Willimantic, Connecticut, with somewhat improved machinery, but from some cause they did not exist long.

J. G. Cooley, of Norwich, succeeded Mr. Allen in his enterprise, and in February, 1855, Mr. Page entered his employ at South Windham. In September, 1856, Mr. Page purchased the remains of H. & J. Bill's machinery and engaged in the business of wood type manufacture on his own account, first at South Windham, but in 1857 he removed to Greeneville, a suburb of Norwich, Connecticut, where he continued it for more than thirty years, until sold out to the Hamilton Manufacturing Company. It was during the civil war that Mr. Page constructed the splendid machinery for cutting wood type, and the product of his factory at that time has not since been equaled.

The machines used by Mr. Page were common pantagraph machines. They were constructed to move about on the surface of a nicely planed iron table, but one great improvement made was to increase the speed of the cutters from twelve thousand revolutions to eighteen thousand revolutions per minute. By this increase of speed nearly double the work could be done. These spindles were so accurately fitted they would run from seven o'clock in the morning until noon by the use of one drop of oil applied to each bearing without heating a particle. The spindles ran in cast-iron bearings—nothing else would stand the test—and only the best sperm oil could be used.

The designs for the letters were first drawn on whitewood boards, half an inch thick, and most plain letters were on boards of twenty-four inches high. Ornamental letters were made on twelve-inch boards. From these a half-length pattern was cut by the machine, that is, a twelve-inch from the twenty-four, and a six-inch from the twelve; while from extended designs a three-inch pattern was cut from the six-inch size. From these four sizes of patterns any size letter could be made, from two-line pica to 120-line pica. Larger letters were drawn by hand and routed on a machine specially constructed for that work. Mr. Page says the largest letters he ever made were a few in two colors which required 160 feet of lumber to complete each letter. These were in nine blocks, 29 by 42 inches in size for each color. The blocks were placed on the floor, and he proceeded to "survey" them in his stocking-feet, after which they were routed and finished.

William H. Page was born and brought up in the valley of the Connecticut river, on the New Hampshire side, on a small farm. At the age of fourteen he crossed the river into Bradford, Vermont, to learn the printer's trade. He spent two years there and one at Newbury, next town above on the river, and one year at Haverhill, on the New Hampshire side. He next went to Concord, the capital of the State, where he was employed awhile, next to Boston, and thence to Worcester, Massachusetts, where he worked on the *Spy* for three years. He also worked on the New York *Tribune* during the Pierce campaign in 1852, after which he came to Norwich, Connecticut, where he worked on the Norwich *Tribune*, at the time when Edmund Clarence Stedman was editor of the paper. After the two years spent on this paper he engaged in wood type manufacturing, as previously stated. He is now, at the age of seventy-one, actively engaged in manufacturing steam and hot-water boilers for house warming. All through his long life Mr. Page has taken an interest in art, and he is a landscape painter of more than mediocre talent. While he must challenge our admiration as a man of self-education and many accomplishments, he stands before the printing world as the developer of most beautiful effects in wood type and borders. To this must be added his rare inventive genius, which brought the special machinery used in his work to such perfection.

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## PROOFROOM NOTES AND QUERIES.

CONDUCTED BY F. HORACE TEALL.

The following list of books is given for the convenience of readers. Orders may be sent to The Inland Printer Company.

BIGELOW'S HANDBOOK OF PUNCTUATION gives full information regarding punctuation and other typographic matters. 112 pages; cloth bound; 50 cents.

COMPOUNDING OF ENGLISH WORDS.—By F. Horace Teall. When and why joining or separation is preferable, with concise rules and alphabetical lists. 224 pages; cloth bound; $1.25.

ENGLISH COMPOUND WORDS AND PHRASES.—By F. Horace Teall. A reference list, with statement of principles and rules. 312 pages; cloth bound; $2.50.

PENS AND TYPES.—By Benjamin Drew. A book of hints and helps for those who write, print, teach or learn. 214 pages; cloth bound; $1.25.

PUNCTUATION.—By F. Horace Teall. Rules have been reduced to the fewest possible, and useless theorizing carefully avoided. 194 pages; cloth bound; $1.00.

PUNCTUATION.—By John Wilson. For letter writers, authors, printers, and correctors of the press. 334 pages; cloth bound; $1.00.

PUNCTUATION.—Under the heading, "Common Sense on Punctuation," the *Midland Magazine* says that its answer to the question, "Whose punctuation do you follow?" is, "Our own." It proceeds to tell what are its own rules, among them being: "Never use a comma if 'the wayfaring man, though a fool,' can grasp the meaning of the text without it." "Never use a colon when a semicolon will serve as well." "Use an exclamation-point whenever you want to, but don't want to over-much. An over-use of the exclamation-point, like the over-use of italics, seriously weakens. Used temperately, it is strengthening." "These are our rules to-day," it says. "To-morrow, if we see any new light, we shall follow it." A person in need of help would not get much from that.

A TROUBLESOME WORD.—The following story is old, but seems worth repeating, although it has been told in several papers: "A fortune of $118,000 is hanging on the grammatical construction of a single word in the Superior Court of San Francisco. A jury, among whom there is not a school-teacher or any one claiming to be an authority on grammar, had, up to a week ago, devoted twelve days to the consideration of the point, and at last accounts the case was still unsettled. The learned judge and some half-dozen high-priced lawyers had been helping to disentangle the intricacies of the problem. The prize depends on the exact meaning of the word 'their' as it appears in a clause in a contract. It is plain that the word is a pronoun, standing for an antecedent noun in the sentence, but there are two such nouns, and the point is as to which it refers

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