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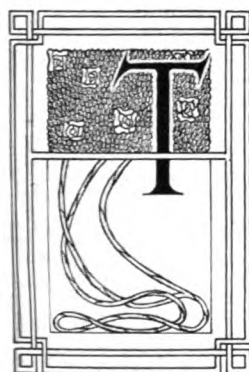
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DISCURSIONS OF A RETIRED PRINTER.

NO. XI.—BY QUADRAT.

REVOLUTION IN TYPOGRAPHICAL DISPLAY FROM THE ORNAMENTAL TO THE MASCULINE—INFLUENCE AND SERVICES OF JOSEPH WARREN PHINNEY—HIS BIOGRAPHY, NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME PRINTED—IMITATION VERSUS ORIGINALITY IN TYPE-DESIGNS.



THE last and best service rendered to the printers by Messrs. St. John and Schraubstadter's Central Type Foundry was the introduction, about 1890, of the De Vinne series of types, which was as fortunate in its name as in its conception. It was the first effective factor in a typographical revolution which banished those ornate, ingenious, or pretty types illustrated in the May Discursion. From its introduction we date the commencement of that masculinity in commercial typography which still prevails. The Central Type Foundry's designs had started with the extreme fine stems of the Geometrics and Morning Glory (examples 33-35, May Discursion), and soon developed into the robustness of the Washington, Victoria, and Hogarth series (examples 42-44, 46, May Discursion), but these types had use only in display lines. The De Vinne is the first great series of types, not a book letter, which in every size fills not only the function of emphasized display, but satisfies in a paragraph or a page. Old-style Antique has much in its range of adaptability in common with the De Vinne, and is in the same class, but above the twenty-point size it loses its strength and color in the mass, just as modernized old-style Romans do, while the De Vinne series holds its color and strength when made in the largest sizes offered by the makers of wood types. This quality is the final test of any type-design. It is possessed notably by the

Caslon Old Style, the greatest of all type series, I think, which is more admirable as it is enlarged, and has the very rare merit of combining the function of a book letter with that of a display letter. It is not a quality of our indispensable modernized old-style Romans, which do not carry their color above the eighteen-point size. It is found in several of our modern Romans, a family of types that has been neglected of late years, but which will, I predict, recover their popularity as display letters. It is found in some of the Gothics, Antiques and Clarendons, but these, on the other hand, lack in varying degrees the refinement of design which is necessary to make a pleasing page-effect—they are thoroughbreds, but of the draft-horse variety. The De Vinne series is the parent of a family of De Vinnés, of varying merits, the italic branch being the most admirable. This family was developed with much success by the successors of Messrs. St. John and Schraubstadter in the ownership of the Central Type Foundry.

In 1892, MacKellar and the Smiths and St. John and Schraubstadter, Sr., having retired, and their foundries having passed to the possession of the American Type Founders Company, Joseph W. Phinney, who had been for several years the brain and inspiration of the old Dickinson Type Foundry of Boston, and latterly a partner therein, became the successor of these earlier leaders of the fashions in types. While, up to that year, the new type-faces produced by the Dickinson Type Foundry were not so numerous as those originated by any one of half a dozen other American typefoundries, it is a praise-

worthy fact that no new design put forth by Mr. Phinney has failed of success artistically and financially. No other letter-founder in America could make such a boast, prior to 1892. Mr. Phinney has always been a conservator of the best there is in types. It is a fact that while MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan introduced the Caslon Old Style into America in 1859, their direct sales of it were insignificant. They also dropped from their specimen books several series of ancient texts, known to us as Priory, Cloister Black, Caslon Text, Cathedral Text, which had been brought to this country by Maffa from Holland and by Baine from Scotland. MacKellar was not in sympathy with these ancient and classic types, and it was Mr. Phinney who kept them before the eyes of the printers in the Dickinson specimen books, encouraged their sale, and finally improved or extended several of these series, which have now at last received their due measure of appreciation among printers. I think, too, that the book or body types of the Dickinson Type Foundry had no superiors anywhere. Excellence in this class of types was traditional from the time of its originator, Samuel Nelson Dickinson, who was the leading printer of America in his time (1828-1848), before he became a typefounder in 1839. It is said that he became a letter-founder because no typefounder of that period in America or Europe was making type of a design satisfactory to him. His designs for modern Roman were accepted and used by the Scotch typefounders, and aided in establishing their supremacy in the British market. These Dickinson body-types are to be found in more of the very best books printed in America than those of any other letter-foundry, and they attracted a clientage among the best and most advanced printers of this country, irrespective of location. There was little of advertisement, and none of that charlatanry of bogus claims which has been characteristic of some of our typefounders, in the methods of the Dickinson Type Foundry; and its success was gained and maintained by the merit of its product, which was ever the salt of the typographical world. It may have had its sins of omission, but it certainly avoided the sins of commission, and that is a virtue that no other American letter-foundry of the early nineties could fairly claim.

Very soon after the American Type Founders Company assumed ownership Mr. Phinney's work made him the leader of type fashions — or, shall I say, of type morals — for are not frivolity and

eccentricity and crudeness of design immoral, or worse, in the realm of art? In 1893 Mr. Phinney introduced the Jenson Old Style series. This was a design made in one size by William Morris of England, based on a design used by Nicholas Jenson in the fifteenth century. Morris printed a few limited edition books with his font, and it had a limited appreciation among the typographical elect. Mr. Phinney was the first to thoroughly — even more than William Morris — recognize the merit and significance of this revived design. He applied, not once but thrice and urgently, for permission to pay for the privilege of reproducing the design, but Mr. Morris did not want to popularize it or make its reformatory influence available in general typography, but rather to keep it for the narrow purpose of enhancing the value of his limited edition publishing business. Mr.

**HILOSOPHIAM A BARBARIS
iina sūpsiffe plerq; autumāt.
Nanq; apud Perfas claruisse Ma-
gos. Babylonis siue affynis eius rei
principes fuisse Chaldaeos : Gym-
nosophistas Indis Celtis seu Gal-
lis Druidas & qui Semnothei ap-**

Reduction from Jenson's original Roman of 1471,
thickened in reproducing. Nicholas
Jenson, Venice.

**HILOSOPHIAM A BARBARIS
iua sūpsiffe pleriq; autumat.
Nanq; apud Perfas claruisse Ma-
gos. Babylonis siue affyriseius rei
principes fuisse Chaldaeos : Gym-
nosophistas Indis Celtis seu Gal-
lis Druidas & qui Semnothei ap-**

The Original American Jenson Old Style.
Joseph W. Phinney, 1894.

Phinney, therefore, felt himself absolved, and proceeded under his legal right to cut the design in a magnificent series of fourteen sizes, with a corresponding italic series and a condensed series, neither of which had been attempted by Mr. Morris. Now that Jenson Old Style has proved one of the greatest successes in the history of typemaking, and now that every one is familiar with it, some may affect to lightly esteem the work; but when the proofs of the trial cast of the twelve-point size were first taken and shown it was looked upon as an oddity, which would have little success, by the most experienced typefounders and many of our leading printers. There was little encouragement to go ahead, other than Mr. Phinney's fixed appreciation of its far-reaching merit. It was a great thing to divine the significance of Morris's revival. It was a greater thing to make that revival the instrument for making commercial typography dignified, masculine and coherent, and acceptable to the most cultivated taste, by multiplying its efficiency and practicability, instead of allowing the design to remain a typographical rarity or curiosity, without influence in its generation, other than to please the eyes of a limited *dilettanti*. Nor was Jenson Old Style a slavish copy, for each character of every size was cut with the original print

from the ancient Jenson types as a guide. The first showing of the series had an effect on typographic taste in America that was instantaneous and most valuable and still remains effective. That specimen first taught and demonstrated the correct method of assembling types, and the advantages of mass effects over incoherent display by isolated lines. The whole work was done under the plan and direction of the most advanced type-founder of the time, and I know of none of his contemporaries of 1895, here or abroad, who could have done it, for the work and training of all were based on a narrower range of study, which did not conserve the good work of past times. The Jenson Old Style, like every other series of wide adaptability and range, is open to criticism in some details, but its influence in restoring commercial printing to sanity and dignity can never be overestimated. It completed on a higher plane the revolution commenced in America by the De Vinne series, and brought typography back to the principle of assembling the types which is one of the chief causes of that admiration we all accord (who have seen them) to the works of many of the earlier printers. Since the introduction of Jenson Old Style Mr. Phinney has directed for the most part the production of the new designs which so prolifically issue from the foundries of his company, and has been the modest but none the less effective leader of typographical styles in America, and with great influence on foreign typography.

Not the least advantage to the printers derived from the renaissance of good typography initiated by the Jenson Old Style series was the cultivation of closer relations between good printers and cultivated buyers of good printing. When the printers found themselves on a true road to art they discovered that really good printing filled "a long felt want." There existed a theory, not yet dead, that it was against the printers' interest to aid their customers in the knowledge of type. They regarded such knowledge much as the physician regards a patient who wishes to know just what is in the dose he is to swallow — it is none of his business except to pay for it. But when Jenson Old Style appeared, the people who had looked in vain for many years for sane ideals in printing quickly fraternized with intelligent printers and encouraged them. This interest on the part of the customers of the printers resulted in an extension of the uses of commercial printing and more liberal appropriations to pay for it. It is a purblind, foolish, narrow idea that the printer is hampered by his customers taking up the study of types. The more the public know about types the better able it will be to distinguish between good and inferior printing, and to understand why one costs more and

is worth more than the other. There is not a progressive printer in America who has not been, consciously or unconsciously, benefited artistically and financially by Mr. Phinney's work.

I am not going to discuss the later designs — (the spirit of competition would make that an uncomfortable task) — but invite the attention of the student of types to the difference between ante-1900 types and those now most popular. In their uses the ante-1900 types may be compared to the signs put on business premises, and the best types of the immediate time to the inscriptions placed on dignified monuments. The ante-1900 types would, as a group, belittle a monument, while our best present types will dignify a mere signboard. There is no purpose in typography that is not better served by our present types than by their predecessors. There has been a remarkable improvement under the leadership of Mr. Phinney, whose influence has been responded to even by competing typefoundries. Types have now a greater range of usefulness. They are designed to look well in page form, in mass effects, and in single lines, and I venture the assertion that no types (certain series obviously designed for special purposes excepted) can belong to the first class which are not readable, harmonious, compact in color, dignified and impressive in the page form. All of Mr. Phinney's later work conforms to this principle. It is the principle evolved after centuries of experience by the letterers who produced the wonderfully beautiful manuscript books which preceded the invention of movable types, and afforded models for the earlier printers. As it relates to commercial printing, it took just a century to complete the circle and come back after many tests of other methods to the earliest and best principle of typographical display.

Before Mr. Phinney's leadership was acknowledged, and before his ideas were understood, in nothing was he more criticized by the old-time founders than on his insistence on close "fitting" one character with another. Example 1 shows

A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s

Caslon Text, an admirable old English design.

A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s

Cloister Black, Mr. Phinney's adaptation of Caslon Text, in which, although the letters are longer and wider, they set into the same measure on account of being fitted close together.

EXAMPLE 1. — Showing open and close fitting; this, with the thickening of the serifs in Cloister Black, affords an excellent study.

what is meant. In this, also, he conforms to the earliest models. The unit in reading is the word; the reading eye does not dissect a word; therefore the word should be compact as one piece; if

ABCEGHMS abcdefghjklmp

Original De Vinne.

ABCEGHMS abcdefghjkm

Post.

ABCEGH S abcdefghkm

Abbey No. 2.

ABCEGHMS abcdefghjklmp

Original De Vinne Italic.

ABCEGHMS abcdefghjkm

Avon.

Group J.

Original De Vinne and De Vinne Italic, with imitations.

the letters are separated the effect is consciously or unconsciously confusing to the eye. An extreme illustration of this is afforded by the old German method of spacing words for the purpose of emphasizing them, instead of using italics as in other countries. It really weakens each word, and makes all more difficult to read. The student of types should form his judgment on this important detail by careful comparison of type-faces, new and old.

Joseph Warren Phinney, whose portrait we now have the honor of printing for the first time, was born in 1848 on the Island of Nantucket. The name

ABCDFHMP abcdefghklmq

Washington (original).

ABCDFHMP abcdefghkmm

Clifton.

ABCDEFGHI M abcdefghjkmp

Lafayette (original).

ABCDEFGHI M abcdefghjkmp

Vincent.

Group K.

Original designs and their imitations. The Vincent design is impaired by wide fitting.

was originally Finney, a family of English origin belonging to the first New England Colony which centered around Plymouth Rock. A section of this family settled in Barnstable, on Cape Cod, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and Mr. Phinney is of this branch. On the maternal side the ancestry is of Scotch-Irish origin, of the names Foster, Parkman, and Smith. The latter, Mr. Phinney's great-grandfather, was engaged in the battle of Bunker Hill, receiving some wounds,

and subsequently losing his property as the price of his patriotism. The paternal great-grandfather carried a musket in the War of 1812, the father served at the capture of Vera Cruz in the Mexican War, and Mr. Phinney, when yet a lad, enlisted in the army in 1864, when one's patriotism had to be very real or one's love of adventure very intense, as the tremendous slaughter of the Civil War had by that time appalled all but those with the stoutest hearts. It is a pleasure to record these evidences of an hereditary spirit of patriotism, which is the most honorable possession of a true American family, especially when the facts are reluctantly disclosed as in this

HERE endeth The Book of Wisdom & Lies, a Georgian Story-book of the eighteenth century,

Morris's Troy type, derived from Jenson's original Roman. This example is reduced to twelve-point for comparison, but has been unavoidably thickened in reproducing.

HERE endeth The Book of Wisdom & Lies, a Georgian Story-Book of the eighteenth century.

Phinney's Jenson Old Style.

HERE endeth The Book of Wisdom & Lies, a Georgian Story-Book of the eighteenth century.

Kelmscott, differing in the capitals R, T and lower-case s and r.

HERE endeth The Book of Wisdom & Lies, a Georgian Story-Book of the eighteenth century.

Mazarin, in which the cutter's own ideas predominate.

HERE we end The Book of Wisdom & Lies, a Georgian Story-Book of the eighteenth century.

Mr. Phinney's Jenson Italic.

HERE we end The Book of Wisdom & Lies, a Georgian Story-Book of the eighteenth century.

Mazarin Italic.

HERE endeth The Book of Wisdom & Lies, a Georgian Story-Book of the eighteenth century, by Sulkhan-Saba

Mr. Phinney's Jenson Condensed.

Group L.

A study in adaptation.

instance. At a very early age Mr. Phinney commenced to learn the printing trade in a small office at Sandwich, on Cape Cod, finishing his apprenticeship at Taunton, in the office of C. A. Hack & Son, after the close of the war in 1865. Then came a period of three years of wandering in the principal cities of the South and West, very customary among young typos in those days. In 1868 he went to Boston and worked in Rand & Avery's establishment, leaving there to find employment in the selling department of the old-established Dickinson Type Foundry. Contending against the unprogressiveness of the owners of that foundry, Mr. Phinney steadily

HERE ends the tale of the Wood beyond the World, made by William Morris, and

Morris's Golden Type, reduced to twelve-point for comparison, and unavoidably thickened in reproducing.

HERE ends the tale of the Wood beyond the World, made by William Morris, and

Mr. Phinney's Satanick.

HERE ends the tale of the Wood beyond the World, made by William Morris, and

Tell Text, another reading.

Group M.

An original and two adaptations.

came to be its chief personality, storing away meanwhile a fund of ideas and energy which his principals did not see fit to use. Whenever this conservatism relaxed, Mr. Phinney produced a successful series of types or border, for it was true then (as always thereafter) that no design

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Condensed Runic.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

A design obtained by reducing the thickness of the stems of Condensed Runic.

Group N.

A curiosity in design.

suggested or approved by Mr. Phinney was other than a success, especially from the artistic viewpoint. So by persistent but modest endeavor conservatism was subdued, having doubtless benefited Mr. Phinney by instilling a proper caution in his enterprises, until in 1885 he became a partner.

Hon. Charles Bailey Agtham.

Mr. Phinney's Manuscript.

Hon. Charles Bailey Agtham.

Mackellar's Circular Script.

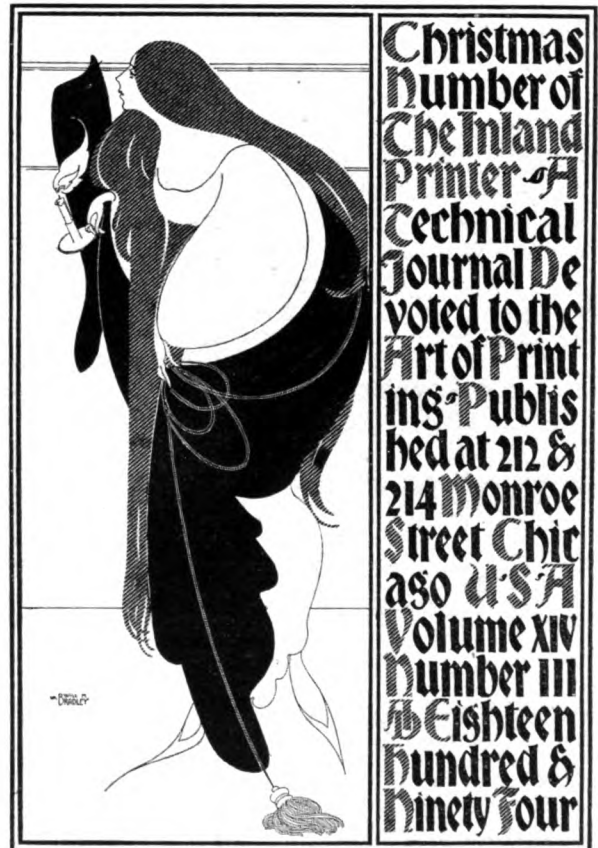
Group O.

Showing marked similarities in two designs cut simultaneously in Boston and Philadelphia.

From that time on the Dickinson Type Foundry has steadily grown in importance as one of the best factors in typographical progress in the world. In 1892 the foundry was sold to the American Type Founders Company, in which from the beginning Mr. Phinney has been a director, a member of the executive committee, and its chief advisor and critic on all matters relating to the production of new or the improvement of old type-faces. He is now the manager of the Boston Branch and the important typefoundry attached

to it, which has done more good work for the printer than any other foundry during the last fifteen years; and he is also assistant-general manager of the whole organization.

Mr. Phinney's life as a letter-founder has been one of constant growth, influenced by patient study of the art as an art and a sense of loyalty to his immediate clients, the printers of New England, which happily prevented him from being lured away to positions more lucrative, but which, if accepted, would probably have interrupted the evolutionary process which has made him the leading typefounder of this period. He has grown as the tree grows, and transplantation might have retarded the development which the typographic world is now benefiting by, and which has not, I feel sure, reached its culmination. If a young man has ability and ambition he will be wise to stay and grow in one place in which he will create



DECEMBER, 1894.

EXAMPLE 2.—Reduction of lettering on cover of INLAND PRINTER, designed by Mr. Will Bradley, which was imitated by three typefoundries.

a home, and a fame and worthy friendships, much easier than by following the lures of a mistaken enterprise and of temporary monetary advantage. It is the man's work, irrespective of the place in which it is done, that is crowned by fame. Wise, again, is that young man who before venturing on any change will inquire of what advantage it will be to him in the closing years of his career. Build

for the future always, as did Mr. Phinney. As to the place of labor, it matters little where that is, if you are to make it famous, or increase its fame. When Daniel Webster was consulted as to where one of his students should settle, he replied: "Let him settle anywhere. Let him settle in the backwoods of Maine; the clients will throng to him." Those who know the burden of management of both the commercial and manufacturing branches of the foundry in Boston which has been carried by Mr. Phinney for many years may well be astonished that he has found time to introduce so many successes in type-faces. Mr. Phinney's career also demonstrates the sufficient power of good work to make itself appreciated. No man in the typemaking business has

ABCEGJM abcdefghijklmp

St. John.

ABCEGJM abcdefghijklmp

Bradley.

ABCEGJM abcdefghijkl

Abbey Text.

Group P.

Showing three interpretations of original design shown in Example 2.

been so little exploited. Search the trade journals and you will not, I believe, until this article, find a single paragraph about his personality. His picture has never been printed anywhere, except some years ago with a group of Boston master printers. The advertising men of his company have strict orders from himself not to mention him in advertisements, and yet wherever you meet a man whose opinion is really worth quoting on matters typographical, in this country or abroad, you will find him defer to the name of Phinney. It is time that such a fine example of a modest American man and a true typographer should be known to all printers, and I count it a high honor to have become the means of making this historical memorandum for the benefit especially of the younger and rising generation of printers. Mr. Phinney has few distractions outside of his business and domestic life, in both of which he is most pleasantly situated. At an age when most men think themselves old, Mr. Phinney is as alert and vigorous as men in the prime of life. This is, in fact, a test of the wisdom of a man's life, that he meets the advancing years with the spirit of youth and has husbanded his energies so that he does not fail as he approaches the crown of his career.

The question of originality is ever difficult to

decide. A thing may be original and not admirable. The productions of MacKellar and St. John had, many of them, marked originality, and were very successful, but they produced little that will survive. There is another kind of originality which conserves and builds on the good work of the past — which leads in its own time by following those things which have survived from other times by right of merit. We concede the originality of the architect who devised the grain elevator of this country, while we confess that the architect of the capitol at Washington was a follower of antique models, and we know which is architecturally the more admirable. If Mr. Phinney did not originate Cloister Black, which is shown in Example 1, we concede that he made it more worthy of its originator, and, in fact, accomplished exactly what its originator would have done if he had survived to profit by a century's experience. Those who apply the principles of art discovered in classic times to their own work are really reincarnations of the departed artists, and their task is to progress with or advance those principles and apply them to contemporaneous conditions. If Jenson Old Style is a copy of Morris's Troy Types, I believe that Mr. Phinney's series, with its italic and condensed branches, is as the pyramids to an obelisk. To realize how difficult it is to carry forward a classic model and adapt it to modern commercial uses, we should watch the persistent experiments, the frequent rejection of expensive punches, the patient comparison and criticism of each letter in combination with all its fellows, which explain the unvarying success of Mr. Phinney's numerous type productions. There are those who deny to a Tennyson originality in making the mediæval legend of King Arthur and his knights more beautiful and familiar than the original, or to Shakespeare, who invented no histories, but made the tales and plots of others the messengers of his genius. There is a wide gulf between appreciative adaptation and mere imitation. Mr. Phinney has produced several faces which are entirely original in form and design — in this field no living typefounder compares with him, — but I prefer that work of his which has made and is making the very best work of the olden times count so effectively in the every-day printing of our hustling up-to-date America — the perfecting of sound ideals and the conservation of tested principles in type-designing.

The worst feature of American letter-founding has been the persistent imitative tendencies of many typefounders. So soon as one evolved a selling success, a certain class followed with a more or less close imitation, in the effort to benefit by another's ideas. This tendency has been fruitful of much bad work. Who treads in another's

footsteps must travel in the rear. It is admissible to copy if one can improve, but certainly not otherwise. In 1887 I visited a well-known typefounder, and at a time he was called away from his desk I took up from it a specimen book of one of his successful competitors. To my surprise I found its margin full of drawings of variations of the competitor's most successful designs. It is obvious that such a typefounder could not lead artistically, however he might succeed otherwise. The imitative retrogressive idea is illustrated in Group J, showing De Vinne, with its italic, and three imitations which appeared shortly after the success of the original was assured. Group K shows a similar evolution in the wrong direction. When Jenson Old Style proved to be popular, three typefounders exercised their undoubted legal right to copy it. Two of them did so with minor variations, while another offered its own conception of the Morris idea, with what success may be seen by comparing the examples in Group L, which shows Jenson's original, with the Morris and American adaptations, together with the italics, both of American origin. Group M shows two adaptations of Morris's Golden Type with italics which are of American origin, together with the original. One of these entirely misconceives the original idea. Mr. Phinney's first design, the Norman Condensed, was produced in a singular manner. It is really a condensation of a French design made under various names (Norman, Romanesque, Gallican, etc.) in this country. When Mr. Phinney conceived the idea, the firm he worked for did not think well enough of it to go to the expense of cutting punches in the regular way, but permitted him to have Condensed Runic alphabets trimmed down to the stem and form he desired. The result is shown in Group N and was unlike any previous design. It was the first light-line letter made in America, and had a tremendous sale. There are many interesting instances of the almost simultaneous production of similar faces. At the time the Cleveland Type Foundry had popularized autograph scripts by introducing a facsimile of the handwriting of Mr. Carpenter, of Messrs. R. Hoe & Co., Mr. Phinney had an exact imitation of his own excellent handwriting cut and named it Manuscript. At the same time MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan cut their Circular Script. It was thought, erroneously, by some that a workman had communicated Mr. Phinney's idea to the Philadelphia firm, so similar are the two designs in many details. For comparison they are shown in Group O. In the latter part of 1893 Mr. Will Bradley, then first embarking on his artistic career in Chicago, designed a cover for THE INLAND PRINTER, lettering from which is reproduced in this article. Evidently the lettering was appreciated by three typefounders, who,

without notifying the publisher of THE INLAND PRINTER, proceeded simultaneously to utilize the design. What they made of it is shown in Group P. The St. John was first shown in two sizes in the August, 1895, INLAND PRINTER; the Abbey Text was shown in the September issue of the same year, in two sizes; and Bradley was also shown in that issue in eight sizes. This is an interesting group, as it shows how differently three experienced designers will interpret an original common to all of them. I think it also affords an illustration of the superiority of close fitting. Given a design which is entirely satisfactory in itself, as in Groups L and M, with the legal right to reproduce it exactly, the examples show that some designers lack the ability to copy, but must needs mutilate it. I could fill many pages with similar illustrations, and yet all of these variations or imitations are patentable, which indicates how much value the citation of the United States patent is as a proof of originality.

(To be continued.)



DAISIES.

Photo by R. R. Sallows, Goderich, Canada.

BELOW THE SCALE.

Pasted on the window of a book store was a sign "Porter Wanted." In the window on a pile of books was a sign, "Dickens Works all this week for \$4."

An able-looking Irishman read first the sign and then the placard. He scratched his head and blurted out, "Dickens can work all the week for four dollars if he wants to, but I'm a union man. I'll not touch it. Ye'd better kape Dickens."