

**EARLY ILLUSTRATED BOOKS: A  
HISTORY OF THE DECORATION  
AND ILLUSTRATION OF BOOKS  
IN THE 15TH AND 16TH CENTURIES**

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Early illustrated books: a history of the decoration and illustration of books in the 15th and 16th centuries by Alfred W. Pollard

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**ALFRED W. POLLARD**

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# Early Illustrated Books

A History of the Decoration and  
Illustration of Books in the  
15th and 16th Centuries

By Alfred W. Pollard



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## Preface

THIS little book was written nearly a quarter of a century ago in the enthusiasm of a first acquaintance with a fascinating subject, and with an honest endeavour to see for myself as many as possible of the books I set out to describe. If I had tried to rewrite it now I might have made it more interesting to experts, but at the cost of destroying whatever merit it possesses as an introductory sketch. I have therefore been content to correct, as thoroughly as I could, its many small errors (not all of my own making), more especially those due to the ascription of books to impossible dates and printers, which before the publication of Robert Proctor's *Index to the Early Printed Books in the British Museum*, in 1898, was very difficult to avoid. In these emendations, and in getting the titles of foreign books into better form, I have had much kind help from Mr. Victor Scholderer of the British Museum. I am grateful also to Mr. E. Gordon Duff for his leave to use again the chapter on English Illustrated Books which he kindly wrote for me for the first edition.

A. W. P.



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# EARLY ILLUSTRATED BOOKS

## CHAPTER I

### RUBRICATORS AND ILLUMINATORS

No point in the history of printing has been more rightly insisted on than that the early printers were compelled to make the very utmost of their new art in order to justify its right to exist. When a generation had passed by, when the scribes trained in the first half of the fifteenth century had died or given up the struggle, when printing-presses had invaded the very monasteries themselves, and clever boys no longer regarded penmanship as a possible profession, then, but not till then, printers could afford to be careless, and speedily began to avail themselves of their new license. In the early days of the art no such license was possible, and the striking similarity in the appearance of the printed books and manuscripts produced contemporaneously in any given city or district, is the best possible proof of the success with which the early printers competed with the most expert of the professional scribes.

All this is trite enough, but we are somewhat less