

THE STORY OF BOOKS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649544370

The Story of Books by Gertrude Burford Rawlings

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

GERTRUDE BURFORD RAWLINGS

**THE STORY
OF BOOKS**



EARLY PRINTERS AT WORK.

© THE
STORY OF BOOKS

BY

GERTRUDE BURFORD RAWLINGS

Author of "The Story of the British Coinage"

LONDON:
GEORGE NEWNES, LIMITED
SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND

1901

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTORY	9
II. THE PRESERVATION OF LITERATURE	13
III. BOOKS AND LIBRARIES IN CLASSICAL TIMES	26
IV. BOOKS IN MEDIÆVAL TIMES	36
V. LIBRARIES IN MEDIÆVAL TIMES	56
VI. THE BEGINNING OF PRINTING	70
VII. WHO INVENTED MOVEABLE TYPES?	81
VIII. GUTENBERG AND THE MENTZ PRESS	89
IX. EARLY PRINTING	103
X. EARLY PRINTING IN ITALY AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES	110
XI. EARLY PRINTING IN ENGLAND	118
XII. EARLY PRINTING IN SCOTLAND	131
XIII. EARLY PRINTING IN IRELAND	138
XIV. BOOK BINDINGS	144
XV. HOW A MODERN BOOK IS PRODUCED	159
POSTSCRIPT	164
INDEX	166

ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	PAGE
EARLY PRINTERS AT WORK	38
PAGE FROM THE BOOK OF KELLS	39
PART OF PAGE FROM THE BOOK OF KELLS	44
PAGE FROM THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS	76
PAGE FROM THE BIBLIA PAUPERUM	95
TYPE OF MENTZ INDULGENCE	98
PAGE FROM THE MAZARIN BIBLE	99
TYPE OF THE MAZARIN BIBLE	111
TYPE OF THE SUBIACO LACTANTIUS	114
TYPE OF THE ALDINE VIRGIL, 1501	123
TYPE OF CAXTON'S DICTES OR SAYENGIS OF THE PHILOSOPHRES, WESTMINSTER, 1477	125
BOYS LEARNING GRAMMAR	127
CAXTON'S DEVICE	129
TYPE OF WYNKYN DE WORDE'S HIGDEN'S POLY- CHRONICON, LONDON, 1495	132
MYLLAR'S DEVICE	140
TITLE PAGE OF O'KEARNEY'S IRISH ALPHABET AND CATECHISM	149
UPPER COVER OF MELISSEDA'S PSALTER	

THE STORY OF BOOKS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE book family is a very old and a very noble one, and has rendered great service to mankind, although, as with other great houses, all its members are not of equal worth and distinction. But since books are so common nowadays as to be taken quite as matters of course, probably few people give any thought to the long chain of events which, reaching from the dim past up to our own day, has been necessary for their evolution. Yet if we look round on our bookshelves, whether we measure their contents by hundreds or by thousands, and consider how mighty is the power of these inanimate combinations of "rag-paper with black ink on them," and how all but limitless their field of action, it is but a step further to wonder what the first books were like. Given the living, working brain to fashion thoughts and create fancies, to whom did it first occur to write a book, what language and characters and material did he use, when did he write, and what did he write about? And although these questions can never be answered, an attempt to follow

them up will lead the inquirer into many fascinating bye-ways of knowledge. It is not, however, the purpose of these pages to deal at length with the ancient history of the *manuscript* book, but, after briefly noticing the chief links which connect the volumes of to-day with primeval records, to present to the reader a few of the many points of interest offered by the modern history of the *printed* book.

The Beginning of Writing.—Books began with writing, and writing began at the time when man first bethought himself to make records, so that the progenitor of the beautiful handwriting and no less beautiful print of the civilised world is to be looked for in the rude drawing which primeval man scratched with a pointed flint on a smooth bone, or on a rock, representing the beast he hunted, or perhaps himself, or one of his fellows. The exact degree of importance he attached to these drawings we cannot hope to discover. They may have been cherished from purely æsthetic motives, or they may have served, at times, a merely utilitarian end and acted, perhaps, as memoranda. However this may be, these early drawings are the germs from which sprang writing, the parent of books, and liberator of literature, that great force of which a book is but the vehicle. How these drawings were gradually changed into letters, in other words, the story of the alphabet, has been already told in this series by Mr Edward Clodd, and therefore we need not deal further with the subject here.

Writing once learned, and alphabets once

formulated, the machinery for making books, with the human mind as its mainspring, was fairly in motion. "Certainly the Art of Writing," says Carlyle, "is the most miraculous of all things man has devised. . . . With the art of Writing, of which Printing is a simple, an inevitable and comparatively insignificant corollary, the true reign of miracles for mankind commenced." That these words only express the feeling of our far away ancestors, a cursory glance into the mythology of various peoples will prove. For wherever there is a tradition respecting writing, that tradition almost invariably, if not always, connects the great invention with the gods or with some sacred person. The Egyptians attributed it to Thoth, the Babylonians and Assyrians to Nebo, the Buddhists to Buddha, the Greeks to Hermes. The Scandinavians honoured Odin as the first cutter of the mysterious runes, and the Irish derived their ogham from the sacred Ogma of the Tuatha de Danaan. And it is noteworthy how, from time immemorial, writing, and the making of books, have been considered high and honourable accomplishments, and how closely they have ever been connected with the holy functions of priesthood.

Materials for Writing and Books.—The early forms of books were various, and, to modern eyes, more or less clumsy. Wood or bark was one of the oldest substances used to receive writing. Stone was no doubt older still, but stone inscriptions are outside our subject. The early Greeks and Romans employed tablets of soft metal, and