

which they were masters, and some hundreds of dollars, increased from their father's means; and with this capital, in a small printing office in Dover street, they began the business which has expanded through half a century into that of Harper & Brothers.

At first the young men printed books to order, doing a part of the composing and press-work with their own hands. In August, 1817, they delivered two thousand copies of Seneca's *Morals*—the first book they printed—to Evert Duyckinck, a noted bookseller of that day; in December twenty-five hundred copies of Mair's *Introduction to Latin*, and in April, 1818, five hundred copies of Locke's *Essay upon the Human Understanding*, upon which the imprint of J. & J. Harper, as publishers, first appeared. They proceeded with characteristic care. When contemplating the publication of a book, especially if a reprint, they sent to the leading houses in the trade to ascertain the number of copies each would take; and so, slowly and steadily feeling their way, intent only upon good work well done, improving every opportunity with prompt sagacity, their business rapidly extended, and the firm of J. & J. Harper was soon the most eminent publishing house in the country. Perhaps the most famous work that bears the imprint of J. & J. Harper is the series known as "Harper's Family Library"—a collection familiar to every American reader during the last thirty years. The volumes were of convenient form, and the Library included standard and attractive works of every kind—such as Milman's *History of the Jews*, Southey's *Life of Nelson*, Galt's *Life of Byron*, Scott's *Demonology and Witchcraft*, Cunningham's *Lives of the Painters*, Brewster's *Life of Sir Isaac Newton*, Mrs. Jameson's *Female Sovereigns*, Lander's *African Travels*, and many more.

Two younger brothers, Joseph Wesley and Fletcher, were apprenticed to the firm, and when admitted as partners the style was changed to Harper & Brothers; and, in 1825, the house was established at Nos. 81 and 82 Cliff street, upon a part of the site which their buildings now occupy. It was then the largest printing house in the city, employing fifty persons and ten hand-presses. Cliff street was a narrow street just back of Pearl, in what is called the Swamp, the seat of the leather trade; but it was familiar to almost all American authors. When they went there and stopped at the Harpers' they found a small and very plain office, in which there was little room for idlers, and a brisk and incessant industry was everywhere apparent. They met a frank courtesy, clearness of statement and decision. It was strictly a place of business.

In 1844, the eldest of the brothers was elected Mayor of New York, a position which he worthily filled; and, about 1850 or 1851, the firm commenced the publication of the *Magazine*, of which it is not too much to say that it has completely changed the current of magazines in the country. Before its date the old *Whig Review*, the *Knickerbocker*, and *Graham's Magazine* were the best that had been produced. The new periodical immediately surpassed them, and was a source of great pecuniary profit to its proprietors.

The business had so increased that on the 10th of December, 1853, it occupied nine large contiguous buildings full of costly machinery of every kind, with stores of plates and books—buildings alive with workmen,