rior classes, in which thirty-six boys and thirty girls are clothed and educated ; and most of the churches and cha­pels have schools attached to them for the gratuitous in­struction of children of the labouring classes. There is also a valuable medical dispensary. For amusement and relaxation, a theatre, an assembly-room, a concert-room, and a subscription-library, have been established ; and there are annual races on three successive days in the month of August.

The town is favourably situated for the conveyance of the heavy goods fabricated within and around it. It is on the Stafford and Worcester Canal, and on the Essington and Wyrley Canal, upon which there is easy communica­tion with London, Liverpool, and Bristol. The facility of communication has been recently increased by the com­pletion of the Grand Junction Railway, that connects Bir­mingham with Liverpool and Manchester. The chief trade of the town depends on the mines of iron and of coal which are worked in its vicinity. From them, by mechanical and human labour, are fabricated vast quantities of domestic fire-irons, tinned and japanned iron wares, heavy cast and wrought iron articles, agricultural implements, locks and keys, nails of all sizes, and various other commodities.

The more ancient part of the town is ill built, and has a gloomy appearance ; but in the modern part there are some large and handsome dwellings. By the reform bill this place has obtained the right of returning two members to the House of Commons. There are good markets on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and a large fair of three days’ duration in the month of May. The boundaries of the parish are very extensive, and comprehend eight other chapelries or townships, in one of which is included the town of Bilston, with, in 1831, 14,492 inhabitants. The population of the town itself amounted in 1821 to 18,380, and in 1831 to 24,732 ; and that of the parish amounted in 1821 to 36,838, and in 1831 to 48,080.

WOMAT Ροιντ, a rocky projection of Cape Barren island, between Van Diemen’s Land and the south-west coast of New Holland.

WOOD, Αντηονυ, a well-known literary historian, was the son of Thomas Wood, bachelor of arts and of the civil law, and was born at Oxford on the 17th of December 1632. He studied at Merton College, and in 1655 took the degree of master of arts. He wrote, 1. The History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford; which was afterwards translated into Latin by Mr Wase and Mr Peers, under the title of *Historia et Antiquitates Universitatis Oxoniensis,* 2 vols, folio. 2. *Athence Oxonienses ;* or an exact Account of all the Writers and Bishops who have had their education in the University of Oxford, from the year 1500 to 1600, 2 fols, folio; which was enlarged in a second edition published in 1721 by Bishop Tanner. This work, which is highly valuable as a collection of materials, has been greatly improved by Dr Bliss. Upon its publica­tion, the author was attacked by the university in defence of Edward earl of Clarendon, lord high chancellor of Eng­land, and chancellor of the university, and was likewise animadverted upon by Bishop Burnet ; upon which he pub­lished a Vindication of the Historiographer of the University of Oxford. He died at Oxford on the 29th of November 1695.

Wood, a substance of which the trunks and branches of trees consist. See Planting, Timber, and Vegetable Physiology.

Wood, *Fossil.* Fossil wood, or whole trees, or parts of them, are very frequently found buried in the earth, and that in different strata ; sometimes in stone, but more usually in earth, and sometimes in small pieces loose among the gravel. These, according to the time they have lain in the earth, or the matter they have lain among, are found differently altered from their original state ; some of them

having suffered very little change, and others being so highly impregnated with crystalline, sparry, pyritical, or other extraneous matter, as to appear mere masses of stone, or lumps of the common matter of the pyrites, &c. of the dimensions, and more or less of the internal figure, of the vegetable bodies into the pores of which they have made their way. See Geology.

WOOD-ENGRAVING is the art of representing ob­jects on wood, by lines and points, in order to their being impressed on paper. This art is of very ancient date, having been practised by the Egyptians. Some bricks found on the site of ancient Babylon are preserved in the Bri­tish Museum, with characters upon them which have plainly been indented from engraved blocks of wood. It appears also, from specimens that are extant, that the Greeks and Romans were acquainted with methods of wood-cutting for impressing letters and characters on various substances. The probability of the art being known to the Chinese, or actually having been carried to the extent of delineating figures, in the thirteenth century, has been successfully dis­proved by Mr Jackson, in his able and learned Treatise on Wood-Engraving. The art was however used in the thir­teenth and fourteenth centuries for attesting documents, and about the commencement of the fifteenth century, by the Germans, for marking figures on playing-cards.

The most ancient wood-cut of which there is any au­thentic account, is that of *St Christopher* carrying an in­fant Christ through the water, now in the possession of Earl Spencer. It is eleven and a quarter inches high, and eight and one eighth inches wide. The impression is dated in 1423 ; and the figures of the saint and the youth­ful Saviour are executed with very considerable spirit and feeling. W∞d-cuts of the *Annunciation* and of *St Brid­get of Sweden* appear to belong to this period, when tire art began to be much encouraged by the church. Heineken, in allusion to this, tells us, that “ having visited in my last tour a great many convents in Franconia, Suabia, Bavaria, and in the Austrian states, I everywhere discovered in their libraries many of those kinds of figures, engraved on wood, and pasted either at the beginning or the end of old volumes of the fifteenth century. I have indeed obtained several of them. These facts, taken altogether, have con­firmed me in my opinion, that the next step of the en­graver in wood after playing-cards, was to engrave figures of saints, which, being distributed and lost among the laity, were in part preserved by the monks, who pasted them in the earliest printed books with which they furnished their libraries.”

Between 1430 and 1450, several works technically called block-books, chiefly illustrative of the Scriptures, appear­ed. The most remarkable among these is the *Apocalypse, or History of St John,* which was probably engraved in 1434, and is reputed to have been the production of Lau­rence Coster, a Dutchman. According to Heineken, there have been six editions of this book. “ Though some of the designs,” Jackson observes, “ are very indifferent, yet there are others which display considerable ability, and se­veral of the single figures are decidedly superior to any that are contained in the other block-books. They are drawn with greater vigour and feeling.” The figures in an­other of these block-books, called the *History of the Virgin,* are also very gracefully delineated, and the style in which the cuts are engraved exhibits a more advanced stage of the art than we find in the *Apocalypse.* Another specimen of block-books is called the *Βiblia Pauperum* (see Plate CCCCXIII. art. Printing), the figures it contains having, it is conjectured, been executed for the purpose of impart­ing a knowledge of sacred history to those who could not afford to purchase a manuscript copy of the Scriptures. Several of the cuts in this work, though rude, are not in­expressive of the scenes which they represent. The *Alpha-*