

A ONE MAN BOOK

By Nelson Antrim Crawford

DARD HUNTER, American maker of books, has gone a step further, or, to be exact, several steps further, than any other producer of books in the history of printing. For more than ten years Mr. Hunter has been engaged in making books wholly by his own labor. He has made the paper; he has designed and molded the type; he has set the type; he has made up the pages; he has performed the press work. So far as is known, no other person has ever performed alone all these processes in the making of a book. Mr. Hunter's first two books, "The Etching of Figures", published in 1915, and "The Etching of Contemporary Life", published in 1916, are now collectors' items.

In his latest book, "Old Papermaking", Mr. Hunter has added an achievement that makes this volume uniquely his own. He has performed all the craft work which he did in connection with the former books, but in addition he has written the text.

The contents of the book are authoritative. Dard Hunter probably knows more about old papermaking than any other man in the world. He owns the largest collection of works on papermaking in America. The material in his volume, moreover, is unique. Although a thousand books have been written on the history of paper, there are not ten that treat actual manufacturing processes, and none of them contains anything like the data amassed in Mr. Hunter's volume. The book tells an interesting story — especially interesting to the printer or designer, but curious enough in its facts to

intrigue anyone. Mr. Hunter lacks charm of style — at times he is awkward — but the interest of the facts and the beauty of the volume compensate for these deficiencies.

"Old Papermaking" is printed on heavy laid paper bearing a watermark containing the date, 1922, with a branch from which is hung an escutcheon with the initials D. H. The type is old style Roman, resembling somewhat that of Jenson, but possessing a marked individuality of its own. The ink is rich and black. The page is eight by twelve inches, the type page approximately five by eight, with side margins so arranged as to produce a satisfying design when the book lies open and two adjacent pages are considered as a unit. It is beautifully illustrated with drawings showing ancient papermaking processes, with examples of water marks, and with reproductions of documents. It contains also ten actual specimens of paper, ranging from 1480 to the present time, one of which, bearing an American watermark of 1805, is rarely seen.

This volume, like Mr. Hunter's earlier books, compares favorably with work from the private European presses, the Kelmescott and the numerous others that sprang up as a result of the example of William Morris. It does not possess the elaborateness found in the work of some of these presses, but it does possess an individuality which they seem to lack. The explanation is obvious enough. Collaboration in any art or craft is never so satisfying as individual work, provided the individual is a master. A master Mr. Hunter genuinely is.

Old Papermaking. By Dard Hunter. Dard Hunter (Chillicothe, Ohio).