of painting. But the pictures in such publications are primarily illustrative documents. Certainly they have not necessarily any determined relation to the type page; generally not, in fact. The same is true of most of the illustrations drawn expressly for a given text — say, a novel; they do, indeed, square with the general conception of book illustration, but they seldom have a planned part in the design of the page or the book. A. W. Pollard, in the introduction to his volume "Early Illustrated Books", puts the matter in a nutshell thus:

> A book may be very profusely and even judiciously illustrated without being much the better for it decoratively. Though I have taken all possible pains to avoid ugliness, the present volume itself affords a sufficient example of the distinction which I wish to suggest. The pictures in it have been chosen as illustrations of books of the past, not as a means of making my own book beautiful, and some of them are out of harmony with the size of the pages and the character of the types here used.

That's really the whole story. Illustrations may emphasize or illumine or interpret the text or they may adorn the type page. They may do both. Sometimes they do neither.

There are, then, two kinds of illustrations: those which illustrate, and those which illustrate and decorate.

As to the first:

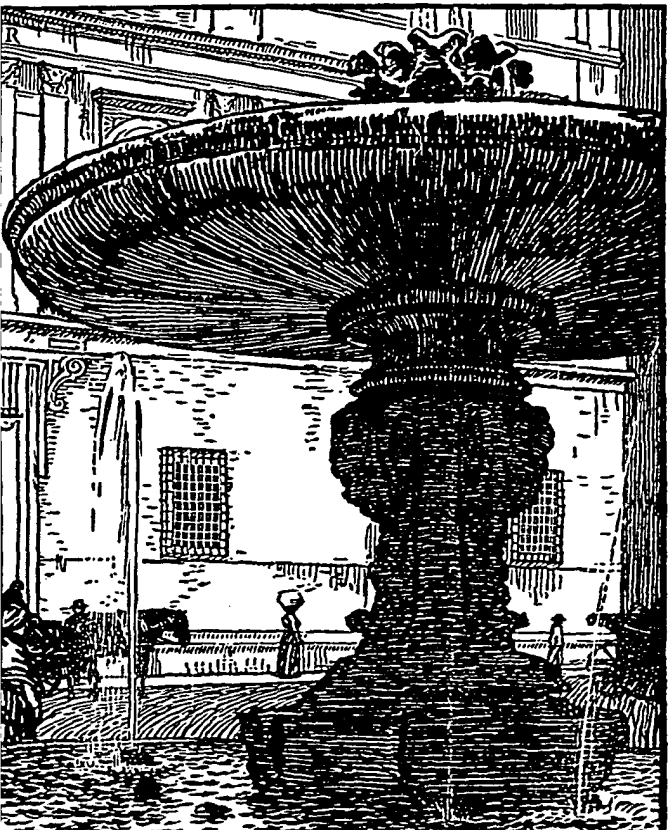
What we ask of the illustrator is an understanding grasp of characters and scenes, gained by a receptive and sympathetic attitude toward the humanity and surroundings and ideas presented by the author. It is a question not of subjection to the latter, but of cooperation with him. An agreement in mental standpoint. But such honest and sympathetic study of the text by the artist is a duty not always observed. The obvious error of putting characters into dress or action or surroundings quite at variance with the author's

THE ILLUSTRATOR'S JOB

By Frank Weitenkampf

WHAT is book illustration?

A book is illustrated, from a printing standpoint, if it contains pictures or diagrams of any kind. A treatise on locomotives, let us say, or a book on French history, or a history



A contemporary example of an illustration which illustrates and decorates. Drawn and engraved on wood by Rudolph Ruzicka for "Fountains of Papal Rome" by Mrs. Charles MacVeagh. Reprinted by courtesy of Charles Scribner's Sons

description is a petty sin of commission or omission that may be left to be exposed by the "old reader" in his letters to the papers. It is a more basic disregard that is in question.

The illustrator that slights his job has lost the game. Illustration cannot be treated as pot boiling and made a success. As a definite branch of art it has its own importance and dignity to be brought out by the artist. Illustration, like any other profession or work or activity, is what the worker makes it. Furthermore, illustration is not mural painting, nor poster art, nor any other thing but just itself. That decidedly does not mean that there are not big and fundamental qualities in those other specialties in art which the illustrator must not disregard. There are certain sine qua nons for the accomplishment of the best art in any field (whether you are painting a Madonna or planning a "container" for goods) — thoroughness, understanding, sympathy, honesty, appropriateness — and they hold good equally well here.

The combination of temperament and technical ability often runs to specialization. Certain types or classes or phases of life may have a particular appeal to a given artist, so that we find illustrators identified with a special "line" of subjects — say, "society" pictures or animals or farm life or Indians or Negroes or children or military scenes or French Canadians. Names of artists who have made an enviable reputation in a particular field will readily occur to one. Such specialization may produce the happiest results. But honesty bars the use of the easy formula, the carefree employment of the same model for a member of the "upper ten" and an excursion boat fiddler.

Technical facility of a certain kind and degree is probably much more widespread today than formerly. This fact has had good results and bad. It has given us an increase in vapid cleverness. And the halftone will reproduce careless work, an undefined, half realized wash drawing, as well as a good one. That helps to take away the incentive to definiteness of statement. When the artist had to draw on the woodblock with a pencil, he had, perforce, to be definite. Of course, he might be definite in saying nothing. So much the worse for him, even though he pleased many. Cleverness, brilliancy, snap, and all the other "up to the minute" qualities are not, alone, enough. Nor will the easy way do in the end. And the best technique with nothing back of it will likewise not turn the trick.

Illustrating cannot be taught, only the preparatory training can be given. You cannot manufacture a good illustrator any more than you can "correspondence school" a fine cartoonist. All one can do is to equip the student with technique and start him on the road toward using his brain. The way to any success worthwhile is hard and thorny.

Given the finest ability in drawing, as a starter, there must be thought, taste, sympathetic and conscientious study, good judgment, added to produce adequate results. To the seeing eye, the understanding mind, there must be added human sympathy in order to meet human response and to hold it.

Today, many of our illustrators are painters, whose brush work on canvas is reduced in size by photography and reproduced by the halftone process. More than one artist of decided ability has entered this field who might conceivably have been deterred by the former restrictions of the woodblock. But this freedom from consideration of

the medium of reproduction naturally lessens the artist's contact with the printer.

That brings up the other class of illustrations, those that decorate.

The great majority of even our best illustrations are pictures inserted in books the text of which they may elucidate, but with the artistic makeup of which they are quite likely to have no fundamental connection. Indeed, they are often painted with little reference to the book as a piece of printing. Printers and artists are strangers. And such illustrations are usually printed on coated sheets of paper, glossy and of unpleasant smell, tipped in between pages, and starting loose at the first opportunity, as though to get away from a place where they do not necessarily belong.

Adornment is synonymous with harmony, harmony between drawing and type, between the illustrative decoration and the printed page. That inevitably leads to line drawing, a matter for another paper, but to be mentioned here with emphasis as a significant and controlling factor in illustration throughout four centuries. The fact that wood engraving held its own for most of that time as the connecting link between designer and printer is easily explained by the other fact that woodblock printing and type printing are both relief processes, so that cuts and text can be printed in one operation. Which invites the obvious reflection that business economy is apt to impose appropriateness based on materials used and the end in view. The sense of appropriateness that fits the proper medium to the purpose is a potent element in any art. Its realization, in the production of a book harmonious in all its parts, is not possible unless illustrator, printer, and binder are in harmonious accord.

It is well to go back to the achievements of the early printers and illustrators, such as the Florentine books of the late fifteenth century, or Holbein's famous cuts for the Bible and the Dance of Death. Not to copy. It's a sorry archaizing that slavishly and thoughtlessly apes a style belonging to another age and land and spirit. Every age has its character and dignity worthy of expression. Even William Morris, fine though his influence was, has been criticized as not speaking for his own living period. Book illustration, like any form of art, should be an outcome of its own time and place. But it, too, has its traditions, its foundations. The example of those old fellows is precious. The early printers in their page arrangement practised principles that we have not surpassed. Among their illustrated books we have imperishable models for present day inspiration. There are books on this subject, written or edited by A. W. Pollard, Walter Crane, Joseph Pennell, Gleeson White, Grautoff and others, which reproduce numerous examples of book illustrations in which sound principles may be studied profitably in their application.

We have had, and have, illustrators who link arms with the author and make us interested in what they have to say about him. And others, some of them engraving their designs on wood, who, with knowledge of printing in its broadest aspect, serve to further the cause of good book making. For all such, here and abroad, may we be heartily thankful, and pray that their tribe increase.

In the end, it is more important to produce well illustrated and designed books — which does not necessarily mean sumptuous ones of *édition de luxe* expensiveness — than to produce many books with illustrations.