“Extra Illustrating.”

The costly and laborious but fascinating process known as “extra illustrating” has lately become so popular among book-lovers in New York, that many persons have been induced to engage for profit in what was originally hardly more than an expensive pastime. Extra illustrating requires both money and patience, but the extended books are now in such a demand that they usually, though not always, sell for much more than the cost of their production.

Even the term is hardly familiar yet, except with those people who live among books and make companions of them. Extra illustrating, or inlaying, or interleafing, as the art is indifferently called, is the process of enlarging a book by the addition of prints or drawings illustrating its subject. This does not mean that the pictures are to be pasted into the original volume. A single small book is often extended into thirty or forty volumes, each volume a dozen times as large as the original. The most expensive extra illustrated book yet made in this country is a Bible that Theodore Irwin, of Oswego, paid $10,000 for. The original was in seven volumes 16mo, and by the addition of drawings and engravings it was enlarged to sixty volumes, each 16 x 24 in., which occupy 17 ft. of space on the shelves. This remarkable book was illustrated by J. Gibbs, and contains 3000 pen and pencil drawings, etchings, engravings, lithographs, oil and water-colour paintings, and mezzotints. Among the illustrations are parts of the “Great Bible of Cranmer,” a black-letter folio printed in 1539; parts of “The Bishop’s Bible,” printed in 1568; and of the “Nuremberg Bible,” the first illustrated Bible published, printed in 1476; and of “Luther’s Version,” and the “Breeches Bible.”
One of the most enthusiastic extra illustrators in New York is Augustin Daly, the theatrical manager. He has a library of such works. His great Bible has recently been made the subject of numerous newspaper paragraphs, but the Bible is only one of a large collection of extended books. Old book buyers in the city remember the sale of Mr. Daly's library about fifteen years ago, when many of these extended works were sold; but since that time he has made a new collection, which he is constantly enlarging: The Bible was originally a Douay in one folio volume, but it has been extended to forty-two volumes, with 2,000 prints and drawings.

One of Mr. Daly's favourite works is a "London, Old and New," published in six volumes, but extended now to forty-two volumes by the insertion of rare maps and views of the English metropolis. He has also a "History of the New York Stage," published in two volumes, quarto, and extended to thirty-three volumes; "Genesta's History of the English Stage," published in ten and extended to fifty volumes; Mrs. Lamb's "History of New York City," extended to twenty volumes; "History of the Battles of the Rebellion," published in four volumes and extended to twenty-four, with rare autographs, maps, and portraits; "Life and Letters of Samuel's," extended to eighteen volumes; "Life of Kean," extended to seventeen volumes; a "Life of Sheridan," extended to ten volumes; and lives of Forest, Wallack, Booth, and Mrs. Siddons, all greatly enlarged. These are only a few named at random from Mr. Daly's collection. Some of them he prepared himself, and others he bought ready made.

The cost of extending a book is always considerable, but it is greater or smaller according to the methods employed. The enthusiastic young extender with unlimited means often pays thousands of dollars for what the cautious and experienced old hand secures for a few hundreds. The Bible is a favourite book for this work, not because the extender are unusually religious, but because of the boundless opportunities it offers in its variety of subjects. The works of Thackeray, Scott, Dickens, and Shakespeare are often chosen, because they have been published in so many different editions and with so many different illustrations that they are comparatively easy. The more a book is in demand, the oftener it has been published and illustrated, the better field it offers to the extender. A new work of fiction, however striking, is never attempted.

The extender must at least have money; if he have both money and brains so much the better. His first step is to choose a subject, and he is often guided in this by the material on hand. He may have in his cabinets a number of prints illustrating biblical subjects, or some standard novel or biography, and these make a nucleus around which more pictures may be gathered. He buys then a copy of the work to be extended, and takes care to select a good edition, printed with clear type upon a good paper. The style of binding is of no consequence, for the binding is immediately cut off and thrown away. The book is "opened up" so that all the pages are loose, and if there are any illustrations on heavy paper they are separated from the print and laid away in what is to be the "print drawer." Here is the backbone of the new work; but at this stage no effort is made to construct one of the new volumes. A beginner at the business may make his volumes as he goes along; but it is only because he knows no better; the old hand waits patiently until he has all his material collected, for experience has taught him that he may any day come upon a print that is larger than the volume he has made, and a print folded over is unworkmanlike. When some choice pictures are found that are altogether too large for any book of reasonable size, the photo-engraver is sometimes called upon to make reduced copies.

All is ready now for the pictures, and they must be secured. This part of the work can be done only in the large cities—New York, London, Paris, Vienna, and so on. Other large cities are searched occasionally, for, although they do not produce pictures, copies of engravings sometimes drift into their shops. If the extender is an enthusiast, and lives in this city, he searches the New York print shops himself. There are about a score of shops here where good results may be expected, and at least fifty more where a good picture may accidentally be found. None of these places may be neglected. The print sellers understand the business of extending, and they know what the customer desires. It is necessary only to say to one of them: "I am illustrating 'David Copperfield,' and want some engravings." He has his own collections ready, and brings them out at once. He produces pictures not only to illustrate "David Copperfield," but everything that he has that pertains to Dickens—portraits, views of the Gadshill House, Dickens in stage costume, Dickens on the platform, Dickens in every possible style.

Some of the prints may be valued at 50 cents, others at $50. The extender must be able to distinguish between them. when he is very verdant and shows his verdancy he is likely to find a remarkable rise in the price of engravings. He goes out with a small flat package under his arm and a void in his purse. If he is really in earnest and has plenty of money he leaves an order for everything the dealer can find concerning "David Copperfield," but this order he afterwards countermands, for he finds that he is duplicating too many pictures. After a few such visits the dealer knows him, and announces at once "Nothing new in 'Copperfield' to-day," or perhaps "I have something capital for you."

This is only one print shop in one city, and all the others must be treated in the same way. No little basement shop so obscure but it may contain a prize. In course of time they all know that Mr. Smith is illustrating "David Copperfield," and Copperfield prints are carefully laid aside, for they are pretty sure to sell. Unless Mr. Smith is shrewd and wary Copperfield prints are likely to rise in price. Meanwhile the book stores and stalls must receive equal attention. Every illustrated edition of Copperfield must be bought and the illustrations be removed. While the extender is doing his own work in New York, his friends or agents must be busy in the other cities. They must be kept informed of what is bought here...
to avoid duplicating. Word comes of a beautiful picture of Steerforth in an art work just published in ten volumes in London, which cannot be had without buying the whole set for £30. Then to buy or not to buy becomes a heart-breaking question.

With these agents at work in Europe, and money pouring out freely at home, extending a book has an extensive look; but these things are nothing to what the process may be made. Often the desired pictures are not to be had in any city at any price. Then the extender falls back upon the artist, and has pictures made to order. It is only very enthusiastic and very wealthy beginners who do this. These drawings cost at least $50 each, and if they are engraved upon wood that costs fully $100 more; and after all they are not so satisfactory as the cheap pictures unearthed unexpectedly in the print shops, for in the latter the finder feels a proprietary interest that he can never have in a drawing made to order. There are perhaps paintings that can be photographed and reduced to the proper size, and such things cost money.

No man can hope to make a satisfying collection of prints on any subject in less than two or three years, and even that is very short notice. The work can never be said to be finished, though a lifetime be devoted to it; there are always more to be had; and the gem of the collection, the one illustration without which the work would be a mockery, is often found at the last minute. All the time the print drawer has been filling up. There are, perhaps, a number of original drawings, for some extenders prefer to bind in the originals rather than have them engraved or photographed. There is no telling how much money may have been spent upon that drawer-ful of pictures. But at length it is determined that enough have been gathered and that the new work shall become a fact.

An extender who spends as much money in collecting his pictures as has been here described, is not likely to spend months in pasting them upon sheets. He must arrange them to his own satisfaction, but after the arrangement they are sent to the binder, who is not dismayed at the number of loose sheets. He is accustomed to such work, and he will bring out the new volumes with all their parts so neatly joined that they will seem to have been made together. He will use the best of paper, and put on the handsomest embroidered leather corners, and his bill will add materially to the cost of the work.

It is not to be supposed that such expensive volumes are made up like scrap-books, with the letterpress and pictures pasted upon sheets. That would be an inglorious ending for such a work of love and expense. A favourite way is to "insert" the pictures and pages of print. This process is a little handy to describe, but a photograph in an album nearly illustrates the method. The size of the pages having been determined upon (and the size of the engravings largely governs this), a page of print is "inserted" into the middle of one of the new pages, like a photograph going into its mat. The illustrations are treated in the same way, and when the work is skilfully done the book looks as though it had come from the printers in its new form.

When an extended work is made for sale and profit, these expensive methods, of course, are not used, except perhaps in the binding. There are no agents in London or Paris, no special drawings made, no photographs of celebrated paintings. Yet the cheaply extended book is often quite the equal of the expensive one. Patience here takes the place of lavish expenditure. "All things to him who waits" must have been written expressly with reference to collectors of prints. What can be had at once in Paris will very likely be found in some neglected drawer in New York in a few years. What is offered for $50 to-day may perhaps be bought at an auction for 20 cents in 1995. Every print dealer in New York is in some sense an agent in Europe if one has patience, for European prints come to him by special order or by accident, and in the course of years he can supply everything needed.

The extender who goes into the work for the love of it never thinks of letting the binder make up his pages. He does that himself, generally with far less skill, but always with a pleasure that pays him for his labour and outlay. The new book becomes his companion, and he would sooner sell his family silver than part with it. He shews it proudly to his friends, and tells the history of every picture between its covers. Some of the pictures often have strange histories.

Extended works are not always run up to forty or sixty volumes. One of them in this city is a life of Blake, the artist, in two volumes, extended from 1600. The original was written by Alexander Gillchrist, and published by Macmillan, and 175 illustrations have been added, some of them in the preface. Another is "A Description of London, Old and New," by Walter Thornbury and Edward Walford. This is distinct from Mr. Daly's work of the same character. It was published in two 12mo volumes, and has been extended to fifteen volumes folio. It has been enlarged by 1,200 illustrations, mounted on elephant folio paper, and bound in half morocco with cloth sides, and cost about $1,500 to manufacture. It contains plates by Hogarth, and caricatures by Gillray and Cruikshank. There is hardly any part of the English metropolis, ancient or modern, of which there is not some illustration.

One of the most interesting, and perhaps the most instructive, of the extended works in this country is entitled "Typographical Miscellanies." This book is in thirty-seven volumes, folio, mounted on heavy drawing paper, and is bound in crimson morocco with gilt tops. It contains more than 2,000 engravings on copper, steel, and wood; fragments of old black letter and Gothic type books; 1,300 letters, the whole illustrating the history of printing, engraving, typefounding, and paper making from the infancy of those arts. This book was at one time part of the library of Mr. Richard M. Hoe, and it illustrates not only the history of printing, but also it illustrates that book extending is not always profitable, for although it cost more than $5,000, it is offered for sale for $350. — New York Sun.