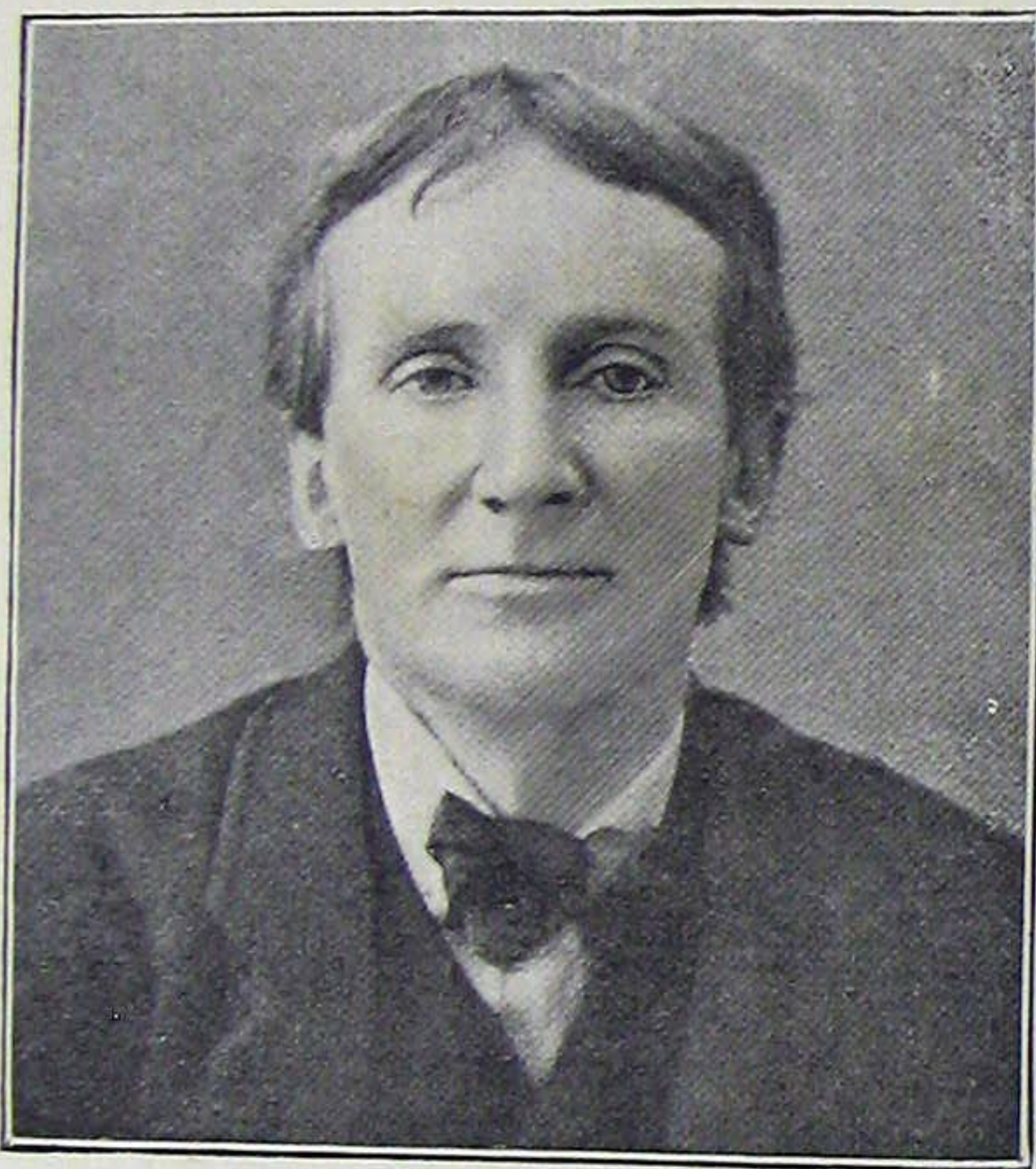


A Visit to Mr. Cobden-Sanderson.



ABOUT a mile from Hendon railway station is "Goodyears," the residence of Mr. T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, whose work as an art bookbinder has created so much interest at the Arts and Crafts and the Society of Arts Exhibitions, and elsewhere, and it was after dark on a recent November evening that our representative called in order to obtain a few particulars concerning Mr. Sanderson's life. "Goodyears" is an old-fashioned country residence, and a well lighted and suitably appointed apartment on the first floor forms the workshop of a binder who, by reason of his unusual method of work and the originality displayed in his finished designs, has won a name in the world of art and the respect of his fellow craftsmen.



T. J. COBDEN-SANDERSON.

The object of the visit having been suitably explained, Mr. Sanderson expressed his willingness to relate such particulars concerning himself as he could call to mind. He accordingly said:

"I was born in 1840. In 1857, at my own wish, I was apprenticed to an engineer and worked for about a year in the draught room. I then came to dislike the business, as business, and at my request the articles were cancelled, and I set myself to read for Cambridge and the Church. I entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1860, and read for mathematical honours; but in 1863—having in the meantime given up all notion of going into the Church—I left the University, refusing both honours and a degree (I might, indeed, have failed to get either, but in fact I did not try). I disliked then, as now, the competition system, and the warp it gave to all the university teaching. For the next seven or eight years I gave myself up to Carlyle and literature (chiefly German philosophy, which is not, perhaps, literature), and by way of a

living made faint-hearted attempts at writing and medicine. In 1870 I allowed myself to be called to the Bar, by way of stop-gap and to stay inquiries as to what I was doing. In 1883 I abandoned the Bar to become a manual labourer. I had come to despair of knowledge (in a philosophical sense) but to hope I might yet, craftsmanlike, do or make something. Gradually all the ideas of my life took station and direction from this main idea. I came to look upon society itself, upon the wants and progress of society, as itself a work of art, to be made sound and beautiful, as a whole, and in all its parts, and upon all the arts and crafts of life, of whatever kind, as ministrant thereto. This seemed the main idea to which all my life had been tending, and now, when I bind and decorate a book, I seem to be setting myself, like a magnetised needle, or like an ancient temple, in line and all-square, not alone with my own ideal of society, but with that orderly and rhythmical whole which is the revelation of science and the norm of developed humanity.

"To resume. In 1883 I abandoned the Bar, and through the great kindness of Mr. De Coverly was permitted by him to enter his workshop and to try my hand at forwarding under his direction. He taught me for six months with the utmost patience and generosity. At the end of that time (in 1884) I left him and 'set up for myself' in Maiden-lane. It had been the intention of my wife and myself to keep a shop and to live over it in strict mediæval fashion. But at the end of a year, finding that I could, in fact, work as well, or better, out of town, we removed to Hendon, where we now are. On an average I work five or six hours a day—doing all the work, the rough (if there is any) and the smooth, with the assistance of my wife who sews, and sews admirably, and always from 'end to end' and 'round the bands.' I have exhibited at the Society of Arts, at the Arts and Crafts Exhibitions, at Liverpool, Glasgow, and Chislehurst, and I have in lectures and otherwise attempted to set the craft-life, as I conceive it, before the public, and to insist upon the value in life of the processes of life, and to shew that *an end*, if not the end, of life, of life as a whole, may be sought for and found *in the means*. This I take to be the great discovery of my own life and the answer to the question I, now many years ago, asked myself: 'To what do all the means of life tend? to what end?'"

Mr. Sanderson here passed on to other topics and our representative shortly afterwards left. We hope in some future issue to give an account of this gentleman's methods of work, his workshop and his principal works.

The Original Book of Prayer.

AN absolutely unique publication is to issue from the Government printers early in the new year. Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode have for some time past been engaged at the House of Lords in photographing what is known as the "annexed" copy of the Book of Common Prayer, which was originally joined to the Act of Uniformity. Great care has had to be taken in preparing the plates that every letter and stop shall be brought clearly out, and that all parts shall be in exact proportion as in the old book.