

may be affirmed, in a certain sense at least, with respect to glass: for this substance, though very early discovered, hardly came into general use for ordinary purposes till comparatively a very late period. But a more remarkable instance occurs with respect to the art of printing: and whoever looks at the stereotype stamps, as they may be called, which have been discovered at Herculaneum, and other places, will be disposed to allow that the embryo of the art of printing died, as it were, in the birth^x.

vant to it; and is sufficiently curious in itself to justify its introduction to the notice of the reader.

In Dr. Thomson's *Annals of Philosophy* for 1817, p. 149, is an account of a paper read at the Royal Society, relative to some experiments made on torpedoes at Rochelle, in which it is stated that, where torpedoes abound, boys are in the habit of playing the following trick to those who are not in the secret. They persuade the ignorant boy to pour water in a continued stream upon the torpedo; and the consequence is, that an electrical shock is conveyed, along the stream, to the body of the boy.

Plutarch notices the same fact in almost the same terms. "It is affirmed by those," he says, "who have often made the experiment, that, in pouring water on a live torpedo, the hand of the person who is pouring the water will be sensible of a shock, which has apparently been conveyed through the water to his hand." *Ἐνιοὶ δὲ ἱστοροῦσι, πείραν αὐτῆς ἐπιπλέον λαμβάνοντες, ἀν ἐκπέσῃ ζῶσα (Νάρκη, the Torpedo), κατασκεδαννύντες ὕδωρ ἄνωθεν, αἰσθάνεσθαι τοῦ πάθους ἀνατρέχοντος ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα, καὶ τὴν ἀφὴν ἀμβλύνοντος, ὡς ἔοικε, διὰ τοῦ ὕδατος τρεπομένου καὶ προπεπονθότος.*

PLUT. MORALIA, Oxon. 4to, 1797, tom. iv. p. 643, 644.

^x A very interesting conjectural account of the origin and progress of the arts, and of social life, occurs in the last part of the fifth book of Lucretius.