

Electrotype Matrices.



THE article on this subject, contributed by Mr Carl Schraubstadter, jun., to the *Inland Printer*, and republished in *Typo* last October, has evoked the following reply from Mr James M. Conner, in the *Typographic Messenger*:

Mr Schraubstadter's article is misleading in several important particulars. But little reference is made to the piratical custom of many foundries in using this process to copy original designs cut in steel, and it endeavors to convey that all electro-matrices made at the present time are from type cut in metal. Also an attempt is made to convince the reader that the productions of the letter-cutters are far superior to anything before done in steel, a refutation of which is found in a perusal of the specimen-books of the older foundries. Nearly all our borders have been cut in steel, as were also most of the leading scripts, Payson Penman and Boston having never been equalled by anything done in metal. In our opinion, the writer of the article will live many years before letters cut in metal supersede them.

We have reproduced the matrices as shewn in the *Inland Printer*, and call our readers' attention to Nos. 3 and 4, made of two pieces of brass held together with rivets, which, at times, will part, the back piece rising up; the force with which the metal is driven into matrix A, fig. 3, will expand the sides on the front piece of brass, and if the top is narrow, on large letters, force the brass up, causing the type cast from such a matrix to deviate in line, standing, and thickness. The face will often pull up, making a difference in height, no matter how carefully made. It will be noticed that the square in which A stands is copper, the surrounding parts brass, and how little the force of metal required, if any quantity is cast, to bulge out the sides of



Fig. 3.

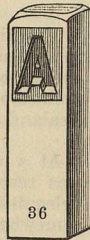


Fig. 4.

the matrix. Types cast from matrices made from another founder's productions are always inferior to the originals, among other disadvantages having no shoulder on their sides, to all of which reference is made in our article on «Electro-Matrix Typefounding,» and we challenge any founder to refute it.

The exhibit here shewn¹ we think is sufficient to convince anyone of the superiority of solid copper matrices obtained through the agency of a steel punch, and are not the miserable makeshifts so extensively utilized by these copyists.

The writer also states that in the larger sizes the tendency of the matrix struck from a steel punch is toward hollowness of the face. The electro-matrix has the same fault, the battery for depositing the copper not always working the same, causing defects in the backing, and with all the care of these copyists, their matrices are as a rule not uniform.

Another statement which we are positive he cannot substantiate, is that the electro-matrix exceeds the solid copper as seven or eight to one. If the writer had stated that in at least twelve of the type foundries in this country the proportion of electro-matrices is as nine to one he would have been more correct, as nearly all their faces, both newspaper and job type, are made from electro-matrices, having pirated the larger part of them from the older foundries.

Had the electro-matrix never been made, type-founding would, beyond a doubt, have been just as far advanced as it is at the present day; steel letter cutters would have increased in numbers, and judging from that which has been accomplished, produced anything required, and with far superior finish and accuracy. We are indebted in no small degree to the improved and perfected type casting machine for the beauty and symmetry of the type now manufactured, for without it all the cutting in the world, on steel or metal, would be of no avail.

In conclusion, we question very much if Mr. Edwin Starr, with whom we labored over thirty years ago, would consider it an honor to have originated the present system of electrotype matrices, as to our knowledge he looked upon it as a matter of dollars and cents, and precious little he received from many of these foundries. To the late John M. Wehrly must be given the credit of having first cut type in metal in this country, and he had no superior. The double great primer Rimmed Shade, and many of the Penman scripts, cut in steel, attest his superiority as a cutter.

¹ [Here are inserted engravings of a steel punch and copper matrix—the latter so represented, by erroneous shading, that the letter, instead of being sunk in the metal, stands out in high relief! Correct representations of the punch and matrix may be found in DeVinne's *Invention of Printing*, chap. iii, MacKellar's *American Printer*, chap. i, Caslon's *Circular*, No. 5, and many other books on the art.]

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The worst «make-up» we have yet seen is in an East Coast contemporary of a recent date. The first column of the second page consists of advertisements, with the exception of the last inch, which is occupied by the leader-head and date! The next column begins with local paragraphs, there being no leader. There are half-a-dozen quack medicine paragraphs in the same page, any of which would have filled the little space at the foot of the column.—«Making-up» should not be left to boys who have not learned the difference between a title and an imprint.

The balance-sheets of the Australian Typographical Associations shew some peculiar items of expenditure. To the Silk Hatters' strike the N.S.W. Society contributed £5; to the Tanners' and Curriers' dispute at Geelong the Melbourne Society's final payment is £7, while among the receipts the large item of £82 19s 3d appears under the head of «Arrears Tanners' and Curriers' Dispute Levies.» There is also an expenditure of £2 2s in aid of the Anti-Chinese League. The rule does not work both ways; for no outside society appears to have contributed to the Association funds. If this kind of thing is allowed, we may expect to see levies imposed on the unfortunate combs for protection leagues, land nationalization societies, Irish home rule—and so on indefinitely.

At a meeting of the Hawke's Bay branch of the N.Z.T.A., on the 3rd March, the report and balance-sheet for the half-year ending 31st January was presented. Owing to heavy calls on the funds, the branch had only the sum of £1 14s 6d to credit at the close of the half-year; but to this must be added the sum of £5 on loan at ten per cent. The membership was 24, one less than at date of last report. The matters dealt with in the report were chiefly of general rather than local interest, and have already been referred to in our pages.—At a board meeting on the 19th inst., the proposal from the executive council, that a fine be imposed on compositors arriving from Australia without proof of membership, was considered. It was decided to suggest £2 as the amount of fine to be inflicted in such cases.—One new member was added to the roll.

A statement is going the rounds in regard to the jubilee gift to the Pope, that her Majesty's first idea was to present him with the Windsor library copy of the «Mazarin» Bible. Great consternation was caused in the literary world, the book being the most precious volume in England, and by far the finest of the few copies in existence. The librarian earnestly protested, but his remonstrances were vain—the Queen said she had notified the Pope of her intention, and could not draw back. The librarian then appealed to the Premier, who at once vetoed the gift, on the ground that the Bible was Crown property, and was not at her Majesty's private disposal. She was much annoyed at being thwarted, especially when a letter arrived from the Vatican, warmly thanking her for the regal gift. If the story be true, every Englishman will rejoice that a royal whim has not succeeded in depriving his country of one of its choicest treasures.

An energetic effort is being made by the Wellington branch of the N.Z.T.A. to cope with the evils of undercutting and the extensive employment of boy-labor. Recognizing that the workmen alone are unable to effect a reform, the association has addressed a circular to master-printers, a copy of which has been handed to us. It is shewn that while since 1880 there has been a very great increase in the amount of printing, there is one-third less adult labor employed. It is suggested that boy-labor should be limited to a fixed proportion to the number of men, and that endeavors should be made to break down the system of tendering.—We have not much hope of the effort succeeding. The insane and criminal competition among master-printers—actuated not so much by the desire to obtain work as to prevent rival firms from securing it—has nearly paralysed the trade. Work is done at fifty per cent. below cost; newspapers whose scale-rate is five shillings insert contract advertisements at one penny and a halfpenny per inch;—and the inevitable result is disaster alike to employers and employed.