

Mechanical Department

Job Stereotyping in the Country Printing Office.

To the Editor of Newspaperdom:

The letter which I sent you last month, on the subject of job stereotyping in country offices, which you gave prominence to through the columns of your paper, has brought a number of requests for more information. Believing that Newspaperdom is here for just that purpose—that its mission is to instruct—I venture to send you another letter on stereotyping, because job printers are interested in that subject.

I believe that many printers who already possess stereotyping outfits neglect to work them because of repeated failures, and I imagine a few hints on the causes will prove of value to them. I find that, while most instructions sent with stereotyping outfits tell the printer how to do the work, few, if any, give the reasons why certain operations should be done in a certain way. If you tell a man why you advise him to do so and so, he will not only be more apt to remember it, but will also be able to follow the advice more intelligently.

In the past, the reason why printers often failed to get good results from a job stereotyping outfit lay chiefly with the method used. It was the papier maché method that was universally sent with the outfits. Now I do not wish it understood that this method is not a good one—in its place. The many thousand plates that are made by it every day would be a conclusive refutation of any such claim. But, what I do maintain is, that the beginner in stereotyping usually has a very unsatisfactory experience with papier maché. The trouble lies in the material of which the matrix is made. Really, it is not papier maché, but several sheets of paper pasted together, which, in a wet state, are beaten into the form with a brush. Now, in spite of being wet and soft to the touch, this paper matrix has a certain degree of toughness, does not take kindly to the impression, and considerable force, backed by good judgment, has to be employed on some type forms to make a good matrix. An open form of plain type presents little difficulty when making a paper matrix; but when it comes to newspaper matter, set in six-point or smaller, solid, or a form containing finely shaded cuts, then the novice begins to have doubts about papier maché stereotyping. An experienced stereotyper, of course, would turn out good plates—as good as the method permits—in the cases noted, but I am writing from what I know of the experiences of beginners.

Now if the matrix were composed of a material that would lend itself readily to the impression, would sink into the form without much force being used, and withal take a sharp, accurate impression, then the beginner would find that good job stereotyping is not a theory, but an actual fact. Of course, there are other conditions that must be right, but a good matrix is perhaps the main one. It is due almost wholly to this fact that electrotypes are so sharp and accurate. It is the wax mold used by electrotypers that gives this good result.

Something akin to the electrotypers' mold has been developed in stereotyping also, and has been in use for some years, giving excellent results. By this method, instead of forcing a tough paper matrix into the type form, a composition resembling soft wax in appearance and touch is gently worked into the form. A cast from such a matrix shows the type, cuts, etc., as sharp and accurate as the originals—in fact, the stereo-plate looks like an electro excepting in color.

It is this method that I particularly

referred to in my former letter, when speaking of the methods of stereotyping in use today, as contrasted with what had to be contended with in the past. This method makes a splendid matrix, which, I have intimated, is a prime desideratum in any stereotyping process. But even with a good matrix, the printer has often failed to make a good plate.

The instructions usually sent with a stereotyping outfit are often very vague concerning a most important point, and that is, the heat used in the metal, casting-box, matrix, etc. The beginner is told that, when making a cast, his casting-box should be hot. But how hot? Heat in the casting-box is good and necessary, but one may have too much of a good thing! If a drop of water thrown on the bottom plate of the casting-box boils or assumes a globular form, the box is too hot.

I have found many cases where printers who tried stereotyping became discouraged in the work, because the casts would not come out bright and clean. These would have dark and porous places in them; often a broad, porous streak would be found running the entire length of the cast, generally through its middle.

This condition of the cast, in almost every case, is due to an over-heated casting-box and a small amount of moisture in the matrix. When a matrix has been dried and all the moisture presumably driven out of it, there is always a probability that a little yet remains; it may be water or it may be oil, which the matrix has absorbed from the oiled form when the molding was being done.

Now, supposing such a matrix be placed in a casting-box only moderately warmed, and the hot melted metal poured upon it. When the latter has cooled and the matrix is taken up, the bottom plate of the box will often be found to have some condensed moisture upon it, which the hot metal drove out of the matrix upon the comparatively cooler iron plate of the casting-box. The cast in all probability will be a good one.

If, on the other hand, the casting-box is very hot, the moisture in the matrix, when the melted metal is poured in, is between two fires, so to speak, repelled by each of them, with no means of escape. The consequence is, the steam or hot vapor generated acts on the molten metal and gives the cast the dark, porous spots or streaks referred to.

I would like to touch upon one or two other points in this letter, but fear I am encroaching too much on Newspaperdom's space. If its readers desire, I will pursue the subject further in a future issue.

HENRY KAHR.

A Record for Scott Presses.

Among New York dailies the recent record of none has been so remarkable as those of the Times, under the aggressive and efficient management of Publisher Adolph S. Ochs and his experienced coadjutors. Since the price of the weekday edition has been reduced to 1 cent, and that of the Sunday to 3 cents, there have been rapid and sustained gains in both circulation and advertising. Besides "All the news that is fit to print" and an able editorial page, most notable features have been the literary and financial supplements, which have mightily contributed to the Times's advancement.

Naturally the demand upon press-room facilities has been extreme. But the "smooth and swift" Scotts have well measured up to this demand. For a recent Saturday issue, it is said, fifty tons of white paper were consumed; but the two great four-tiered presses that so

ably proclaim the genius of Walter Scott turned this enormous quantity of stock into complete and handsomely-printed Timeses without a moment's delay from start to finish, and promptly on time.

On these facts the claim is made for the Scott presses that they are producing more papers of a given size than any other two machines of the same class in the world.

Facilities for Stereotyping Ads.

Supplementing its plant, including a Scott web perfecting press, Linotypes, etc., the Ottuma (Ia.) Courier has added a flat-bed stereotyping outfit, with which it is enabled to cast from matrices furnished by advertisers at a distance. A good-sized casting-box has been put in, taking in a full seven-column page, 18 x 30 inches. No doubt the new machinery and accessories will be found serviceable—a sort of reinforcement in the work of the Courier's advertising manager.

Rule for the Division of Words.

Of all absurdities in typographical style, none is less lacking in reason than the now almost obsolete practise of "dividing on the vowel" a word that must be broken at the end of a line. A capital example was recently discovered in a New York daily of otherwise faultless typography, where the word "bishops" was split into "bi-" and "shops." Whatever the doctors may decree, unquestionably the most direct and sane method is to divide on a syllable, as the word is pronounced. That is easy for even an unintelligent compositor, and never results in perplexity for the reader. Fancy pronouncing "bi-" with a long i, to find "shops" beginning the next line!

Printing Halftones in a Daily.

One of the first newspapers in its section to print halftone cuts in its regular daily edition was the Bangor (Me.) Whig. Its managers observed the practise of dailies in larger cities, of illustrating their "magazine" supplements with these superior plates, using better paper and a higher grade of ink, but believed it feasible to do similar work on news stock and with a perfecting press. The outcome of their experimenting is briefly told in these words: "It proved to be considerable of a problem, and for a time our efforts afforded readers much amusement; but we persevered, and today the Whig is daily printing halftone portraits which it will compare with those published in any paper in the country, in regular editions, printed on a perfecting press."

ABOUT NEWSPAPER PEOPLE.

In a handsome illuminated embossed folder the Geneva (N. Y.) Free Press greets its advertising patrons and enumerates briefly the reasons why patronage should be continued.

Miners and mining furnished the text and data for the Telluride (Colo.) Journal's special annual number, just issued. Sixteen pages of illustrated matter tell of the mining interests of Telluride and San Miguel counties, and tell the tale attractively.

The Beatrice (Neb.) Daily Express issued a very well gotten up carrier's greeting the first of the year. Colored covers, a halftone reduced first page of the Express, with a roguish face peering through a break in the center, poems and miscellany make up an elegant little souvenir.

Charles Albert Jones, who recently announced that he would launch a new weekly periodical, Current Events, writes Newspaperdom: "I regret to inform you that, owing to the great advance in paper, I have decided not to place Current Events before the reading public for the present."

The Schenectady (N. Y.) Union is out with a neatly printed booklet, the matter it contains being a review of the daily and semi-weekly Union's growth and the reasons which commend it to advertisers. Incidentally mention is made of the enlarged quarters made necessary by increasing business.

Peculiarly attractive and interesting is the Minneapolis Journal's book, "Expansion." The book is made up of page reproductions of the best cartoons which have appeared in the Journal during the past year. They are all the work of the Journal's celebrated cartoonist, Bart, and constitute a pictorial comic history of the important affairs of 1899.

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