

The Printer's Miscellany.

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"Hard Packing" for Cylinder Presses.

[Selected from our Scrap Book.]

The possessor of a country cylinder press, as a general thing, has but a slight conception of what he can accomplish, by a little effort, in the way of fine artistic printing. Most country printers have been brought up to composition only, and look upon their cylinder press simply as a means of getting off their edition with less labor and greater speed, satisfied if, perchance, they are enabled also to turn off an occasional half-medium poster; but few of them are aware that, by a little management and observance of certain details, they may successfully rival the work accomplished on the higher-priced machinery of the city job office.

Country presses are usually supplied with rubber or felt blankets. These answer for the solid newspaper form; but when a pamphlet or open job is put on, the yielding blanket is found to be entirely inappropriate. It is utterly impossible to produce fine printing from an open form on a soft, yielding blanket. What is called "hard packing" is the only possible means by which fine effects can be produced on a cylinder press. We propose, therefore, suggesting a plan by which hard packing can be used up to publication day, and the surface softened for the news form in a few moments, and without disturbing the permanent packing.

Instead of the rubber or felt blanket, procure two sheets of what are called "pressing boards," cut as possible the size of blanket. Apply a straight-edge about two inches within the long

edge of each board, cutting the outer surface of each very slightly, so they will bend over squarely. See that it bends close and solid around the printing surface edge of cylinder. If not perfectly solid where the impression commences, a slur will be inevitable. Next add so many sheets of good white paper as will bring up the thickness of the packing to that of the blanket. Next cover the whole with a piece of fine muslin, or strong even paper, tightening around the little shaft at rear recess of printing surface. When this is properly done, and you run your fingers over the entire printing surface of cylinder, you will find your packing lay as close and solid to the iron as if pasted sheet by sheet. This is what is called "hard packing."

To make ready your job or pamphlet form, dampen a suitable thin sheet of paper, paste it slightly on two edges, and place it over where the impression comes. In a few moments it will dry *taut*, when you will run your press through by hand, thus giving an impression. Common sense will soon sustain the "hard packing" principle, and practice will shortly enable the country printer to turn out a class of fine printing he little thought possible on a cheap country cylinder press. He will also soon discover the little niceties of cut-work, and how readily the fine effects are produced from hard packing.

But publication day is upon us, and how are we to soften up the packing suitable to the solid newspaper form? Very easily done. Simply provide a blanket of billiard cloth, or fine thin felt, such as is made expressly for printing purposes, take off the few sheets of fine paper and lay them carefully aside, put on your billiard-cloth blanket instead, tighten it under the muslin same as you did the paper, and you are ready for your newspaper.

Caution! The circumference of the cylinder and travel of the bed must be in harmony; therefore, in packing either for the news form or for jobbing, care must be taken not to pack too much. If you pack too thick, you make the circumference of the cylinder larger than it should be, and out of harmony of movement with the form surface, resulting in a drag or slur. Judgment and experience come in here.