

Fast Type-Setters.

From time to time we hear of what are called "whips," says the *Australasian Typographical Journal*, doing an extraordinary and marvelous amount of "comping" in a given time. Many of their achievements are undoubtedly mythical or apocryphal, but phenomenal cases, of course, occur wherein such dexterity is acquired as enables its possessor to do 50 or 100 per cent. more in the way of picking up stamps than the average run of workmen. America is, however, the land of "big things" of this kind, as of many others, and the accounts of "type-slinging," as it is usually termed, that come from the other side of the Atlantic are not unusually extraordinary as they are incredible. On the other hand, there are many well-authenticated cases of really remarkable feats of setting, to some of which it may be interesting to refer. A man named Jack Fasey was for a long time considered the fastest comp. in Philadelphia, probably in the United States. In his prime, he could pick up 3400 ens per hour, easily. In some of the California newspaper offices there was formerly a great demand for rapid compositors, and the *Sacramento Union* office contained, in proportion to the number of men employed, more rapid compositors, probably, than other office in the country. In 1864 the paper was all set in solid type, and the average earnings of each compositor amounted to one dollar for each working hour, the rate of payment being 75 cents per 1000 ems, or 2000 ens. Many of the hands could set a good deal more than this; yet this would necessitate the setting of 5666 ens per hour. In fact, it has been shown on indubitable authority that there is a long list of men in the States who have set up 4000 ens an hour. On the other hand, such rapid compositors do not always possess endurance. It is one thing to do this for a single hour, and quite another thing to keep it up for half a day. Yet there are not wanting instances of extraordinary endurance combined with great speed. For instance, in 1845, Mr. J. J. Hand, deputy foreman of the *American Republican*, of New York, undertook for a wager to set up 64,000 ems of solid minion in twenty-four hours. He failed by 64 ems only. Mr. Robert Bonner, now the proprietor of the *New York Ledger*, was employed on the *American Republican* also, and is said to have set up 51,000 ems in twenty

hours and twenty-eight minutes, without a moment's rest. Mr. George Dawson, one of the proprietors of the *Albany Evening Journal*, when he was an apprentice, is said to have set up 54,000 ems of solid brevier in ten hours; but, on the statement being verified, the exact figures were 44,044 ems in thirteen hours, a very wonderful achievement. Mr. Keeling, of Utica, N. Y., set up, distributed, and corrected, in six days, of ten hours each, 201,900 ems. Mr. Mink, of the *Eagle*, Pittsfield, Mass., in 1858, set 20,092 in four hours and forty-five minutes, solid minion. A race between two compositors at Iowa City and Council Bluffs resulted in each of them setting 8000 ems, solid bourgeois, in two hours. In a type-setting match at Toledo, Ohio, one compositor set 8576 ems in two hours and forty minutes, while the other set 8108. In short, it has been demonstrated that more than 4000 ems can be set up in an hour, and that in a considerable proportion of the important newspaper offices in the States compositors are to be found who can set up at least 3000 per hour. The following are all fast compositors: George Arensburg set 2064 ems, solid minion, twenty-three ems to the line—one break line to each stickful—in one hour, at New York, Feb. 19, 1870. S. N. Benerman, at Washington, D. C., Dec. 5, 1877, set 5070 ems nonpareil, in three hours. Same time and place, R. A. McLean, set 4998 ems, nonpareil. Thomas Alty, at Montreal, Can., Sept. 1876, set 3530 ems, nonpareil, in two hours.

In response to our call to the "rushers," says the editor of *Woodcock's Newspaper Reporter*, after detailing the exploit of Mr. Robert Bonner, of the *New York Ledger*, who, in 1846, upon a wager that he could set 33,000 ems of solid minion from reprint copy, in twenty-four hours, and who only failed by three ems of accomplishing the task, the *Sentinel and Witness*, of Middletown, Ct., in the issue of July 9th, says:

"In June, 1875, Ernest King, jr., of this paper, set 12,700 ems of solid brevier in nine hours and thirty minutes, or 238 ems more than Mr. Bonner's average. The measure was seventeen picas wide, reprint copy, and was performed, without any wager, in the office of Messrs. Pelton & King, when they were located at 130 Court street. What say the rushers?"

The *Sentinel and Witness* must bear in mind that while Mr. King's average for the nine hours and thirty minutes leads Mr. Bonner's by