

The Printer's Miscellany.

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WEAR AND TEAR OF TYPE.

It is of very little importance whether type is cast in hard or soft metal if it is not properly used. The destruction of type by incompetent and careless workmen is a matter of serious importance to all purchasers of this necessary and expensive material. To begin with the laying, where the type receives its first injurious blow: it is a common practice with compositors, when laying new type, to empty a large paperful into their aprons, and then to toss it up and down, like Jews sweating sovereigns, and then it is pitched head foremost—not slid gently feet foremost—into the cases, to be violently shaken about to rout it out of the corners whenever a case gets low. This baneful practice cannot be too strongly condemned, as many men will shake the type about in a case like a gold-digger washing his nuggets, as if the object aimed at was to break it all up as small as possible.

In the daily use of type by compositors there are many things which contribute to its rapid destruction, unless they are prevented by the watchfulness of the overseer or the employer himself. Sometimes, the type may come to the compositor's hand far from clean; before it is put into case it should be well washed with any liquid used for that purpose, and afterwards well rinsed in clean water, and in addition to this, should always be well washed after being unlocked, either on the letter-board or in the galley. The common process of washing news-galleys is simply absurd: the galley is filled

with type so full as it can hold, and is then tightly quired up, and a stream of water is allowed to pass over its surface, leaving all the ink and filth which has accumulated between the lines and letters to remain and permanently harden there. Unless the lines can be well loosened, and the filth, which gets between them, is thoroughly sluiced and flooded out, the mere face-washing process might as well be done away with as far as the cleansing of the body of the type is concerned.

Of planing down a small volume might be written; but it may be safely asserted that more type is destroyed by the sledge-hammer process than by any other means used in a printing-office. More than this, the face of the planer is never kept clean; and by allowing it to be laid down anywhere, *face-downwards*, dirt and small substances adhere to it, which is all rammed into the face of the type by the malleting process. The face of a planer, cannot be kept too clean, and the implement itself should be discarded as soon as its smooth surface begins to rough up. The harder the wood, it is said, of which these things are made the better. A slight tap with the mallet-handle *before the form is locked up* is all that is required to cause the types to settle down into their places, and all the Herculean efforts of mallet-banging, *after the form is tightly locked up*, are but dooming it to its destruction.

Allowing type to be worked when off its feet is another most destructive process, because after it has been once so worked, it is never likely to be able to stand fairly upright again, and will also prevent its more perfect neighbours from doing the same. This all arises from its being improperly locked up, which makes it almost imperative that no one but thoroughly competent persons ought to be allowed to do the stone-work, as type once injured in this way can never be repaired, but is only fit for the metal pot, whatever its age may be.

It is a fact that type suffers more injury from the hands of careless workmen, and short blunt bodkins in correcting, than it ever receives at the hands of the stereotyper or the revolutions of the modern lightning cylinder machine.—*Press News.*