

A Printing House Plant.

BY ED. COOMBS.

A tribute in rhyme to the mignonette
 And its lank luxuriousness,
 That flourished above on the window sill
 By the side of the little proof press.
 Its head erect no crown bedecked
 In its reign of rude despair,
 For aught of bloom or sweet perfume
 Were wholly absent there.
 With types around of every kind,
 A type it proved to be,
 And left its imprint on the mind,
 Portrayed indelibly;
 A cynic plant that would not bloom
 But pined in privacy.
 But the mignonette was not all at fault,
 A candid truth to tell,
 And sagacious doubts were heard at times
 Of some evil spirit's spell.
 The secret of its withered life
 None seemed to quite unravel,
 But the proofreader knew, and the foreman too,
 That 'twas watered by the Devil.

Economy in the Printing Office.

THESE are days of keen competition in all lines of business, and it is most important that rigid economy should prevail everywhere, especially in printing offices where waste is serious and competition severe. The Engraver and Printer in a recent number deals with this subject in a brief article, and announces as a true theory the principle of having as few workmen as can accomplish the labor, and paying them well. Have no drones in the office who fill the places of good men without doing their work. The dawdler not only wastes his own time—rather his employer's—but he sets a bad example to the others. Have no such person about the place, throw him overboard with the superfluous ones. If the work can be done by four good hands and six indifferent ones are employed upon it a saving will be effected by reducing the staff to four, even if that four receive the same wages as the six. Labor is the chief expense of printing, and yet in how many places is the workman allowed to come late, to be a long time at his meals, to dawdle over his work, and to depart early, or to permit his presses to stand idle a quarter or half an hour at a stretch? It is the duty of every foreman to see that nothing is wasted, and that time and material are made to go to their limit, and it is the employer's duty to see that he has that kind of a foreman. Working overtime is also a serious cause of loss in many printing offices. As a rule, it is not a good thing either for ma-

terial or men. The latter may get more wages on pay day and the employer may think he is remunerated by an extra price charged his customer. As a matter of fact both are worse off, the workman through injury to his constitution, the employer because his men are not in fit condition for their next day's labor, besides his incidental losses through extra light, heating, etc. Besides, it is well established that men cannot and do not do as much work or as good and careful work overtime as they do during regular hours. Then, again, the customer complains of the extra charge and probably blames the office for its necessity, forgetting his own delinquencies in not preparing his copy when he might, or in not returning proofs promptly as he should. He is most likely to consider only the extra expense and resolve to try someone else for his next job. Accidents to presses, waste of materials, danger from fire and many other catastrophes are more likely to happen through overtime work, and altogether it is far from compensated for by any extra price that the employer is likely to get for the work.

There are many other things that occasion unnecessary loss in printing offices, of which a few may be mentioned: Time wasted hunting for sorts or furniture, rules, etc., of which the office either has an insufficient supply or dead matter containing them is not promptly distributed; spoiled sheets of paper are crumpled up and thrown away, whilst fine sheets of good paper are used for scribbling purposes; wrapping papers and twines are unnecessarily wasted when they might be carefully put away for use; rollers are not properly cared for and inks are left open to dry and skin up, for the better the quality of the ink the more certain it is to skin over if left open. These may appear small things at the first glance, but life is made up of small things, and economy cannot be practised on a large scale if it is neglected on a small one.

BOOKMAKER: English printers are complaining that cheap library editions are being printed abroad, and they say the system is extending, much to the detriment of the trade at home. It is not needful here to say that is a just grievance. It is obviously so on the face of it, and we believe with a contemporary that such "wanton cheeseparing will inevitably recoil upon the houses which practice it," no matter in what country they may be located. Home industries and home labor have a right to demand consideration from people who look to the home market for their profits.