

TOM TYPO

A THIRDS CENT BATTLE

Tom Typo was a printer good,
A merry, cheerful elf,
And whatsoever care he had,
He still composed himself.

Where duty called him he was found
Still working in his place;
But nothing tempted from his post
Which really was the case.

He counted pretty Emma Grey,
One of earth's living gems
The sweetest Em he used to say,
Among a thousand ones.

So kind was Emma's love for Tom,
It met admiring eyes;
She gave of a copy to her sex,
And wanted no more.

And Tom he kept his fago clear,
And grew to be a life
Of all that manhood holds most dear,
When he with age was ripe.

He made his last impression here
While yet his heart was warm,
Just in the ink closed his career,
And death locked up his form.

He sank into his final rest
Without one sigh or moan,
His latest words "Above my breast
Place no *impressing stone*." — 1892.

UNIFORM PRICES

MANY printers have no real method of determining the price to be charged to a customer. These printers have mostly a small line of business, doing everything that is possible themselves and employing only two or three journeymen. Suppose that something comes in, which the printer in his loose way estimates will cost him \$18. The price to the customer is beyond that, of course, but shall it be \$25, \$30 or \$35? He does not know. He has no uniform rule. He determines by "stringing up" his customer and by guesswork.

In offices of text larger size this primitive method is abandoned, for no one can carry on a business of any magnitude without having a better rule than this; but the results attained by figuring are subjected to personal discount and enlargement which make them a mockery. A, having been a good customer, but close, is given 10 per cent. shading, while B, who has also been a good customer, but who never has a dispute as to price, has no discount. No two customers are treated alike. On some a loading of 5 or 10 per cent. is placed, while others have a discount of 15 to 18 per cent. This never appears in the bill. The printer himself does not know it, for he has not taken the pains to compute the shade-

ing he has given, but it easily appears upon examination.

Take, for instance, presswork at 40 cents a token. By raising this to 45 cents $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is added to the bill; by lowering it to 35 cents $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is taken off; but the one who pays for his printing at the higher rate gives $28\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. more than the other. Variations as much as this are common. If, however, the price at the lower rate were fair, that at the higher would be unfair; if that at the higher rate were just, then the printer has cut off all of his profit, and is doing work below what it cost him; no profit of $28\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is ever made by a printer, except by mistake, on work of any size.

The consideration of these errors and unmethodical practices leads to the enquiry whether men who make such errors in judgment are aware of the grievous wrong they do to some of those who rely upon them. Such men sell a certain manufactured article, a handbill, a catalogue or a book to customers who rely upon their honor and integrity and who do not question bills which are 10 to 30 per cent. higher than the bills of others who have little faith in human nature, and who are always pressing them to fall still farther, and from whom they receive scant consideration.

Printers would justly think themselves cheated if they should send a child to a store for some groceries and should find that half a dollar more on a total bill of \$3 had been charged than had been asked from another person for a like quantity. In nearly all branches of trade, merchants and manufacturers have now learned the truth that it is better to have one price than many, terms of payment, deliveries and quantities being alike. Why should not such a rule be adopted in the printing trade? Many houses do so, but their number is small compared with those which do not.

There are several units used in determining the cost of work. The thousand of type, the token in presswork, the time of a machine, an hour of a workman in a composing room, each forms the basis of a charge, to each of which 50, 60, 70 or a greater per cent. can be added. Whatever is done in this way in one case should be done in all, circumstances being alike, and the result would be that estimates would be uniform whenever and by whoever made. It is now frequently found that there is an advantage to the buyer in having one partner figure rather than another.

The most satisfactory place in which manufacturers can get their printing done is where estimates are made by rule. They are not exposed to the danger of being overcharged, there is less possibility of error and accuracy is much easier attained, while there is no danger of disputes as to the bill when the work is delivered. It is the honest way. If the low rate is just it is unjust to charge a higher price. One customer has a right of complaint if any other is given an advantage over him. Disputes are avoided and business runs more smoothly.

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