

ADJUSTMENT IN PRESSWORK.

H SNOWDEN WARD, an English printer, gives some pointers on presswork in a recent speech in London. We quote the following:

"The difference between the ordinary British method of printing and that which is adopted in all good American houses, and to a certain extent by a few British firms, is a fundamental one—a difference of principle. The British printer does not absolutely insist upon a dead level surface of electro, or of type and block, and does not work his cylinder hard on to the printing surface. If he did, unless that surface was absolutely level, he would bruise and batter such type or blocks as stood above the rest of the form, and rapidly ruin his work. Instead of this, he wraps his impression cylinder with an appreciable thickness of paper or thin card packing, which has a certain amount of 'give' to the projecting parts, and evens up his pressure by an elaborate system of overlay. In this he usually exercises the patience of Job, and often the skill of an artist; but overlaying is like retouching—very seductive, and very apt to defeat its own end.

"The other school insists on an adjustment of cylinder to bed that is only possible with perfectly built machines, and those that have been carefully run and adjusted from the time when they were new. In this method, if electrotypes plates with absolutely dead true surfaces are not used, the printer will give great attention to levelling his surface by underlaying. Of course, if he is working as some printing offices do, with types of various age—and therefore of various heights—in one job, he must give up any hope of fine results from his printing, unless the varying types are in solid blocks of a sort. The printer will adjust his cylinder with the greatest possible care—so closely, in fact, that it needs the thickness of the paper to be printed upon to complete the weight of the impression. With such adjustment, very little overlaying is necessary if the blocks are level and good; and with proper inking, each block will give, until it is worn out, impressions similar to the makers' proofs. This method of working not only saves much time—eliminating almost all of the making-ready—but it also greatly increases the life of the blocks and type, for it prevents the weight of the cylinder coming on to them. The cylinder works in bushes, adjustable by means of screws, and too many British printers get their impression by lowering the lower bushes until the cylinder normally rests very slightly below the level of the top of the type. In this case the printing surface has to bear the weight of the cylinder, which probably accounts for the fact that identical electrotypes plates, running two parts of the issue of the same magazine, will run three or four times as long in one machine-room as in another. The lower bushes should bear the weight of the cylinder clear of the type, while the upper bushes, preventing the cylinder from rising, give a dead impression far greater than can be given by the cylinder's weight.

"The ink that is used must be fine and very stiff, in order to give a dense color with a very small quantity that will not easily clog the shallowest blocks. To use such an ink the rolling power must be ample, and the rollers hard and true."

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