

# BOOKS and NOTIONS

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## ELECTROTYPING AND STEREOTYPING.

The progress made in the art of Electrotyping and Stereotyping during the last few years, a description of the process of manufacture and the many uses made of plates may be of interest. Stereotyping was invented by William Ged, a goldsmith of Edinburgh, about 1731, so it will be seen that it is no new thing. Plates made in those days were rather crude, still copies of early editions printed from stereotypes still exist, and do not compare unfavourably with some books printed from plates made at the present time. The art of Stereotyping has undergone considerable change since the discovery by Ged, the clay and plaster process, which was then popular, has been largely superseded by papier mache. The page of type being set, corrected and cleaned and locked in a chase, is laid on a smooth iron table, after which the moulder takes charge of it. After brushing it with a little oil, he places the prepared paper over it, and by means of a large brush beats the damp paper into the type until a thorough impression of the type has been made on the paper, adding another sheet of heavy paper to that already used, he places the form under a heavy press on a steam-drying table where it remains until the moisture of the paper has completely absorbed, after which the mould is removed, and a perfect matrix is secured for casting from. This is then put in the casting-box and molten type metal poured in this cools in a few moments, and the cast produced is ready for the finisher, who, by means of machinery, saws off the rough edges, planes down the back so as to leave the plate the proper thickness, trims it down to the desired width, and mounts it on a wooden block ready for the printer. By this means plates can be quickly and well made, and instead of taking from two to three hours by the old process, they can be produced in from fifteen to twenty minutes. The use

made of Stereotypes is very large and saving effected on type very material, nearly all large daily and weekly newspapers print their edition from stereotypes; in fact, they are obliged to do so as the wear on the type by printing from it would soon make it useless. In Chicago, New York, and other cities in the United States, newspapers in the country are supplied with plates of news, miscellaneous matter and serial stories. By this means a publisher can produce his paper at a small cost, and at the same time give subscribers interesting and good reading. We have a firm in Toronto who are supplying plates to the country press, and doing it most successfully. Very few books are published that plates are not made for, even when books are printed from movable type, it often serves a good purpose to take paper moulds from the type before distribution, for the moulds when dried can be laid aside and be afterwards employed for casting plates from, should a new edition be wanted, and the cost of composition saved.

Electrotyping is used for the finer class of work, such as wood cuts, map work, etc., and where large editions of a work are wanted. The process of manufacture is entirely different. The paper or cuts being ready, and laid on a press, a pan of prepared wax warmed, is placed over the page and pressed down into the centre of the type. The wax mould is removed and carefully dusted with plumbago to give it a metallic surface, and is then suspended in the battery. On this, in a few hours, is deposited a thin shell of copper, which, after being coated with tin solder, is backed up with metal to the usual thickness of a stereotype plate, and is afterwards trimmed down and made ready for the printer. Very fine work is done by the Electrotype process, not only for printing purposes, but also for producing reliefs of fine cuts and figures.