

TOOLS AND FINISH.

HAPPY the man who is careful, for his efforts will be appreciated; thrice happy the man who is appreciated, for he is not only satisfied with himself and his work, but others are satisfied with him. In work of any kind, says Louis F. Fuchs, in *The Typographical Journal*, no recipe will bring about the due meed of appreciation so quickly as a carefully finished job, and this applies equally to the most modest or the most elaborate kind. If, for example, a really original idea or combination of rule work should strike a compositor's fancy, even when the utmost taste and harmony in the accompanying text is evidenced, the result will still be unsatisfactory if the rule work is not nicely finished. There is no real merit in an idea unless that idea is perfected, and bungling work is never perfection. It may be argued that an idea is always more or less crudely presented when first it makes its appearance, but while this is true when it marks a new era or strikes a new path, it cannot be consistently said that, under advanced conditions in any field of endeavor, a crude presentation of any idea, however new, is justifiable. When finish depends on the application of known methods, and tools and appliances are not lacking, bungling work becomes clearly the offspring of inaptitude of the individual. This makes the argument that a first stride must necessarily be an experimental or crude one too weak to be tenable.

In the printing trade tools are not lacking to give finish to work. In the kind of work now under consideration, as well as in every-day job work which is sought to be first-class, the file and pleyer play a more important part than any other tool used. In large offices, strangely enough, there is frequently an almost entire absence of rule-cutting machinery, leaving out of consideration the regulation lead cutter. Hence, when it becomes necessary to bevel rule into any angle it devolves on the file to do the work in the hands of the compositor. Now, in the hands of the expert rule filer the result is almost as well accomplished as could be done on any machine, and usually in less time. Observation will show, however, that the filing of rule with success is an art requiring a steady hand, a good eye, and a slight knowledge of the principles of geometry. When these qualities are present in the individual, and he possesses a good sharp file, he can afford to ignore the rule-bevelling machine, which, while it will cut rule up to a nonpareil with accuracy and despatch, usually becomes a snare and delusion if thicker than that is wanted; and, of course, if a distinctive cut is required for the face only, the machine is useless. A file then is the pre-eminent tool of the printer having artistic aspirations. And as it is his chief tool, he should so regard it, taking care to preserve its usefulness by proper handling. If he takes a moment's time and study its construction he will see that it is meant to cut but one way, just like a saw. A heavy pressure on the back-draw will not only not assist in cutting the metal, but will eventually dull the fine points of the teeth by wear. Equally important is it to use the file for brass only, as lead or any other softer substance will clog it, necessitating in turn frequent cleaning, which is about as good a method to render it useless as any known.

A good filing chute can readily be made by anyone on the lower right corner of the stand case. A simple block of wood cut to fill the quad box to an even height with the outer frame of the case will give a substantial rest on which to nail or screw a six-to-pica rule, bringing the one end to the right edge of the

case. Top and bottom of this should be screwed pica slugs of about equal length with the rule, thus making a chute into which rule may be laid and easily bevelled, the only holding necessary being to prevent the rule from slipping from the file. A chute so placed and made will save much work and give the right arm a full free swing. If the same edge of the case, but higher up, is used, the contrivance can be amplified by a top and left side stop against which rule can be braced and filed on the face in any way desired. The arrangement will take but a few minutes to make, and if firmly screwed, will withstand any pressure.

Another good and simple way to facilitate work in rule is to "cut under," that is, when rule must meet closely (which ought to be always in good work) to file the face slightly longer than the base, thus making the tops touch, but not the bottom. A very little difference should be made, however, as rule, so filed, should it be but a hair's breadth longer than the lock-up squeeze permits, will tilt up, setting off the rule in immediate conjunction with it.

The chief reason, however, why well finished work is not more often produced, is because insufficient time is taken to do it properly. For my part, unless I saw my way very clearly to the realization of my goal, I would forego anything elaborate, unless my instructions were "fancy" and "rush." Even then fancy should become so only in the ratio of time allowed. No man, to do himself justice, should attempt what is clearly out of the range of possibilities. Thorough finish of an elaborate subject cannot be hustled, and where it must be so done the elaborate had best be left off. Effectiveness can still be attained with finish, and in short time this should be the limit aimed at.

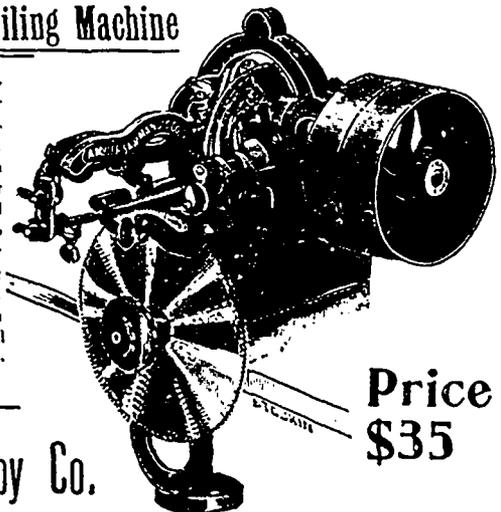
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