

NO PERFECT BOOKS

THERE are some houses who pride themselves on the claim that they have the facilities for making a typographically perfect book, but it is not believed that a perfect book has yet been made. H. A. Southern, a Philadelphia publisher, recently expressed the opinion that no perfect book of ordinary size by any standard writer has yet been issued. He says, "If you have never thought about the matter you will be astonished to find the number of errors of this kind in a volume printed by a good house. No matter how much care is taken, errors are sure to creep in somehow, and I don't think a book of any size has ever been printed that was perfectly free from typographical errors. The attempt has often been made, but it has never succeeded. One famous effort was made by a large Spanish publishing house who spared no pains on a magnificent edition of a Spanish poet, and spared no expense to have every letter and mark of punctuation correct. Yet when the book had been printed and bound, an error of one letter was found. This, however, was rather mechanical than typographical, as the letter had been worked out of position by the shifting of forms. This was the closest approach to typographical perfection that has ever been made. Another famous attempt, with more surprising results, was made by a large Glasgow publishing house, which started in with the avowed intention of getting out a perfect book. Every conceivable precaution against errors that could be conceived of was taken. Six of the most expert proofreaders in the United Kingdom were employed at a high salary, and they went over the proofs very slowly, devoting hours to each page. After they had found every error they could, the revised sheet was posted in the University with an offer of two hundred dollars for the discovery of an error. Enormous crowds read the sheets, but no claim to reward was made. Yet, notwithstanding all this, when the book came out no less than five errors were found on the very first page. This illustrates the difficulty of getting out a really perfect book.—*Western Stationer*.

A PRINTER'S NOTES ON ADVERTISING

MANY advertisements are now to be found in the magazines which have been engraved although they are words and not pictures. This is a mistake. Engraving has its uses, and it will very frequently give one or two effective lines, but a whole half page or whole page notice will never look as well engraved as in type. The original characters in type require from half a day to a day to cut each of them. They are compared, and weakly executed ones are thrown away. They line better and are more legible than engraved characters. A mistake

in a block can be amended with difficulty, and the surface has usually too much upon it. Neither do engraved characters print as well as the others. This does not apply to large lines used for purposes of display in the midst of lines of type.

A corollary to this statement is that engravings of any kind are of very little value in advertising unless well printed. It is useless to use half-tone cuts for this purpose on any ordinary newspaper. Neither will a fine wood-cut be valuable. Those in which the lines are heavy and wide apart will print well enough, but they are very far from being works of art. The only kind that is of value in daily newspapers is the outline drawing, similar to those shown by a Broadway clothing house. If of other kinds, every line is clogged with ink, and the hollows also get filled, so that the whole is smudgy and undesirable.

Since it became common to make up newspapers in small pages, many old established journals have tried the experiment, and a large number without reaping advantages. Indeed, some have lost so much by the trial that they have gone back to the former shape. One great reason for this has been that there was too little reading matter to spread over the surface. Three or four columns out of nine are sufficient for reading matter in a folio paper, but when the matter is broken up on two or three pages there is very little inducement for the reader to turn over the leaves. Unless an advertisement is read it is of no value, and it is unfortunately the case that much of the surface of such a journal is rarely looked at.

A good thing for an advertiser to do, when he puts a notice into a journal is to stipulate that it shall be reset every two months or so. There are many advertisements which are constantly changing, because their wording is different, but there is also another class in which the charm consists in being invariable. The more venerable it is as a chestnut, the more it is worth to the advertiser, as, for instance, "children cry." When the notice has been inserted for forty or fifty times, the type becomes worn. It ought to be changed, and is changed by every good printing house. Sometimes it is well to specify that it shall have different display.—W. W. Pasko in *Printer's Ink*.

ST. PETER.—You say yourself that you were a compositor on a daily paper. What earthly claim have you, then, to come in here.

Compositor.—When I came to an italic "i. e." in distributing, I always took it over to the italic case instead of putting it in my pocket to throw into the gutter after I got outside the office.

St. Peter.—Hustle this man down to the other gate. A good liar is bad enough, but he doesn't even know how to tell a plausible lie.—*Somerville Journal*.