

Historical Printing Poems

Compiled by Frank Granger
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TOM TYPO

ANONYMOUS

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 temped from his post—
Which really was the Case.
He courted pretty Emma Grey,
One of earth's living gems—
The Sweetest Em, he used to say,
Among a thousand Ems.
So Chased was Emma's love for Tom, It met admiring
eyes;
She Proved a Copy of her sex,
And wanted no Revise.
And Tom he kept his Pages clear,
And grew to be a Type
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 Nick 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 Imposing
Stone."
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 1, 1883,

THE SONG OF THE PRINTER

ANNONYMOUS

Pick and click
Goes the type in the stick,
As the printer stands at his case;
His eyes glance, and his fingers pick
The type at a rapid pace;
And one by one as the letters go,
Words are piled up steady and slow
Steady and slow,

But still they grow,
And words of fire they soon will glow;
Wonderful words, that without a sound Traverse the earth
to its utmost bound;
Words that shall make
The tyrant quake,
And the fetters of the oppress'd shall break;
Words that can crumble an army's might, Or treble its
strength in a righteous fight.
Yet the types they look but leaden and dumb,
As he puts them in place with finger and thumb,
But the printer smiles,
And his work beguiles
By chanting a song as the letters he piles,
With pick and click,
Like the world's chronometer, tick, tick! tick!
O, where is the man with such simple tools
Can govern the world as I?
With a printing press, an iron stick,
And a little leaden die,
With paper of white, and ink of black, I support the Right,
and the Wrong attack.
Say, where is he, or who may he be,
That can rival the printe's power?
To no monarchs that live the wall doth he give;
Their sway last only an hour;
While the printer grows, and God only knows
When his might shall cease to tower!
From MacKellar's
The American Printer: Phila.1887

YE PRINTER MAN

BY WILLIAM H. BUSHNELL

A curious chap is ye* printer man,
Always open to just convictions;
Not given to quarrels, but all his life A "bundle" of
contradictions.
He may have a "bank" and plenty of "quoins," Yet never a
cent can pay;
May "stick" like a martyr to the truth, Yet be "lye"-ing the
livelong day.
His "signature" not be worth a rap, Though the "script" is
fair to the eyes, The "paper" be highly "calendered," And
"imperial" in its "size."
He may never have a wife or child, But of "small caps"
keep a good stock;
Have plenty of "furniture" but no "form" Of a babe in his
"cradle" rock.
May have "a bed" and may spread "sheets," Yet never
upon them lie;
May make every day and put it away, Yet never can eat his
"pi."

He may carry no revolver around, May no gun when
 "tramp"-ing choose
 With which to defend, yet always has A "shooting-iron"
 ready for use.
 A "dagger" he always has a hand, But no blood sheds in
 strife or jars;
 And, though no astronomer, has a way
 Of deftly handling "stars"
 He may work in "dead matter," and be no "rat," May
 "copy" all vain digressions;
 And yet, if "boiled down," his talk will be "proof"
 That he has but the best "impressions."
 A "rolling" disposition may have, Though by travel ne'er
 be informed;
 May have a "sheeps-foot," but not the least Be crippled,
 marked or deformed.
 May have learned all there is to know of a "case,"
 And a man of "letters" be,
 But of law or medicine never a word In his life has studied
 he.
 He's neither policeman or jailor grim, But in "locking-up"
 takes delight;
 And though called a "devil," wears the crown Of
 Christianity, pure and bright.
 He's constantly "embracing" something new, "Making
 ready" some "form" for "press"-ing, "Making-up" for
 the night, yet alas, no lass, Made happy with love's
 caressing.
 He handles the "lever" that moves the world, "Corrects"
 "errors" as they arise, And if he has followed the golden
 "rule," Will find a "new dress" in the skies.
 * The word "ye" is to be read "the" since the y is an old
 Anglo-saxon character "thorn" having a "th" sound.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 6, 1888

ODE TO AN EMPTY INK-KEG

BY W. P. ROOT

Fountain of darkness,
 Source of light!
 How widely scattered now are all thy carbon particles,
 Since first, with mallet heavy, I loosed your iron hoops
 And drove a nail into your head!
 One little portion of your ebon blood told us of death;
 And, right beside, one said a man was born, Thus
 equalizing things.
 Through many a day of toil I've watched the rollers,
 As with ceaseless twirl
 They sent thy murky contents round the world, To teach
 men better things and new.
 But now how far beyond recall
 Of all who tread this earthly ball
 Must ever be thy teachings!
 The good cannot be all destroyed, The ill we can't erase;
 The merry things that thou hast said Will cheer us in life's
 race.
 What are we all but ink-kegs,
 Filled with that which, of itself, is neither good nor bad
 Until we first apply it?

Our power to talk is just a well employed In making all
 men friends and neighbors, As though we used that same
 unruly tongue To make them hate and curse.
 'Tis not the ink alone that puts the words on paper,
 But Etis the type.
 And so our hearts, like metal cold,
 Give shape to what we think;
 And tongues give utterance to these thoughts,
 Like paper stamped on ink.
 The energy stored up in kegs of dynamite, And other
 compounds deadly, Is but a bagatelle when once
 compared
 With all thy innate power for good or bad.
 So may I scatter wisely such potential seed,
 Lest the crop sown be worse than one from dragon's teeth.
 Let wisdom, virtue, harmless fun,
 Forever from my ink-kegs come.
 Let no man ever be the worse
 For having read thy contents.
 Good-by, old hulk! Like corse without the spirit, Thou liest
 there in everybody's way, Fit only for the sexton.
 Ope the furnace-door. What Heat!
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 6, 1889

THE ARTISTIC PRINTER

BY HERBERT L. BAKER

A lot of bent leads and some broken-down rule,
 A high-smelling pipe and an old office stool,
 Some crazy "art" fonts and some doctored up inks,
 And wads of chewed paper to fill up the chinks.
 Some "butes," few "lakes," a lot of "curliques," too,
 Some "slobs" for his jobs, an old knife-blade to hew
 Material too good to deserve such a fate, But suffers
 destruction at a terrible rate.
 The artist then goes out and fills up with "booze"—
 A horrible nightmare appears in his snooze. He wakes up
 next day with "idees" in his head, And sets up his
 nightmare in bits of cold lead.
 No importance to him are the words in his job —
 Subordinate all to the "bute" and the "slob." But in goes
 the fancy as full as 'twill stick, While all's covered over
 with colors most sick.
 Then specimens go to the press of the trade, And flattery
 thick on the "genius" is laid.
 "A step in advance," and "an exquisite taste,"
 "To praise this young artist with pleasure we haste."
 The customer!—well, just see how he'll chill The budding
 young genius, and kick on the bill.
 Artistic it may be, but naught strikes his heart
 When the use of the job has been killed by the "art."
L'Envy
 To criticise others is easy enough—
 It's easier by far then to be "up to snuff."
 We point in derision, of "artists" make game,
 But wish we were "artists" ourselves, just the same.
 —*Inland printer*, Vol. 6, 1889

THE TYPESETTING MACHINE

ANONYMOUS

Ye printers, dear, what's this I hear, the news that's goin' round?

A grand machine, to take your place, has surely now been found;

It'll set the type quite neatly, at a most tremendous speed,
And the clever printer man, they say, we shall no longer need.

A million ems, or more, a day, they say it will turn out,
Correct its proof, revise, make up, and whirl the forms about;

Deliver papers in the street, and do it mighty quick,
And the most admiring thing of all—"the beastly thing don't kick!"

The editor will touch the keys, and deftly "set" his work;
The "special" man, his articles into the thing will jerk;
The "night man" and the "local" will quickly spread their notes;

The "funny" man will calmly smoke and click his anecdotes;

The "fashion" and the "sporting sharp" their screeds will neatly do;

The machine will edit copy, yes, and punctuate it, too.
Then the chapel will be silent, and the Father go to grass,
And the stupid typo's blunders will never come to pass.
The editors of rival sheets will revel and feel good,
While the printer man tramps o'er the land or takes to sawing wood.

But the summer time will come again and winter's winds will blow,

And many a harvest time will come again and go,
Ere the thing of cranks and gearing takes the place of pen and ink,

Or supplants the toiling typo, with his power to work and think.

—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 6, 1889

THE YOUNG FEMALE COMPOSITOR

BY R. B., IN SCOTTISH TYPOGRAPHICAL CIRCULAR FOR JUNE 1889

Oh! But she's bonny and kind—

A smart, cheerfu' witch o' a creature—

A lassie just form'd to my mind,

Wi' a face beaming ower wi' guid nature. And 'deed, the plain truth to declare,
Few chaps ever turn up their nose at her,
The charms are sae catching and rare O' Nell, the young female compositor.

'Maist every five lines that she sets For sorts thro' the hale house she dances,
And a' that she asks for she gets,
Returning her thanks wi' soft glances. And though, ance or twice every week,
The gaffer he threatens to closet her,
It ends wi' him patting the cheek O' the modest young female compositor.

But of a' the Frames she seems to like mine;

And faith she's untrammled wi' fetters,

For twice every hour in the nine

She comes seeking capital letters.

Then up on a case she'llt play jump,

And while I keep keeking richt close at her, She fa's on my knees wi' a thump,
This charming young female compositor.

A wee cockie cliquer sae braw,

Wha' thinks he's a don'mang the lasses, Breaks a note or a headline or twa,
Ilka time that the sweet lassie passes.

But he's out o' the hunt, tha's quite clear, For a' the sly glances he throws at her
Are met wi' a cough and a sneer
By this handsome young female compositor.

A Beaugard jacket she wears,

And a skirt neatly draped and brocaded;

Yet she never puts on foolish airs, Though oft for her pride she's upbraided.

But though she might spit in my face,

I'm sure I could never look cross at her,

Sea fu' o' saft, heart-winning grace,

Is this nymph, the young female compositor,

I'm on a grand volume-bourgeois, Wi' lots o' big wood cuts, and leaded—

And I'm certain, in sax weeks or so, I'll hae as much coin as is needed.

Then, low on my knees, I'll discharge O' Cupid's saft sawder a dose at her,
And Row in the conjugal barge Wi' This darling young female compositor.

—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 6, 1889

THE COMPOSITOR

BY ALEXANDER COPLAND

Humanity's man is the man at the case, Pegging steadily on with a serious face;

Now he builds up a scandal, now a disgrace;
Each small leaden missile fits close to its place.

Devastating bullets are made out of lead,

And, when fired from a firearm they fill you with dread.

The stuff the "comp" handles he pitches for bread,
But then he don't "dis" his type, not till it is dead.

With a shade of doubt he kicks for a "ring";

If his copy be "time," that's the time he can sing;

But if there's a "rush" he'll his energies bring
And concentrate them all ere time can take wing.

To sing of our hero is not a disgrace;

If you kill off the typo you can't fill his place.

His habit is seldom of silk or of lace,

But he'll print you the news at a swift, lightning pace.

He glares at the lead till his eyeballs are sore,

And seeks not diversion till business is o'er,

But struggles on bravely through "sport," "base ball score,"

"Local items, "dispatches" and-dear knows what more!

He labors at midnight, while you're snug in bed,

And heeds not the gas-glare beating fierce on his head,

Which oft drives him crazy or cuts short his thread.

So cheer loud for this hero before he is dead.

Hurrah for the printer!

Hurrah for his stick!

What fashions the world

Is its clickity, click!
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 7, 1889

THE EDITOR'S WIFE
ANONYMOUS

You have heard of the country editor's life, With its care
and worry and doubt.
Of the shabby-genteel of his seedy clothes, Of his diamond
pins and his calm repose, His happiness, money and
gout.
But say, have you heard of the editor's wife?
Of that silent copartner, who,
With a blending of sentiment, Beauty and skill, With
temperate knowledge, with tact and will, The whole of
his labor can do?
It is she who embroiders the garments worn By the editor's
hard old chair, Now dressed with cushions soft and neat,
And trimmed up with tidies and ribbons sweet, Which
once was so poor and so bare.
If the editor's sick, or away, or behind, In need of more
hands and more haste, She directs his wrappers so they
can be read, And writes his leaders right out of her head,
And willingly makes his paste.
She reads the magazines, papers and books, As the cradle
she softly rocks;
While the editor sits in his easy chair, With his fingers
thrust in his tangled hair, She quietly mends his socks.
Then she reads the ads with the editor, Just to find what
each has paid.
"But the column of the jeweler, there," So he says, "and
the harness, and human hair,
Must be taken out in trade!"

She wears the corsets he gets for ads, And rattles his
sewing machine;
She uses the butter and eggs and things The country
subscriber so faithfully brings, With a cheerfulness
seldom seen.
But her life, so full of merry delight, Has one dark cloud,
alas!
Though she shares his tickets to circus and play, To
lecture, and negro minstrels gay, She can't use his
railroad pass!
When time hangs heavy on his hands, She beguiles the
hours away With joke and laughter, music and song, And
pleasant talk, and thus ripples along
The whole of each leisure day.
O, who would change this sweet content, This simple and
trusting life, For that of a queen of royal birth?
For the happiest woman on all this earth
Is the country editor's wife!
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 7, 1890

THE DEVIL TO PAY
BY HARRY J. SHELLMAN

When Gutenberg, Coster and Faust first began
In secret, the great art preservative to plan,

The ignorant masses, suspecting some evil, Traced all of
their mysteries right to the devil;
And thus the assistant who tends to the fires, And does
such odd jobs as the office requires, Who handles the
rollers, and washes the same, By the name of the devil
has gone into fame.
As years crept along till they reached modern times,
An occasional printer was short in his dimes,
And once it occurred that an editor found
At the end of the week he'd not cash to go 'round;
He counted and figured to get it all square,
The foreman and comps must each one have his share;
When he'd got it all fixed, as he thought, in dismay
He discovered and cried: 'There's the devil to pay.'
So now 'tis a proverb, grown common in years, When
worry or care at the office appears;
When bills can't be met, or when trouble is rife;
When bloodthirsty men seek the editor's life;
When subscribers won't "ante," and ads are shy;
When his "cake is all dough" and his form is all "pi"—
A proverb that comes in the editor's way, And so he
exclaims: "There's the devil to pay."
—*Inland Printer*, Vol.7, 1890

A PRINTERIAN HINT
BY SYDNEY T. BATES

A poor old printer stands silent and glum, With type well
pois'd 'tween finger and thumb, And eyes slanting up,
expressive of doubt, If the words he has set are clearly
made out, And a look on his face that tells of his scorn
Of the old-fashioned quill and ink in a horn, And the
scrawls on his copy, meant to be words. That look like
the tracks of snails or of birds.
He strains his poor eyes and rubs up his hair, And bites his
moustache, and searches with care, But patience and
learning and good-natured will Won't turn into sense
these words with a quill, He peers up and down for the
cap letter O, As a key to the noun which puzzles him
so—
He spies out a letter and has it, he hopes, When, lo! It's an
A, as the spelling denotes!
He rubs up his glasses and starts off again To get at the
thread of the intricate train, And a tear trickles down on
the end of his nose As he carefully quarries the words of
the prose, He's doubtful of the p, and the f and the j,
"They're made just alike," he whispers to say;
"Writ with blue ink on the end of a quill, By confounded
dude, with his usual skill!"
He reads along further, to get at the gist, And scans very
closely each pot-hook and twist;
But he finds that the q is made like the g, And the r and the
v exactly agree;
And as to the caps, why, the J is an I, And that H is an A,
there's none will deny;
For F he has T, and sometimes an L, And which one is
meant he can't always tell.
He finds now an I that looks like a t, And an I undotted,
which answers for e;

And the u and the n are always alike,
 And look just as though they were made with a pike. If he
 wishes for h, it's a very good k, But these never stand
 very much in his way;
 But the a and the o, when made just the same Are apt to
 confound in a tough proper name.
 You may see how complete is the printer nonplussed,
 But never can feel his thorough disgust, Nor the dread that
 awaits the proofreader's skill, When the poor fellow's
 copy is writ with a quill. The characters found on the
 tombs of Luxore Still live in the hand of Ben: Perley
 Poore:
 And the prophetic script on Belshazzar's wall Is fairly
 outdone by Bob Ingersoll.
 The Lowell and Holmes and Whittier quill Has made the
 world cry and laugh at its will;
 But, like gold in the mine or pearl in the shell, It taketh
 much labor to quarry it well. The words that are said
 about each little line You may think are profane or truly
 divine:
 But you never may know nor never can guess What
 trouble it is to correct for the press!
 O, man of great genius! Think not of thyself When wooing
 the muse for honor and pelf, But strive to obtain the
 printer's good will By writing quite plain, but NOT with
 a quill! Think always of him who works in the night, By
 the glare and the flare of the hot gas-light, Whose days
 are all told while yet he is young, And dieth unknown,
 while thy glory is sung!
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 8, 1891

THE PRINTER

BY CY WARMAN

Poor artists, who preserve the arts, Who toil through weary
 nights and days With tired eyes and heavy hearts;
 No poet sings the printers' praise.
 To them the years no glory bring,
 They walk not in the path of fame,
 But uncomplaining sit and sing
 The praises of another's name.
 And me they much have helped along, And doubtless after
 I am dead They'll print my name and spell it wrong And
 part it with a period.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 12, 1894

A PRINTER'S LAMENT

BY A. K. H.

"Pick and click goes the type in the stick" Will soon be a
 song of the past, For the "setting" machine of brass and
 steel Has come to stay at last.
 There was a time—not so long ago
 That our mem'ry to reach it strains,
 When we thought, "They may MAKE the d - - - machines,
 But they can't endow 'em with brains."
 But, oh, how time has changed our minds And caused our
 spirits to fall;
 For many a printer who runs a machine, Has no need of
 brains at all.

Oh, why don't someone invent a man Of sheet-iron to take
 our place;
 A telephone-phonographic kinoscope man, And do away
 with the race.
 For the poor old "print" there'll soon be no place But the
 Childs and Drexel asylum, And even there he can't sleep
 in the beds, Because they're afraid he'll "spile" 'em.
 Perhaps St. Peter will find a place
 For the "wrong font" typo to dwell,
 But if he can't "get cases" in Paradise, He'll have to take
 boxes in - - - .
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 14, 1895

The rapid changes being brought about by the introduction
 of the Linotype and Monotype were protested against by
 many recalcitrant printers, and the above is an example of their
 pessimistic verses

FRANKLIN

BY J.J. FLINN

He begged no favors, pleaded no immunity—
 As 'prentice lad or guest of princely halls, Nor courted
 fame with honeyed importunity—
 Nor sought a lift that he might scale her walls.
 He walked not on fickle opportunity—
 But made occasion answer all his calls. He loved the truth
 and would not be content Till he had plucked it from the
 firmament.
 In childhood, boyhood, manhood's prime he yearned
 To stifle falsehood, and for this alone—
 No matter how the wheel of fortune turned He would not
 reap where he had never sown, He counted chance a
 something to be spurned, And claimed no virtues that
 were not his own.
 He bore all things, save humbug, sham and vanity,
 And next to loving God, he loved humanity.
 'Gainst ancient wrongs his barbed shafts were hurled,
 He spared no hireling, feared no tyrant's ire. It mattered
 not though lordly lips were curled When Franklin spoke
 of retribution dire—
 His cry for justice wakened all the world, His plea for
 freedom set the world afire, From earth to sky the blaze
 he kindled ran Till heaven itself proclaimed the rights of
 man.
 He supped with kings, this child of lowly station, His
 native tact disarmed courtly laws, His lucid mind
 illumined half creation, His vivid wit compelled
 mankind's applause, His wisdom, prudence, fixed
 determination, Confounded diplomats and won his cause.
 Enraptured France paid homage to his name, And
 Europe, thrilled, resounded to his fame.
 Wherever truth prevails, throughout the earth, Wherever
 reason reigns and minds are free, Wherever toil
 commands a cheerful hearth, Wherever plenty smiles on
 industry, Wherever honor's paid to honest worth And
 manhood's robed in manhood's dignity,
 Wherever Franklin's words and deeds are known, The
 millions claim and love him as their own.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 18, 1896

AN OLD COMPOSITOR'S PLAINT

BY ROBERTUS LOVE

I hear the roar and rattle of the linotype machine,
And watch the nimble fingers of the operator keen,
As he sweeps the sentient keys
With unerring skill and ease;
But I miss the merry music of the click, click, click,
When the minions used to muster in the old-time stick.
I see the shining metal as it issues from its cell—
A slug of antimony that has learned to read and spell.
Oh, it may be very fine
As it leaps into the line,
But it lacks the ringing rhythm of the click, click, click,
When the letters danced together in the old-time stick.
There was poetry of motion, there was dignity and grace
In the Gutenberg disciple as he stood before his case,
Building out of metal bits
All the wisdom of the wits,
All the music of the masters-in the click, click, click,
Of the types that used to gather in the old-time stick.
I mark the mechanism of the Mergenthaler mill,
Grinding language in its hopper with deliberative skill;
Turning out with measured speed Thoughts that he who
runs may read;

But its monotone is discord to the click, click, click,
Of the merry metal midgets in the old-time stick.
To Mergenthaler's genius I will bow and doff my hat.
He has built a great automation, a useful one at that;
But it's harsh and horrid noise
Grates upon the printer boys
Whose fancies love to linger on the click, click, click,
Of the music of the minion in the old-time stick.

—*Inland Printer*, Vol.23, 1899

Oh, come now, the linotype didn't really roar and rattle! It
may have clanked and thumped at each stroke of the
plunger, but it also had its rhythmic click, click, click of
the falling matrices

THE AD. UPON THE FENCE

BY ALOYSIUS COLL

Jim Keeper was a man who had
More silver than good sense;
He wandered to the fields and put
His ad. upon a fence.
"This neighborhood can read it here,
And pilgrims passing by,
And I will save the space-rates, too," He said, and winked
his eye.
A cow came up, and saw the sign,
And softly bawling "Moo,"
She went off to her brother ox
And told him of it, too..
And all the cattle came and looked
Upon the lonely sign,

And moored: "Why, 'groceries and shoes' Are not within
our line."

The sheep came up, and bleated "Baa,"
When they the sign had seen;
And, laughing at the lonely ad.,
They gamboled down the green.
"Why, what are 'woolen goods' to us?"
They bleated in the fold;
"We have enough to last for life,
To keep us from the cold."
The horses came and read the line
About the leather goods,
Then galloped off, and hid within
A little patch of woods.
"Harness and saddles—cheapest, best," That's what the
letters said;
"We wish they were in Halifax,"
The angry horses neighed.
Thus, While the animals discussed
Jim Keeper's rural sign,
The people in the papers read
Joe Seller's, line for line.
And Seller sold, and richer grew,
Not strange! — It came to pass Where Keeper kept his
store, the cows Are nibbling at the grass!
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 27, 1901

THE LINOTYPE MACHINE

BY M.V. GOODRICH

Can we a "thing" denominate this mass Of iron and
polished nickel, steel and brass, Filled with the whirl and
grind, the clash and jar Of cam and roller, cog and wheel
and bar;

Instinct with motion, forceful, swift and true, Each stroke
performing what it set to do, Each part of an anatomy
sublime Biding in patience its appointed time! So
human-like its action, strange, involved, The riddle:
"What is life" seems almost solved.

Yet is it more than human, think we then, Committing no
mistakes, excelling men In an adherence to the right so
strong It stops and stands fast, but will not go wrong.
This is the Linotype, whose maker's skill Gave all but life
and speech, but sense and will. In many motions wholly
self-controlled, Doing its work, nor waiting to be told, It
scarcely misses speech in lacking life-Dumb, But not
wordless, its recurring strife.

The pledge of peace; the savage threat of war;
The statesman's eloquence, the sage's lore;
The funeral dirge; the rapturous song of love;
Are gathered here, though dormant. Lo, above
Armored, like Romans, in well-hardened brass, Entrenched
behind a wall of shining glass, Like warriors camped
upon some lofty crest The hosts of Literae in barracks
rest, And at the Master's touch, a silent sign, Obey the
fateful summons: "fall in line."

Then, ranged in order, as the Old Guard came, Cheering
their chief, to face "the furnace flame," March to their

place to meet a heat more dread And mold the glowing
thought in glowing lead.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 25, 1900

THE PRINTER'S PURGATORY
BY LEWIS J. JUDSON

I dreamt last night that I had journeyed
To the regions far down below,
To that place of torment eternal,
Where sometimes a printer may go

“Ah, a print,” was Lucifer’s greeting;
“Tho I see you’ve not come to stay.
Just come to renew old acquaintance?”
All right, I’ll show you the way.”
Straight to the job-room he then led me,
To a gall’ry inside the door,
Where I gazed in horror and pity
At the struggling crowd on the floor.

Each man in his hand held his scissors;
And the proof that lay on his case
Showed Roman, Italic and Gothic,
With cautions to “line up the face.”

As I looked at those sweltering wretches, And the
cardboard litt’ring the floor, I thought of the Inland’s
new system, And spoke to my guide at the door:
“Why don’t you buy Standard Line faces?
I pray you, O Satan, to tell.”
But he frowned and sternly made an answer,
“My friend, you forget this is —.” Well,
I woke with a start and a shudder, And then laughed aloud
at my fears;
For not a “cardboard printer” am I—
So the devil may take my shears.
—*The Practical Printer*, Vol. 4, March 1902

This refers to the old-time time-consuming chore of
aligning faces on different (pre-point) bodies with
strips of paper or cardboard.

ONLY A PRINTER
BY WILL M. MAUPIN

Only a printer? His finger tips Give voice again to long -
dead lips, And from a past and hoary age Recalls the
words of seer and sage.
No Painter he—
But line by line he tells the tale
That color gives to canvas pale,
And masters old before us stand
With brush and palette clasped in hand, So we may see.
With patient toil while others sleep
He makes the ages backward creep,
And knights in armor ride and fight
“For God, my lady and the right.”
No player he—
But by the magic of his hands
The curtain rises in all lands,

And actors for a season rage
Their few brief hours upon the stage, So we can see.
Only a printer? His magic trade Hath all earth’s scenes
before us laid.

He moves his hands and to our eye
Comes scenes where soldiers fight and die.
A Wizard he—
For he but waves his hand, and, lo The world with
knowledge is aglow;
And by the magic of his art
The future’s curtain draws apart,
So we may see.
Only a printer? His magic spell Preserves earth’s sweetest
story well;
Of how on Calvary’s cruel tree
The Savior died to make men free.
A prophet he—
For by his art he makes the book
Wherein the weary soul may look,
And looking, see the promise blest
Of home and love and endless rest—
Eternity.

—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 27, 1901

A POEM WITH A POINT
BY DANIEL BAKER

“In days of old
When printers bold
Like barons held their sway,
A printer bold,
In search of gold,
Sang merrily this lay:
My plant is large and true,
My type the best that’s cast,
And all my hands so quick and true
That none with them compare;

So what care I for prices high,
I’ll work for naught or die;
So what care I for profit high,
I’ll work for fame or die.

“So this brave wight,
With visions bright,
Went gaily to the fray.
He worked by night,
Till broad daylight,
For things just came his way:
The work all came his way.
The noisy pressroom din
Was music sweet to him;
As in his office bare and dim
He looked for profit there.

So What cared he for prices high,
He’d work for naught or die;
So what cared he for profits high,
He’d work for naught and die.

“His price so slow
 Made profits go
 And credit melt away.
 For want of gold
 The plant was sold,
 While buyers sang this lay,
 The buyers sang this lay:
 His plant so large is worn,
 His type and workmen gone;
 Yet ere he died he feebly cried,
 I’ve kept the vow I’ve sworn.

So what care I for prices high,
 I’ve worked for fame and gotten naught,
 I’ve worked for naught,
 For naught, for naught, I die.”
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 29, 1902

THE TRAMP PRINTER
 ANONYMOUS

He used to call around and borrow
 A dollar;
 There was grime and printers’ ink upon His collar;
 At times he used to get quite drunk—
 They said it was
 To indicate his strong contempt for Editors;
 He used to eat tobacco at his case
 And, what is more,
 He spat quite freely anywhere
 Upon the floor;
 I haven’t seen him since the latter
 ‘80s.
 The foreman couldn’t even tell you
 what his state is;
 Perhaps he’s gone the way of all the earth—
 Mayhap to jail;
 But if he ever shows up here again
 He will not fail
 To have on that same
 Collar
 Again strike you for the
 Dollar;
 And he doesn’t get it
 From me.
 Not this time!
 See?
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 29, 1902

TYPO’S DREAMS
 BY EDWARD SINGER

When a print starts lookin’ lonesome an’ a-clickin’ of his
 rule
 Kind o’ in a Riley jingle an’ a-twistin’ on his stool,
 An’ a-settin’ up his doublets with a free an’ easy grace,
 He’s been drunk the night precedin’, er a woman’s in the
 case.

When he kind o’ stops a-settin’, clean fergettin’ where he’s
 at,
 An’ in order to remember squirts terbacker at the cat;
 An’ his eyes with dreams air labeled that the copy can’t
 erase,
 He’s been drunk the night precedin’, er a woman’s in the
 case.
 Yes, he’s either got a headache, er a maze o’ yeller hair
 Is a-dancin’ from the “g” box to the “x” box over there;
 An’ across the small-cap boxes he kin see her blue eyes
 race,
 An’ they ain’t no raise in wages when a woman’s in the
 case.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 29, 1902

WHAT BROWN, THE REPORTER, HAS WRITTEN
 ANONYMOUS

Oh, mind the columns and columns of stuff,
 The hot sensations, political bluff,
 The personal notes, society guff,
 That Brown, the reporter, has written.
 Oh, mind you the men who have now grown great,
 Who were boosted high to the jobs of state
 From the one-horse jack-leg candidate,
 By what Brown, the reporter, has written.
 Why, even the president oft gets there,
 Where he sits so grand in the White House chair,
 Because of speeches, delivered with care,
 That Brown, the reporter, had written.
 Now look at the author-no good at that-
 Who prospers and thrives and who waxes fat,
 And whose head swells out till it crowds his hat
 Because of the things that Brown has written.
 Oh, the player folk and the merchants, too,
 They all belong to the same old crew
 That steadily up into greatness grew
 From the notes and the puffs Brown has written.
 “I would like to be Brown,” I hear you say, “He must be
 the biggest man out today.
 Just give me a sight of him—do, I pray-
 And the things the reporter has written.”
 Oh, his stuff, my friend, is buried away-All lost with the
 “has beens” of yesterday;
 And his burning thoughts are but smoke astray-
 These thoughts the reporter has written.
 The men whom he helped with his timely praise,
 Alas! Know him not in their prosperous days,
 But speak with a sneer of reporters’ bold ways
 And the stuff the reporters have written
 “But Brown, the reporter, is rich, is he not?”
 You’d smile if I’d tell you the pay that he got. The
 publisher drops “fifteen per” in the slot For the gems the
 reporter has written.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 24, 1899

THE PRESSFEEDER AND HIS STEED
 BY R. L. FALLIS

The pressfeeder stands while deftly his hands

Pass the sheets one by one from the lift to the gauges.
 As the sheet gently glides down the board to the guides
 He is thus by his skill daily earning his wages.
 But what is this steed he is trying to feed?
 Some say it's a "Camel"; a "Pony" some call it.
 The fact that's most stunning, 'tis fed while 'tis running,
 With never a nose-bag or stable to stall it.
 From a fountain it drinks all flavors of inks;
 Its food is the paper that slides down its back.
 Just look at the hand which is guiding the sandwiches
 Down to its lips—takes 'em one at each smack.
 The pressman stands by, keeping up the supply
 Of food and of drink which its appetite craves,
 While he tells by its bite if its teeth are all right,
 As he watches to see how the creature behaves.

To tell you more freely, here's one called Amelie (a
 Miehle),
 With an excellent record for work and for speed
 Here's the Colt by her side with its jaws open wide
 For paper, on which it delights most to feed.
 Ask her feeder to show how Amelie will go.
 He'll say: "Just watch closely, keep cool and alert.
 You don't need to hitch—just throw on the switch,
 Then shove on her belt and she's off with a spurt."
 For he studies her points while he oils up her joints
 Each morning before she begins on her run;
 And rubs her down clean with oil and benzine,
 And brushes her teeth off at night when she's done.
 The type are her teeth. You'll notice beneath
 She has only one set in her square lower jaw;
 With a number of rollers to serve her as molars
 And spread on the ink just before ev'ry chaw.
 By way of digression she makes an impression
 On the sheets which she bites and spits out on the table.
 By observing them shall you determine their value—
 'Tis the newspaper, pamphlet, bill, poster or label.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 29, 1902

THE TOURIST'S SOLILOQUY (WORK IN PROSPECT)

BY LEROY B. RUGGLES

To work or not to work: that is the question;
 Whether 'tis better in the mind to suffer
 The "outs" and "wrong fonts" of a strenuous life,
 Or these more courageous comps. to panhandle
 And thus win out a stake? To brace, to strike,
 To beg; and by this means to say
 we end The heartache and the thousand frightful
 things That work is heir to; 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished. To win, to gain,
 To gain we know not how.
 Aye, there's the rub;
 For on that hook who knows what troubles lurk—
 Pica solid; perchance manuscript unreadable—
 Must give us pause. There's the respect
 That makes calamity of working life;
 For who would bear the heat and dust and dirt,
 The leads to piece, the lack of "sorts" much-needed,
 The cluttered alleys, the foul smells of the gloomy room,

The insolence of "devils," and other things
 The patient printer while at work must stand,
 When he himself might his quick rescue make
 By a change of scene? Who would
 burdens bear, To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something worse than this,
 The unexplored places within whose walls
 To tourists are welcomed, puzzles the will
 And makes us rather bear the ills
 we have Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus labor doth make cowards of us all,
 And thus our inborn spirit of resolution
 Is unseated by the pale cast of thoughts,
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 29, 1902, page 901

The term "tourist" in this poem, and in others, is a polite
 word for tramp printer.

MY FIRST "POEM" IN A NEWSPAPER

BY G. S.

Ah! Here it is! I'm famous now—
 An author and a poet!
 It really is in print—ye gods!
 How proud I'll be to show it!
 And, gentle Anna what a thrill
 Will animate her breast,
 To read these ardent lines and know
 To whom they are addressed.
 Why, bless my soul here's something strange!
 What can the paper mean
 By talking of the "graceful brooks
 That gander o'er the green"?
 And here's a T instead of R,
 Which makes it "tippling rill"
 "We'll seek the shad" instead of "shade,"
 And "hell" instead of "hill."
 "They look so" — What? I recollect—
 'Twas "sweet," and then 'etwas "kind";
 And now to think, the stupid fool,
 For "bland" has printed "blind."
 Was ever such provoking work?—
 "Tis curious, by the bye,
 How anything is rendered blind
 By giving it an eye.
 "Hast thou no tears?" the t's left out—
 "Hast thou no ears?" instead.
 "I hope that thou art dear," is put
 "I hope that thou art dead."
 Who ever saw, in such a space,
 So many blunders crammed?
 "Those gentle eyes bedimmed" is spelt
 "Those gentle eyes bedammed."
 "Thou art the same" is rendered "lame,"
 It really is too bad;
 And here, because an i is out,
 My "lovely maid" is "mad."
 "Where are the Muses fed, that thou
 Should'st live so long unsung?"
 Thus read my version: here, it reads—
 "Should'st live so long unhung."
 I'll read no more! What shall I do?

I'll never dare to send it;
 The paper's scattered far and wide—
 'Tis now too late to mend it.
 Oh, Fame! Thou cheat of human bliss!
 Why did I ever write?
 I wish my poem had been burnt
 Before it saw the light.
 I wish I had that Editor,
 For only half a minute,
 I'd bang him to my heart's content,
 And with an H begin it.
 I'd jam his body, eyes, and nose,
 And spell it with a D;
 And send him to that hill of his—
 Which HE spells with an E.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 30, 1902

**AN INDEX EXPURGATORIUS
 FROM "MUNSELY"**

The man who marks or leaves with pages bent The volume
 that some trusting friend has lent, Or keeps it over long,
 or scruples not To let its due returning be forgot;
 The man who guards his books with miser's care, And
 does not joy to lend them, and to share;
 The man whose shelves are dust begrimed and few,
 Who reads when he has nothing else to do;
 The man who raves of classic writers, but Is found to keep
 them with their leaves uncut;
 The man who looks on literature as news, And gets his
 culture from the book reviews;
 Who loves not fair, clean type and margins wide—
 Or loves these better than the thought inside;
 Who buys his books to decorate the shelf, Or gives a book
 he has not read himself;
 Who reads for priggish motives, or for looks, Or any
 reason save the love of books—
 Great Lord, who judgeth sins of all degrees, Is there no
 little private hell for these?
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 33, 1904

**SUCCESS
 ANONYMOUS**

He built a poem of the time,
 And every foot in it was rhyme!
 'Twas full of dreamy autumn days,
 Of leaves and hues and golden rays!
 When every line would neatly scan
 He sent it to the printer man!

The printer man was sore oppressed With pains beneath
 his laundered vest;
 From eating dough and hasty lunch, His stomach was an
 aching bunch!
 At what the scribe had written there!
 "The fiercest rot he ever read,"
 Is what the printer madly said!

The hungry poet sighed no sigh;

Instead, he winked the other eye!
 That night he toiled by candle-light
 To fix the poem up just right!

To dialect he changed the verse;
 (If anything he made it worse).
 He killed the head and added one
 That had a hint of buried fun.
 Then for the printer man once more
 He stuck the poem 'neatha the door.

The man of type had just brought in A contract that would
 yield some tin< (His stomach, it was calm and fine). He
 read the poem line for line!
 Quite filled with mirth, he laughed in glee, Then sent the
 bard a golden V.
 The moral is, do not despair,
 But daily watch the bill of fare!
 Success in life is but a fake
 When founded on the stomach ache!
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 32, 1904

**"CAN'T I HAVE IT RIGHT AWAY?"
 BY STRICKLAND W. GILLILAN**

I sat beside the estimator's desk one afternoon—
 He hadn't had a smell of lunch, but said he'd "join me
 soon."
 I know a very little of the art preservative
 And hadn't a suggestion or a helpful hunch to give.
 So there I sat and listened, in a meditative way,
 To tales of woe, each ending, "Can't I have it right away?"
 I didn't understand another syllable I heard;
 The articles were Greek to me to which these men referred.
 They talked about the kinds of type, the grades of stock
 and all,
 Of picas, slugs and nonpareil, till I was like to fall
 From weariness; and every man in leaving turned to say:
 "I guess you understand me—and I want it right away!"
 No matter what was wanted, if 'twas letter-heads or bills,
 Or circulars to wrap around some anti-billious pills;
 No matter if the job would take a week or maybe more,
 Or if the same job made him wait a half a month before,
 Each patron turned with anxious look, while hustling out,
 to say:
 "Oh, yes<I didn't tell you that I want it right away!"
 "I s'pose its human nature," sighed that printer-man to me,
 "But I have yet the very first wise customer to see;
 They wait until they're out of all the printed stuff they'd
 got,
 And then come rushing in to be replenished on the spot,
 They'll wait to give the order till the very latest day,
 Then tear their hair and tell us they Æmust have it right
 away!_ "
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 33, 1904

**THE POET AND THE PRINTER
 ANONYMOUS**

Once a Poet loved a maiden, as the Poets often do,

And his rival was a printer of a very inky hue;
 But the maiden showered the Poet with her favors all the
 time,
 For she loved his gentle habit of adorning her in rhyme.
 Day and night the angry Printer swore "Ha, ha!" as villains
 do,
 When he saw the weakling Poet with his halting verses
 woo,
 And in vain he sweat and struggled for some loving
 rhymes to think—
 He had not the Poet's genius, though he had the type and
 ink.
 By and by the blushing Poet wrote a rhyme of tender vein,
 Telling how he loved his Lulu with an ecstasy of pain.
 Thus it ran: "Upon the rubble of the tangled garden close
 Thou dost pine, thy cheeks more ruby—aye, more
 scarlet—than the rose!"
 This the Poet sold one winter to the leading magazine,
 Where the Printer worked for wages at a Linotype
 machine.
 When the Printer saw the poem he declared with baneful
 eye:
 "Maybe I can't fix the Poet's hash—but I can fix his pie!"
 Then he took the verse and set it, with a dark and bodeful
 mien—
 Came a strangely altered poem, like a god from the
 machine.
 Thus it ran: "Upon the rubber of the tangled garden hose
 Thou dost dine thy cheeks more ruby—aye, more
 scarlet—than thy nose!"
 Came the day of publication and the dark and fateful moon
 When the maiden read the poem, shrieked and fell into a
 swoon.
 Then she wept in wild hysterics and they carried her away,
 Where she lay in nerve-prostration for a month at Oyster
 Bay.
 There the scheming Printer met her—there were walks
 beneath the moon—
 There were hints of an engagement—there were wedding
 bells in June.
 And the Poet? Nought in life his former ardor could
 restore.
 Now he's teaching kindergarten and will write in rhyme no
 more.
 Moral
 Thus the very modern Poet, though entitled to enthuse,
 Still should learn to watch his Printer as devoutly as his
 Muse;
 And I have a fellow feeling for the devotee of rhyme,
 When the Printer pies my stanzas (as he does from time to
 time).
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 33, 1904,

**WHEN THE OLD SUBSCRIBER QUIT
 FROM BALTIMORE NEWS**

'Twas market day, and people came
 From miles and miles around
 To gather at the corners or

Upon the courthouse ground,
 To sell their truck, to buy new duds, To talk of this and
 that—
 And each brown face its pleasure smiled Beneath a broad-
 brimmed hat.
 And at the business office of
 The WEEKLY CLARION stood
 A long, long line of faithful ones,
 To make their standing good:
 And as each in his turn advanced
 And his subscription filed,
 The editor, beside his desk,
 Just smiled, and smiled, and smiled.
 For it was good to hear the clink
 Of money, and 'twas fine
 To know the CLARION was the guide Of all that eager
 line;
 'Twas cheering to reflect that he
 Had been their monitor,
 And so he smiled, and smiled, and smiled, And let his
 fancies soar.
 Came maid, came swain, came old, came young, Their
 tribute then to pay—
 And oh! the sun was shining fair
 Upon that happy day,
 Until from out the line there stepped A hoary-headed one,
 Who straightway gloomed the cheerful sky And blotted
 out the sun.
 "Look here," he said, "I tuk this sheet
 Fer nigh on forty year
 And I ain't satisfied at all
 The way you're doin' here!
 By gum, your policies is rank,
 And I came here to say
 As how I don't want this blamed sheet Another single
 day!"
 Then out he stalked, as having done
 His duty, as he knew it—
 "By gum," he said, "I hated tew,
 But I jest had t'dew it!"
 And to his clerk the editor
 Turned in his deep distress:
 "The deacon's stopped his paper, Jim—
 Go down and stop the press!"
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 33, 1904

THE DEADLY PI LINE

BY EDGAR YATES

Some fiendish printer is my secret foe,
 On the top floor.
 He has a trick that fills me up with woe
 And oaths galore.
 I wrote a sonnet to my lady's hair And said that "only with
 it can compare shrdl cmfo vbgk hrdlu taoin hrdlu hrdlu
 hrdluooi —This made me sore.
 A thrilling romance, too, I penned one day.
 On the last page
 The villain told why he did seek to slay Sir Durivage.

“I sought his life,” quoth he,” not in the fray, But helmet
off, because he once did say:
vbgkq xzfilfff ,h:mrldfwy; hrldu shdlu rdluoio —That
made me rage.
And forthwith to the editor I wrote,
With angry pen,
Correcting the mistake in a brief note Of how and when
‘Twas printed; yet an added horror smote, As over the
correction I did gloat.
MUST -All Editions -A J T -Bury on inside page
—I was mad then
Could I but have this wretch to work my will For one short
hour, I’d boil him in hot pitch, or, better still, Had I the
power, Above the fiery furnace have him grill, Able
alone to shriek in wordless will:
vbgkq cmfwy shrld etaoin shrldu mfwyp oain xz
Forevermore.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 31, 1903

**ENGLISH AS SHE IS WROTE
FROM PRINTERS’ REGISTER**

The teacher, a lesson he taught;
The preacher, a sermon he praught;
The stealer, he stole;
The healer, he hole;
And the screecher, he awfully scraught.

The long-winded speaker, he spoke;
The poor office-seeker, he soke;
The runner, he ran;
The dunner, he dan;
And the shrieker, he horribly shroke.
The flyer on “wings of love” flew;
They buyer, on credit he bew;
The doer, he did;
The suer, he sid;
And the liar (a fisherman), lew.
The writer this nonsense he wrote;
The fighter, a rival he fote;
The swimmer, he swam;
The skimmer, he skam;
And the biter was hungry, and bote.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 35, 1905

A SONG OF THE LEADEN TYPE

(Dedicated to the International Typographical Union)
BY GEORGE E. BOWEN

I sing a song of the Mighty Force
That dwells in the dusty case,
Oh, it charts the paths of the endless course
Of the mind of the Master race.
Upper or lower, I pick my notes
To letter the muse’s staff,
And I sing for truth, with a million throats,
A plea in the Slaves’ behalf.
Oh, the molten flash of the Linotype
Is dashing away the fears
That burned in the scar of the goad’s raw stripe

That stung for a thousand years;
And whether the bondage be of law,
Or whether of mind or heart,
There isn’t a cruel fang to draw
that the power of type won’t start.
Liberty stands by the galley, now,
To censor the stealthy fault,
And puncture the lies that the Kings allow—
Or serve them with sparkling salt.
Oh, the days of relish for facts are long,
And the nights for chainless dreams—
So the type clicks merrily into my song
As the light of its freedom gleams.
Under the thunderous presses shoot
The sentence of Prince or Priest,
And the tyrant flies from his black repute
Away from the West or East.
Oh, sweet is the service of cloudless light,
To the darkness of the mind.
Oh, blessed the glory of welcome sight,
To the misery of the blind.
Gothic, Brevier or Nonpareil,
Keep to your sacred task,
For your translation must always spell
The faith that the people ask.
Oh, keep it plain in the head-lines set
O’er the creed of a common hope,
That the cry of Nations be answered yet,
Thro’ the gloom where their follies grope.
I sing a song of the victory
Of the Type o’er the rusting Sword,
And its banner waves to destiny,
Where peace is at last restored.
Oh, measure it quickly, stick by stick,
In the light of a fervent prayer,
For the Rulers listen to hear the click
Of the pardon their sins shall wear.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 33, 1904

**THE PRINTERS’ AGREEMENT
BY STRIKLAND W. GILLILAN**

In Knoxville (hard by Hammersburg), a town of small
dimensions,
There dwelt four wily printer men, each making bold
pretensions
To do the finest, cheapest work within that little ville,
While each, in settling, strove to give best discount on his
bill.
This system proved so ruinous to one and all, that they
Decided they would meet and fix the matter up, one day.
And thus they met: Old Piker Slugge, Jim Dash and
Collum Rule,
With Shutin Styck, who came at length, though seeming
rather cool.
The diffidence of rivalry o’ercome, they settled down
To blowing up the patrons of their craft, within that town:
The stinginess of this one and the crookedness of that

They chattered o'er — you may be sure each had his man
down pat.
Then to the things more businesslike before the house they
came,
And each told prices he had made to men he called by
name.
An ironclad agreement they perfected then and there.
On prices they all agreed were practical and fair.
And then — such faithless creatures as those printers
proved to be! —
Each rubbed his hands in pleasure and each hugged
himself in glee;
He'd learned just what the others would be asking, and he
knew
Just how much he should charge, to beat the others black
and blue.
Each sliced the price agreed on till you'd never recognize
it,
Each wondered at dull trade — he'd hoped he might
monopolize it,
Then each felt scarcely half the size of Towser's smallest
flea
When he discovered all the rest had done the same as he!
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 33, 1904

THE PRINTER'S SOLILOQUY

BY JOHN C. HILL

(With apologies to Shakespeare and Chimmy Fadden)

To cut, or not to cut, that is the question.
Whether 'tis better for the pocket
To let the chap who knows not,
And knows not that he knows not,
Have the work at cut-throat price, or to Take up arms
against this sea of troubles, And, by opposing tit for tat,
end them? To cut—
To slash—and by a slash to put the other cutter Out the
running— 'tis a consummation Devoutly to be wish'd.
To cut — to slash —
To slash—perchance myself to get it in the neck—
Ay, there's the rub; for when one starts
To meet the other fellow's price, 'tis like
As not he'll find he's up against it
Good and hard.
To cut is not to end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks That
printers' flesh is heir to.
Nay, nay, Pauline; 'tis but the preface
Of that business sleep of death, which will
Ere long, make us shuffle off this mortal coil
Of debt and mortgages which such a course engenders. 'Tis
well to get the price, the price The work is worth, and not
be bullied Into printing it for what John So-and-So Will
do it for. Methinks I'll make the customer Believe my
work is It, the only It worth having;
And when his native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And I have him on the string, almost, almost,

I'll clinch the argument with specimens of good work
Which can not be approach'd.
So will I gather to myself much business—
Enterprises of great pith and moment. Thus, cutting doth
appear unseemly; and fit Only for the man who knows
not what His work is worth, and who, ere long, By very
stress of making odorous comparison Betwixt bankbooks
and stubs o'checks, Will make his exit for that
undiscovered country From whose bourne no traveler
returns.

—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 34, 1904

A PROOFROOM TRAGEDY

BY B. B.

The printer donned his office coat,
And eke his cuffs doffed he,
Then scrabbled o'er his littered desk
For proofs that there mote be.
Ye proofs that this good customer,
Job Holdemup, had sent,
With marks most curiouslie devised
And pleanteouslie besprent.
“Now, what the —.” Hold, my reader, hold,
I dare not here relate
The words that printer-man let fall,
Nor will tergiversate.

He gazed upon those curious marks
With eyes intent and blear.
(The hairs upon my head arose
And quaked my limbs in fear.)
He hied him to the Proofreader,
So calm, so wise, so slow,
That man of rules and instances
That plague the printers so.
He glared upon the Proofreader—
The Reader glared at him,
Ere yet the clouds of conflict rose
The lights burned low and dim.
There hangs upon the moated wall
A cage of ghastly guise.
A legend reads:
YE BRAINERIE
“ 'Tis Folly to be Wise.”
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 34, 1905

THE HOPPERTOWN GAZETTE

BY ROY K. MOULTON

There is a certain journal that arrives here once a week.
It is the proper thing to have when all the news you seek.
It's full of information from the first page to the last.
It tells you of the future, of the present and the past.
It's always very accurate, and you can safely bet
A thing is true when printed in the Hoppertown
GAZETTE.
I always like to sit and read the good old-fashioned news
Contained within its columns and the interchange of views.
It has no gaudy pictures of the yellow-journal style,

Its head-lines can't be read with ease for more than half a mile.

Its insides are of boiler plate and pale pill ads., but yet There's quite a lot of reading in the Hoppertown GAZETTE.

The editor is not a very handsome sort of guy.

He sits and sees delinquents by the legion going by.

He gets his three squares every day, that is to say, some days,

When some subscriber happens to forget himself and pays,

But still, with all his troubles, it's seldom that you get

A more delightful paper than the Hoppertown GAZETTE.

It says: "Hank Jones is building a new hencoop on his farm."

And, "Grandma Higgins slipped the other day and sprained her arm."

And, "Jasper Johnson's waiting now on Miss Luella Wing,"

The wedding bells, so it is said, are just about to ring.

Lots of rain here lately and the ground is most too wet.

Please settle your subscription to the Hoppertown

GAZETTE.

"Amos Smith got drunk last week and now he's feeling bad.

Party down at Kay's last night. Pleasant time was had.

Baby boy at William Nye's. Mother is doing well.

News are mighty scarce this week. There ain't much to tell.

We've got a few outstanding bills that surely must be met,

So please call in and settle with the Hoppertown

GAZETTE.

"Henry Brown is thinking some of building a new fence.

Good boy, Henry. Let us hope that you will soon commence.

Andy Wilson's driving now quite a bit at night.

Ah, there, Andy, what's her name? You are out of sight.

Bill Hinds was here from Bangor on Thursday of last week.

John Mudge's duck boat on the creek has went and sprang a leak."

That's the kind of wholesome news you're always sure to get

When you let your optics wander o'er the Hoppertown GAZETTE.

—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 36, 1906

WHO'S WHO IN PRINTERDOM

BY PAUL J. PETERS

Who gives instructions clear as mud And when your art begins to bud Who "jumps upon you" with a thud?

The Foreman.

Who in one hollow, wedge-shaped line Can fifty frightful "bulls" combine, Reset and make them worse each time?

The Operator.

To lift whose ads. You can't begin, And who, with self-complacent grin, Leaves out the words that "won't go in"?

The Adman.

Who marks in commas just for fun,

And when the job is nearly run

Finds errors plain as noonday sun?

The Proofreader.

Who so abhors monotony,

Each page a different length must be?

Who hides his string-ends carefully?

The Make-up

Who bends the chase like Cupid's bow, And when the type moves to and fro, Who plugs a quad and lets her go?

The Stoneman.

Who puts the form on wrong-end to, Who sets his guides a mile askew, And can't tell pink from Prussian blue?

The Pressman.

When quoin or key on halftone lies, Who starts the press with dreamy eyes And feeds the sheets in cornerwise?

The Feeder.

Who cleans the brayer with a spade, And thinks he knows the bloomin' trade;

Whose ways are in his name betrayed?

The Devil.

Who sweetly lauds his fellow's art,

And flawlessly performs his part;

Whose work defies the critic's dart?

Why, I don't believe I've met the gentleman.

—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 43, 1909

A BRAND-NEW SERIES

BY EDWARD SINGER

We've got a brand-new series—

One of the latest faces—

And every single typo

Is scurrying for the cases!

No matter what the job is

The foreman's deadly fear is

He's apt to find a poster

Set in that light-face series!

The devil wants the 10-point,

McCready wants the eight,

And "Bill" also wants it

And finds the time to wait;

"Jack" Nixon wants the thirty,

And so does "Wally" Shonts,

Who bows to "Jack" and murmurs:

"You first, my dear Alphonse."

We've got a brand-new series—

The Caslon is forgotten,

The Gothics cut no figure,

The Mercantile is rotten;

Engraver's Bold is common,

And Briggs fell dead when Pinchell Forgot the brand-new series And set a job in Winchell!

The devil wants the 12-point,

McCready wants the six;

All sizes of the series

Are dropping in the sticks.

The cabinet is crowded

With printers ten abreast.
Just buy a brand-new series
And the boys will do the rest.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 39, 1907

This is pretty accurate picture of what happened in my own experience—it never failed that when the Firm installed a new series, everybody wanted to use it, especially the mark-up men, who “killed” it by using the new face whether it was appropriate or not.

WHEN I WAS A KID
BY BENT TWIGLEY

When I was a kid I served a term
As roustabout in a printer’s firm.
I washed the rollers, and I mopped the floor, And I put the
dirty water o’er the sanctum door.
I balanced the pail so carefuller
They gave me the roller where it hadn’t ought to be.
(Repeat the last two lines staccato.)
P.S. — The boss bought a new suit.
I put a pillow beneath my vest,
And somewhere else—you may guess the rest. I pulled the
proofs on the old hand press And mixed the “takes” in a
lovely mess.
I mixed them up so fine and free
They dusted my clothes quite thoroughlee.
(Repeat, somewhat sustained.)
P.S. — The comps. also dealt me a hand or two. Clubs
trumps.
In course of time I learned the case;
Each little type in its little place.
The very first time I filled my hand I threw it in to beat the
band.
I filled that minion case so quick
I made all former records sick.
(Repeat, making a noise like a pied form.)
P.S.—It was eight-point at that, too.
I kicked the Gordon and I wrapped the mail, And I
dumped the paste in the old lye pail. I washed the forms
when the run was through, And rinsed them off with Le
Page’s glue. O, I rinsed them off so thoroughlee They
spent a week in looking for me.
(Repeat, loud as possible.)
P.S. - They threw it in with a hammer.
They showed me type lice in the face, They sent me for an
italic space.
I found it on a tamarack
And brought it back in a canvas sack.
I threw the sack upon the floor.
Then bolted out and locked the door.
(Repeat, in full chorus.)
P.S.—O yes, I forgot. It was a hornet’s nest.
Now devils all, you may take it from me, If you want to
rise to the top of the tree, Forget your past, resplendent
though it be, And drive it out of your memoree.
Forget your past when you lay it away,
For you may be a foreman of a shop some day.

(Repeat, ad lib.)
P.S. - Capital punishment of devils is discouraged.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 37, 1906

AN ELEGY IN A COUNTRY PRINT-SHOP
BY J.W. FOLEY

He’s taken thirty off the hook; it’s quitting time for
“Slim”;
We’ve closed the shop this afternoon to read the proof on
him,
And find it pretty middling clean, a pi line here and there,
But only such a one as apt to slip in anywhere;
His ticket’s on the Foreman’s desk, all figured up, I s’pose.
He had some fat takes and some lean, but that’s the way it
goes;
I don’t know what’s his overtime or what his check will
be,
I guess he’ll strike the average, along with you and me.
He set a measure middling wide—he liked to set that way;
His work was mostly solid stuff, and not much on display;
He ought to lived three score of years, a friend of yours
and mine.
It’s tough to think some worthless chap is quadding out his
line
He told me nigh a month ago, as cool as anything,
His dupes were cut and pasted up—a middling longish
string.
He said he never skinned the Shop, and guessed he’d had
his share
Of overtime and double price, and maybe some to spare.
He set a proof that showed up clean, and did his work up
right,
He never shirked by day so he could double-space the
night.
The make-up’s dumped his matter in, his form is closed,
you see;
His galley’s empty on the rack, his slug is twenty-three.
We don’t know what the Cashier’s desk will have to give it
Slim;
We’ll mark a turned rule in the proof and say a prayer for
him.
For him the dawn is in the East, it’s getting light Uptown,
And thirty’s taken off the hook, the last form’s going
down!
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 41, 1908

A STICK OF TYPE
BY C. D. STUART

A stick of type! What shot or shell
From war’s grim camp hath half the power?
A stick of type! With this one thought:
Freedom is Man’s God-given dower!
That stick of type hath more of might Than warrior hosts
or fortress walls, And it shall batter towers to dust That
laugh at siege or cannon balls.
That stick of type! I see it break The eldest of the blood-
built thrones, And lift the yoke from millions, bowed
O’er dead slave-millions’ bleaching bones.

That stick of type! Careering fleets Before it idly flap their wings,
And bannered armies pass like chaff, Grown hideous 'mong remembered things.

That stick of type! God bless the Faust, Who wrought it in his conquering brain:

That stick of type! God bless the Hoe, Who scatters it abroad like rain.

The type! The press! The living thought! By stream and lightning spread abroad,
Shall conquer yet, and bring to man, The freedom, love, and truth of God!

—The Printing Art, Vol. 17, 1911, page 288

Ether the poet was misinformed or he couldn't rhyme Gutenberg for Faust, who "wrought it in his conquering brain."

WOMEN

ANONYMOUS

The sweetest Types upon the earth, The prettiest Forms, the fairest Faces,
The loveliest Flowers that e'er had birth, That ever clung to man's Em-braces.

—*The Printing Art*, Vol. 17, 1911

THE OLD WAY AND THE NEW

BY OSCAR LANGFORD

The typo's old pick from the case Has changed to machine's rapid pace—

To iron and steel,

To shafting and wheel,

And the keyboard has taken his place.

The clinking old rule and the stick,
With their time-beating, rattling click,
Are now laid away,
And slow "prints" and gray
Are "out" by a Linotype trick.

The tourist who shipped off as freight,
Arriving both early and late,
Panhandling, subbing,
Hungry for "grubbing,"
Has had to submit to his fate.

He walks or he rides on the road,
The fields and the plains his abode;
He is working no more,
But tramps till he's sore,
Since the Linotype's stream overflowed.

The old-fashioned cases grow few, Machines quickly cast the lines new;

"Distribution" is past

And "slugs" are all cast

By the stereotype metal-pot stew.

A long "fare thee well" to the stick
And the rule with musical click,
To the old wooden cases
And the smiling old faces

Of the boys who were quick on type-pick.

Adieu to the "strings" and the paste, To the longest we often have raced;

Old-timers are "out,"

But the young comp.'s about

And filling up columns with haste.

Yet the hand-setter never was known,

Nor proofreaders, sober, would own,

To "pass" such a mixture

Or puzzling picture

As machine "pi" often has shown.

For example: MdghFdhAscruslxyfelCroym.

—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 47, 1911

TO A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER

BY DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Wan-visaged thing! Thy virgin leaf To me looks more than deadly pale,
Unknowing what may strain the yet,—

A poem or a tale.

Who can thy unborn meaning scan?

Can Seer or Sibyl read thee now?

No,—seek to trace the fate of man

Writ on his infant brow.

Love may light on thy snowy cheek, And shake his Eden-breathing plumes;

Then thou shalt tell how Lelia smiles, Or Angelina blooms.

Satire may lift his bearded lance, Forestalling Time's slow-moving scythe,
And, scattered on thy little field,

Disjointed bards may writhe.

Perchance a vision of the night,

Some grizzled spectre, gaunt and thin,

Or sheeted corpse, may stalk along,

Or skeleton may grin!

If it should be in pensive hour

Some sorrow-moving theme I try,

Ah, maiden, how thy tears will fall,

For all I doom to die!

But if in merry mood I touch

Thy leaves, then shall the sight of thee

Sow smiles as thick on rosy lips

As ripples on the sea.

The Weekly press shall gladly stoop

To bind the up among its sheaves;

The Daily steal thy shining ore,

To gild it leaden leaves.

Thou has no tongue, yet thou canst speak, Till distant shores shall hear the sound;

Thou hast no life, yet thou canst breathe Fresh life on all around.

Thou art the arena of the wise, The noiseless battle-ground of fame;

The sky where halos may be wreathed Around the humblest name.

Take, then, this treasure to thy trust,

To win some idle reader's smile,

Then fade and moulder in the dust,
Or swell some bonfire's crackling pile.
—*The Printing Art*, Vol.17, 1911

A PLEA FOR THE BEST IN ENGRAVING
BY OLIVER L. BELL

They can hand you a copy as sharp as tacks,
With a "punch" in every line,
Dolled up by hand
With border and band,
Most elegant in design—

Your plant may be all a shop should be,
Each "comp." Have an artist's soul,
Your type may be new,
And your presses true,
And your men on the honor roll—

You may be as wise as the ancient guys, Plus all these
modern mutts—
But you can't make good,
As a printer should,
If you haven't got **FIRST CLASS CUTS**.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 53, 1914

SOLILOQUOYS OF THE DEVIL
BY H. F. LOCKHART

Most eight o'clock — and no one on the job.
Gee. But them printers has an easy lay! An' editors! Why,
crickey! Any slob Can hold an arm-chair down and draw
his pay. I wish that fresh young ed. Would get the can;
I'd show'em how this paper should be ran!
I s'pose, baccuse I'm devil here, they think That all I'm
good for is to shove a broom, Or get my face smeared up
with printers' ink A washin' forms in the composin'
room. Say! If they'd only give me half a show, I'd
learn'em how to make this bum sheet go!
Some day the senior ed. Will be took sick;
Then maybe there won't be an awful stew!
They'll want some editorial copy quick;
Them fresh reporters won't know what to do. And then I'll
say, as calm as can be, "Aw don't you fret; just leave it
all to me!"
And then they'll stand and watch me sling the ink And
nudge each other, and when I am done, They'll say, "The
boss's stuff is on the blink' Gee, Hennery, you sure have
got him skun!" And then I'll answer with a mordest
grace, An' say, "Aw, quit yer kiddin'; close yer face!"
Then when the boss comes back afeelin' blue,
An' thinkin' the whole place is out of joint
Because he hooked it for a day or two,
Some one will bring the paper in and point
To what I wrote, and say, "That there's some kid!"
Say, Henry has done it' see what he has did!"
An' then the boss won't know just what to say—
He'll be so kinder taken by surprise—
He'll take the paper in a half-dazed way As if he couldn't
scarce believe his eyes. Say! When the old man reads

what I have wrote, Take it from me, it sure will get his
goat!
But then, doggone it, just as like as not He'll be so green
about what I have did, He'll up and say, "You're fired on
the spot," An' hardly give me time to grab me lid Before
he tows me to the outside door. Gosh! There's the
foreman—I ain't swept this floor.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 48, 1911

**THE INVENTION OF PRINTING—
A LEGEND**
BY RUBY E. LIVINGSTON

Back to the dawn of Creation,
Back when the earth was new.
Once lived a man and a woman
In a garden—just the two.
There were dells and bowers to explore,
With the lure that in them lies,
And the charm of sole possession
Of this, their own Paradise.

'Twas a life of joy unbounded,
Their cares and sorrows were nil;
The man in leisure grew restless
And wandered-as husbands will.
He sometimes was late to dinner,
For clocks were not running then;
His minutes oft lapsed into hours—
For such are the ways of men!

So Eve, with no gossiping neighbors, Grew lonely,
beginning to fret—
She knew not the art of making a dart In a fig-leaf skirt as
yet—"There's no use staying alone all day With Adam
away," said she, "I think I'll go for a stroll and explore
That wonderful apple tree."
"But how shall the man know where I am Should he come
and I not here?"
Then upon the sand with nimble hand She printed some
pictures clear.
"Twill solve the problem of many a thing In future years,"
said she;
"With this crooked stick I'll crave for him The way to the
apple tree."

* * *

The man came, saw, and wondered, And said in his
puzzled mind:
"Why can't I carve upon these rocks Some record to leave
behind?"
So they studied out hieroglyphics,
And I doubt not we could trace
And decipher some of their records, If only we knew the
place.
Then down through the countless ages
The wondrous printing came,
The vanguard of civilization,
With ever-widening fame.

I reverence the Goddess of Liberty,
 Long may her banner unfurl!
 But 'tis not our noble Goddess,
 But Printing lighting the world.
 Flashed o'er the mountains by lightnings,
 Leaping o'er sea and land,
 The very winds are its newsboys,
 Obeying its slightest command!
 The oceans stretch forth their cables, The wireless waits at
 its call That printing may flash through the nations,
 Dissembling disseminating knowledge to all.
 Scattering broadcast the tidings,
 Bringing both sorrow and joy, or
 Telling of wand and of suff'ring,
 And grimmest disasters of war;
 It chronicles births and diseases,
 It tells, too, of weddings galore;
 It molds events into history—
 News—inexhaustible store!

And as long as the earth shall endure,
 On down to the end of time,
 The service of printing will render
 Its blessing to every clime.

* * *

But I think that the art of printing—
 I hope you'll agree it's true—
 Was invented back in Eden—
 And that by a woman, too!
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 53, 1914

THE PRINTER MAN

ANONYMOUS

I LISTEN to the printer man discourse about his art,
 And trace the wisdom of his ways and take his words to
 heart.
 No thing that ever was produced upon the printing-press
 But he has done long years ago, and freely he'll confess
 That if he'd laid his mind to it and let his genius run
 He'd set a pace would dust the face of mighty Edison.
 I knew him long, long years ago, when rollers first came
 in;
 He viewed them with sardonic eyes and most sarcastic
 grin.
 He twirled the ink balls then and there with mighty
 muscled thews,
 And said, "Them candy rolls for sure give me a fit of
 grues."
 The days are gone when patiently he set the type by hand,
 For now machines set words and lines and old-time ways
 are canned.
 But still the printer reaches back to the top shelf in his
 mind,
 And all new things are old to him and naught to him is
 blind.
 Assured he is in mysteries of his mysterious art,

The glories of the past are his, and I am just a wart.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 56, 1916

SOLILOQUIE OF THE DEVIL

BY H. F. LOCKHART

I hate to see the sunshine on the wall—
 It looks so much like Rosie's pompadour;
 Gee, for a cent I'd just sit down and bawl To think that she
 won't ever come no more.
 We've got a new stenographer—oh laws!
 An' Rosie's gone—they fired her to-day. The chief he said
 he let her go because She couldn't spell. What's spellin'
 anyway?
 I know just why. That fresh young junior ed.
 Howled 'cause she spelled "condition" with a "k";
 I wish I had a chance to punch his head.
 I guess I wouldn't hand him one—the jay!
 Well, maybe Rosie wasn't swift as some At poundin' keys,
 but she was just my style;
 And maybe this new bat will make 'em hum;
 But looks! Say, Rosie had her skinned a mile!
 Gosh! I was so surprised I couldn't speak When I saw this
 one. Gee I got a shock! She's thirty-five years old if
 she's a week, An' homely! Aw, her face would stop a
 clock!
 I tell you, Rosie was the candy kid.
 You'd know to look at her that she was some. You'd tell it
 by the way her hair was did, And by the classy way she
 chewed her gum.
 But now she's gone, and life's a pickled lime.
 The foreman jaws—he'd better save his breath;
 If he should come and say "Go get your time," And
 bounce me. I'd be tickled half to death.
 Then I'd go off and run a pirut ship Until I made a million
 plunks or so, And then I'd take my tainted wad and skip,
 An' go and buy a print-shop with my dough.
 Then I'll set round and be a howlin' swell, An' little Rose
 can come an' work for me. An' I won't give a ding if she
 can't spell.
 Aw, don't get fresh! I'm comin'. Can't you see?
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 49, 1912

YOU SALESMEN

BY ISAAC H. BLANCHARD

When the train pulls you in and you grab up your grip,
 And the hackman is there with his old frayed-out whip,
 And you call on your man and you try to be gay, And all
 you get is "Nothing doing today"—
 Then you're a PEDDLER!
 By Gad, you're a Peddler.
 When you get into town and you call on your man,
 You ask, can he see you; and he says "Sure you can";
 And you size up his stock and he helps in the count,
 And then tells you to send "The usual amount"—
 Then you're an ORDER TAKER!
 By Gad, you're an Order Taker.
 When you travel along and everything's fine,
 And you do not get up until half after nine,

Then you see each concern and talk of conditions—
 And you write it all home with many additions—
 Then you're a TRAVELING MAN!
 By Gad, you're a Traveling Man.
 When you call on the trade and they're grumpy and sore,
 And swear they want nothing and will buy nothing more,
 But you smile and you talk and you get them all right,
 And send in their orders just the same every night—
 Then you're a SALESMAN!
 By Gad, you're a Salesman.
 —*The Printing Art*, Vol. 28, 1916

SOLILOQUIES OF THE DEVIL

BY H. F. LOCKHART

I got a grouch. I feel so blasted sore I never speak a decent
 word—I can't. An' I don't care a darn. The things I've
 bore 'S enough to make a preacher croak his aunt. Now
 it's vacation time, or soon will be, An' every geezer's
 gettin' one but me.
 Say, ain't it fierce? Here's Henry on the trot Six days a
 week, an' fit to curl his hair. Does any guy say "thank
 you"? I guess not;
 They only holler, "Get a move on, there!" Gee, then I
 jump! An' some fresh mutt will say "This ain't no
 funeral—goin' to start today?"
 I've toted metal till my back was broke;
 I've shacked for everybody in the shop. Believe me, Oscar,
 it ain't any joke To fetch and carry till you almost drop,
 But if there's any soft things handed out, They jest fergit
 that Henery's about.
 There's Old Man Smith. He says he's goin' to take
 A trip to Texas. Aw, I wisht he'd stay!
 The way he hollers round here makes me ache.
 I bet I'll have some peace while he's away.
 The firemen's convention's comin', too.
 He'll take that in.—Vacations! He has two!
 The bookkeeper, she's goin' on a trip. The boss gave her
 and the stenographer An advertisin' pass on a swell ship
 Across the Lakes.—Huh! Pretty soft for her! He's got a
 lot of passes. Gets 'em free;
 But he don't never hand none out to me.
 There's that guy Kenney; every little while He shakes the
 joint. He says he's gotta go;
 The Red Men can't pull off their stunts in style If he ain't
 there. He's mostly the whole show, Or else he's got his
 garden truck to tend—
 He's got excuse enough, and some to lend.
 Well, I should worry. Some one's got to stay To keep the
 dump from goin' to the bad. I s'pose they pick the best
 man anyway, So maybe I was wrong in gettin' mad. But
 say! Let Henry whisper in your ear;
 They'll be darn glad to let me go next year!
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 53, 1914

TYPEFOUNDERS' PUNNING

BY J. W. R. (READ AT A TYPEFOUNDERS' SOCIAL
 REUNION IN 1857)

Types of the genus homo, hail!

Hail, FACES new and old;
 We're glad to meet these BODIES cast In nature's truthful
 MOLD.
 If we're not truly NONPAREIL,
 At least no MINION's here;
 Nor one old "Nick," though strange to tell, The printers
 keep one near.
 We're glad no PUNCH has made a show To throw us out
 of LINE;
 Hence we'll not BOTTLE-HEADED go, Nor BREAKERS
 round us shine.
 May we not FOUNDER on life's sea, While driving o'er
 the wave;
 RULES yet a God to GUIDE us free To ports beyond the
 grave.
 Oft did a DRESSING-ROD illumine
 In youth the dullest mind;
 In age, the world's a DRESSING-ROOM With
 DRESSERS fill'd, we find.
 In RUBBING through this world of sin We're LE(A)D to
 pick our way, Wanting, like others, BRASS and TIN.
 And PURCHASERS who pay.
 And yet we're ANTI-MON(E)Y men, And love not
 DROSS at all;
 Yet we are made of METTLE when Our customers do call.
 It has been said there's nothing new
 Beneath the burning sun,
 But here's a CASE (the first, 'tis true)—
 This meeting's surely one.

May it give birth to confidence;
 May amity abound;
 May it the MATRIX be from whence True friendship shall
 be found.
 And now, good friends, may you excuse MACHINES like
 that which CAST These wretched JETS—but there's
 good news, The JOKER'S BROKE at last.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 57, 1916
 Harking back to the days when types were still made by
 hand, this poem uses terms that were unknown in the type-
 making industry in 1925.
 Page 84

STRAIGHT FROM THE DEVIL

BY HERBERT ARTHUR

The foreman tried me out on distribution And fiercely
 swore when I mistook a case. To learn the types I tried a
 new solution, For, otherwise, I_d still be in disgrace.
 With pica I_d mix ten-point in confusion—
 But what_s a point or two between good friends?
 Bourgeois and minion forced the wise conclusion
 These war-like thoughts would help attain my ends;
 The Belgians are brevier howe_er you take 'em;
 Distinctly nonpareil the poilus are;
 The tommies are as English as they make 'em;
 The seventy-mile long-primer shoots too far.

The kaiser gets a pica's satisfaction When Ludendorff, his
 minion, reeks in crime. The boches are bourgeois in
 thought and action;
 Small pica is the crown prince all the time.
 Allies believed in simple composition—
 The body-matter solid nonpariel;
 Brevier for subheads made a fine addition And strong
 display in English fitted well.
 Now, solid nonpareil is double-leaded;
 Brevier and English battered till they fall.
 Over the top a stronger line is headed—
 American great primer leads 'em all.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 62, 1918

This is a war-time poem in which the author cleverly
 co-ordinates World War I conditions with printers'
 terminology

THE LOVE OF PRINTED THINGS

BY CLYDE B. MORGAN

Yes, I'm sort o' bookish,
 Loving printed things,
 Loving type and paper,
 'Round which beauty clings.

Loving fine old woodcuts,
 And a chapter head,
 And a fine initial
 With a touch of red.

Imprints of the masters,
 Colophons so rare,
 All reveal the craftsman,
 And a world of care.

Type of grace and power,
 Of a bygone age,
 Tell their tales eternal
 On the printed page.

And I'll love them always—
 Sort o' bookish, quite—
 Revelling in these treasures,
 Finding real delight.

But I'm so contented,
 When I think of them,
 I would rather have this love
 Than a diadem.

Bookish! Ah, 'tis truthful,
 And I shall confess,
 Nothing here on mother earth
 Brings more happiness.

Type, initials, borders,
 Paper, ink, divine,
 What on earth is greater,

Than this love of mine?
 —*The American Printer*, Vol. 79, 1924

REQUIESCAT IN PICA

BY R. M. P.

I reckon now my sun is set,
 Old-timers are crossed off the list,
 No job holds forth for me, and yet,
 I wonder if we "tramps" are missed.

New notions of a younger day, All straight stuff set
 typewriter style, While shell-glassed "ad-men" draw the
 pay, No "growler" guards the copy file—
 The romance all has gone west,
 For "mats," fool-proof, can not be pied;
 No office joker works with zest, And "system" keeps 'em
 cut and dried.

No 'baccy juice or stale pipe smoke A halo 'round the
 office keep, And while subscribers cough and choke, The
 foreman rouses from his sleep.
 "Efficiency" they call the germ
 That drove the type-louse from his case. Oh, well, I'm old
 and served my term, And guess I must give up my place.
 Enough of this old-timer's chant, But, here, what's this
 Help Wanted ad? "Night watchman in a printing-plant,"
 Say, pal, I'll get a job, begad!
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 62, 1918

THE PRINTER

BY WILLIS HUDSPETH

What man is that in yon back room, With dirty floor and
 walls of gloom—
 That man who rises in his hand
 A stick of steel like magic wand,
 A-bending over stone and case
 With knitted brow and sweaty face,
 Like some grim alchemist of yore
 Endeav'ring secrets to explore—
 That man obscure behind the scenes?
 What does he do? What are his means? As this mysterious
 one with care Move soil-ed fingers through the air, Both
 men and women laugh and cry, Supinely hope and lonely
 sigh.
 With line of type and drop of ink
 He makes a million people think.
 He radiates both joy and woe,
 And, like the strings of piano,
 Or doubtful wave upon the sea,
 Emits discord or harmony;
 Or, like the fabled fountain's glitter, Pours forth its streams
 both sweet and bitter.
 All earthly knowledge passes through
 His stick, and whether false or true,
 By "art preservative of arts,"
 He teaches teachers all their parts.
 Before his wand great tyrants quail,
 Or nod in pleasure at his will.
 He strikes a key that sets on fire

A nation's thought, and mad desire,
 The deadliest that man abhor
 Runs rife till spent in clash of war;
 Or strikes another key that sends
 A wave of amity that blends
 Humanity, misunderstood,
 In one great, glorious brotherhood.
 With copy in his hands unfurled,
 He reads the mind of all the world.
 His task pursuing with a strain,
 He works with muscle and with brain, And, though
 proverb'ly poor himself, Helps others to amass their pelf.
 We marvel at his wondrous might To play with darkness
 or with light, And make us act upon suggestions Or
 change our mind on many questions.
 Is he a sorcerer resourceful,
 With penetrating mind and forceful—
 A menace to the human race, Who should be shuffled off
 the face Of earth into chaotic night, Like Lucifer, the
 dang'rous, bright? Like Mr. Hyde and Dr. Jekyll, A loyal
 friend and fiendish, fickle? No. He is the phonograph;
 Recorder, like the photograph,
 Of things that are, if good or evil—
 An honest man—he's not the devil!
 He's but a nat'ral, faithful mirror,
 Reflecting truth as well as error.
 When all mankind aspires to love,
 And has no thought but from above, You'll find the
 Printer, If you choose, A working on the Heav'nly News,
 Produced by One who never makes Intended errors or
 mistakes, Whose forms are never pied or late—
 The Universal Printer Great.
 —*The Printing Art*, Vol. 29, 1917

HELP WANTED—OR THE LAY OF THE LOST COPYHOLDER

BY GEORGE O. JAGER

Now there's been all kinds of writin'. In prehistoric date
 Man scrawled on a stone with an ape's shinbone or
 scratched with a bit of slate
 Heteroglyphic hieroglyphics on the rocks or cliffs o'erhead
 Or pebbles paleolithic, from an antediluvian bed.
 Later they used the stalk of plants, wood-pulp or bark of a
 tree,
 The stylus and papyrus, pressed clay or ivory.
 While the mid-age monks, on sheepskin stiff, with pen of a
 goose's quill
 Tossed off the so-called "classics," which schoolboys
 ponder still.
 And there's been al styles o' writin'—the Jap and the
 heathen Chinese
 Wrote from bottom to top—as you see on a box of tea!
 The Persian wrote from right to left, and the Babylonian
 bold
 From left to right—the exact reverse—that is, so I've been
 told.
 Others again employed both styles, and wrote from right to
 left,

And then from left to right again— a cross-cut saw effect,
 Swaying alternately back and forth, in a manner based
 upon
 The famous system practiced by the ancient
 boustrophedon!
 But of all the weirdest writin' that ever is or was
 Some of these want-ad. fellers break all of chirography's
 By holdin' the paper upside down or at obtuse angular
 slant,
 You may decipher something—but most of the time—you
 can't!
 A signature often resembles a snake, yet hardly, that,
 forsooth!
 For you can't make head or tail of it, and to tell the simple
 truth,
 If you can't do that, then it ain't a snake, for may I rot in
 jail
 If there's anything else to a bloomin' snake outside of a
 head and tail
 Gutenberg, O Coster, or whoever the devil it was
 That invented the art of printin' and improved
 typography's laws,
 Three towns contended for your name, Mainz, Frankfort
 and Harlem, too,
 But which of the three deserved it I'm hanged if I know, do
 you?
 And thou, O industrious Mentel, thou too wert a mighty
 name
 And a tablet hung at Strassburg duly records our fame—
 But O great trio of typos, what boots all our learned skill
 When wretched mortals practice the art of longhand still!
 Oh, there's been some great names in printin',
 There's Jensen, whose characters rare
 To our modern architypographers prove both a pride and a
 deep despair.
 And Laurent St. Vincent Alopa, who embellished now and
 out-of-date
 Editions of "Lascaris" with his capitals ornate.
 Then there was the mighty Aldus, who from Gothic drew
 apart,
 And with svelte and graceful italic invented another art.
 Oh, I dream of these ancient artists and I feel a proper
 thrill—
 Then I think of these "longhand" scribblers, and I want to
 rise up and kill!
 Boy, page Ignatius Donnelly, send a tracer for Sam Lloyd,
 Bring me the Urim and Thummim that Joseph Smith
 employed!
 Like the learned Taylor and others who studied the
 alphabet's plan,
 I scrutinize strange symbols, weird signs and characters
 scan! Oh, soon I will go crazy, and in a padded cell Cut
 out little dollies, or leap and wildly yell. O Isis and
 Osiris, Oh, what a mess all this is!
 Osiris and O Isis, this writin' is a crisis!
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 73, 1924

THE PRINTER'S TOWEL

BY BURDETT

When I think of the towel,
The old-fashioned towel.
That used to hang up by the printing-house door,
I think that nobody,
In these days of shoddy,
Can hammer out iron to wear as it wore.
The tramp who abused it,
The devil who used it,
The comp. who got at it when these two were gone,
The makeup and foreman,
The editor, poor man,
Each rubbed some grime off for the heap they put on.
In, over, and under,
'Twas blacker than thunder;
'Twas harder than poverty, rougher than sin.
From the roller suspended,
It never was bended,
And it flapped on the wall like a banner of tin.
It grew thicker and rougher,
And harder and tougher,
And daily put on a more inkier hue;
Until, one windy morning,
Without any warning,
It fell on the floor and was broken in two.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 76, 1926

I AM THE PRINTING PRESS

BY ROBERT H. DAVIS

I AM the printing press, born of mother earth. My heart is
of steel, my
limbs are of iron, and my fingers are of brass.
I SING the songs of the world, the oratorios of history, the
symphonies
of all time.
I AM the voice of today, the herald of tomorrow. I weave
into the wrap
of the past the woof of the future. I tell the stories of peace
and war
alike.
I MAKE the human heart with passion or tenderness. I stir
the pulse of
nations, and make brave men do braver deeds, and soldiers
die.
I INSPIRE the midnight toiler, weary at his loom, to lift
his head again
and gaze, with fearlessness, into the vast beyond, seeking
the
consolation of
a hope eternal.

WHEN I speak a myriad people listen to my voice. The
Anglo-Saxon, the
Celt, the Hun, the Slav, the Hindu, all comprehend me.

I AM the tireless clarion of the news. I cry your joys and
sorrows every
hour. I fill the dullard's mind with thoughts uplifting, I am
light, knowledge, and Power. I epitomize the conquests
of mind over matter.

I AM the record of all things mankind has achieved. My
offspring comes to you in the candle's glow, amid the
dim lamps of poverty, the splendor of
riches; at sunrise, at high noon, and in the waning evening.
I AM the laughter and tears of the world, and I shall never
die until all things return to the immutable dust.

I AM the printing press.

—*The Printing Art*, Vol. 33, 1919

A KETTLE CREEK MONODY

BY N. J. WERNER (WITH APOLOGIES TO THE
AUTHOR OF THE "SPOON RIVER ANTHOLOGY")

Billy Herndon Talks:

'Tis strange,
That, after having "toured "
Through all our noble States
And parts of Canada—
At times in sorest need of funds
And then again quite flush with coin,
Oft carrying a card,
And quite as often not—
I should life's ending meet
In such an unpretentious spot
As Kettle Creek,
A town that almost missed the map;
That, after having dis't and set
All kinds of type, both large and small,
On almost every sheet
That's printed now or used to be
In this great realm that stretches from Atlantic to Pacific
coast, My "thirty" take should come to me In such a
pied-up place as was The KETTLE CREEK
RECORDER'S shop;
That, after having slaked my thirst
With many sorts of drink,
With whiskey straight (both raw and aged)
With fusel-oil and "rot-gut" fierce,
With cocktails, gins and ryes,
With wines and liquors good and bad,
With everything the barkeep mixed,
With beer in glasses, bottles, pails,
And often "rushed" in cans,
My throat at last was satisfied
With "booze" dispensed by him
Who kept the "Kettle Creek Saloon."
'Twas strange, indeed, the fate
Which caused the odd mistake
That careless barkeep made.
I ask'd, as oft I'd done before,
To have the Stoughton bitters flask—
To fix the Bourbon to my taste
I jiggered in a portion big.
He passed a bottle from his shelf;

I used the dope and quickly drank
 (Its taste was odd, but yet was good
 To one who likes his liquor strong);
 Next thing my corpse fell on the floor, My spirit from it
 flown.
 That jiggered stuff was aconite,
 A bit of which some barkeeps use
 To fortify the rasping taste
 Of whiskey when with water thinned.
 (Thus profits which a gallon gives
 Are multiplied by two and three.)
 It seems the bottles side by side
 Were ranged among his liquid stock;
 Nor he nor I the label saw,
 So here I'm dead in Kettle Creek.
 I have to say it for the boys, They did their best for me;
 For while they had no union there,
 Nor mortuary fund,
 They managed, in fraternal way,
 To pay respect to my remains.
 By chipping in a "plunk" or two,
 Each helped to get a coffin neat;
 They laid me in an humble grave,
 And had the village parson lead
 In prayer and song, and make a talk
 About the good they knew of me.
 I think he stretched a point or two,
 For in all honor I must say
 I'd led a life that held no good
 For self, nor kin, nor other folk.
 Perhaps it was that I lacked pride
 And cared me naught for high acclaim, For as the sands
 blown by the winds I drifted through the run of time,
 And gave no thought to what was wise, Nor how my
 course should governed be. But, why did fate make me a
 "print"?

Then "tramp" and then a "bum"?

How strange is fate,
 For through my death alone came good;
 Because the way it came about
 Brought change to Kettle Creek.
 That barkeep's conscience smote him sore And made him
 close his place at once;
 Through freed by jury and by court, He ne'er would serve
 a drink again;
 And since that day the town's been "dry"—
 No prohibition did it need.
 A generation now is passed, And all my bones have gone
 to rot, But still the good my death has caused Continues
 on and on.
 The town has grown some larger since, And many folks
 have gotten rich;
 They've spent their cash for better things Than can be
 found in saloon;
 They got more wealth, and also health, By giving time to
 useful work.
 The KETTLE CREEK RECORDER's plant Has bettered
 much, and there's no pi;

The shop is clean, the boys dress well—
 They've even got a Linotype.
 And so I'm glad I met my death,
 In manner told, at Kettle Creek.
 'Twas for the best, I'm sure—
 Yet, fate is strange.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 61, 1918

IN PRAISE OF PUNCTUATION POINTS
 BY AMOS R. WELLS

The Exclamation-point, how long! how slim!
 How very grateful we should be to him!
 We tremble! We're astonished! We're afraid!
 Behold! Behold! He rushes to our aid!
 Are you perplexed? Are all things out of joint?
 And do you know the Interrogation-point?
 Or have you tried what questioning will do?
 And have you found that he will bring you through?
 Dear Comma! most familiar, close at hand, Alert,
 prepared, you leap at our command, Glad, eager, swift,
 obedient to our will, And keen, though small, our
 purpose to fulfil.
 The Semicolon is a bit reserved;
 But, though he's cautious, never has he swerved.
 He may be prudent, backward, slow to clinch;
 Nevertheless, he's useful in a pinch.
 Now note the stately Colon's excellence:
 His reach, his grasp, his wide-embracing sense. Behold his
 qualities: imperious, bold, Eager to sieze and strenuous
 to hold.
 Alike, yet self-contained and different.
 The close-bound Hyphen holds his clear intent. Warm-
 hearted, he, sharp-sighted, eagle-eyed, And many by his
 firm-fixed bound are tried.
 But see—beware—he's near! the fervent Dash.
 Come, clear the way—he's swift and very rash!
 I tremble—ah, how masterful is he!
 What will become—look out! —of you and me!
 And now (how gracious, how benign are these!)
 A welcome to the calm Parentheses. So leisurely (why
 should we haste?) they move, Their wheels revolving in
 a double groove.
 "And these," you ask, "what little freaks are
 they?" "Quotation-marks," I answer, and they say
 Whatever you have said, and spread it far, Oh, what a
 pair of gossipers they are!
 And now we reach the satisfying end. Here is the Period,
 our constant friend, Wearisome poetry or tiresome prose,
 Though long spun out, he brings it to a close.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 75, 1925

LIFE'S COMPOSING ROOM
 BY ANN FALWELL ELLIS

I watch the man who bends
 Above the white hot blaze
 Where molten metal bubbles up
 To meet his anxious gaze,
 Discarded type again becomes

Perfection—for machines to mar,
 Recast, each time it must emerge
 A perfect silver bar.
 How like our soul it seems,
 This porridge on the fire;
 How like repentance is the flame
 That purges our desire
 And leaves us free from malice
 And from envy's green corrode,
 With high resolve to follow straight
 The ethics and the code!
 But when repentance leaves us
 With high resolve to do,
 Take care that penance follows
 Else the flame may not burn true.
 And pity him from whose neglect
 The fire burns low at last,
 Until his soul lacks courage
 To alter and recast.

For life is, after all,
 A big composing room,
 A “makeup” station for our souls
 That live beyond the tomb.
 And when at last we hear
 “Forms standing” from above
 The baser metals are consumed,
 And all that's left is love.

So, let's be thankful for the flame
 That burns within us all,
 That forces us to rise again
 When greed has made us fall.
 For when the last recast is made
 With paradise not far
 This flame alone can make our soul
 A perfect silver bar.
 —*Inland Printer*, Vol. 77, 1926

THE BANNER BEARERS OF EIGHTY-FIVE
 BY EARL HARRISON EMMONS

I've wandered the village, Tom,
 To see the changes made
 In that old shop where you and me
 Picked up the printing trade;
 But none were there to greet me, Tom, And few were left
 to know Who kicked the press in that old shop Some
 forty years ago.
 The place is just about the same,
 The devil just as green
 As you and me most likely were
 When we were seventeen.
 I saw him meet some type-lice, Tom,
 And Oh, I chuckled so
 To think how we were introduced
 Just forty years ago.

The old equipment's altered, Tom;

My frame is thrown away;
 They have a big composing mill
 To take its place today,
 But I recalled it just the same,
 And how I used to throw
 The primer in the nonpareil
 Some forty years ago

But over by the farther wall
 Your frame is still in place,
 Where, mounted on a boiler-box
 You stood to reach the case;
 It used to be so awful high
 But now it seems so low;
 I guess we've changed a little, too,
 Since forty years ago.

The office towel is missing, Tom,
 The one we used as kids,
 And gone are all the slugs we made
 From old cigar-box lids,
 But there is still that awful dent
 Along the floor, you know,
 Where you and me once pried a form Just forty years ago.
 The old asthmatic engine, Tom,
 Has wheezed its final wheeze;
 The shop is run by motors now
 With quite a lot more ease;
 Electric lights are all about
 And cast a brilliant glow
 In corners lit by candle light
 Some forty years ago.

Ah, yes, the place has changed a bit
 Since days of Eighty-five;
 There's not a one of our old gang,
 But you and me, alive.
 The ranks that packed the banner, Tom, Are running
 mighty low;
 Just you and me of all that crowd
 Of forty years ago.

It's quite a little journey, Tom,
 From then until today,
 But standing here and looking back
 I'm proud that we can say
 When our last string is measured up
 I know that it will show
 Our banner just as fair and bright
 As forty years ago.
 —*The American Printer*,
 40th Anniversary issue, Vol. 81, 1925

APOSTROPHE TO THE PRINTER
 BY WILLIS HUDSPETH

What man is that in you back room With littered floor and
 walls of gloom—
 That man who raises in his hand

A stick of steel or wizard's wand;
Deflecting over stone and case,
With wrinkled brow and heedful face,
Like some grim sorcerer of yore,
As though attempting to explore
The hidden things of earth and sky
And bare them to the public eye?

As this mysterious one with care Makes finger passes
through the air, Both men and women laugh and cry In
gladness, hope or sadness sigh.
With lines of type and drops of ink
He makes a million people think;
He radiates both joy and woe,
And, like the violinist's bow
Or sounding wave across the sea,
Emits discord or harmony.

All earthly knowledge passes through
His wand, and, whether false or true,
By "art preservative of arts,"
He teaches teachers all their parts.
Before his baton tyrants fall,
And freemen rally at his call;
He strikes a key that sets on fire
A nation's thought, and mad desire—
The deadliest that men abhor—
Runs rife till spent in clash of war.

He strikes another key that sends
A wave of amity that blends
Humanity, misunderstood,
In bonds of human brotherhood.
He changes fleecy white to black.
Then metamorphoses it back.
We marvel at his magic might
To play with darkness or with light. And make us act upon
suggestion, Or change our minds on ev'ry question.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 77, 1926
The original of this poem is given under the title **THE
PRINTER**,
page 76, being taken from "The Printing Art," 1917. It
seems the author
altered and "apostrophised" it for this 1926 appearance.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN'S LIFE
BY WILLIS HUDSPETH, THE EDITOR

With pencil, pipe, and telephone
He occupies the sanctum throne,
Directing copy for the force
To follow up the narrow course.
Advancing those who do their parts
According to the art of arts,
The gates are open to the deed,
Not color, class, or race, or creed.
THE REPORTER
He recognizes what is news
And has sense of puzzling clues;

Assigned perhaps to some bad run, He labors till the task is
done.
Sometimes he finds himself a dupe,
But often carries home a scoop,
And no temptation is too great
To not produce the story straight.

THE COMPOSITOR

While tediously he toils to make
A faultless record from his take,
He does not contemplate despair
To stick a blunder here and there.
Without compunction or regret
For any pieces he has set,
He makes the changes that express Improvement in his
carelessness.

THE PHOTOENGRAVER

Though photographs may never lie,
Photographers may falsify
In honest efforts to be true
To work designed for them to do.
Depending largely on the light
To get his illustrations right,
By caution and the acid test
He reproduces what is best.

THE PROOFREADER

Though others, too, should share the blame,
He takes upon himself the same
For ev'ry error that appears,
And for perfection perseveres.
By thus atoning for their faults,
He unmistakably exalts
Himself, and on the judgment day
My find his own proofs all O.K.

THE STEREOTYPYPER

The plate that hardens from his mold
Is past correction when it's cold;
The only chances for reform
Are in the metal when it's warm.
However late, his day of grace
Is never lost in any case;
He has occasion to the last
To melt and make another cast.

THE PRESSMAN

Impressed with time's important scroll,
He grabs the bundle or the roll
And puts the touch of finish to
What all the other printers do.
He fails at times to register,
But 'tis no sign he wants to err;
He shifts his form or seeks to move His efforts in the
proper grove.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 79, 1927

A PRINTER'S REVERIE

BY O. J. SNODIE

Oh, I'm glad that I'm a Printer And can work with words
and type To broadcast the world's achievements And
proclaim the wrong and right;
For the people need good reading
And are always wont to find
Some good in any literature
That's printed for mankind.

Yes, I'm glad that I'm a Printer.
Though they seldom achieve fame
I can work with words and sentences
That oftentimes will remain
To tell the world in years to come
Of deeds we strived to do
And the fulfilment of our earnest hopes, To give the best to
you.

Yes, I'm glad that I'm a Printer,
Through they seldom think of me
Except to point out my mistakes,
Which tickles them with glee;
But if they knew how hard I've worked To make a perfect
score, They'd pass them by without a thought And find
some good in store.

Yes, I'm glad that I'm a Printer,
Printing things which people read,
For in printed words is knowledge,
Which may fill a long-felt need
Of some brother who is seeking
His wisdom to repair,
And in so doing I've accomplished
What my heart considers square.

Yes, I'm glad that I'm a Printer,
Building up the biggest book,
So that when from life departed
I need not backward look;
For I have left on pages printed
Many thoughts for future years,
So I need not meet my Creator
With excuses or in tears.

—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 79, 1927

THE MASTER PRINTER CRAFTSMAN

BY JAMES EDWARD HUNGERFORD

His face and hands are covered with ink;
He toils in his shop all day
And uses his "thinker" to plan and think Out things in a
"better" way;
Each "job" with him is a task of pride That gives him a
tingling thrill;
He never is happy or satisfied
Till it's finished with super skill!
He visions "classics" of printing art And glimpses some
genius's gleams;
His work he does with his soul and heart, But it falls far
short of his "dreams";

Each "job" with him is a "masterpiece" As he sees it in
fancy's view, And he works with brain and elbow-grease
To make his "sweet dream" come true!

But some how the finished job falls short Of the picture he
strove to paint, And he views his work with disdainful
"snort," With the look of a martyred saint!

His friends may tell him his work is "fine" And view his
efforts with pride, But he seeks the "perfect," the "spark
divine," And never is satisfied!

—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 79, 1927

THE STEREOTYPER

ANONYMOUS

I've often heard the saying,
Though it's old and rather trite,
Twixt the Devils and the Pressmen,
Is the Stereotyper's plight.

The Ad Man missed the dead line,
His clients must be pleased!
Of twenty forms now on the floor,
Not one can be released.

The composing room is all a-stir,
There are columns yet to set.
The make-up men stand idly by—
"Their system here is all wet!"

Another form comes rushing through.
From it a mat is rolled.
The Steros back and cast it,
Then wait for another mould.

The Pressman is all excited,
There are nine forms yet to come;
With fifteen minutes to press time.
"It's the Stereotyper's fault, the bum."

The Stero crew is in high gear,
Their faces covered with sweat;
Six forms at once on the dead line,
The composing room is clear, you bet!

The Pressman is on the telephone,
"Where in hell is the starter?"
To hear him relate his troubles,
You might think him a martyr.

But, after the run is over,
Some explaining will have to be done;
The composing room hit the dead line, Stereotypers
delayed the run.
For between composing and press room, Only the
Stereotyper can be;
And he gets the blame from both sides, Twixt the Devils
and the Sea.

—*SNIPS*, Vol. 11, Aug., 1934

(House organ for all employees, Lancaster Newspapers, Inc., Lancaster, Pa.)

PRINTING, THE IMMORTAL WORK OF MAN
BY WILLIAM SUNNERS

If out of dust I brought to life a living, breathing man
You'd think I was a wizard built on superhuman plan.
You'd be amazed if back to earth I brought a man who
died.
Yet printers do these very things and point to them with
pride.
Each piece of type is cold and dull when lying in the case.
Composed of lead and antimony, and, but for its face,
Each letter would be meaningless, inanimate, and dead.
But still each little character brings life and joy again.
When properly combined they speak with dignified appeal;
Immortal words are said again; cold type their thoughts
reveal.
When rearranged by human hands within composing
sticks,
Behold! An image is produced by type with groove and
nicks.
By placing type together printers make a dead man speak.
Each printer is a conjurer. Each day in every week
The words of men who died are uttered once again through
print
Embellished by the men who live with border, cut, and
tint.
Oh, printing is artistic; it is beautiful and fine.
A necessary part of life; it's yours as well as mine.
It never should debase nor harm nor hurt the human race.
It holds a foremost place in art, so keep it in its place.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 81, 1928

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PROOFREADERS PLEASE NOTE
FROM TYPOSITOR

We'll begin with box; the plural is boxes, But the plural of
ox should be oxen, not oxes. One fowl is a goose, but
two are called geese, Yet the plural of mouse should
never be meese.
You may find a lone mouse, or a whole nest of mice,
But the plural of house is houses, not hice.
If the plural of man is always called men, Why shouldn't
the plural of pan be called pen? The cow in the plural
may be called cows, or kine;
But a bow, if repeated, is never called bine;
And the plural of vow is vows, never vine.
If I speak of a foot and you show me two feet
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?
If the singular's this, and the plural is these, Should the
plural of kiss ever be written keese?
Then one may be that, and the two would be those,
Yet hat in the plural would never be hose.
And the plural of cat is cats, and not cose.
We speak of a brother, and also of brethren,
But though we say mother, we never say methren.
Then the masculine pronouns are he, his, and him,
But imagine the feminine, she, shis, and shim! So the
English, I think you all will agree, Is the funniest
language you ever did see.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 79, 1927

SALUTE TO SNIPS
BY ADDISON H. GROFF

I like SNIPS;
It whips up my imagination,
Making me see something more
Than a big machine
Behind the page,
More than wheels turning,
Kettles boiling,
Engines hissing,
Mountains of type—
(Columns of tripe).

SNIPS makes me see
Folks like me,
Laughing, crying,
Hoping, sighing,
Not mere drudges
Marked with smudges,

Or big bosses
Counting losses.

In SNIPS the editor
Comes out of his sanctum,
And the announcer forgets,
His mike;
I like that.
I remember
One cold morning
Down by the vinegar works:
I was carrying
THE MORNING NEWS—
Peace to its ashes—

It was blizzardly,
And at six in the morning,
I was fagged and half frozen,
And a kind lady took me in,
Sat me down by the fire
With a hot cup;
And I remember saying:
Here, God, is something
For Your Big Book.

I like SNIPS:
It rhymes with “ships,”
And ships have wings—
Like you and me.
—SNIPS, Vol. 13, Feb., 1936

THE TYPE-LOUSE BY REID MAGUIRE

If Bobbie Burns, at kirk, found theme
And then, at leisure, dwelt upon it,
Should printer’s de’il ne’er imitate
“A louse upon a lady’s bonnet”?
Should sense of del’cacy restrain
Of all mankind a printer’s devil
To write upon that ancient myth
And prove type-lice are on the level?
These modern days a spade’s a spade.
Why blush in kirk or printing house?
Burns wrote of old, and so do we,
A sonnet to a type of louse.
Come back with me to devil-days, When craftsmanship
was in the making, When ‘teens were still a world un-lived,
And fun was fun—in giving, taking. A stranger’s loitering
round the shop, Fit food for fun; and in a trice Glee-fully
you amble ‘round and ask:
“Say mister, ‘jever see type lice?”
Attention roused, the guy’s half sold, A willing victim to
the myth so old—
For men, like cats, wise though they be, All fall for
curiosity.
You are the spider, he the fly, And soon the web is in the
spinning.
Sly winks; “comps” gather at the stone,

‘Prentices, and vets with hair a-thinning’
To perpetrate with gleeful air
The type-louse in his native lair,
A-crawling (galley slightly tipped)
On body type (fresh water dipped).
With searching glance he bends to see The printer’s secret
of antiquity—
He gets an eyeful of the type-louse,
And, wiser, wipes away the douse!
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 88, Nov., 1931

THE TYPESETTING MACHINE BY DONALD A. FRASER

Deft fingers touch the magic keys, and lo! With jingling
music, and with merry haste, The matrices come
tumbling to be placed Like waiting fairies in a rigid row;
Then, clamped, they’re smothered in a fiery flow Of
molten metal, on whose edge is traced The words the
letter-molds have firmly spaced, And now a line of type
clinks down below.
Then swoops upon the molds the arm of fate And lifts
them back to that grim bar on high, Which, aye
revolving, ruthlessly sedate, Back into that oblivion
whence they came, Siezes and drops them with a tinkling
sigh Until the keys once more a summons frame.
—*Inland Printer*, Vol. 82, 1928

ODE TO A WIRE EDITOR ANONYMOUS

Poor Hugh Nevin had a simple brain:
Precipitation—he called rain,
Orthography—he called spelling,
And olfaction—just plain smelling.

For aviation, he said flying,
Prevarication, that was lying;
Conversation, he called talking,
And pedal locomotion, walking.

For annihilation—he said rid,
And persiflage to him was “kid.”
Ridiculous? He called it funny,
Finances—oh, yes, that was money.

Poor Hugh, he could not hope to rise, Not erudine, but
merely wise, He’ll probably open an antique store And
print “OLD STUFF” on the door.
—SNIPS, Vol. 12, March, 1935, page 1

The following is a poem as given to me by an old Lino
machinist when I was an apprentice machinist about 35
years ago.

THE MACHINIST

Over the idle Linotype, the Lino machinist stands
Not a brain within his head, just large and horny hands
Each morning late to work he comes

Each evening early goes
Nothing accomplished, nothing done
His thoughts are of repose

**AUTHOR UNKNOWN (BUT PROBABLY SOME
DISGRUNTLED SHOP FOREMAN)**

Anyone hear this one before?
I heard him say that years ago
When I, a lad, would only scoff
And claim I'd proved it wasn't so,
Because I'd touched and washed it off
But I am older now than then, And I have journeyed far
and wide, And worked with many printing men, And many
writing men beside.
And now I know his words were true, For it becomes both
food and drink And seeps into the blood of you When
once it gets you.—**PRINTER'S INK.**

Once You Touch It

"If once you let it touch your hand,
Or get it near the heart of you,
No scrubbing it with soap or sand
Can ever make it part with you!
"It's like the blood of Bluebeard's day
That got upon the chamber key
And simply wouldn't wash away!
It's like the Old Man of the Sea!
"So mark my words and ponder, lad, Before you touch or
pass it by, One touch and it (for good or bad) Will stay
with you until you die!"

TITLE UNKNOWN

I heard him say that years ago
When I, a lad, would only scoff
And claim I'd proved it wasn't so,
Because I'd touched and washed it off

But I am older now than then, And I have journeyed far
and wide, And worked with many printing men, And
many writing men beside.
And now I know his words were true, For it becomes both
food and drink And seeps into the blood of you When
once it gets you.—**PRINTER'S INK.**
About a year ago, there was a discussion on this list about
a poem which
appears in the book "Manual of Linotype Typography."
The last stanza
of the poem is cut off, and there was a discussion about
what it might have
said and whether the poem appeared anywhere else.
I recently received a small publication called the "Hell
Box" from Joe Kempe
in Nokomis, Illinois. In the center is the entire poem in
question (but in a
different typeface than the one in the Linotype book). The
caption says
"The Hell Box thanks Jerry Killie, Hoffman Estates,
Illinois and Merle

Langley, Coolin, Idaho, each of whom submitted a copy of
the poem.
I asked Merle what the source was, and he didn't know. He
said he found
it on a single sheet of paper in a box of old papers which
he had received
from the founder of Marlboro Mats (William Plank), who
died about 1972.

According to this version, the last stanza is:
So the Linotype man, as his fingertips leap
and the long bar comes down with its rythmical sweep,
Knows well that the Linotype's earning its keep in the
office with one machine!

THE HISTORY OF THE ART OF PRINTING (1713).

*A Contemplation upon The Mystery of MAN's
Regeneration, In Allusion to the Mystery of PRINTING.*"
BY JAMES WATSON

Great bless MASTER-PRINTER, come Into the
Composing-Room:
Wipe away our foul offences;
Make, O make our Souls and Senses,
The Upper and Lower Cases;
And they large Alphabet of Graces
The Letter, which being ever fit,
O haste thou to Distribute it:

ODE TO THE TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

The typographical error is a slippery thing and sly,
You can hunt 'til you're crazy, but it somehow will get by.
'Til the forms are off the press, it is strange how still it
keeps;
It shrinks down in a corner and it never stirs or peeps.
That typographical error, too small for human eyes.
'Til the ink is on the paper when it grows to mountain size.
The boss, he stares with horror, then he grabs his hair and
groans.
The copyreader drops his head upon his hands and moans.
They remainder of the issue may be clean as clean can be
But the typographical error is the only thing you see.

THE PRINTER'S TOWEL

BY BURDETT

When I think of the towel,
The old-fashioned towel,
That used to hang up by the printing-house door;
I think that nobody,
In these days of shoddy,
Could hammer out iron to wear as it wore!
The tramp who abused it,
The devil who used it,
The comp.
Who got at it when these two were gone;
The makeup and foreman,
The editor, poor man,
Each rubbed some grime off for the heap they put on.

In, over, and under,
'Twas blacker than thunder;
'Twas harder than poverty, rough than sin.
From the roller suspended,
It never was bended,
And it flapped on the wall like a banner of tin.
It grew thicker and rougher
And harder and tougher,
And daily put on a more inkier hue;
Until, one windy morning
Without any warning,
It fell on the floor and was broken in two.

CLICK

This poem was from a Linotype instruction book. *Linotype Keyboard Operation*, 1940. (The book used this poem to show how to set poetry)

Oh, the click of the flintlocks is not half so divine
As the click of the types as they fall into line,
The audible step of unfaltering feet
To a mightier tune than our bosoms can beat.

OUR MAN

This poem was written to answer the one above by Dick Hopper a printer and later an editor at The Indianapolis Star

Yes, our man on the keyboard is a sight to behold
He turns out those stories in type big and bold.
About statesmen and actors and wars and disease
The he cuts a fart loudly and beats them damn keys.

NEWSPAPER MEN

BY WINIFRED SACKVILLE STONER, JR. (1903)

Newspaper men, so I believe
Have tongues that roll around
As if well oiled with labial grease,
The slickest to be found.

Most of these men are very nice
And have a pleasant look,
But if I utter one wee word
They make it fill a book

Someone has said that simple smiles
For length can't be surpassed;
Because there is a whole big mile
'Twixt letters first and last.

But I believe newspapermen
Can make words longer still,
With oceans rolling in between
Made out of little rills.

Winifred Sackville Stoner, Jr. was said to be a child genius, who with her mother made public appearances. She disappeared from editions of Who's Who about 1942.

A FONT OF TYPE

BY WALT WHITMAN, PRINTER

This latent mine – these unlaunch'd voices – passionate
powers
Wrath, argument, or praise, or comic leer, or prayer
devout,
(Not nonpareil. brevier, bourgeois, long primer merely.)
These ocean waves arousable to fury and to death,
Or sooth'd to ease and sheeny sun and sleep,
Within the pallid slivers slumbering.