HOW PLATES ARE MADE.

WHAT STEREOTYPING IS AND HOW IT IS ACCOMPLISHED.

It Enables Large Papers to Print Hundreds of Thousands of Copies in a Remarkably Short Time—The Papier Mache and the Clay Process.

What is stereotyping and what are its advantages?

The common idea of stereotyping a paper is that the type is put through some process for the purpose of facilitating the printing. The fact is, stereotyping is little more than duplicating the type. The forms are reproduced in one solid piece, hence the word, stereotype, solid copy.

The types are used for patterns only, while the printing is done entirely from the plates. Thus the type is subjected to very little wear, and by the use of a large number of plates the papers are printed with great rapidity. If type was directly used to print The Sun, Herald, or World, a new "dress" would be required every day. The wear and tear of two or three hundred thousand impressions would destroy the best type in the world.

Not only that, but in order to get such a paper as The Sunday Sun, Herald or World printed from the type as rapidly as from plates it would require all the compositors in the city to set up one edition.

There are few presses in use on which the papers are printed directly from the type in the form of a curve. These are called "type revolvers" or "type wets." They are very complicated and are fed by a web or roll of paper, the same as a perfecting press, printing both sides. The pages are made up in the form of turtles, and, of course, the press carries only one set at a time. While these presses do fairly rapid work, they cannot compare with the perfecting presses. What is gained by eliminating the work of stereotyping is lost by the wear of the type; besides, for papers of large circulation they are of no use whatever.

PREPARING THE MATRIX.

By newspaper stereotyping I mean the only modern way of producing stereotype plates for newspaper use. There is practically only one process in use, and that is the papier mache process. The old plaster of paris and clay processes are not now used except in rare cases where some special result is aimed at. The old ways are too slow for newspapers, and have been superseded by electrotyping for book work. Electrotyping furnishes a copper faced plate and perfectly reproduces fine engravings. Stereotyping by whatever process can do neither.

The only place to my knowledge where either of the old processes is now used to any extent in this country is the American Press association in this city. All its pages, except the news pages, are first stereotyped by the clay process. By this means they obtain one deep plate, from which thereafter a large number of molds are taken by the papier mache process. The latter, now so universally employed, was invented some forty-five years ago in Paris. This process is practically divided into four parts—matrix making, molding, casting and finishing.

Matrix making is simply preparing the papier mache, and must be done in advance of the process proper. The paper used is of two kinds, blotting and tissue, manufactured expressly for stereotyping. The blotting paper is first dampened properly, and the matrix (so called) is usually made by pasting together two sheets of blotting for a back and four sheets of tissue for a face. The tissues are carefully smoothed down, either by hand or with a roller. The paste used is of a special kind, and is prepared by the stereotyper before he begins his day's work.

TAKING THE IMPRESSION.

When a page is ready to be stereotyped the prepared matrix is laid on the form face downward, and either beaten in with large brushes or passed under a heavy roller, in order to force the dampened paper into the spaces of the type and thereby take an impression of the page. The form, with the matrix still on top, is then placed under the platen of a steam heated drying press, resembling a large copying press. Soft blankets are laid on the matrix in order to absorb the moisture, the press is screwed down, and in from three to ten minutes the paper mold is dry. The form and matrix are then taken from under the press, the form being returned to the composing room for distribution.

The matrix, now being dry and flexible, is placed in the curved casting box and the molten metal poured in. The box is cooled by water, and in a few seconds the rough plate is thrown out ready for the finisher. The tap, or tail end, is now sawed off by a peculiar saw, the plate is trimmed, chiseled and finally shaved on the back, in order to give it an even thickness, when it is ready for the press.

The casting and finishing are repeated for every plate needed, but only one mold or matrix is required for each page. As each form is received from the composing room it is immediately stereotyped, and thus the way is made clear for the last page, which is held back for the latest news.

The time lost by stereotyping is therefore reduced to the minimum, and in fact it is almost nothing. The last page or "starter" is invariably got through with a rush. The matrix is beaten in and dried, the plates cast and finished in a wonderfully short time. All this is done and the first press started in about the same time it takes to start a press when the printing is done from the type itself. Each succeeding press is quickly started, and in a few minutes these wonderful machines are throwing out the printed sheets by the thousand or million, according to the imagination of the circulation editor.—Edwin Arlington in Journalist.

The Barber Shop Drill.

Two mirrors placed opposite each other reflect the objects between them ad infinitum. The other day a veteran politician from the interior entered a Griswold street barber shop and seated himself in a vacant chair. A barber was at work on a customer in the next chair. The statesman's eye caught the long row of barbers in the glass reflected from another glass behind him, and he muttered, "Big barber shop, this." Shutting one eye, he glanced down the line and soliloquized, "Well drilled. All, two squirts; comb, one time and two motions; brush, one time, one motion; brush ground ed in one time, one motion; all out the chairs same time; customers well drilled, too," and he lay back for a shave.—Detroit News.

A Wonderful Transformation.

It is on record in medical literature that in the year 1531 a poor old man residing in Tarentum, near Naples, was the subject of a marvelous change when at the age of nearly 90 years. His skin peeled off and a new and soft skin supplied its place; his muscles again became strong and plump, the wrinkles disappeared from his face and the white hairs from his head; black, curly hair grew on his head again, and his complexion became fresh and youthful. Sixty years later he again became decrepit with a second old age, and died after passing his 150th year.—St. Louis Republic.

A Windy Day.

Mistress—What is that noise? Have the children come in from school?

Maid—No, mum. It's only the north wing of th' house tumbling down.—New York Weekly.

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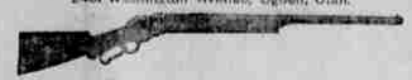

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