

PEN AND PENCIL
 SKETCHES OF PRESS CHARACTERS.



It is now something over half a century since that eventful morning when all the "Times" pressmen were in solemn Chapel

awaiting the arrival of some important news, which the wily proprietor of that journal had informed them was expected to arrive every minute. After waiting for a very long time, an unusual bustle outside the office betokened some great event, and upon the anxious pressmen endeavouring to ascertain the cause, they found themselves close prisoners in their apartment. A rat was thereupon sniffed by all present, and the advice to burst open the door ran loud and high; when the hubbub was instantly hushed by the entrance of Mr. Walters, accompanied by a few friends, bearing with him a perfect copy of that morning's edition, which had been duly printed by steam machinery for the first time! This artful expedient on the part of the proprietors of the "Times" had been resorted to in order to obviate any opposition from their pressmen, who were now informed that, although their services would be no longer required for the purpose of printing the paper, their situations would be guaranteed them until other employment could be obtained. By these means the angry feeling which succeeded astonishment was ultimately allayed; and as the promise was faithfully kept, no outburst of disappointment took place. From that day to the present the

"Times" newspaper has been printed by steam machinery, and the labour of the pressman has been performed by the Machine Manager.

The difference in the machines which have been in requisition to produce the "Times" newspaper since the eventful morning here alluded to, has been various in the extreme; from the old primitive appliances which threw off 800 copies per hour to the wonderful resources of the Hoe, the Applegath, and

the Bullock presses, all of which are now in full operation in Printing-house-square, and by their united efforts some 70,000 or 80,000 copies per hour are printed off daily. The introduction of these improved machines for rapid newspaper printing, as a matter of course, created a new class of printers to superintend them. The first few Machine Managers were men from the shops of engineers; but upon skilled pressmen being taught the nature and construction of the machines, their services were soon found to be much more valuable; as by their knowledge of presswork, much better and finer work was turned out than any engineers could produce, and consequently those pressmen who possessed sufficient energy and perseverance, set themselves quickly to work to master the mysteries of the new printing machines, and in a few years' time a race of skilful machine printers were added



No. 9.—THE MACHINE MANAGER.

to the ranks of Press labourers. In some of the larger offices throughout the kingdom where the new machines had been introduced, the apprentices were bound to press and machine, so as to be able to acquire both branches. Yearly new improvements were introduced into the newspaper machines, till the perfection of the four-feeder at 4000 per hour was accomplished, which was in a short time increased by additional improvements to about 5500, at which point its rapidity seems to have approached a climax, as we do not hear of any of these old-

fashioned machines having been made which could reach a higher speed with safety. Perfecting single-feeders, two-feeders, and four-feeders formed the class of machines resorted to by newspaper proprietors to get their work done for many years, till the rapidity of the Applegath, the Hoe, and certain other machines began to astonish the trade. In those days the services of a skilful and intelligent Machine Manager was a most valuable acquisition to the labour-branch of every newspaper office; and when a workman could be obtained who possessed the united requirements necessary for the successful fulfilment of all these duties, he was looked upon as a treasure. Many newspaper proprietors would as soon think of changing their editors as their Machine Manager; as a speedy delivery of copies, after the paper is at press, is of the first importance. A curious instance is on record of the sudden dismissal of a Machine Manager through a little bit of temper. The proprietors of a provincial daily paper were well suited, some years ago, with one of the best newspaper Machine Managers in the business; for besides being a printer, he was also a thorough engineer, and knew the construction and ramification of the four-feeder machines to their smallest bolt. Well, this competent man, on receiving his wages one Saturday morning, was told that his services would not be required any longer, and a fortnight's wages in lieu of notice was paid to him, and he was politely elbowed off the premises forthwith, just being allowed to take his own private instruments and tools. Now, it so happened that, unbeknown to his employers, this man had contrived to fix to his machines some simplified tape pullies and riggers, which almost rendered a broken tape an impossibility, and greatly accelerated the remedy when that inconvenience to the working did occur. Of this arrangement his successor knew nothing; and it so happened that as soon as the first forme of the paper was down at the machine, and it was set going without the rollers, just to run the colour up, a report like a pistol-shot was heard, and in a moment every tape hung down loose, thus rendering the machine useless. In the emergency, as no one but the inventor was acquainted with the new process, the proprietor, after most violent imprecations and universal denunciations, found that he had no other alternative than to send for his former Machine Manager, and solicit him to get them out of the difficulty. To the credit of the dismissed overseer he came at once, only requiring, as a condition, that everyone but his former assistant should leave the room; and in something less than an hour the machine was in full work; but instead of throwing out some 5000 sheets per hour, it would not print more than 4000 in new hands, owing to the abstraction of some few private improvements which had been added to it by the manager at his own expense, as an experiment, and for which he had not claimed so much as a royalty. The upshot of this night's work was missing the early trains with the bulk of the publication, and the re-engagement of the dismissed overseer, who, this time, not only secured himself by a good agreement, but also stipulated for a royalty on his improvements, and remained in his situation for many years.

The present time is likely to witness as great a revolution amongst Newspaper Machine Printers as the introduction of printing machines caused amongst pressmen. Quality now gives place to quantity; and the consequence of this is, the engineer is considered much the better man to manage the rapid printing machines introduced by Americans and others than a mere printer. There is no making-

ready required on the stereotype machines, the only objects sought to be obtained being speed and perpetual motion, with a superintendent who is so familiar with the construction of his machine that he can at once remedy every defect as it happens. In almost every case in London—and we believe we may also say in the provinces—wherever the Hoe machine has been introduced, it has been found necessary to select a qualified engineer, who is intimate with its construction, as its superintendent. Men who have got on very well as drivers of luggage trains, in the shape of the four-feeders, have, in most instances, had to give up their positions when they come to deal with rotary expresses and others. Wherever quality is required, as in the case of illustrated or class weekly newspapers, then the printing overseer is found to be the right man in the right place; and it is due to the great excellence and skill with which all classes of fine machine printing is now executed, by either platen or cylinder, to say that the press has been fairly rivalled by the various machines which have been brought into the market against it.

Not only are the competing foreign houses beating the British manufacturers by the rapidity of their newspaper machines, but those who have to work them state that they are made in a manner far superior to any English machines. The Frenchmen, we are told, are very independent in trading with us: they will have their price, and they will only deliver their machines to a railway station in France, and leave the purchaser to do the rest at his own cost. It is said they are teaching John Bull more than one lesson, all of which may be adopted to his advantage, in the way of standing up for his price and in giving a good article for the money.

So much for the machines: now for the men who superintend them. From their unity and brotherly feeling with each other, Machine Printers now form a numerous, well-paid, and highly-skilled class of Press workmen, all of whom, when considered competent, earn wages second to no other branch of the business. They stipulate for seven years' service, with the necessary trade diploma, much more strictly than any other branch of the trade. They have their library and reading-room, the same as the compositors have; and their trade benefit society is ably, trustfully, and economically managed by a veteran fellow-workman, now, however, elevated to the rank of a confidential agent and traveller to a printing-ink firm in London; and their trade business at their general meetings is discussed in such a cool, practical, and sensible manner, that, at times, our friends of the composing-room might often take a hint from them with advantage. In the practical development of the general utility of the printing machine, several engineers admit having received some most valuable hints, suggestions, and improvements from the ideas of Machine Managers; and we believe we are correct in stating that the "travelling blanket," to obviate setting-off, with other appliances for the same object, have been the successful inventions of newspaper printers. For a thoroughly practical opinion of the merits of any machine for the purpose of printing, no one is so competent to judge as the men who have to work them; and it is to these men that every purchaser should resort when about to lay out his cash on anything of this sort, and their opinion once given may generally be relied upon as to what a machine can do and how it does it.

As nearly the whole of the general work which is now turned out by the large offices in town and country is produced by the machine, the possession of a competent and diligent person in this depart-

ment of the office must necessarily be a great desideratum in every printing business. It is from the machine room that the reputation of a house for good or bad work emanates; and fortunate is that employer who possesses a man capable of turning out work famous for its general excellence and beauty of finish. So well do many publishers know the exact character of every London house, that it not unfrequently happens that while the letter-press text of a publication or magazine is done at one house, the wood-cut illustrations are sent to another, simply because of its high character for this class of work in the hands of competent workmen. More than this: it may be asserted, and with truth, that instances are on record where publishers have removed this sort of fine work from one house to another, merely owing to a change in the workmen. From this it will be seen that the proper selection of a staff of competent workmen, under the charge of a trustworthy and experienced manager, is one of the first qualifications necessary to establish a name for any establishment, which, when once obtained, can only be retained by the aid and superintendence of a thoroughly practical and skilful MACHINE MANAGER, who, when found, should be taken great care of.

Letters addressed to the Editor.

EDITORS AND COMPOSITORS.

SIR,—I am inclined to think that your experience has been with that class of Compositors who have never had to be fetched from the tavern to do their work. I have had to deal with all classes—good, bad, and indifferent; and I have known what it is frequently to have to write a long article a second time because my copy has been either lost or destroyed. Seldom or ever are printers correct in their calculations of the copy in MS. The other night I left the printing-office with the assurance that the paper was quite full, but in the morning I found that a column of standing advertisements had been used to fill up because the copy had fallen short; some of it had been thrown away and was found in a hole next day because the men were too late to get it into type.—A NORTH-COUNTRY EDITOR.

DILATORY EDITORS.

SIR,—I read your article last month on the Compositors with much pleasure, but I think at the same time that you are rather too hard upon us editors, by laying so much blame for delays and hardships to printers, upon our shoulders. I am a working editor of a weekly newspaper in Oxfordshire, and I always make it a point to have a certain quantity of copy ready at fixed times every day, so that our Compositors are never kept idle by me. I am at times sadly used by them, however, in return, and it very often happens that, when they are wrong with their estimates, they either lose or burn the copy, and then stand me out it was never sent to them. I am inclined to think that, if all hard-working editors who supply their copy punctually were to tell their side of the question, many very queer cases would be made out against the printers for inattention and delay on their part. One day last month we had to postpone the issue of a second edition, which we are in the habit of giving every Monday afternoon, because neither the printer nor any of his men came back after attending a lunch in an adjacent skittle-ground! I say nothing about having to sit up half the night reading proofs which ought to be ready early in the evening.—A PROVINCIAL EDITOR.

COMPOSITORS.

SIR,—I find by reading your thoroughly practical article on Compositors, that these workmen are idle at their own expense on weekly newspapers. I was not aware of such a rule, as I have frequently been charged for waiting for copy during the night. Is that a legal demand?—W. W.—[It is so near to a just claim that we should advise you not to dispute it. If you require the services of a workman during the night, you cannot in fairness object to remunerate him for giving up his bed to your business. If his night's work produced him two galleys, or more, there might be some reason in objecting to pay for waiting; but if the copy composed does not produce a fair night's work, then the man's time should be taken into consideration.—ED. P. N.]

EDITORS AND PRINTERS.

SIR,—To show you that editors have occasionally some cause of complaint against printers, and are not all the sad scapegraces you seem to make them out, I will just tell you how I am served. I am supposed to be the responsible editor of a weekly paper, and the head printer is a relative of the proprietor, and a most untractable, pig-headed individual, who, to increase his own profits employs a heap of boys to do the work, and as the paper is published on Friday afternoons, it is necessary for me to see nearly all my proofs on Thursday evening, and I assure you I have to stay nearly all night to get proofs of copy sent in on Monday and Tuesday. This is all at my own loss and inconvenience. Sometimes Mr. Printer is absent through "illness," or some other cause, and then his son has to do his work, and on such occasions I see very few proofs at all. If an important article is sent up the day before publication, I am told it is too late, it can't go in, because the copy of the day previous is not half done! This is my case against neglectful and incompetent printers.—PATIENCE IN AN EASY CHAIR.

PHOTO-LITHOGRAPHY.

MESSRS. WHITEMAN AND BASS, Copper-plate Engravers and Lithographers, of High Holborn, have recently introduced into their business a novel feature, which they describe as the Photo-Lithographic process, by which means original drawings, &c., may be reproduced, and an unlimited number printed at much less cost than by the ordinary method of copying on stone, besides ensuring photographic exactness. The size of the original is of no consequence, as it is enlarged or reduced and lithographed at one operation. It is particularly adapted for architectural, engineering, and mechanical drawings, pen and ink sketches, &c. Speaking of this new process, the "Building News," which adopts it for its lithographic illustrations, observes:—"Architects sometimes complain, and with justice, that their drawings are not fairly reproduced by the wood engraver or the lithographer. When one man draws on wood or on stone from another man's drawing, some of the spirit or substance of the original evaporates in the translation. It is, in fact, another man's work. Architects cannot, however, complain of engravings produced by the photo-litho. process, as it is nothing more nor less than their own drawings, line for line, and dot for dot, slightly reduced. Of course a vast deal will depend on the drawing and the manipulator. One photographer will take a better likeness and produce a better picture than another photographer, and one man's face is more easily taken than another man's face. So it is with the new process of photo-lithography: if the original drawing be good, the reproduction will, in all probability, be good. The frequent appearance of illustrations obtained in this manner will introduce to our readers that picturesque and charming variety which all admire. Messrs. Whiteman and Bass, our lithographic printers, have made special provision for this kind of work, and all who are familiar with our pages must admit that they do their work well."

By this new process maps or plans are faithfully enlarged or reduced to any size, with all the exactness of the original proportions, to say nothing of the vast saving in time and cost of the reproduction. Drawings made especially for reproduction by this process should have well-defined black lines, and should not be shaded with flat washes. Colours should be avoided; smooth paper should be used; the drawing should be about twice the size of the intended lithograph,