

# The MONOTYPE RECORDER

Vol. XXXI

No. 248

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"Some years ago I laid down the setting-stick", writes AN EDITOR (p. 5) describing THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE COMP-ROOM since the coming of the "Monotype".



ATTACHMENTS, simple and inexpensive to add to the "Monotype", can increase the range of work handled. Do you know what these various attachments are? A list is given on p. 8.



LUCIEN LEGROS, Scientist in Typographic Technology: An appreciation and interview (p. 11).

LONDON: THE MONOTYPE CORPORATION LIMITED

43 FETTER LANE, LONDON, E.C.4

CENTRAL 8551-5

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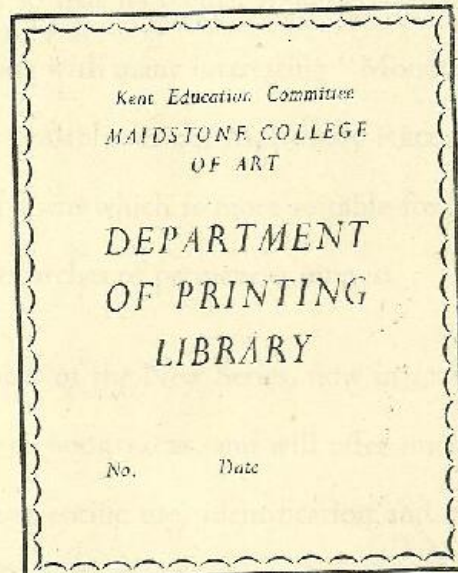
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Our foreign re ~~view~~ *view* ~~is~~ *is* ~~the~~ *the* "Branches" page at the end of this number—the result of our recent Continental re-organization.

THIS NUMBER SHOWS "MONOTYPE" CENTAUR IN ITS 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, AND 24 POINT COMPOSITION SIZES, WITH 60 POINT DISPLAY. SERIES 252



# The Monotype Recorder

VOLUME XXXI NO. 248 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1932

## PRINTERS' MARKETING PROBLEMS

An Analysis, with a Note on The Chief New Market for his Services

I. Publicity for Printing consists of the following elements:

A. General educational propaganda, concerned with—

1. Intensifying demand in existing markets, to (a) raise standards and prices; (b) increase rate of consumption and re-ordering.
2. Creating and stimulating new markets.

B. Specific advertising of the individual printer's service, by—

1. Promise of a definite standard of value (House name being equivalent of "brand"): (a) speed, special capabilities, etc.; (b) co-operation in details of production.
2. Suggestions to customers based on General Publicity as above.

II. Normal technique of such publicity:

A. (General propaganda) Collective advertising.

1. Market research in existing markets, with circulation of conclusions as to (a) reasons for using better print; (b) "Styling"—scrapping of obsolete print and more rapid consumption.
2. Market research and publicity on new uses, by a committee of experts.

B. (Specific): Printer informs his public what particular equipment, experience and standards his house has.

1. "Plant," or semi-technical advertising.
2. Suggestions adapted to specific users' needs, showing his own special abilities.

III. The individual printer cannot afford to issue by himself the general or "introductory" publicity which refers to a whole class of printers, because:

- A. He must devote too much space to facts equally applicable to his rivals.
- B. He has proportionally less time for the specific reasons for using his identified service, which are the most direct and sales productive arguments he has.

IV. On the other hand, the individual printer cannot afford to advertise specifically without any "advance barrage" of general publicity, either for "better value" or "new uses".

(*Remark:* Effort is wasted in advertising the best variety of a commodity to a public that knows and cares little about that commodity as such. "This is why you want the X Sunray Lamp" falls flat when no desire for sun-bathing has been created.)

V. There must therefore be collective market research and collective sales propaganda in printing, as in many other well-organized industries.

(*Remark:* The "natural" as against the "stimulated" market for printing was enormously increased by compulsory education, later by the need in other trades to advertise (to stabilize prices and create quality-demand), still later by the increasing "mechanization" of business. Only now is the printing industry finding it necessary to stimulate existing, and create new, markets for its services.)

VI. But such publicity cannot effectively be undertaken by any existing body, because no printing organization imposes on its members a definite standard of value.

A. The F.M.P.A. can speak for over half the printers of the country, and presumably the better (because the more craft-conscious) half; but it can promise the customer nothing as to the *quality of work*, the *efficiency of operation*, or the *degree of co-operation with the customer* implied by the fact of membership. And it is just such promises that make possible the collective publicity already mentioned.

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'Obsolete printing' is hurting the prestige and lowering the efficiency of hundreds of business firms to-day.

*RE-STYLING to increase 'print power' is the need of the moment. The 'experts' are aware of this. But WHO IS TO UNDERTAKE THE RE-STYLING?*

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B. The Supply Companies are—

1. not likely to pool their efforts in a sufficiently large campaign to increase the consumption of print. The necessary argument for higher quality would benefit some suppliers at the expense of others; and indirect and difficult to attribute to a given effort.

(*Remark:* The Monotype Corporation has done more general publicity on behalf of "better printing" than any other supply company, but that is because the machine it manufactures has what amounts to a

monopoly of the more effective settings. It is inevitably connected, in the minds of printers and users alike, with the idea of better typography at economic cost.)

2.—not, in any case, fit and proper ambassadors to the public. To give the supply companies the controlling voice in national printing propaganda (by accepting a preponderant contribution) would injure the prestige of the printers as such and rob them of independence.



VII. Hence we must envisage a new group of printers (allied with the more forward-looking suppliers) who have:

1. Definite standards that identify them, such standards (of modernity, typographic skill, etc.) being a condition of membership in the group.
2. The willingness to (a) pool marketing experience; (b) jointly investigate ways of stimulating present markets and raising standards of quality (hence stabilizing prices); (c) jointly exploring new markets for print (by organized research); (d) exploiting these two markets by collective national publicity and propaganda.

(Remark: It will be noted that a clear definition is made here between such printers as can be called modern both in equipment and in creative responsibility towards their customers, and such other printers as still retain obsolete methods and an unambitious attitude toward customers. This definition has already been drawn by the average shrewd buyer of printing. It is absolutely necessary to any clear appreciation of the present situation. There is no point whatever in collectively advertising "locomotion" as such, if the ox cart is thereby to be as widely advertised as the motor car; but "buy a new car" is a legitimate slogan for collective advertising, because every modern motor-car is known to have certain mechanical advantages. Similarly our own advertising on behalf of the "Monotype" printer has identified a class of modern printers as possessing certain known and unique mechanical advantages (separate type correction, new separate type press work, etc.) irrespective of what type faces or typographic service the printer may offer. But of "the printer" in general it is impossible to say anything more than that he is able to print just as the ox-cart and motor-car are both able to transport goods! The printer who clings to obsolete methods, neglecting all the finer points of craftsmanship in his desperate effort to keep up with the machine, and referring to the cry of "cheap" for lack of any other sales argument, is not so valuable a member of the industry that his interest must be put before that of the modern printer. If any must suffer from competition and under-consumption, then it is better that the balance should be weighed in favour of the courageous, modern house than that a general silence on the latter's part should work to the actual advantage of the price-cutter, the obsolete plant, and such "print factories" as lack the enthusiasm of craftsmanship.)

## A NOTE UPON STYLING

The word "styling," which was unknown in its modern sense a decade ago, has recently become a word to conjure with in up to date industrial quarters. No one word could be of more vital interest to the printer in regard to the marketing of his service. It would be as well to rehearse the reasons behind this new movement before applying its precepts to printing.

The creation of new markets is a necessary but slow and relatively expensive process. Far more fruitful is the ability to make an existing buyer *scrap and replace*.

The normal rate of repeating consumption could once be calculated according to the lifetime of the goods; only when they wore out was the way free for another sale. This is still true of peasant communities. But it is interesting to notice that exactly in proportion to the rise in standards of living, the habit of using goods "to death" falls off, and a new element enters marketing, namely *style*.

### "SCRAP AND REPLACE"

The alert manufacturer (say, of furniture) discovered that, although it was possible for a family to invest in a dining-room suite of such durability that even the consumers' great grandchildren would offer no further market for those goods, still a new sale of new goods could be effected in as short a time as ten years. That mysterious current of human affairs known as a change of style had rendered the old goods obsolete, and there was an unexpected market for a new and modern set of furniture. Manufacturers, however, were not content to hope and pray for a natural change of style to bring them so many benefits. It was discovered that within certain limits "re-styling" could be deliberately injected as a stimulus to trade. With that discovery was born a new kind of expert, one who is at present drawing four-figure salaries in many trades for value received: namely the stylist. This man or woman does not actually *manipulate* buying impulses only in the luxury trades, where "change for the sake of change" is tolerable. The more solid aspect of styling consists of recognizing wherein certain goods have become obsolete or old-fashioned, and urging their replacement with a far more efficient **REDESIGNED PRODUCT**.

Re-styling is an idea which has in it more potential printing orders than any other one idea which the printer can conceive. It is probably an understatement to say that 50 per cent. of the commercial printing of this country is hopelessly and grotesquely obsolete from the point of view of the modern business man. One need only open the morning post to see letter-heads unchanged since the 1830's; hopelessly inefficient catalogues, poorly or insufficiently illustrated; booklets and leaflets that have received no benefit from the modern renaissance of



## THE MONOTYPE RECORDER

fine type design. Actually, many a business man will say "We don't need any new circulars, we still have a thousand of the old ones"—as if a non-circulating circular were in some way an asset! All these tawdry and complacently old-fashioned printed jobs are playing dog-in-the-manger to the efficient modern literature which should be replacing them. It is as if a man with a 1912 model motor-car were to say "I am not in the market, I already have a car; look, there it is."

### THE EFFECT ON PRICES

And apart from all this, the blindness to re-styling is a powerful depressant to prices. Mr. X finds that the old instruction book (feebly designed) is going out of print. At a tragic cost in prestige, he can "save a little" if his printer has kept the forms standing, and price wins the day by default! Or a re-setting is necessary, and it is a question whether Y, the modern printer, shall take the job and turn it into something effective by twenty electrifying master strokes of typography; or whether Z, the price cutter, shall do his best with it amidst the harassing problems that such a house must face. See what happens if the job goes to Z: Mr. X says "Of course this printer is a cheap-jack who cannot afford any skilled typographer; if he makes any alterations they will probably be for the worse; at least the present layout has been fairly good enough for the past fifteen years, so we had better play safe and tell Z to follow style." So what might have been genuine re-sale at a fair price based on better values becomes a minimum consumption of "the mixture as before."

If there were no propaganda now being issued for the re-styling of printed literature, one could fairly say that a forceful campaign by the printing industry could produce a 100 per cent. increase of orders in a very short time. But it is of the utmost importance to realize that the *stylist is already at work in the printing industry; and he is by no means always a printer.*

The advertising agent is vividly aware of the importance of modern typography; the free-lance "expert" is really a professional stylist, consciously spreading the gospel of effectiveness in print. Many an advertising manager devotes as much of his and of his subordinates' time during a year as would be represented by a £300 salary, in work which can strictly be called styling; the collection of paper, ink and type specimens, and the designing of printed matter to the strictest and most iron-bound specification. The printer, approaching his

customer with the message "SCRAP OBSOLETE PRINTING AND REPLACE WITH EFFECTIVE TYPOGRAPHY" is as likely as not to be met by a typographic enthusiast who will ask the most searching questions. If such a printer is not genuinely expert in these matters, his well-meant efforts will be ignored and he will be told to confine himself to following the layout with rigid obedience, using the specified materials, and exercising his own private judgment in exactly one matter, namely the price to be paid!

This state of things is extremely damaging to the printing craft as a whole, and is directly productive of price competition. The solution is to a great extent in the hands of the printer.

As the printing training school becomes a place where the basic principles of good taste are instilled into craftsmen; as the art of typography becomes the enthusiastic cult of the modern printer; so will the word "expert" in connection with layout and design become meaningless when applied to anyone outside the printing office. As customers come to realize that they spend as much in the end whether they "trust the printer" or do part of the printer's work themselves, we shall see more and more houses buying printing by the appropriation method, which starts off by fixing the amount to be spent on a basis of the results to be gained, and then invites competition for the best value offered at that definite price.\* This will play squarely into the hands of the printers who really do know how to make type work overtime, who have invested in an adequate modern repertory of faces, and keep abreast of the latest processes and materials; for after all, the printer has certain advantages against any outside expert when he is talking of design in terms of technique, and vice versa.

It is too late for the modern printer to introduce typographic styling to his better customers. But unless he fully and deliberately exploits this extremely powerful force, he will be unable even to talk the language of the very class of customers that he should be most anxious to deal with. That typographic design matters, and matters enormously, in the exploitation of printers' markets is perhaps the one statement most worth making in regard to the problem of selling more printing at a fair price.

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\* A folder analysing the Appropriation Method of buying print may be obtained on application to the Editor



# THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE COMP-ROOM

BY AN EDITOR

SOME years ago I laid down the setting-stick and took up the pen. Instead of helping to print the literary burlblings of other people, I had the satisfaction of seeing my former confrères of the case-room setting up *my* burlblings. In those days I was a case-hand.

There were two reasons for my ardent wish to desert the composing room. One was an insatiable itch for writing; and in my innocence I thought I should find my highest form of happiness in journalism. The other reason was the scarcity of type-setting material.

Now this second reason may sound extremely funny. But it wasn't funny to me in the least, nor to the many compositors with whom I have worked in the course of my printing career. Looking back on those miserable days of searching for mere type and materials to set up the smallest job, I am inclined to think that they were even more nerve-racking than editing a newspaper.

It was ghastly. We were always out of leads and sorts and furniture and quotations and most other things besides. Always new type and lengths of lead were coming in to the case-room, yet somehow there were never any in the cases or the furniture racks.

It was all swallowed up in standing jobs. How we picked those standing jobs! By the time two or three of us had flourished our tweezers round them, they were simply skeletons of their former selves. Degeneration would set in on them and those standing jobs would become so much standing pie.

When the job came along again to be reprinted, the entrails of the type were in such a hopeless condition that the thing had to be set up all over again. So we had to pick another standing job to set it up. By and by the proprietor would find out the true state of affairs, and as of course all printing trade employers are the souls of efficiency, he began to see that this sort of thing wouldn't do at all. (By the way, I am not speaking of any individual employer, but of the whole race).



There would then be inaugurated an era of dissing. For quite an hour or more, half the case-room would be put on to hectic dissing. Then came the inevitable rush jobs—do printers ever have jobs which aren't rush jobs?—and the one brief hour of dissing became a legendary experience, lovely to look back upon, but to be sternly forgotten in the grim search for sorts and leads.

It was a most unhappy time. Tempers would fray and fret, and the atmosphere generally was gloomy and bitter. You would meet compositors wandering about from job-rack to job-rack like so many lost and tormented souls, finding themselves forestalled wherever they despairingly turned. You swore dreadfully—it relieved you just a little. And of course standards of workmanship declined seriously. All the arts of the wangler, the bodger, the shifter and the skimp were practised—had to be practised.

The bugbear of empty lead racks, cases without type, and scarcity of furniture, made life intolerable. After all, most of a man's working life is spent inside the workshop, and the development of his character and moral well-being depend, to an incalculable extent, upon the state of his life there. When inefficiency is all around him what else can it induce in a workman but inefficiency in his own conduct. Slovenliness becomes in time second nature, and laziness begins not so much with the temptation to escape work as with the desire to escape irritating search for materials.

The most amazing example of this sort of print-shop is not a hundred miles from Fleet Street, that land of progress in printing. To this especial "glory-hole" compositors used to come and go like birds of passage. They bided their little hour or two like the Persian Kings in Omar Khayyam, and then passed on their way, unable to endure the Spartan simplicity of the type cases and the stern struggle for quads and furniture. All day compositors wandered vacantly around the randoms for hours at a stretch, their fount of hope slowly ebbing away. Eventually, the 6 o'clock bell would ring and, hastily scrawling "General—4 hours" on their daily time sheets, they departed weary and disillusioned. And the next day the whole nightmare of "picking for sorts" occurred over again. The miracle of the whole farce is that quite a fair standard of composition was turned out. It surely speaks much for the stamina of the British Working Man!

And now the sequel.



The other day I went through one of the composing rooms where I had laboured and suffered. As I neared the once-hated department, something of the old gloom and strain returned upon me. The compositors, I knew, would be anxiously searching, searching. And the stone-hands would be worried and snappy. And the cases and the furniture racks would be empty.

But a metamorphosis had occurred in that case-room. I sensed the transformed atmosphere immediately I entered the department. There was an air of assurance, of efficiency, of smooth working, which in the old days I used to connect only with giant and prosperous firms, or with the Utopian Hereafter of a compositor's dream. Here the case-hands were actually looking as though they were getting on with their work—they were contented and they did not slouch or look worried and surly as we used to do. I went over to the lead and quotation racks. They were full. I pulled out some cases: they were full. I found the ornament and rule drawers: they were also full.

The Manager looked pleased with himself when I pointed out the seeming miracle to him. "Yes," he said, "it's that machine, Great stuff, the 'Monotype'."

"But the leads and metal furniture?" I queried.

"All 'Monotype'," he said with lofty pleasure. Extraordinary. I had only heard vague rumours about this omnipotence of the "Monotype" machine.

The Manager took me over to a machine working briskly and with cheerfulness. He showed me a squad of 24-point quotations in process of casting. "That's how we keep ourselves supplied nowadays," he said.

Then he pulled out drawer after drawer of standing display and tabular jobs, all set by "Monotype", even the most intricate ones. There wasn't a letter picked. "Half the jobs that come in nowadays are standing," he said.

Returning homewards I pondered whether the universal coming of the "Monotype" in my own printing days would have tied me to the case instead of my loathing it as I did then.

There is no doubt, from what I can see, that the "Monotype" has wrought a happy revolution in the conditions of the modern compositor, and has, I should imagine, resulted not only in an efficiency which the old haphazard days never knew, but also in giving the workman a self-respect and a lively pleasure in creation.



## ATTACHMENTS

IN planning the design of any machine for displacing hand operations an account is always taken of the diversity of these operations, and the frequency in which each is carried out.

If the designer of such a machine feels convinced that his mechanism is unlikely to be able to carry out speedily and economically some of the more difficult functions of the hand craftsman he will not provide for the performance of these functions in his proposed mechanism; for it is obvious that if a certain operation is performed by hand very infrequently by the general run of anticipated users it would not be an economical proposition to provide special mechanism to substitute it. In these cases it is a sounder proposition to provide special attachments which may be applied by potential users who specialize in work in which these operations are brought into use with a frequency greater than that experienced by the general users of such machine.

It is an unprofitable proposition to saddle a machine with a mass of equipment that may be seldom or never used by the greater majority of purchasers, no matter how indispensable such equipment might be to the few who specialize in work which necessitates its use.

The "Monotype" is a machine which specially lends itself to the fitting of attachments; consequently the number which it has from time to time been proposed we should apply has been almost enormous. Similar demands produce similar solutions, and it is therefore not entirely strange that we receive many identical suggestions at different periods for performing a given class of work. In these cases the remitter of the suggestion invariably becomes incredulous that his own idea could possibly have been anticipated by anyone else.

Although, as we have stated, the "Monotype" lends itself to the application of attachments, it is remarkable how few have been of

such universal utility to users that they have been adopted as details of the standard equipment of the machine. This speaks well for the comprehensiveness of the original design. A notable exception has been the case of the mould low-space mechanism. This was first applied as an attachment or "extra", but is now an integral part of the equipment of every machine sold. The same applies to the attachment which extended the maximum measure of composition from 42 ems to 60 ems; this is now part of the standard equipment.

Amongst the "Monotype" attachments that have not reached the standard equipment stage the following are the most important:

### DISPLAY TYPE-CASTING ATTACHMENT

This attachment increases the capacity of the composition machine as a typesetter up to 48 point. A further attachment permits leads and rules to be cast in continuous strips, which may be automatically cut to any desired length. The range of leads and rules cast may be anything from 1½ point to 12 point.

### EXTENDED MATRIX-CASE

An attachment for increasing the capacity of the matrix-case by two more rows, adding 30 matrices to it.

### LEADING ATTACHMENT

For automatically inserting leads between the lines as the latter are placed in the galley.

### LARGE TYPE COMPOSITION ATTACHMENT

The standard "Monotype" composes type up to 12 point. The Large Type Composition Attachment increased this limit up to 24 point.

### TEMPERATURE REGULATOR

For automatically controlling the inlet of gas so that an equable temperature of the molten



## ATTACHMENTS

metal may be maintained. Previously a thermometer was used to indicate the temperature, and when an excess of heat was registered the gas supply had to be reduced by hand. Consequently the metal was frequently permitted to become overheated, impairing its quality, or allowed to reach such a low temperature that imperfect casting resulted.

### UNIT-ADDING ATTACHMENT

This enables the body of the type to be cast to a greater width than the design of the character to be cast on it, so that the type may appear uniformly spaced. This is in common demand in German composition, and in recent years has also become fashionable among many British printers, owing to the vogue of spacing out lines of small capitals.

### LETTER-SPACING ATTACHMENT

A device for easily converting type bodies into justifying spaces, so that (for example) the narrow measures usually necessary at the sides of illustrations may be justified by casting the characters slightly apart.

### TABULAR COMPOSITION ATTACHMENT

This is a keyboard attachment for automatically adjusting the keyboard measures when a table of many columns of different measures is being composed so that all the lines of the column may be set right across as readily as lines of straightforward composition.

### NINETY-EM ATTACHMENT

A keyboard attachment for composing to a width of 90 ems of the type body size. The standard keyboard is equipped to compose to a measure of 65 ems of the type body size.

The foregoing are attachments of major importance, and are applied by users to their machines with more or less frequency. The following are of lesser importance, but in special circumstances they all prove to be exceedingly useful as time savers.

### LINE TRIP ATTACHMENT

This is a small device fixed to the caster galley bracket so that when casting sorts a pre-decided length of line will be automatically carried to the galley, and the lines will be stacked in the galley in regular order similar to lines of composition. This avoids the use of any paper ribbon, and reduces very considerably the work of the attendant.

### MOULD BLADE COVER

A small device screwed to the top of the composition mould, for use when casting quads and spaces for case work. This does away with the necessity of attaching the bridge to the machine. Where much quad and space casting are done this device saves considerable wear upon the mould surface.

### THREE-UNIT JUSTIFYING SPACE ATTACHMENT

This is a small keyboard attachment for reducing the thinnest space cast in composition to three units of set. Used where very closely spaced composition is demanded.

### UNIT-INDICATOR

A small attachment fixed in front of the unit stops on the keyboard for indicating the unit value of any key struck. Very useful to an operator during tabular composition.

### UNIT WHEEL POSITIONER

For advancing or reversing the position of the unit wheel by means of a geared wheel instead of by hand.

### ELECTRIC LIGHT EQUIPMENT

For the better illumination of the keyboard, the electric light being focussed upon the mechanism and the copy where it is most needed.

### BOOK COPY HOLDER

For holding books and large sheets of copy. Very convenient in cases where the books or other copy must not be creased or soiled.



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### LOOSE LEAF COPY HOLDER

For loose leaves and large sheets of copy up to 18 inches long and 18 inches wide.

### LINE REPEATING ATTACHMENT

This is an attachment applied to the paper tower of the caster for facilitating the repeating of lines of composition, headings of books, border pages, etc., by means of a continuous perforated ribbon. By its use the caster will continue to repeat lines or groups of lines indefinitely, the only attention necessary on the part of the operator being to keep the machine supplied with metal.

It is common knowledge that machine users as a class look with disfavour upon attachments of any kind. There is a tendency to view them as "extras" produced by the manufacturers for the purpose of securing extra trade.

This is an entirely erroneous impression, for their manufacture and application cannot possibly be so profitable as the production of equipment which is common to every machine made. On the other hand the manufacturer cannot be expected to apply to every machine produced a mechanism that is likely to be used by only one user in five hundred.

We wish it therefore to be understood that the attachments which we offer for sale are produced more for the benefit of those "Monotype" users who have need of them than for our own profit. If any of them can be used with reasonable frequency it will be found profitable to apply them.

Further particulars and prices of the attachments referred to may be had upon application to our Sales Department, 43 Fetter Lane, London, E.C.4.



# A FAMOUS BOOK

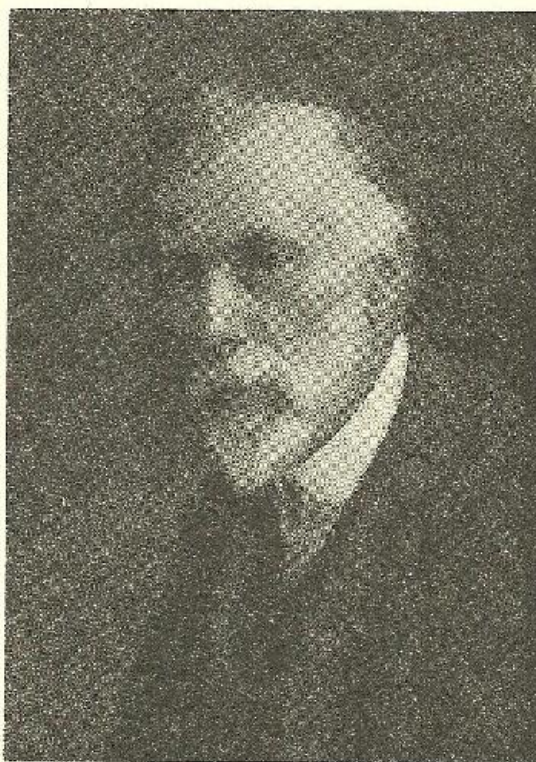
WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF ITS CHIEF AUTHOR:

LUCIEN ALPHONSE LEGROS

EVERY printer, in fact every person who makes any pretensions to being an expert in typographic technique, has at least one shelf of reference books to which he can turn, either to refresh his memory or to extend his special knowledge. However short this shelf may be, it must be at least 10" high, otherwise it will not accommodate the very book in which the whole collection started—that inexhaustible and indispensable volume called *Typographical Printing—Surfaces, the Technology and Mechanism of their Production*, by L. A. Legros and John Cameron Grant. Almost any reading list of a printing subject can safely start with this book, particularly as it is never safe to study any one cell in the honeycomb of typography without reference to the whole structure. And in "Legros and Grant" that whole group of processes which for convenience we call "printing" is put before the student. This is not to say that the book is no more than a *thesis*; it is also a studied and fundamental analysis. That in fact is its chief advantage to the beginner. It is by no means unimportant, for example, that anyone wanting to know about type faces should go straight back to the early hand mould to find out exactly how this basically simple device has evolved. Before any theories can be laid down in regard to type design, it is absolutely necessary to know how certain optical effects cheat the eye, and what those effects are.

Since 1923 typography has had an appeal for the general public that it has never had before, and a large number of books, theoretical and practical, have popularized the art. Hence it is still possible to confound a young and glib enthusiast with the exclamation: "What, you have never consulted 'Legros and Grant'?"

Until a short while ago, the excuse, if any, could have been that the book, at £3 7s. 6d., was too expensive for the young student's purse. Now, most happily, that is no longer true. Copies may be obtained from Mr. L. A. Legros at the very modest price of 16s. The edition, unlike its contents, is *not* inexhaustible,



so those who wish to take advantage of this remarkable opportunity are advised to make application without delay.\*

\* Orders, preferably accompanied by a postal order, should be addressed to Mr. Legros, 58 Hale Lane, Mill Hill, N.W.7



As a man chiefly responsible for the book, Mr. Legros would in any event be a figure of great interest to our readers, but few of them are likely to realize the extent of his activities. His career would be a rich mine to any biographer who wished to select a type of "the man behind the new age"—not the business man, not even the scientist or engineer in the ordinary sense, but what might be called the "philosophic engineer"; the man to whom mathematics, physics and human psychology are all tools to be handled deftly, even with profound artistry, for purposes which only the visionary can even foresee at the time. The layman may be amazed to hear that a president of the Société des Ingénieurs Civils de France, and one of the pioneer researchers into such different subjects as tractive effort and industrial psychology should have stepped aside to produce (almost as a by-product!) the one greatest text book of typographic technology. He may also wonder at the contention that much of the technological work of this great engineer could have been directed by a special form of the "artistic temperament" so richly inherited from his father, Alphonse Legros, one of the modern masters of etching.\*

Yet those who met Mr. Lucien Legros as a stranger might guess him to be either an artist or an explorer (the words are to some extent synonymous), and not a man who was once able, by crawling under a broken-down train, to see what had happened to an axle and thereby to start a series of important deductions on the behaviour of steel.

Mr. L. A. Legros has given us, in an interview, some interesting comments on how the book came to be written.

"Early in 1900," he said, "the Wicks Rotary Type-casting Machine was in difficulties arising out of inaccuracies in the work, and I was asked to report to the Company

generally on these difficulties. In the past I had been accustomed to take up branch after branch of engineering work, and had generally been able to be provided with text books from my old friend—the late Mr. B. T. Batsford, the publisher of works on Engineering and Architecture; but on this occasion I was to learn that the technology of printing type was quite a different story. The books obtainable were very few, the information they contained was scanty, the books were difficult to obtain, and the information required could seldom be found in any one source. It was not possible to get much out of the English text-books although there were a few British and American works: every other nation, however, has done something to meet this hiatus, and the recommendation of Mr. Batsford to go to the St. Bride's Institute, as the most likely source of information, helped certainly, but it showed the absence of really useful technical tables and data.

"The paucity of data and doubtfulness of their source reminded me of a story told by Sir Frederick Bramwell a year or two earlier. This related to a Royal Commission, appointed to investigate the breeding places and migrations of the fishes in the North Sea. After gathering all the information rendered available by the fishermen, the members of the Commission found that the data thus obtained were so conflicting as to be absolutely useless. Then a Member of the Commission had a brain-wave: 'If we cannot get the truth from the fishermen why not ask the questions of the fish!' The result was the marking of the fish with the metal tabs which are reported where and when the fish are caught at later periods. This method has rendered it possible to locate the spawning grounds and avoid the extinction of the species.

"Applying a similar argument to the dimensions and forms of type faces it was easy to ascertain the magnitudes of the various inaccuracies which must be introduced into the design in order that the characters may appear

\* A fine series of reproductions of the etchings of Alphonse Legros appeared in 1926, and was No. 9 of "Modern Masters of Etching," published by *The Studio*.



correct when the type has been printed. Measurements of apparent errors could be recorded and tabulated, and the hitherto hidden rules known to the eye of the craftsman could—by the use of the micrometer-microscope—reduce the judgment of the designer to the various dimensions and data necessary for reproducing old founts and introducing new founts. Measurements take the place of guesswork or of the individual's estimate whereas all can be governed by rules based on what the eye of the expert will accept and approve. The micrometer-microscope, used by a skilled mechanic, can unravel the tangle of apparent errors, in serif, main-stroke, counters and hair-lines, as well as the positioning of round-sorts in relation to the lower and upper lines, that is the lines of top and bottom serifs. It is by such measures that the punches can position the characters in true relation."

A paper read by Mr. Legros before the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1908 aroused such general interest that it became advisable to expand the paper into the present volume which, with its very full index, comes to 732 pages. The chapters devoted to mechanical casting should now be read in the light of subsequent developments, chiefly the great expansion of composing range and versatility of the "Monotype" since 1915, and should anyone wish to have a dramatic proof of the improvement of the printer's type repertory since that date, it is only necessary to begin the

chapter on type faces to realize that there were in those days literally only two available text faces which were not more or less offensive to the eye. But even here there is an invaluable lesson to be learnt from the comparison of A—Z lengths of various founts, while the figures superimposing different letters (to test the chances of mis-reading by substitution) go to the very heart of the problem of legibility.

One question about "Legros and Grant" which is very familiar to printing librarians concerns the authorship of the *Mirror of Printing*, from which those lively quotations are taken to head various chapters. Many an enthusiast has longed to reprint this philosophic little book of an old master craftsman; but the British Museum will be searched in vain, for it does not exist save in these charming "excerpts".

Apart from his ten years research on type and the numerous scientific papers on automotive attraction, Mr. Legros has published papers both in French and English on "The economy of human effort in relation to industrial fatigue," and (in 1927), "Technical and non-Technical Management"; his "Note on the legibility of printed matter", published in 1922, is a standard work of reference, and he was one of the committee appointed to select the best faces of type and models for display of government printing, the fineness of which have given great moral support to the better class of printers throughout the country.



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