

for
SHOW CARD
SIGN ARTISTS,
SCREEN PROCESS
ARTISTS,
WINDOW DISPLAY
MANAGERS,
POSTER ARTISTS,
LETTERERS,
STUDENTS

n.c.
MARTIN'S
MODERN, money-making

IDEAS

BOOK
one

martin's ideas

MR. MARTIN has asked me to write him a bit of foreword for his little book. . . .



H. C. Martin needs little introduction to the sign and studio fraternity. He numbers his friends by the thousands; is known literally from Seattle to Miami, from Brownsville to Boston, and from Nova Scotia to New Zealand. In every small town in the U. S., probably, are those who know him through his writings and who follow his ideas.

This latest plan of his to issue a series of popular priced Idea-Books is exactly what the trade needs; something we can financially reach without the aid of a ten-foot pole; a dollar bill slipped into an envelope and Uncle Sam brings a valuable new shop-manual to our bench!

He has no pupils, classes or anything of such nature to promote or to sell you, but has spent himself physically—and almost mentally, for the good of the cause. The very "simplicity" of these ideas represents years of previous hard training along experimental lines, and a "boiling down" of many things more complicated and impractical.

He has spent thousands of hours getting the layouts together for this coming series—and in digging them out of his mind. To those whose ideas sprout slowly, and on those mornings when blank mind confronts blank cardboard, I say—consult your Martin's. Instead of having to take valuable minutes to work things out for yourself, hammer and tongs, with danger of bungling the job—consult your Martin's.

A flip of the pages, you get the germ of an idea here, and presto! other ideas of your own will at once leap to the mind, if you have a shred of brain left. This unusual new suggestion book is a treasure-house of idea-stimulators; a book you can take off the bench at any time and find material, layouts, new forms—interesting stuff on every page.

In these pages there is no twaddle, nor is there piffle; Martin is Martin, and doesn't care "tuppence" whether everyone agrees with him or not; doesn't expect them to, in fact. Herein are no gymnastics; no magic; yet scores of ideas of sure-fire value. They're practical!—they work!

Know what Martin knows. Many an amateur spends years learning what Martin can tell him and show him in five minutes. When you follow the suggestions in these books you have Martin working with you. It means money in the pocket.

D. R. HIATT,
Orlando, Fla.

•••
Thank you, Mr. Hiatt! Those be strong words—do I deserve all that?

•••
"H. C." (Himself)

martin's ideas

TO PLUNGE right into the subject, for there will be no formal chapters, let me give you a few words of explanation right here as to the aim and purpose of this series of little books.

The simpler, elementary forms of layout will not often be shown here particularly, but readers are referred to my other writings for numberless examples of these. For color ideas my first book, "1000 Show Card Layouts", contains close to a thousand, cleverly indexed for quick reference. Furthermore, it takes a broad view of the field, gives principles of layout, treats of lettering, plans and suggestions for advertising and running one's own business, etc.

THIS series will not supplant but supplement this former work. No repetition of anything will be found,—all is *new* material. Leaning of course heavily to display card layouts, but the ideas are applicable, well adaptable to sign, bulletin, screen process, and—often—even poster work. In the next issue—Book Two—it is planned to show six to ten pages of poster art and pictorial cards. Many alphabets and examples of lettering will be shown of value to a student along this line. And in short a general miscellany, and what one book lacks, another in the series may have a plethora. The idea is the IDEA—call it layout composition, what you will.

Never—it is said—has there been such an opportunity in the history of the world for imagination in selling by vital hand lettering in the "market place" as today. Many will tell you that "wild stuff" is all gone out—taboo—in interior decoration of all sorts, in typography even. Maybe so, but we

as display card men and sign writers will probably for years and years retain much of it, the flavor and spirit of it. It's primeval in the cardwriter's soul to go rampant, trampling down all rules and precedent.

I do not mean to encourage too extreme layout dramatics, lurid eye stoppers—but rather, simple, vigorous design. Remember my oft-repeated battle cry "A show card is a large hand lettered ad in color",—a talking salesman in the window.

There is rarely need to be "modernistic." Modernistic has been defined as "smarty", but modern is simplicity, vital, fresh, *alive!* Action, eye movement, *color*. There is much argument pro and con regarding this modernism. Some claim the Century of Progress at Chicago marked the beginning of a new period, the crystallization or shaping into definite form of the new principles rampant and disorganized for several years. Others assert that this carnival, as they term it, marks the end of an era—an orgy—of half-baked chuckle-headedness. That the millions who came and saw, are through with modernism forever and ever. "That crazy stuff . . .!" The camps seem equally divided on the question.

No matter if we are swinging around in a cycle back to the traditional again, the Empire period perhaps, the influence on our design will never change back to the musty, out-dated forms of yester year. Radical modernistic is "out", of course. But the sane modern we will always retain. Particularly in our window display field, for we employ much ballyhoo and are allowed freer license than those in other lines of graphic arts, as the printed page.



Plate 1—Display cards not too extreme—they're practical!

martin's ideas

READER, what does modernism mean to you—crazy angles, distorted lettering, raw discordant colors—all haphazardly slung together? Granted, one may work for sparkle, movement, action, as preferable to over-dignified and ponderous conservatism, and may set something aslant perhaps, use asymmetric layouts, try for a feeling of force, strength—but is discord necessary to get attention? No! For even the more conservative style of layout if rightly handled, may hold its own in attention value against the extreme modernistic.

The ingenious cardman may occasionally depart from or deliberately violate some basic principle of layout in order to achieve interesting variations, in order to get away from trite, worn-out commonplaceness, and at first glance such a layout as executed by an expert may seem extremely simple. But ah! such effects don't merely happen willy-nilly. They are the logical result of lettering lines and color values thoughtfully, tastefully, strategically placed.

The acid test to be applied to every layout should be: "Is it easy to read?" This one principle should be considered above mere clever attractiveness, color snap, mechanical skill of letter, or so-called modernity, according to my humble opinion. The masses—the average intelligent shopping public as a whole—it is doubtful if they give two cents for modernistic "art" in the windows, and all the stuff that the high-brows rave about.

What they want is legibility, to be told the good points in the merchandise displayed, to be informed the price. Modernistic ornaments and dingbats, and fancified lettering avail little. All these are more than likely hindrances rather than helps. An appearance of

orderliness makes for easy reading. And the card *must* be easy to read.

The statement has been made—the source is forgotten—that for everyone capable of producing a really good piece of modernism, there are at least one hundred second-raters; that weak or even atrocious examples are many times more numerous than the few meritorious. This is no doubt true; therefore we should exercise discretion in selection of those used for model or study.

Much of the so-called modernism we see in our branch of the graphic arts is childish, if not downright asininity, born of illogical reasoning—if it may be dignified with the name of reasoning at all—of confused muddle-headedness and ignorance of the real fundamental spirit, which is simplicity. Movement, yes—and freedom, but beware of freakishness; high color, brilliant and attractive, is permissible, but all must be subservient to, and augmenting legibility.

Do not close your mind to the good in the new, yet don't be blinded by the dust of modernism; avoid the danger of becoming a mere abstractionist. Think for yourself; measure others' work with the yard stick of practicability, of common sense,—of *advertising sense*.

IT MATTERS not what letter one uses in these layouts, the IDEA is there, staple as sugar or coffee. These ideas will be as good ten years from now as today.

I have fowl scorn of the man whose first remark is "Look at that S!" or some other petty detail that does not just suit his pernickety taste. Little man, let me see *your* work—has it the *punch*?



Plate 2—More moderately modern in tone.

martin's ideas

OFTEN the card writer whose work lies along routine or rather proscribed lines is able to turn out good layouts on the narrow upright half sheet proportion without fumbling, but when faced with a decided "landscape" shape he may have to hesitate and scratch his head for a moment. Hence the few idea-stimulating hints here shown.

Beware of too much "see-saw" or tilting of display lines; it shows bad taste. However, if judiciously employed, perhaps among a number of cards of more sober arrangements, it may be a means of added attention. Then again, there is the curved line of lettering, or that set on a quarter-circle or other segment of a circle; if not overdone or forced and strained, it may serve to attract the eye through contrast with the rectangular shape of the card.

Just a word right here regarding outlining (frequently called for in these color notes): The extremist branch of modernists contend that any outlining of letters, likewise any use of card borders is superfluous—nay, even "primitive"! Certainly many in the past have gone to excess along these lines, yet common sense and careful experiment will quickly convince one of the practical value of both. They are far from out of date.

Outlining particularly, on in-between colors of card stocks, is often very necessary. Not a narrow "tight" outline, but decidedly "loose", is generally best. Too heavy an outline may cheapen, too narrow may look forced and niggardly. Execute it freely, yet neatly. Of course borders too, may be overdone and heavy, smothering the message. A border should be kept well away from the display elements, allowing plenty of breathing room and not in any de-

gree hindering the register of the message in the reader's mind.

•••
"Kodak". This is a pea green card, with dark blue display with highlight or inline of orange; white rules.

"Dine". Orange card; display words in black with emerald green inline. Corn rules.

"Bold Letters". Silver card; the lettering all black. The two hairline rules at the right are white. On the upper left outline your large round dots with a vivid vermilion then coat around with vermilion leaving silver dots on the panel; or a red card stock aplikay may be used with white dots forming the "rule."

"Modernistic". A gold card with two silver panels aplikayed on. All lettering black. Or, an orange card stock, with white panels edged corn, then a rule of cream inside this edge. Lettering black. Edge the display with a cold bluish-green (medium light). Or, maroon card; "Modernistic" in black lettering on an orange panel, "Layouts" in white or lavender panel. The small lettering below is a cold green.

"Special \$56". Using a heavy white matboard, coat the upper portion a bright magenta. Then flank this with medium light lavender, and this in turn with very pale lavender. Letter the card price and all in black, edging the price with bold corn or a softened dark yellow.

"Hosiery". Turquoise card. Salmon display with inline of white. Small lettering also salmon. Rules bold black.

•••
You may run on something here that looks strangely familiar. Yours? Thank you! I take certain liberties in my borrowing and adapting, but am careful to preserve the basic IDEA.



Plate 3—Thought-provoking "landscape" layouts.

martin's ideas

ONE QUICK, practical way to get a modern effect is to employ an aplikayed panel of contrasting or harmonizing color on the card. The opposite page illustrates several ways of doing this. In "Beau Mode", "Tudor Plate", "Sandwiches"—the panel is used for the main display lines; in "Suits", "18 Sessions" and "Lucerne" the panels are the means of bringing out certain selling points; while the two ribbon-like panels above in "Steins" and "Brighten Up", and the one panel in "Furniture", feature a catchline or slogan of some sort.

This aplikay method is always effective if the design as a whole is good, and right colors are chosen. But if the layout design is not right, and the panel be added as an attempt to pull out of the hole, it generally results in "Confusion worse confounded". If as a newcomer in card work you are awkward in panel use, restrain yourself to those examples you know to be right till more familiar and sure of your ground.

•••
 "Join the Band". White card. The panel is buff with black display lettering. "Of course you can" is in turquoise mixed with ultramarine blue. The small lettering is penwork, black. Rules are a broad corn (light orange) band, with a narrower rule of the same paled, beside it. Or the rules may be turquoise and "of course you can" in vermilion.

"Steins". Pale cream-ivory card. The aplikay panels are all bright pea green (Oriental), with black letters. The small lettering on the card proper is black, "at" may be in gray; the thick and thin vertical rules are a very bright, light, vivid red or vermilion.

"Saranac". White card. Vertical rules red; aplikay panel of black edged medium gray. "Saranac" is in corn (light orange). All other lettering is black.

"Suits". Pale ivory card; panels light turquoise or pale blue (cardstock) with midnight blue letters. The display and price are a cold geranium red, or a strong magenta. Small copy gray.

"Beau Mode". Buff card. Light lavender panel with white letters. Rules gold. Small stuff, black penwork.

"Sandwiches". Dark brown card. The panel is buff edged with thick and thin orange, then flanked each side with a bold black rule on the dark brown. The display lettering is black. All small lettering is light yellow green; the capital in orange; rules are lavender.

"Lucerne". Yellow card. "Lucerne" and the price are a dulled light blue with inline of black. The panels are orange with lettering of black, as well as the smaller lettering on the main card.

"18". White card. The price is a light vivid red and main lettering black, while the panels are pea green with black lettering. Rules gray.

•••
SEEN in Cincinnati, where a store was being remodeled, the front boarded up as usual,—this hoarding painted black, with light yellow lettering "The New Home of, etc."; lavender and vermilion modern ruling and decorations! And a typical "cardwriter's layout."

That was modern. It was novel, unexpected, a fresh effect. "DARE to be Original . . . !" What a motto to place on the wall before us at the bench.



Plate 4—Examples of lettered aplikayed panels.

martin's ideas

THIS present modernistic trend is puzzling many. W. A. Diggins in his able book *Layout in Advertising* speaks thus: "Modernism is not a system of design—it is a state of mind. It is a natural and wholesome reaction against an overdose of traditionalism." It should be as if the workman said to himself: "Forgetting all the influences which I have been through, all precedents that have gone before, all rules I am supposed to follow, I take these letters and my own inventive modern-day creativeness and proceed to *be myse f.*"

Modernism is not "an extravagance and clutter of geometric ornament . . . malformed letters in disorderly array", as some one expresses it, not a mass nor mess of angles and antagonistic colors, but—SIMPLICITY.

The real spirit of modernism is embodied here, far more strongly in this group than in the topsy-turvy type generally, and quite as erroneously, claimed as expressing it. An address on such problems reported in a display magazine, gave this terse, staccato statement regarding lettering particularly and layout: "Modernistic is smart; modern is smart. There is a difference. You can be modern, but please don't get too modernistic. Let's leave out the fancy stuff . . ." How true that is! Let these words burn themselves into your brain; many times they may help to keep you sane and safe, from going to extremes.

Good modernism has brought us freshness and variety. But to anyone who looks at much of modern art through the spectacles of common sense it is seen to be absurdity. The arti-

ciality and complexity, the dizzy geometrics and petty modernistic trickery is sheer nonsense. The public gets satiated with too-spectacular color, with queer design and layout, and occasionally craves conservatism and dignity for a change.

CARDWRITING is largely a matter of details—small details that are seeming trifles, but none must be neglected, for all go to make a perfect whole. Take the detail of colors; the cost of the best obtainable being so small on the individual job, why be satisfied with muddy, cheap colors? Just as also carefully made good lettering takes but the smallest trifle more time than shoddy workmanship; the same number of strokes is necessary in each. Then again, a few moments spent in planning an effective layout may greatly add to the selling value of the finished card. Don't overlook these details.

Some may claim that specializing is an admission of weakness—that such an one is not big enough to cover the field properly as a whole. I contend just the opposite—that it takes real strength of character and will—power to concentrate, to know all possible about this one thing, instead of scattering one's energies and ability out over many things. The trained man wins, the figures all prove it; the man who can really make sales through the plate glass window. Only the really efficient and competent survive. Efficient? Yes, it has been shown that even coal shovelers have had their efficiency increased 300% by cutting down lost motion, studying proper sizes and types of shovels, etc. Know your stuff!



Plate 5—"Split combination" or two-color background cards.

martin's ideas

HOW MANY cardwriters complain "I haven't an original idea in my head!" Where do ideas come from anyway? Is there such a thing as a really original idea? Some of our best advertising brains insist that there is not; that what we fatuously delude ourselves into believing is creative thinking, is really little more than idly letting the stream of memory float by, now and then fishing out one of these "ideas". Carlyle said: "That man is the most original who is able to adapt from the greatest number of sources."

I do not mean to condone the practice of "swiping" a competitor's idea, of downright stealing a thing and then hotly claiming it as your own—that is not ethical. But to lock oneself into a bare room, and sit down with pencil and paper—"cold turkey"—to hatch out new ideas, or to stand at the bench and all day long create fresh layouts, new shapes, what not,—that is rather a strain, to say the least. One needs a primer, a starter, something tangible—the stimulation of other workmen's ideas to start vibration in the brain cells.

USE the experience of others. Fresh ideas are everywhere; we fairly stumble over them. Keep on your toes, always alert for new ideas. Saturate your mind with them, and train it to develop them, not slavishly imitating, but using your own independence of thought in conjunction.

We are all guilty of too much loose thinking, our mental cupboards crammed with miscellaneous unrelated bits of knowledge. True, card-writing seems sometimes to be made up of a mass of details, but strive

to classify your thoughts, classify and pigeon-hole them in the different compartments of your mind; file them away in your brain-cell index in some orderly fashion, and time will come when jolly new shapes and corking color schemes will come hopping through your mind faster than you can use them.

"Oxford Group." The card sections above and below are red, the center portion is yellow. To be most effective this red must be very bright and vivid. Use palest gray lettering on it, the display perhaps with white highlight. On the center portion use black lettering and price.

"Hose Mended." Midnight blue card. Display orange, the small lettering a light blue. The decorations are metallic silver paper, cut as shown and pasted into place.

"Black Persian." The main card portion is corn with black letters. The narrow panels side and bottom are gold. Rules are black. A spot of light or pale turquoise is really needed to give the right accent or fillip to this scheme.

"Sero Tone." Midnight blue card. The bullseye is a mount of yellow edged light old rose, then outside them a ring of vermillion, and lastly emerald green. The rules are dulled dark blue. "Sero Tone" is black; "Interior Paint" old rose; small lettering light or paled blue.

"Perrier." Silver panel shape on an orange card, the panel to be edged and separated from the orange by rules of black. Or, the main card may be silver, with three narrow side panels mounted after; this is probably best. Lettering black.



Plate 6—More unusual modernistic effects.

martin's ideas

WE HAVE for consideration in this group modern cards of a different type—several of them composed of vari-toned areas of mat-board combined to form a pleasing background for the message. They look simple; structurally they are simple, no “arty” stuff; no complicated or fussy design; but merely what Frankl phrases as a “simple rhythmic combination of masses”.

Yet oftentimes it becomes a labored struggle to secure this inviting appearance of simplicity—a la modern. There’s no secret or magic about it—it’s merely the plainest principles of good design, but it is well-nigh impossible to formulate set rules for this sort of thing, any more than to present a universal “open sesame” to other layout design, for each card presents a different individual problem, and each card is capable of interpretation in a number of different ways.

Distinctive modern show cards, not sham or invitation, smart Alecky modernism, are made by this rule (another’s thought): “Simply—simplicity; simple things simply done”. Remember that!

Taking “\$3.50”, in the extreme lower right of the plate, as example: our instant thought is for a primrose lettered panel with orange bull’s-eye and back panels of pebbled gold perhaps. That’s a good combination, but suppose we change it a bit: the lettered panel to be pea green with black lettering; the bullseye orange—with white price figures; the back panels purple with black “shade” from the lettered panel in front. Or again, the center panel is dark blue, the bullseye a striking bright blue—the blue card stock called “Cascade” with white figures; left panel silver, right-and-rear panel magenta. Try all three of these. For best effect, con-

struct this with four planes; the bull’s-eye is in front of all, with separating bits of wallboard between it and the lettered panel, which is plane two; then the left-hand panel, and behind all, the tall right-hand panel.

“10%” is a black card with yellow main lettering; the side panels may be mounted on the front surface if desired, using stripes of cold green—special-coat if necessary.

“Borosco.” This may be either a dark or light card—either will do equally well, with a panel behind of old rose—black band rules, and a tall rear panel behind all of pale lavender with darker self-color rules, or blue rules.

The four shoe cards need no explanation, except to say that the modernistic flower panels should be well separated from the lettered panels by half-corks or other means. In the greatest majority of cases the upright card is more desirable, the landscape shape requiring too much valuable window space—this especially in shoe windows as generally trimmed.

In the group of four cards at the upper left the larger main portion of each card may be white with black letters, the word “SUITE” or “54”—as the case may be—with inline of emerald green. The smaller section may be yellow, black lettering, the largest with inline of orange. Rules of tan separating the two.

Or—the top shape—all white. The price and “3 piece SUITE” in black with loose outline of cold light green. “Was \$78” or “Pay down, etc.” in brightest vivid vermilion.

Or, white cards; lettering all black, the display with an inline or highlight of light turquoise. The price is edged closely with a bold very light turquoise outline. The rules in terra cotta.



Plate 7— . . . and if you go in for this sort of thing . . .

martin's ideas

CARDWRITING has been classed as a minor art, a narrow trade, but it need not be, to the man who has vision and realizes its possibilities. You may have yearnings toward commercial art or what not; here is a work that is creative work, pleasantly combining art with business and business with art. You may never become wealthy, but will surely be always busy; cards are a sure source of bread-and-butter. You have something the merchant needs in a bad way; display cards of the right sort cannot fail but bring good business to the merchant and to you. Cleverness and mere artistic ability may not carry you far, but plain dependability will.

ANARROW TRADE? I contend, on the contrary, that a man to be really versatile in this line must be almost a "jack-of-all-jobs". The variety of work that passes through one's hands in the general studio in the course of a year calls for pretty all-around ability. Because of this, I have always favored concentrating, if possible, on card work, and getting efficient in that, at least.

It is not narrow! True, it is in a measure proscribed and exacting, but it is also exciting to the man with breadth of view and vision; the work holds great possibilities. The amateur dabbler will not attain high success—the fellow content with a rude, crude little business. Let him give himself a "college course" in the work. Let him take up color, and open for himself a door to an absorbing study; let him take up design; let him study layout—thus he may open many doors

and new avenues for thought.

GET a sound knowledge of your business. Don't be satisfied with only a smattering inkling of the purpose of advertising. Don't depend on your glittering personality. Learn more of the real know-how of your business.

The problem has been raised regarding the influx of so many clever and artful young men crowding into this field of work, whether the profession will be able to absorb them rapidly enough. Have no fear, reader; there is always room at the top. Be sure of that. There is no gain-saying the fact that the schools are turning out many new workmen each year, but the trade needs them, must have them; of this number a proportion have maggots in the brain and will never amount to much anyway; or are always looking for some cheap, easy way to success; they should never have climbed out of the cradle. The beginner who plans to build a future on straight thinking and sound sense, not trickster methods; who with skilled brains becomes a creator of ideas, not a copy-cat nor a gnat-brained, progress-blind "mechanic"; the one who resolves to develop a twelve-cylinder mind,—there will always be room and always a demand for such a man.

What have you to sell? ABC's lettered on cardboard, or—IDEAS? Don't sit around racking your brain for new tricks, but use—adapt—profit by the proven "pullers" here presented.



Plate 8—Not brilliant, yet they stand out if rightly handled.

martin's ideas

THE BEST of sales copy may go unnoticed and unread unless properly presented through forceful or attractive layout and color. What are the hidden qualities in the merchandise, and what is the essential selling thought? It has been variously estimated that the average pedestrian spends 4 to 7 seconds passing or glancing at a window display; the card, by its color—its snap and sparkle—or outstanding novelty nature may be utilized as a bright spot for eye focus to induce pausing longer for an inspection of the goods; or the card may be merely a “clincher” to the sales appeal the window display has made; in either case it must *work fast*.

With the layout faculty properly trained, the cardwriter on reading over the copy presented to him, should almost instantly see the various points to be emphasized and featured group themselves, so to speak, into suitable and logical layout arrangement on the blank card sheet before him. There should be no need for fumbling, for headscratching, no groping about for ideas. Layout is the heart and “soul” of the card, the secret of success in this profession. Perfect finish, hair-line serifs, graceful swash letter curves avail little—if the basic composition be lacking. Study layout first, then color, and it may be you will find that lettering has come naturally while you were mastering the first two essentials.

•••
“Sal Hepatica.” Purple card.

White display with capitals S and M in corn. Small copy also white. Rules black.

“Rothwall.” Black stock. Display pale rose or magenta with inline of white. Smallest body text in cream. Dot decorations or rules in gold.

“All Wool.” Maroon card. Display and price in white; the little lettering in light or medium lavender. Rules are vermilion.

“Velour.” White card. Midnight blue or black lettering contrasted with two dainty pastel colors, as pale turquoise and pale tan.

“Arabian.” Midnight blue card. Display in a light yellow orange, with white caps, A and C. Italics above and one word before, also white but not too heavy so as to detract from the display. Small lettering, also the rules, in medium light blue—ultramarine reduced with white.

“Emerson.” Tan stock. Display in cream and caps S, S, and W, to sub display below cream. All other lettering black. Black rules with vermilion hairline rules against.

“Stain-Proof.” Black card. Display medium lavender. Small lettering green. Rules are a band of gold with a line of orange against.

“Reopens Nov. 1.” Silver card—black lettering. Rules of magenta. The lettering may be shellacked to give it a gloss. I often do this on gold stock.

“China.” Black card. The small copy is olive green; the display is dark yellow with a bit of this same green in. Rules are olive green.

•••
If rushed for time, fall back on the book; but my advice is to work up your own ideas also; to originate; to do your own thinking!



Plate 9—Some simple modern ruling effects.

martin's ideas

IT WILL DO you no good to lay this book up on the shelf to accumulate dust. It must be studied to benefit you.

The endeavor is to give helpful, practical common-sense layout suggestions; only in such will the greatest majority find substantial profit. You are urged to borrow these ideas; they will help you "get by" in a rush, and perhaps raise the level of your work. There is no desire to stuff the beginner's mind with masses of new ideas, nor on the other hand—too ready-made layouts, but rather to show the principles and encourage him to do some real thinking for himself. Let him get the idea, then apply his own intelligence.

The beginner is advised to stick to the definite examples he has before him here, not attempting new arrangements before he is sure of his ground, lest he get into bad design and too-bizarre effects. The veteran may, with a flip of the pages, find a new idea come to him in a flash from somewhere, suggested only by the literal layout which he sees before him. When thus rightly used, the book will not stultify but stimulate the mind—in one case will train, in the other merely suggest.

In the examples shown all the cards except "Bokar," "Shirt Sale" and "Budget Plan" are cut-out panels mounted and preferably set out away from the background by bits of wallboard between; with the three named, the cards have openings cut with the contrasting color card showing through from behind.

Many times little real necessity exists for such panelling other than that it makes a more interesting card and so will help to lift it out of the commonplace. Again, a definite need may almost demand it, to segregate minor points from the main card copy proper. Don't force such an effect. It must have a reason for being, must look naturally

and spontaneously done, or else leave it alone.

"Dermitt." White panel mounted on light brightest blue card, the curved bars of shellac or a darker blue than the card itself. Or, the panel may be cream (pale) edged a softened dull green, almost pale; black letters; mount on olive green with shellac bars.

"Bokar." Dark mottled blue stock with cut-out for primrose behind; edge these cut-out panels with orange inside; the display is pale turquoise.

"Comfort." Midnight blue stock. Panel of primrose stippled pale yellowish green; edge the panel white, and outside this on the card with broad gold band. The diagonal band across is of medium light blue. The display is orange edged gold. Panel lettering may be dark green. Or, the card may be purple; panel yellow edged heavy gold, then another heavy outline of black outside around it on the card; bars are emerald green. If there be no outside display (using a large panel only), letter the display on the panel in vermilion edged white.

"Trend of Fashion." Silver card; white rules; panel of lavender or purple—Or, maroon card; rules gold; panel special-coat of light yellowish green if you have not this color in cardboard; black lettering, plum colored caps. Or, silver card; mount of black, with one or two caps in an emerald green, other lettering in white.

"5%." Midnight blue card; white panel; midnight blue lettering, but "5%" in vivid vermilion; rules lavender.

"Arrow Collars" and "Fashion Tablewear" may be transition effects, greens, blues, or "hot" colors. Or, simply use primrose panels or ultramarine blue stock, with black wide-spaced rules set out, or turquoise or other medium light blue rules.



Plate 10—Cutout or mounted panels—try these.

martin's ideas

THE LAYOUTS in this plate are all very simple—yet modern in spirit. Not every one practical on wider cards, it may be—if not, don't force them. Often a layout idea which we feel has real merit and possibilities, we must reject because of its awkwardness on the stock-cut size of card; such a layout is frequently made workable by narrowing the card decidedly.

The design should present itself as a unified whole, with copy in a pleasing contour or silhouette to invite the eye, avoiding an irregular, choppy arrangement; no suggestion of see-saw; lots of "air" around the caption and sub display for accent and quick legibility. There should be an easy follow-through for the eye, a sense of movement, of going some place or leading the eye somewhere—"eye-travel" best describes the action. With your blank card before you, make a few tentative rhythmic lines of movement with charcoal—block out faintly your copy masses, then pencil in and rule the lines.

Now consider colors; sharp contrasts. Put in your dominant color first. Try for sparkle — sparkle and snap—contrast. Don't let the sub display or other counter attraction pull too hard against your main display. A sprawly, spotty piece, poorly planned—will fumble the message in trying to put it across.

Real sales stuff sits in those color jars on the bench before you; with a complete keyboard to your color piano in orderly array, you may play your theme of salesmanship. Armed with proper color knowledge, put your color on with a dash, frankly

and boldly, confident of results to your client and of profits and goodwill for you. Yet be not extravagant, remembering that with color as with food "the sauce is more than half the dish". Again: it's not entirely the brand of colors you choose, but more in the way you use them. And yet again: the rule should be in the eye more than in the book.

Above all—remember the power and effectiveness of simplicity.

"Sale Coats." Black card; feature lines and "Save" below are light yellow with inline of white; small copy medium gray. Rule bars are a dull softened light blue.

"Peppy." Black card stock. Display is lavender with inline of very pale lavender. Small lettering cream. Silver decoration.

"Buddha." Special-coat a panel of wallboard with a bright, light snappy magenta. The aplikay bull's eye is yellow with ultramarine, or lighter blue price with black inline. Rule lines are white. Striking!

"Lawson." Primrose card with three pea green or emerald green arrows. Black lettering. Outline the display and price with a loose hair-line of white.

"Figure Fabrics." Pale ivory stock, with light yellow green side decorations; the card panel may then be mounted on orange.

"Films." Pale blue or seafoam green card. Panel turquoise with white letters; arrows orange.

"Real Spirit." White or pale cream card. Magenta flowers and a light bright blue for the leaves and stem. Rules of dark yellow. Black lettering.



Plate 11—Simplicity is the keynote of modernity.

martin's ideas

ENTIRELY too much emphasis, generally, is placed on the importance of mechanical skill. Workmen whose letter finish is about perfect may produce cards that as selling advertisements are "flops". It's not the letter one uses, but how he uses it—the composition or layout—that makes or breaks one's work. In the accompanying plate are various simple modern layout ideas. Where is expert lettering needed to add to their attention value?

Must our cards shout like the carnival hot-dog stand man, with drunken, crazy letters—to be modern? Is it so necessary to use the ugly modernistic styles, freaky and illegible, the ultra-bizarre? In their proper place—theatrical posters—probably permissible, but for work-a-day display cards, intelligence and common sense answer—No!

Some writer has pointed out that the architect is still using the same old bricks in new designs to create new modern architecture. Modernistic bricks have not been employed in the wonderful new buildings; modernistic tricks should not confuse the busy present day shopper, for she cannot spend much time and brain energy studying out such puzzles.

With a touch in the headline only, and using the new, fresh, modern groupings—let us get the true spirit of this new-day advertising, which is—SIMPLICITY, not complexity.

A color idea or two: "Keep Cool." Maroon card, all white lettering, the two initial caps K and C in emerald green. The horizontal rule or bar

decorations in magenta. The entire card may then, if wished, be mounted on pea green. Or, use a black stock, with all white letters, the bars in dark, dulled blue. With other copy—not the "cool" thought—use terra cotta or light brown rules.

"Paint Now." Midnight blue card. Display and secondary display in a very snappy yellow green. Small lettering in a light bright blue.

"Cut Coal Bill." Black card. Main display and small sub-display below orange. Small copy dark yellow. The panel is pea green with ultramarine lightened a trifle for lettering. The rules are gold with lavender against it.

"Solid Oak." White card, with black letters, and painted orange shaded portions shown; or these may be mounted scraps of orange card stock.

"86-Suite." Yellow card. Panel orange, with black letters. The lettering on the main card is also black, "86" and "Suite" having an edge of olive green—or a yellow and black mixed. This close, but medium heavy edge or outline plays against the orange very nicely, if not too dark.

IDEAS are all Martin has to sell you. The lettering is not "tricky", florid, over-done stuff, but clean-cut and plain-working; and—IDEAS are there, for sign use, even bulletins, as well as for display cards. A poor sign "plunk" indeed, is the man who cannot find ideas here he can use. SIGN MEN! This is *your* book, too! Even though you never make a "show card". Silk screen process men, students, all will find much of value in this work.

Plate 12 displays 12 advertisement cards arranged in a 3x4 grid. Each card uses a different color scheme and layout to promote a product. The cards are:

- Top Row:**
 - 37¢ Quart:** Chocolate, Vanilla, Fresh Peach, Strawberry, Maple Nut.
 - Keep Cool:** Buy Your Fan Now. ...and enjoy a whole Summer of comfort.
 - dining suite:** the very newest. 6 Chairs, Table, Sewing Table, China cabinet. 9 pieces. \$58. (18.45 Cash, 13. Weekly)
 - Paint Now:** Take pride in your home and finish it with Perry Sunfast Paint.
- Middle Row:**
 - YOUR CHOICE:** of any lamp. Pay Down for One Week Only... 85¢.
 - Cut your COAL BILL!:** A Better Heater at a Lower Price. Makes fuel do its FULL duty. Not an Ounce Wasted.
 - Special This Week:** 9 piece SOLID OAK SUITE. Handsomely Carved. \$234. Easy Terms.
 - TODAY ONLY:** DOWN. Balance Easy Terms.
- Bottom Row:**
 - Sale:** Tropical WORSTEDS at BARGAIN PRICES. Light! Cool! Good Tailoring! Handsome Colors!
 - Dauntless Kitchen Cabinet:** DOWN. Balance on Easy Payments.
 - PLUG IN... that's all!** faultless... care-free performance. Positively Trouble Free! Simply plug in... and forget it!
 - Worth every cent of... \$150!:** 86. This 15 Piece Living Room SUITE.

Plate 12—A mere touch of modernism may turn the trick!

MARTIN'S IDEAS

THERE is today more than ever before the need to dress up the advertising message into striking and effective selling designs or compositions that shall be pleasing to the eye and easily read. This design or *layout*, the dressing up of the message, has been described as synonymous with *style* in human dress. Far too many of us have been "too busy making buttonholes (i. e., the mechanical side of our work) to understand the tailoring of the suit."

Time was, not so long ago either, when in this specialized field this matter of layout was considered of little or no consequence; with all the advertising world searching about, as Carlyle says, "into every cranny and doghole", for new methods of getting the interest of the crowd, in display cards this principle seemed to have been overlooked or ignored. It was just as if all that was needed to be known was to letter, and to have a general knowledge of placing letters on the card.

In the writer's search for more knowledge of this, his chosen work, he by chance stumbled on the fact, and soon came to appreciate that this same principle of design or layout was highly important. It became apparent that layout offered the best solution for a short cut to success. Such proved correct. He therefore resolved to master it as thoroughly as possible—by rote, if need be, at first; hoping that later the mind would get to where it would "click" automatically. No sooner was this mastery even fairly attempted than the question arose; "How may this acquired good be imparted to others, perhaps in equal need thereof?" The writer's first volume "1000 Show Card Layouts" was the result.

Others then began to realize the

importance of design layout, and jumped hastily into the ring. Till that time the beginner had started bravely enough, then, perhaps abandoned by his teachers, wandered into briar patches, finally finding himself left floundering in some sour marsh or bog. This present series goes decidedly further into the subject than did the former work; endeavors to show that layouts with attention-getting appeal, cards that will arrest the eye and be easy to buy from, may be produced in endless form and variety.

Literary critics state that all fiction in any form is based on only seven original story plots, that all other plots are simply different combinations and expansions of these. An art critic once insisted to the writer that there could be only three perfect or really best layouts possible on the "golden proportion", as the Greeks called the most agreeable oblong or rectangle shape, similar to our half sheet size. Be that as it may, there seem to be many unique arrangements that serve to heighten the effectiveness of display cards; we should practice and study out these numerous combinations.

Making card layouts may be a continual fascinating game. We have here a rectangular shape to work on, to make more interesting. The possibilities are unlimited. The fact is, the combinations, the variety possible to be made inside the set confines of this rigid oblong shape have hardly yet been attempted by anyone; a ponderous work the size of an unabridged dictionary would be required. And the harder the problem in this game of layout the more satisfaction there will be in achieving a satisfactory solution.



Plate 13—A freshness is the effect sought for!

martin's ideas

THE average display card so frequently falls short of complete effectiveness because of the failure to realize the importance of this design or layout angle in the art of presentation.

You may have a book of multitudinous alphabets—what will you do with them? Even if you be mechanically letter perfect, what then? Well laid out may be said to be more than two-thirds the battle. If the stock is well chosen, color right, the layout satisfying and nearly perfect as may be, any beginner may execute a good card advertisement with the most indifferent sort of tools, even if they be but brushes made of hairs from the cat's tail! Or if one should almost literally shred and beat match sticks into a sort of brush, with forceful layout, well placed, readable display, and snappy colors to aid, a card may be made that will bring the passer to a halt.

How, then, to become proficient, or even further, to excel in this? Unless one has spent previous long hours of plodding mental training and practice, he is going to spend precious minutes in the shop at the bench, thinking, racking his brains for a clever solution to his display problem, turning the card this way and that, perhaps; making tentative pencil strokes, his snappy "brilliant" ideas all gone flying; trying to remember that elusive something he saw somewhere successfully used last year—he just can't remember exactly; losing time, precious time, and tiring himself out mentally and nervously. Nine-tenths of this time and minutes that mean money can be saved. He should, to use a figurative expression, be able at split second speed, to analyze and har-

monize, to coordinate every piece of copy that comes along into a concrete layout. A layout or "idea book" such as you now hold, is a short cut to the solution.

A mediocre or even almost poor letterer with clear, clean-cut layout ideas is better than an expert "mechanic" with muddled thoughts. The latter's work may look passable, but is not good advertising.

Behind good display cards, behind good "mechanics" or ability to letter well—**IDEAS** stand dominant as the real need. It is impossible to make really good attention-getting layouts, to make good *advertising* cards without good **IDEAS**.

The display card letterer need not have professional training as a practitioner of advertising; but from that field he may borrow and enlist every possible method of making his ideas as attractive and easy to understand as possible, so that the eye cannot miss either the message or the vital points of the card. With a proper knowledge and practice in layout design he may obtain unusual and striking effects, put new vitality new "punch", and more attention value into his daily work; he may produce cards that will prove their worth by stopping and holding the roving eye.

I could have used mottled or patterned boards, double-thick beveled or pebbled stock, much airbrushing, use of illustrations; dark and black backgrounds on which most anything looks well; but avoided all this, employing plain white almost entirely—and how it shows up my sometimes lopsided O's and S's. If you can't letter as well as I in two years you'd better quit!



Plate 14—The very long, narrow type of card.

Martin's Ideas

WOMEN are very style-conscious, very fashion-wise these modern times; through the many home and fashion magazines, through the daily newspapers, even the names of Paris designers have become familiar to them. If it falls to your lot to write the copy for cards, remember this and make the most of your opportunity, give specific fashion facts, not mere generalities, when you can, about the goods displayed,

Regarding card copy, "Winter Coats" as a display line on a card may carry no advertising value, being better replaced by "Warm! Stylish!" but on a paper streamer, designed to be read by a shopper across the street or from a moving auto, is logical and sound. Argument is advanced that we should work in "fashion" points, quality should be emphasized, and so forth. This is a thought worth considering, yet when approximately fifty women customers in a department store were questioned regarding this matter of card display, the consensus of their criticism was that the price should be clear and outstanding, but that as far as reading small sales copy was concerned, they themselves felt capable of judging the value, etc. without such aid. In a newspaper ad, it was admitted, this copy might be read, and would arouse interest, curiosity, or a desire to purchase.

The attitude of one very successful merchant in the suit and cloak business who insisted to me that "no one reads the copy on cards or paper streamers, anyway"—is not to be regarded too seriously. He is a great—almost excessive—user of such publicity; but frankly admits that he does it just to get a flash, to "be-

wilder them"—as he phrases it. At that his success may be due more than he realizes, to display cards. Almost needless to comment, his is a store of very popular price appeal.

I realize that the "Buy Now and Save" type of copy used so frequently herein sounds trite and lacks finesse. But what can we do if the merchant insists on such copy? Argue it out with him? Try and hammer any scientific advertising principles into the average merchant's head! "98c" sounded silly—against all logic—to me, even as a boy, but still the feminine buyers fall for it, as eagerly as forty years ago. Some of the keenest minded advertising experts and research men have personally got behind the counter to test it and prove that it should be abandoned, and—capitulated.

The over-use of "Sale" may be decried. Yet a business acquaintance a man who has three exclusive rug shops, tells me that window shoppers frequently open the door and inquire of the nearest salesman if there is a sale in progress; if not, they do not enter; the mere claim of a "Sale" seems to induce them to come in.

After all, this is not a manual of advertising to enter into discussions of this sort; our purpose rather, is to consider what to do with the copy which is furnished us.

LAY aside the prosaic and the out-moded and get a vigorous new vitality into your work! Transform card writing from a sluggish chore into a jolly job you love. While not extreme, this book is brimful of refreshing new design. The young moderns, the alert-brained are going forward, and you must keep pace, and not fall behind. Use Martin's Ideas as your first assistant!



Plate 15—Aplikay panel ideas—and modern!

martin's ideas

I wish to make the definite statement again, emphasizing that these layouts are *not* all original. There has been sometimes unconscious plagiarism, (and at other times rather deliberate. I admit it and the accusation is made that not a gunshot from the pages of this book may be others just as guilty—if only *they* will admit it.

The argument that "professional pride" will not permit an artist using others' creations should not be a deterrent. This line of work is advertising that is temporary and lives but a day, so to speak; time and profits do not always permit working up original ideas. So take with joyous shouts matter whenever you find it, use it and go carefree on your way, with no strain on the tender brain muscles.

Originality! I was going to define it myself, but someone else has put it in a defter way than I am able: "Originality is plagiarism undetected." Again, there is an ancient saying, attributed, I believe, to Solomon, that "there is nothing new under the sun."

Charles Austin Bates, the eminent advertising authority, some thirty years ago wrote pertinently to the point on this same problem.

"Nowadays the man who thinks he has a new idea is generally mistaken. He may not be a conscious copier, but he is a copier just the same. He may think he never saw the thing he has copied, and he may be perfectly honest in his belief that it is a brand new thing evolved from the back part of his own brain. If he were a believer in the transmigration of souls he would be compelled to decide that he had seen the original of his copy in some previous state of existence.

"I am sick and tired of alleged new ideas in advertising. I am tired

of the howl about originality. The more insignificant the business is the more its proprietor clamors for originality and novelty . . . The men who have made and are making fortunes in advertising are satisfied if the advertisement tells their story in a plain, convincing way. They are satisfied if it sells goods. They don't care whether it is new or old . . . It need not be original."

And the old master, Sir Joshua Reynolds, put it thusly in his quaint way:

"It is undisputably evident that a great part of every aspiring man's life must be employed in collecting materials for the exercise of his genius. Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory. Nothing can come out of nothing. He who has laid up no material can produce no combinations. The more extensive, therefore, your acquaintance is with the works of those who have excelled, the more extensive will be your power of invention; and, what may appear still more like a paradox, the more original will be your conceptions."

Occasionally you may see an idea here that you think you have glimpsed somewhere before. Possibly you have. But did you save it—did you use it? No, it slipped your mind till now. It failed to get promptly or properly filed in that filing system in your brain, or perhaps slipped into the waste basket a'so to be found there. You thought you had forgotten it, that it had escaped you. Here it is again—a practical useable suggestion neatly worked out right where it can be utilized with little or no delay. So if you see some old acquaintance in an idea, be glad it is filed here for you.



Plate 16—Is there an idea here you can use?

martin's ideas

THE endeavor has been to put into this little book the *spirit* of modernism, not absurd forms or passing faddisms, but lay-out examples usable in Beeville, Texas, as well as in the exclusive shops of Milwaukee. The new "modernism"—that word that has been misused and dragged in the mire so much—is often baffling to the amateur. For those heretofore afraid to tackle it—this book is full of good practice examples.

In passing, it may be said that any blunder can be forgiven of an honest workman seeking honestly to further advance himself. There does seem oftimes, so much, indeed, to be learned as to almost discourage the effort to acquire it. This feeling of discouragement is a stage through which most students must pass when beginning the study of lettering and cardwork. Many have said to the writer, "I wish I had your talent, etc." Nonsense! Martin claims no special talent—just a single-mindedness and a capacity for study and taking pains. Besides, mere *wishing* will get you no place. Reader, there is in my life no time to waste, nor wish I to waste yours. The advice given in these pages is written sincerely. Study this book for only the length of time that it took the writer-workman to make it, and you with possibly superior mental endowments, may do much better than he. What one man has done, you can do—it doesn't matter where you are, who you are! Rigorously put aside for a time all entanglements foreign to your ambition; get down to the ground and grind!

••

STUDY modern display card science! Develop your advertising sense. It won't come drifting in the window. You must work for it, read and reread, study—for yourself. Stand on my shoulders; learn all I know, and go on from there. For one dollar you have bought, in the book you hold in your hand, the experience that has cost me much money to find out. Some years from now some reader of this little book will say—"Martin wrote that stuff away back in nineteen umpteen. Times are different now." No, it will still be true then!

More study, more seeking after knowledge is needed. There are different ways of doing this; not necessarily through the use of expensive books. As a speaker in a display convention in Chicago said: "You can buy the Saturday Evening Post for a nickel and find on the advertising pages the efforts of some of the highest priced illustrators and artists in the blending of color and lines that are put on paper, and you can utilize these and study their work and plan accordingly."

As to advertising: Display card work is advertising; you must know it thoroughly. Most of my readers may be studio men who have the copy itself furnished, but there are many who are display managers, store men who need to know advertising principles. They must know just what will appeal to the public about their merchandise—style or what not; they often need to realize the necessity for repeating the same headlines that are in the ads, for effective hook-up; so with many other angles. Study, then also, advertising.



Plate 17—For the student—practice examples in layout.

martin's ideas

In defense of what some may term "layout tricks", let me emphasize that we have only a couple of seconds at the most, to catch the reader's attention as he passes—a shift of the eyes, and he is lost forever. Something must be done; contrast is generally wisest—harmonious contrast it may be—but some way we must help the merchant win attention to his display and to sell goods. Do things in a fresh way . . . stunt stuff perhaps . . . "quick-action advertising" . . . the card must sparkle . . . be eye-catching, eye-holding. Through our handling of the subject we may help create an atmosphere, or it may be crystalize the entire window idea into a definite selling appeal.

The card writer should endeavor to do more than mere "signs". His work can be forceful! Dramatic! Effective! An occasional cut-out shape will help. Properly planned and produced shapes may have a *punch* entirely lacking in the ordinary run of stuff. They should be lively, vigorous design to get the passerby's attention, yet simple, for they must work fast.

And—they should be varied from time to time; one time using the severely formal geometrical-line type; the next, shapes with graceful curves, as in "\$100 coats", next page, and elsewhere in the book. Vary also the colors, but striving always for those that contrast vividly with the window trim and background.

I do not mean to encourage the type of novice who attempts to cover up lame construction by throwing dust in the eyes of the merchant through doggy shapes, fancy spurred lettering and many colors of paint.

Let the beginner realize seriously that card writing is an advertising force to influence the public to buy rather than merely a chance to exhibit his pet tricky ideas and vivacious brain creations.

•••
 "Stalwart." This may be a dark card, as midnight blue, with side wings or bars in lavender, orange and yellow. Display and price in pale cool green.

"Pres de Coeur." The shape is turquoise card stock; the panel white edged dark blue. The lettering is dark blue, the price with inline or highlight of red-orange. The small side decorations are this same orange.

"Shirley Mae." The shape is black with dull dark blue rules at each end, separating the black from points coated a vivid light red or vermilion. The panel is pea green edged bold white. Very striking.

"Newest Notes." The panel is a special-coat red-lavender. Above and below are touches of a soft medium blue; the larger areas midnight blue. The lettering is coral, or salmon.

"Saved." Black card. Display line and price greenish cream. Text gray. Side bars of ultramarine, then of a much lighter blue. The sharp "steps" or points are painted in vermilion, being set off by the black of the card; or, this latter may be cut away to form a shape similar to "Shirley Mae"—only upright in form.

•••
 "Shoe Shines." Pale green card with midnight blue display. The side colors are vermilion, orange and corn. Or, the center portion is yellow with a transition effect on each side of orange, vermilion, then light blue and medium blue, with midnight blue base and top.

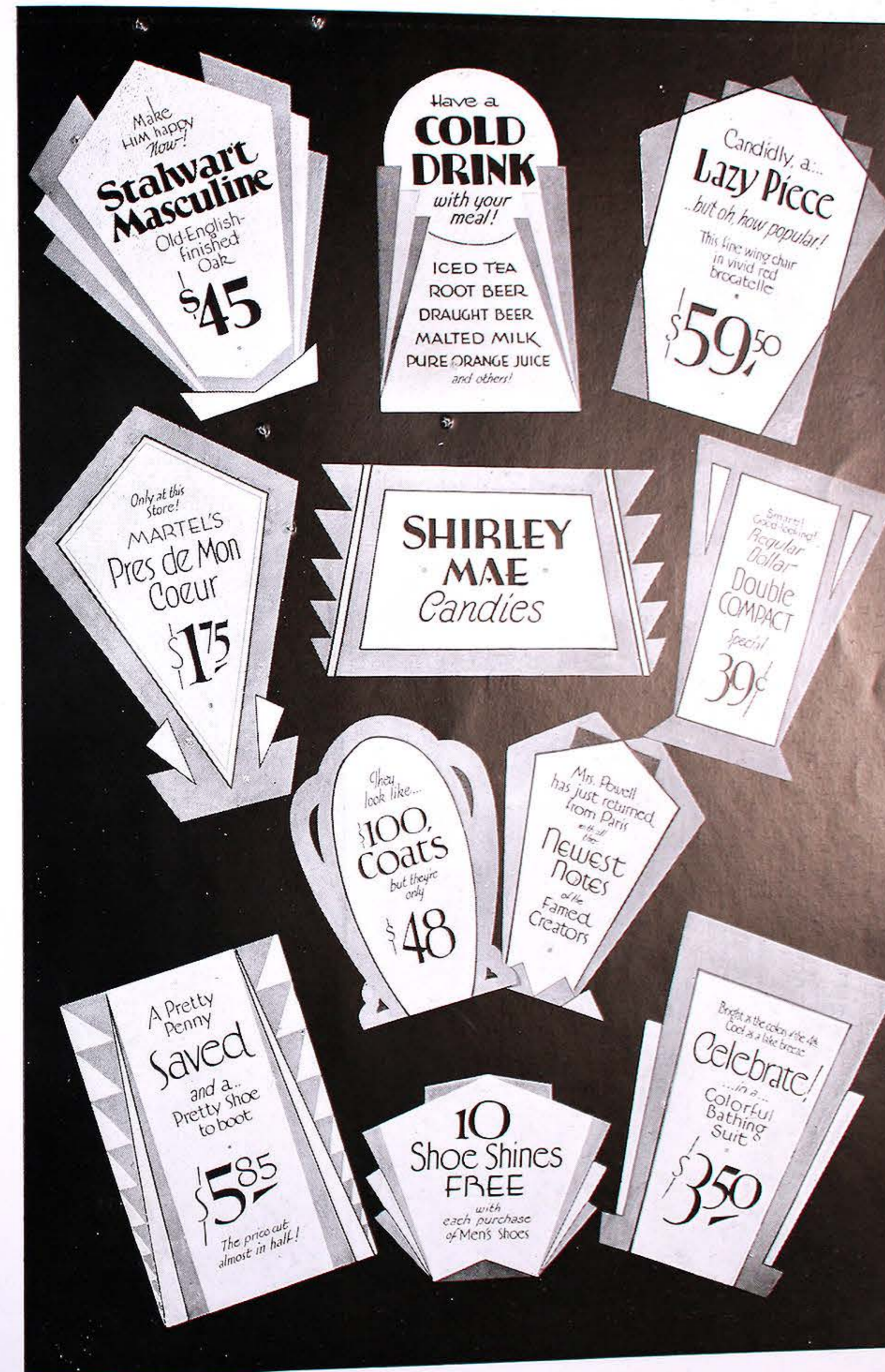


Plate 18—Shapes to add interest to the window display

martin's ideas

THE principle has been advanced before, and it should be stressed again, that in making the layout—and this takes merely an instant or two—we should work for a definite “silhouette” of the various units, elements or lettering masses.

If a card shape be employed it is generally best to keep the lettering copy plain—and straight-away—no curved or tilting of lines or copy masses; likewise if there be a decided design movement or decoration of some sort. If however, the card be plain-cut, then action may be introduced in the lettering.

The definite shape of the display piece or card, the contour or silhouette of the layout, should render unnecessary dingbats, space fillers and “gags”. If used, keep them well away from the “talking” parts of the card; never use such extraneous decorative material unless the layout looks dead without them. Often a well-placed swash character or letter flourish, to carry the eye along in easy reading—will be found preferable.

Most of the designs on these several pages, being bi-symmetric, may easily be made by drawing on stiff mapping paper, one side only, in soft pencil, folding the paper over and rubbing on the back to produce the other half. Or, on the cardboard itself, one half may be sketched and cut, the cut pieces reversed over and the other half so traced and cut.



“Sell Every Suit.” Buff card edged a darker self color or tan. Display in vermilion, small lettering black. Side bars or fluting are dark green, then bright green, then pale green.

“All You Can Eat.” Corn card or coral. Lettering all black, the display and price with loose outline of white or cream. The modernistic pointers or arrows are scraps of orange, silver and turquoise either side by side, or overlapping.

“Value.” With a light center, as pale blue, primrose or seafoam, work out in 3 or 4 shades of blue, yellows to vermilion, pale greens to dark green respectively. Or, taking the pale blue stock, mount the side panels of turquoise card and use gold stripes.

“Trade In.” Midnight blue card with cream display lettering and price. The side wings or fan-like design is orange, corn and yellow. Or, this may be a primrose shape edged broad corn with an orange line against it inside. Display dark green, small lettering black. The side wings are dark red-lavender or dark magenta, medium light of the same color, then lastly pale.

“Winchester.” Following the line of least resistance we think first of a primrose card, with dark green or dark blue or maroon panel behind, “Winchester” on a vermilion quarter-arc. Try reversing this: dark blue for the arc with corn letters, for instance, or almost pale turquoise, and vermilion for the panel behind. “Golfer”—the same way: “Hot” side bars, and dark blue base edged gold; try the base in vermilion with bars in dark and bright medium blue.



Plate 19—A miscellany of modern cutout card ideas.

martin's ideas

MANY cardmen get so intrigued by unique color schemes and odd design that they over-look the essential purpose of display cards—to sell merchandise. Cards should be stimulators of sales! The drab, commonplace type will not do this—but with simplicity, lively color, skillful design, a sales urge may be added to what has heretofore been merely “signs”.

A display card with fresh design arrangement, pleasing colors, a new shape—something different. A changing cycle! The strolling window shopper may become interested, she notes a new trim in the window, and her attention is thus effectively arrested. Just a few letters on a piece of cardboard, but the whole thing so fashioned that it has become a dramatic advertisement.

Yet—let me caution: The beginner, the student who picks up a copy of this book, and turns through it, looking for examples to practice or emulate, is more than apt, in a great proportion of cases, to pounce with great glee on these pages of shapes, when they are just about the last thing he should attempt. It would be far better were he to practice with the simplest price arrangements and conservative down-the-center layouts and ground himself in those first. In their proper place—at rare intervals—such layout shapes as these are very effective; but unless expertly handled they may appear very strained.

“Canaries.” Main body of card in corn, edged white, then with pale blue to separate from the ultramarine which is over all.

“Rinex.” Orange shape with yellow decorations. Midnight blue display—rest black.

“Economical.” Primrose, side fluting olive green and silver. Small spots of olive green and orange. Lettering black.

“Frenchy.” White card. Two or three wings, the first yellow, then a bright light magenta, lastly a dark red.

“La Carita.” Primrose; around the upper half portion and on the bottom center will be an edge of white. Then aplikay (overlapping) with old rose, gold, and bright light blue. Display lettering in dark green.

“Reduced.” Yellow card, edged corn, orange and vermilion; below are purple and tårquoise blue. Or, white card; sides in pale green and emerald (or darker); base orange, same orange paled with white, and pale green; black lettering.

MA RTIN’S “Show Card Layouts” is acknowledged to be the most authoritative, *practical* book on display card work ever published. The various problems that daily confront the cardwriter at the bench are taken up. *Colors* are explained in detail and in simple language. There are 93 plates—each one full page, often as many as sixteen layouts to the page. Contains 1000 ideas by count—but there is no limit to the number of ideas that can be gotten out of it.

You must know fundamental principles if you would improve. This book will guide you. In conjunction with this series of IDEA Books it may be said to almost constitute a real “course” in cardwriting, or shop equipment for the beginners—\$5 is slight cost for such a course or for enlarging your pay check.



Plate 20—Alert sign men adopt ideas from the card shop.

martin's ideas

THE writer has lived in localities where it seemed as if almost every other house contained an embryonic artist, some young fledgling or youth who yearned to enter commercial art, generally as cartoonist; either that, or as theatrical poster artist.

(Before another word is said, let me caution you that these remarks are those of one man only, and he would be considered biased or prejudiced; don't accept any one individual's dictum in this matter, but talk to many before you decide on this or any other career.)

As I was about to say—when interrupted—these things don't just happen. The cartoonist with his seemingly careless drawing probably spent three hours getting that care-free effect; yes—probably several years in art school at the hardest kind of training, drawing casts, then the human form, before he essayed to attempt those lively figures that cavort about with such abandon in the comics.

Again, the poster artist wasn't one who "just always kinda liked to draw", but has spent years grubbing away, making many mistakes, but studying, studying, taking hard knocks of every sort before he got to his present position and degree of proficiency.

"Art is long and time is fleeting" saith the poet; a marathon, not a sprint, and many there be that fall by the way. Cardwriters' ranks are crowded with them—"disappointed artists". It's a great life and rosy—fun!—if you've got it in you, and nothing I nor any one else can say

will stop you or hinder you from your ideals.

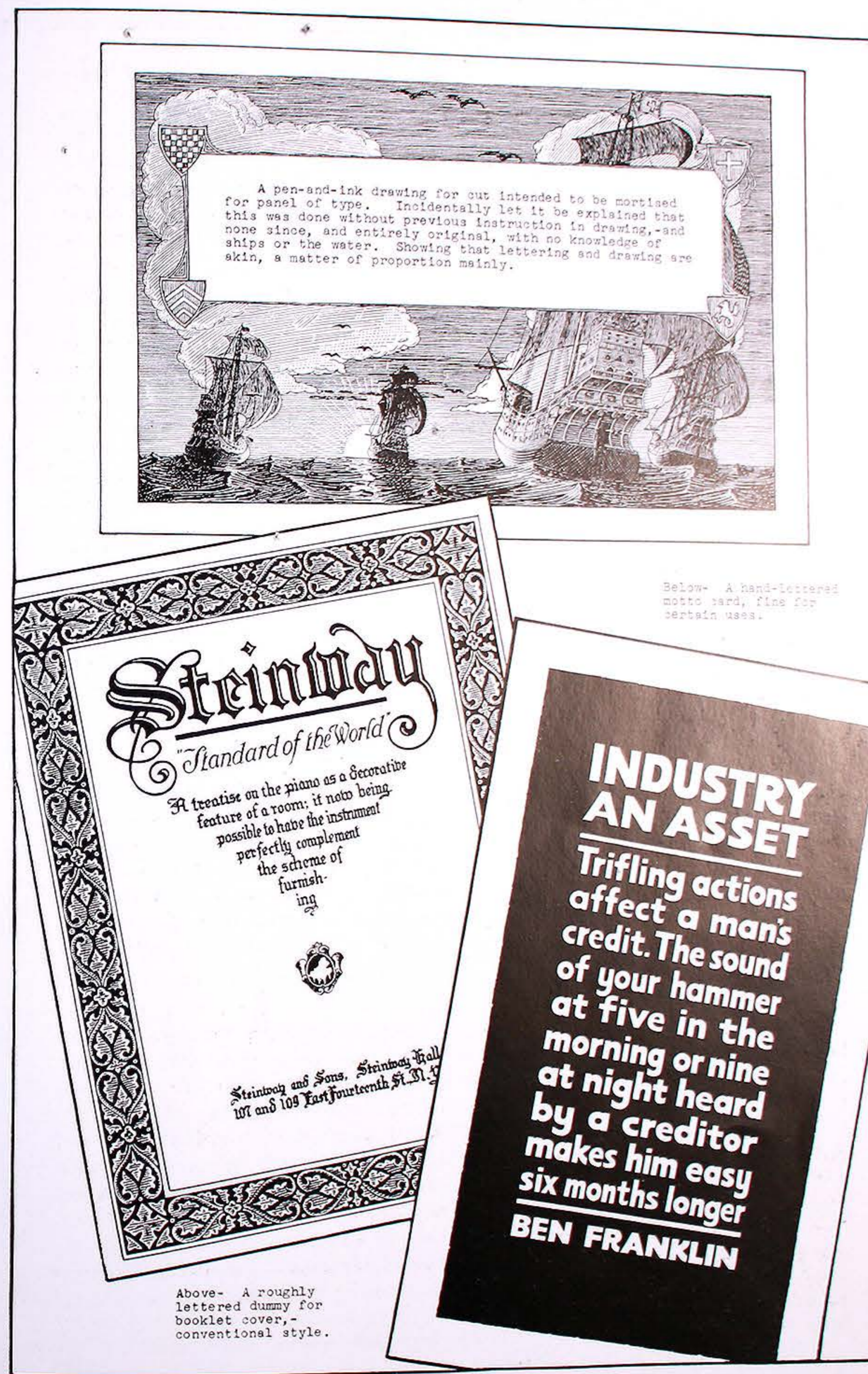
A crowded field is commercial art.

Even in most prosperous times there seem to be eighteen applicants for every job, and you must be *good* to get it,—no half-baked stuff goes; even the free-lancer has to do considerable scratching about. While in times of business sag or depression . . . the artists, many of them, are selling apples on the street corners, figuratively speaking.

Many—myself included—can't "see" the confining life; a-sitting all day long there at an easel, squashed down on oneself like a hop-toad. The broader field of display cards, sign-letting, etcetera, where one may leap about occasionally, and mayhap do a bit of plain and fancy yodeling the while to ease the tonsils—is more attractive to the virile energetic type, and will provide ample outlet on many jobs for that artistic urge that lies within you.

Personally, I dislike drawing; can, I presume; but never do. Lettering I love, but do not make a fetish of, either of finish or form. It must serve as a means to an end—to put over an IDEA and that idea is used in turn to help sell or merchandize something.

As a final word, to one going seriously into commercial art, I advise lettering study—intensive lettering study—lettering and layout. Lettering should not be hard, if you can already draw, for you have form and proportion in the eye. If you cannot draw, or but illy, the study of these two will help you much in your later task of drawing.



A pen-and-ink drawing for out intended to be mortised for panel of type. Incidentally let it be explained that this was done without previous instruction in drawing, and none since, and entirely original, with no knowledge of ships or the water. Showing that lettering and drawing are akin, a matter of proportion mainly.

Below- A hand-lettered motto card, fine for certain uses.

Above- A roughly lettered dummy for booklet cover, - conventional style.

Plate 21—Prepared to do commercial art in your studio?

martin's ideas

DISPLAY card work can be made a sort of game instead of drudgery—a high adventure instead of mere working for a wage; an interesting, ever-changing—hobby, I almost said—livelihood, is the word. Far-away pastures are not any greener.. Get more interested in the work on the bench before you. There is sheer magic in the results to be obtained with color on blank cardboard! Regard your work as an opportunity, not a mere job. Don't plug along, all bogged down with discouragement. Buck up! Dramatize your job! Cast off that idea of dead-weight routine and let your mind travel with new fresh ideas.

A certain necessary ingredient should go into the making of every card, an ingredient as important as the card stock, the paint or the lettering: that ingredient is gray matter—or "thought". The intellectual side of our work is often too lightly considered. No matter what the job—a barber shop "Shine 10c" card, or an elaborate theatrical lobby card—the good display can be achieved only by the workman who *thinks* as he works.

The layouts on the foregoing pages may not be world-beaters but it is true that similar layouts are but infrequently seen, therefore will have considerable force by contrast with the commonplace. Study these examples and your mind should be stimulated to produce other examples. Every idea will likely bring along with it "a whole family of cousin-ideas" to you. You need not—*should* not—slavishly follow another's work if there is an original idea in your own brain. But freshen up your own ideas by contact with others. Don't depend on some fellow like Martin to do your thinking for you; you have the manual dex-

terity, now develop your mental dexterity. Then, as soon as you will—bury the book in the dusty rubbish under the bench, and strike out for yourself. Till then—use these layouts here presented. They will cut down your time of digging up ideas! One idea here may pay for the entire cost of the book.

There are those whose memories are like sieves. The wise cardman depends upon recorded observations. While impressions are fresh he makes notations, everything which can later be used in the creation and production of fresh layouts, mayhap only fragmentary ideas but ideas that would be lost forever if the notations were not there to serve as a stimulus to revisualization.

Examples either for emulation or avoidance, can be found a-plenty in every locality, no matter how small. If not other workmen's productions, at least "dealer helps" as they are called. Some of these shown may have originated thus—it is not now recalled. The writer has found himself standing in front of a hardware store window, and looked up to see the merchant just inside the door with an expectant eye; he perhaps thought this "window shopper" was considering purchasing a lawnmower, when I was really critically studying the lithographed cards in the window.

The truly observant student will come home from even a short trip to a new locality with full notebooks—sparks from others' *brain workshops*. Is there harm in that? No! It is plagiarism defensible before the gods, assuredly better than the trial and error system, or in blind, time-killing experimenting. Half-boiled ideas are suicidal. Develop and prepare them, cook them thoroughly, season and salt away or refrigerate in your note book.

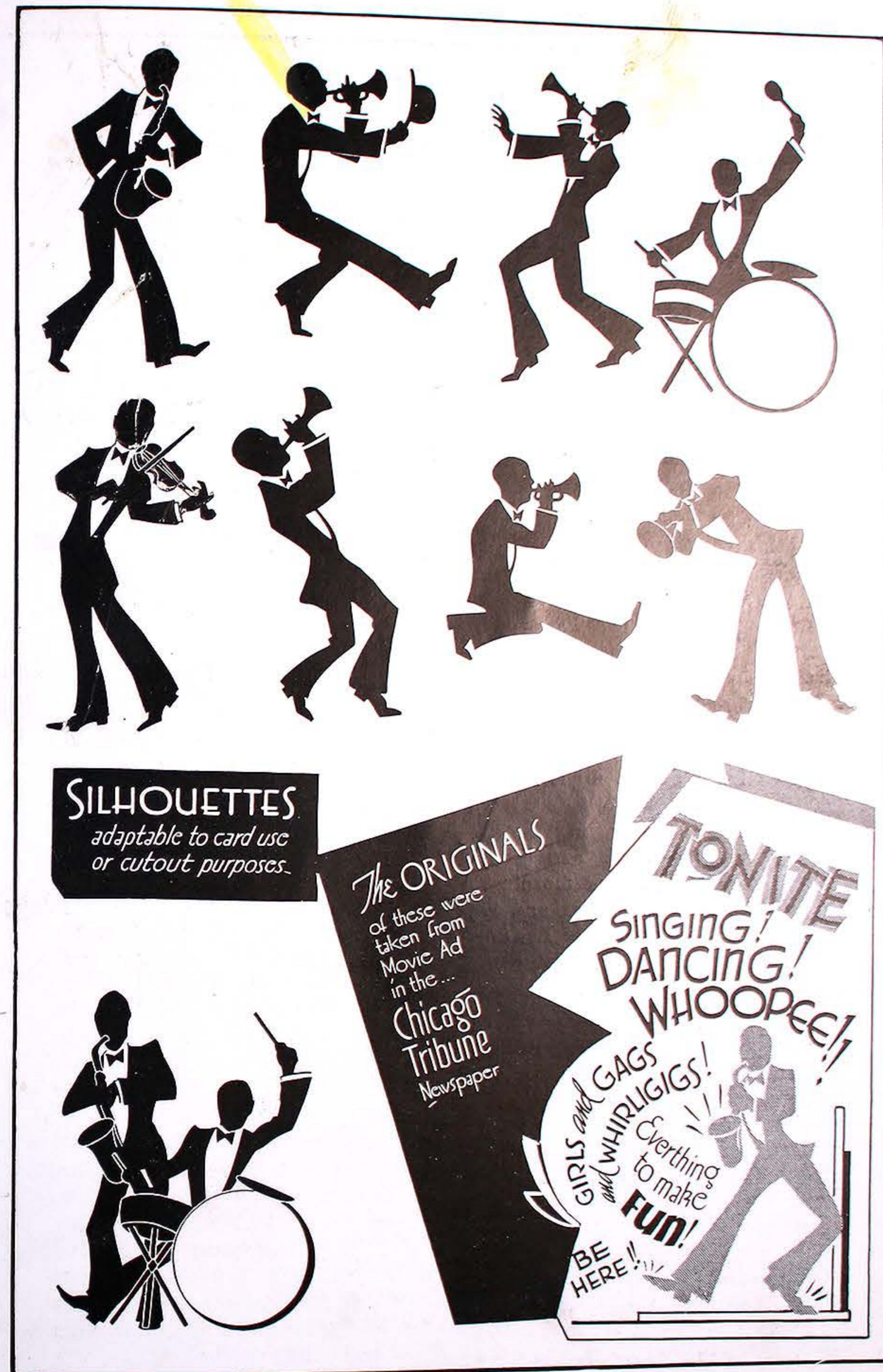


Plate 22—In bright blue, spiffy green, livid red—a knockout!

Martin's Ideas

I WILL get ready . . . and maybe my chance will come." So said Lincoln as a youth. The future did not look bright. Chances seemed very few. But when his chance did come—he was ready.

Louis M. Jones, Nashville, Tennessee, as a lad got a job as door boy and usher in a movie house. Such an humble position does not hold bright promise for the future. The salary is low, the chances for advancement slim. But this lad must have had some thought like Lincoln's in the back of his head. He stuck, and nights he studied.

And his chance came. First, in a rough and tumble sign shop, then with a local studio, doing pictorial work. And finally as house artist in a large theatre. Opportunities to leave Nashville have been offered, but he wisely prefers to stay in his home city.

Not a "genius", he has made himself what he is by his night study and close observance of other's work. Not temperamental—coming down to work at 11:30 a. m. and then working till 2. a. m. next morning. No, he keeps regular hours and is always faithful on the job. Lettering he does not particularly care for, but is no novice at it, and makes it serve him.

These few personal words about Lou Jones are given as inspiration to those having aspirations toward poster art, who are timid and hesitant—feeling that much genius is necessary to "arrive". There is absolutely no intention to underrate him, but Lou practically proves—Disraeli's theory that genius is merely prolonged patience.

It is to be regretted that the posters shown are not recent ones, but it often takes much cajolery and even corkscrew methods, almost forcibly stripping of the samples from the

walls, to get these artists to let me have anything to share with my readers. Too modest entirely.

Color notes: In the "Joan Crawford" poster the face is in lavender monotoes with a little touch of pink to give a better flesh color; the eyes and hair are in purple and lavender, the lips in magenta. The head is against a background of light magenta. The circle background is a midnight blue edged with orange and light blue spots, the lettering white, yellow and green.

In "The Cat and Fiddle" poster, the background is emerald green with dark green musical notes, the copy panel black edged with black flitters lettering pink, light green, light purple. Navarro's face has deep magenta heavy shadows, eyes and lips, the rest in a color made from dark magenta with some orange and yellow mixed in, an odd shade of a pink magenta. His hair is in purple, with light blue highlights. The girl's hair is oranges and yellows with white highlights. Black for clothing.

The "Al Jolson" poster has both heads in green monotoes, running from a quite dark green to a very light green, with white highlights. The girl's hair is in yellow green. The copy panel is purple with lettering in white, orange, yellow, light green. The panel is flanked by side decorations of yellow, orange, red, and magenta. Musical notes are in purple.

In the lower right corner, the girl's head is in monotoes of lavender, with eyes in purples and blues; the lips are orange and red. The hair is a dark orange brown graduated out to a light yellow highlight, against a background of medium blue with orange and yellow bars down each side.



Plate 23—There's a kick in doing it—and money, too!

Martin's Ideas

CHRISTMASTIME comes round again and it's the same old question—What to do, what to do? Go back into the lumber-room of your mind, or some other dusty archives and see what there is that can be dragged out and dusted off, revamped and prettied-up for a "modern" effect. Candles and holly—is that all we find!

The theatrical poster artists each year will exhibit in the trade journals some very brilliant creations, but generally they are impractical for us—simply cannot be done; for cardmen have only a few minutes most likely, in which to execute the entire card, lettering and all.

A search over the greeting card tables in the stationery stores may furnish a few ideas that can be used. Choose the simpler motifs that will not take too much time in making. Decorations should not obtrude on the lettering message. I repeat again: keep such "atmosphere" effects very, very simple.

You may find there some fresh ideas for color; as for instance, holly with bright blue leaves, with berries of yellow, bright blue, red-orange, all outlined with gold. Poinsettias with white petals, black dots in center, all outlined gold, on shamrock green card; poinsettias with red-orange petals, black center dots and silver leaves; or again with both red-orange and silver petals alternating on the same flower, black centers, black leaves! Gold and red Christmas trees on light cards; silver and black trees on orange or bright red cards.

Use the gold and silver patterned metallic papers, brilliant greens and magentas, etc., the lettering on dark aplikayed panels. Use glossy box wrapping papers. Spare not the flitters; get a bucket of the silver glass

sort and inline your display lettering at least. An all-over flittered letter, except possibly "Merry Xmas" quite large and cut out is an abomination, primitive!

Don't attempt any modernistic, geometric Santa Claus. It rarely, rarely works. The little children, as well as the Big Children-Grown-Tall (mother and father) like the jolly old St. Nicholas almost naturalistic, ruddy of face and nose, with heavy, snow white curly beard—remember the description of him in the childhood poem "Twas the night before Christmas"? Read it.

With a projector handy there is no need to sidestep this pictorial work around Christmas. I invite it, and make more money on the jobs. Even do as I, once, when the problem, a disused clock on a lamp post required a Santa head on each side, with several words to accompany. Instead of bemoaning that I had not four years of art training, the shop boy was hustled down to the ten-cent store for a paper napkin from which I traced a head onto two sign cloth circles, airbrushing in ruddy cheeks and bulbous red nose and florid complexion.

Then, more airbrush—this time blue and green—behind, to set them off better and take away the ghost-like look; the lettering was put on, and the circles pasted into place, and we charged them \$4 apiece, which brought a pretty neat profit. The same with turkeys: I have seen paper napkin turkeys cut out, pasted on cards, outlined and cleverly touched up, till even a rival cardman would look twice to be sure they weren't genuine hand-made.

Just one final word as to Christmas decorations: whatever you do, do boldly and with a dash; not timidly.



Plate 24—For the merrie, merrie Christmastide!

martin's ideas

METALLICS and flitters; many beginners are confused by these two names.

Metallics (bronzes) are made by cutting foil papers into small flakes; they are very brilliant, but tarnish quickly when exposed to air and weather, unless thoroughly protected by clear lacquer spray.

Flitters or glass tinsels are cheaper than metallics and are not subject to the objection of rust. For large background work, as theatrical posters, the large glass flitters may be found best, as they do not corrode or fade. As a typical experiment, try alternate bands of blue water color and large blue flitters for a "flash".

Using metallics indiscriminately or too freely on everything is bad. Credit jewelers, credit clothiers and certain businesses can stand much of it, as glitter is the life of such merchandise; but generally a small touch here and there is sufficient. Silver is the most popular of all.

As an adhesive size for flitters, use a mixture of *printers' gold size* and varnish; when a bit "tacky", or even before—sprinkle on your flitters, carefully shake off the surplus, and let stand several hours or overnight till bone dry. You can almost hammer it and it will not dislodge. Or, Pratt & Lambert's "61" White 4-Hour Enamel for "snow" and silver flitters or metallics; the same in colored enamels for other colors.

Lacquer, thinned, sprayed on metallics prevents dimming and rusting to a great degree, as well as helping as a binder for the looser surface particles.

Another method: Get the cheap Southern "black strap" cooking molasses (the bitter kind) that may be bought canned in groceries; mix with glue (and a bit of glycerine if you wish to slow up the drying), all tinted well with show-card color—white for silver, green for green tinsel, etc. Put this on thick enough to imbed the tinsel in it. Always use glass tinsel—fine and coarse mixed; or the coarse, applied sparsely and thinly, the fine sprinkled on afterwards. Buy only the highest grade.

Others pin their faith to white shellac or clear varnish. The surface, if large, is first given a priming coat of the shellac, and when this dries, it is gone over again, only a little in advance of the tinsel or flitters, with a second coat of heavy shellac. After it has been applied, and set a few minutes, the surplus is shaken off onto a large paper placed underneath.

Black jet flitter is sometimes used to give a sparkle and glitter, as well as the red fire flitters, green, etc. For cutout lettering, paint the edges and nail down to the background, applying the adhesive and tinsel afterward.

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THESE layouts are not given to show any skill I may possess, not to exhibit my cleverness—for I disclaim any superior talents, being merely a plodding workman myself—but are presented to be of *use* to you; not elaborate airbrushed creations, but definite layout ideas. Keep, then, these ideas stored by in some corner of your head, and in a pinch they may help to give your work a new punch.



Plate 25—The same old stuff—dusted off and polished up.

martin's ideas

EVERY cardman should keep a scrapbook in which to paste such random ideas as may be met with in newspapers and magazines; these may be pasted in as found, or better still, to make them your own—*sketched in*. For the latter plan a blank book will be needed; the best is the loose leaf system in the spring-back binder; if you do not feel like putting about \$1.65 into such an ensemble (this includes paper), get a cheap 20c order book, at least; or one with a better cover to prevent its becoming dog-eared. Another may be kept for lettering examples. Keep these on or near the bench, some way out of the dust; the use of such aids gives versatility to your work. Ideas may be gleaned from large city dailies for January Clearance and white goods sales, February Furniture Sales, pre Easter sales, diamond and jewelry and hosiery sales, shoe cuts, bedding sales, June bride and gift sales, fall furniture sales, school opening sales, ideas for Christmas and numerous others.

A FURTHER suggestion entailing practically no labor or fuss—the use of large, stout Idea Envelopes plainly labeled with various group-titles. This plan holds great possibilities for the cardman who is ever eagerly seeking something different and effective in display work. A peep into the proper Idea Envelope shows an interesting miscellany and may reveal just the wrinkle you need! When your layouts get “blear-eyed with weakness”—*energize* your work; make it zestful, colorful; the Idea Envelope full of fresh ideas will give you more snappy, clean-cut layouts.

Don't be a show card “carpenter” whose thought runs in grooves already cut by others. Don't be content to just “get by”; an individualist, or routine workman whose mind is closed to fresh ideas, where mental moths and dust collect and spiders feast undisturbed. Be an eighty horse-power man! Fully realize the value of your work, whether the merchant does or not. It is an actual statistical fact that many stores credit 90% of their sales to the windows, and the humble display card plays a not unimportant part in this.

Someone has given a sketchy definition of the display card man; though not able to quote it exactly here is the gist: “A card man is a creature entirely surrounded by work, through which he desperately digs his way, emerging into the daylight occasionally with glad and eager cries, only to be immediately overwhelmed by more tubfuls of work dumped over his head.”

The client comes in for “something different”; here the practical possibilities of the Idea Envelope become apparent. You must produce! You start with nebulous ideas in your head, but under the stimulus of your gathered scrapbook suggestions, it quickly begins to jell, till suddenly the “new” different idea appears.

Sell IDEAS; do only the best work, and—you may charge for it!



Plate 26—Have you a scrapbook of this sort?

martin's ideas

THE display card studio has been enabled to make a distinct advance in developing business through the advent of that magical modern tool, the cutting machine. The experienced man with a strong wrist and sharp mat knife could handle many problems, but with the machine to do the cutting any display, large or small, no matter how intricate the design or how bold the treatment demanded, may be done with ease and accuracy. For even the most lacy patterns or scrolls irregular cutting of all sorts, shapes, letters—this small easily operated machine cuts them quickly, from wallboard or several thicknesses of matboard stock, and various other materials, by means of small chisels; the cutawl will take a small saw for cutting soft wood stock an inch or more thick.

Cut-out catch lines and prices may be attached to regular mat board cards for the aplikay effect, and attractive frames and shapes created without numbers. The lettering is made to literally "stand out" by being first "sawed" or chiseled out of wallboard panels. The edges of the letters are painted to the contrasting color desired, they are properly spaced in the layout and fastened to the panel or card with small brads, then the face of the letters finished with color, which helps to cover the nail heads. Another scheme is pinning to the background and pulling out to the pinheads, thus giving relief to the letters to make them stand out effectively. Instead of brads, the letters may be affixed with glue, water-glass solution, or linoleum paste.

For these relief letter effects on panels or placques, the background may be treated with plastic paint and an edge or beading formed of the same substance and put on with the relief bulb; or, curved panels

may be edged with reed which has been soaked in hot water, curved to fit, and tacked down, then covered with plastic paint.

Cutout prices are in great demand and are very often placed in window displays suspended to the proper reading height, or "eye level" by fine, so-called invisible wires or fancy cords. Flitters are now being used quite extensively to embellish cut-outs of this variety since they catch and reflect the rays of artificial lighting as well as the daylight rays. Sometimes lettering is covered with the metal foil papers before cutting, protecting from marring during the operation by laying over it a thin sheet of scrap mat board, and with the pattern marked on this, cut through both; these papers come in silver, gold, fire, red, light green, blues, etc., and are sold by the supply houses in handy sheets, and in rolls. A very *thick* wallboard has been manufactured expressly for the use of the cutting machine; letters cut from this will stand alone, or if coated will not warp.

A hint or two: When two thicknesses of wallboard are cut at the same time, on the third sheet you will have the reprint of the design, which saves remarking with a pencil. For the table cutting top long odd strips and such scraps of wallboard may be utilized, tacking only along the table edge, but gluing down in the center. Even if the workshop be unavoidably open to view, it may be best to keep the cutawl and airbrush hidden or partitioned off from pryers and loafers.

With the persistent use of suitable cut-outs worked up from the merchant's ideas, he may come to agree with you that by this means his merchandise can be "turned over" faster—more sales will be made. There is little doubt about the definite, traceable results from this sort of display publicity.



Plate 27—Suspend in the window by invisible wires.

martin's ideas

THERE is an increasing amount of window-shopping done these days—not alone from the sidewalk, but from the automobile in the evening. So the problem often becomes one of reaching out for this auto traffic, as well as for the street car rider and for the shopper on the opposite sidewalk who hesitates about crossing the busy street.

Something with stronger appeal than mere price tickets or small cards are needed to cause these prospects to pause, and further—to induce them to come in and—*buy!* Cut-outs of various nature, as shown on the following page and elsewhere can play no small part in this aggressive effort to get more business.

With wallboard or with paper signs (and many of these ideas may be used for either), vivid, contrasting colors should be used, the display lines as well as prices, clean cut and legible for distance reading. With regard for the passerby on the sidewalk, if the cut-out be placed too high—it will be above the normal range of vision and its value nullified; if too low, it is subject to the merchant's objection that it hides the merchandise.

One must take these problems into consideration when fashioning such advertising in order to work intelligently to produce *results*.

Cutouts of the "Advertising Signs" type are capable of many color schemes, two only of which I give; yellow lettering, inline of cream, orange rules between. Corn letters, or cream with inline of dark yellow with bright light blue between; some may prefer the darker ultramarine blue instead.

The shape "cut-outs" is a light

blue made by paling ultramarine, with inline of white. It stands on a band of gold below, and where the wallboard extends nearly one third or one half way up the letters paint it black. These three horizontal hanging pieces well illustrate three different variations possible. "Cutouts" may, of course be used also as a standing shape.

The panel or shield makes a good vehicle for copy of various sorts, either sale name or price feature. "40%" is a buff, the figures in vermilion edged closely with a fairly bold edge of tan; "Cash Saving" is black edged light or pale yellow green.

"Any Suite", "Bottom Prices", and "Linen Sale", are three interesting hanging prices. "Bottom Prices" is wallboard, scored or grooved so as to seem to be four separate panels joined together. Coat them in a bright green and light yellow, alternating; lettering all black. Thus: "Bottom" is on green, "Prices" on a yellow panel; "Household" is on a green panel, "Necessities" on yellow.

THE ART of "Cardwriting"—that hackneyed phrase, seems to smack of needed genius. I tell you it is more,—steady, plodding work! You know Edison defined genius as nine-tenths perspiration; Disraeli as prolonged patience. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the artist, insisted that his work was no more difficult to master than soap boiling. And Anthony Trollope's recipe for success in the literary field holds equally good here: "Let their work be to them as is his work to the common laborer;" this one thought should be treasured up and committed to memory.



Plate 28—More of the same for Cutawl enthusiasts

Martin's Ideas

NEXT issue of "IDEAS" will contain several pages of paper sign layouts with color suggestions and discussions of papers, the new waterproof card colors, the transparent colors and their use, etc. This time only the Japan colors are considered. (And this is all for the beginner, Mr. Old-Timer!)

The old-line water colors in drying would "draw" and pucker the paper; the colors ground in Japan, a bit of varnish added, and thinned with turps are better.

Purchase just a few colors: you may easily mix the rest from the stock on hand. For instance, take this small group, if you will: Lamp black, ultramarine blue, zinc or flake white, lemon yellow, taxi yellow, (true orange), a bright red or vermilion; the greens, blues, violets, red-violets, tints and shades can be mixed galore from these. Buy the most livid vermilion obtainable, no matter what the cost; experiment around till you find it; it will pay. Your colors must be snappy; above all, this light red or vermilion.

It is suggested that the Japan colors be purchased in five pound press cans. This cuts down waste as the color does not dry out in the cans. The cost runs a wee bit more for the press packages, but is worth it. (For odd tints mix in a uniform set of empty one pound flake white cans; lids should be kept on these, in addition to the liquid always kept covering the pigment. These are for outlining and trims.

A certain quantity of varnish (to be determined by individual preference) used in Japan colors along with the turps makes them go further and work better. Instead of any old cheap varnish from the ten cent store—probably gummy or containing

kerosene!—or even much-vaunted gold size varnish, the thoughtful experimenter may light on some good mixing varnish—remember the best is always the cheapest—that will be much faster and at the same time toughen the paint film.

For small mistakes in Japan color on poster paper, wipe off immediately with a rag saturated with gasoline or other volatile cleaner—as benzol or lacquer thinner—and then erase the remainder carefully, as much as possible, with a red sand eraser; use Van Dyke's soft ink eraser 6500, made by Faber, as no other will do the work. Then reletter, and the trouble will never be suspected.

Often the cardman working on paper work must do what sign painters term "cutting in". With red, green or blue, particular care must be taken to prevent daubiness and streaking. Freshly mixed paint and working solid as you go, carrying the area forward while wet, are necessary otherwise if the lettering be done in outline first, when you come back to fill in the remainder, the outline—already half dried—receives two coats and shows badly. If the color is not fresh-mixed it is apt to streak, anyhow. A loose black outline around the letters may camouflage the streakiness to some extent.

There is a transparent gummed paper or adhesive tape put out by Dennison on little patent spools; librarians use it in mending torn pages in books; it is very fine for places similarly torn on paper window streamers, being transparent it is barely visible. When you need it, you need it instantly; delay means possibly making the job over, so keep a ten cent spool on hand. It may be bought at stationery stores.

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Plate 29—The paper sign may pack a punch!

martin's ideas

THE valance has a primary purpose to hide the lights and frame the window, whether it be made of cloth, frosted glass paneling with design, wallboard or such material or even be painted on the glass itself. But the practical modern is using it much as a medium to carry the firm name, and thus eliminate the elaborate expensive erected sign. This is generally applicable only with the small shops where front is flush with the street. "David's", "Stone's" and "Valance" are examples of this. They are either painted directly on the glass, or are wallboard and such material with cutout work and superimposed layers to give added effectiveness. "David's" may have the name cut out and aplikayed on, as glossy black on silver, or the lettering *cut out* and cellophane placed behind for night illumination.

In the example at the top of the plate the valance is changed occasionally, advertises each time a new sale, and plain cardboard only is used. In fact, I have seen especially neat studio-made "valances" of paper only—the best grade heavy white—with well chosen and formed lettering for the firm name, and simple color side decorations.

Detail colors for the "Sale" valance: Center panel is rich dark brown matboard with vermilion rules above and below. "Sale" is yellow with loose outline of black. Below this panel is a small decorative touch—a square of light yellow-green card. On either side of the center are long panels of light yellow-green card with inset rules of rather dark green. "End" and "Effective" are red lettering with bold loose outline of white. Make a small

dummy of this in color and you'll agree it is effective! A good, clean flash, but not too strong.

"JC" and "Rogers" are center motifs only. In the upper right are side drapes. The smaller would go admirably with a center design like "Rogers". The larger one was from a Baskin store, Chicago, on Michigan Ave. As reproduced here in black-and-gray tones the colors were: my lightest tint was dark green, the next darker was black (the whole main portion of the valance being in this color); the darkest tones were vermilion. The single narrow decorative upright strip was black, with inverted "pyramids" or triangles, in gold; all edging lines were gold. A very high grade effect indeed.

The advantages of the wallboard valance made with mat-knife or cut-awl are obvious. If well braced behind with light framework, they will never warp, and if done in water color and then thoroughly sprayed with clear lacquer the colors will hold better and not fade from light or moisture; and the whole affair may be removed and washed, thus eliminating the dry cleaning bills that so frequently go with cloth drapes.

Most fellows are hunting for some magical short cut in this work. They should realize that the beginner must bake bread before he can bake cake. Study of fundamentals will constitute a guide to help one's common sense to work by rule instead of haphazardly. On the other hand, a set of arid rules might prove fatal to a beginner with living idea material in his mind. Which course is right depends on the individual. But there are no magical short cuts.

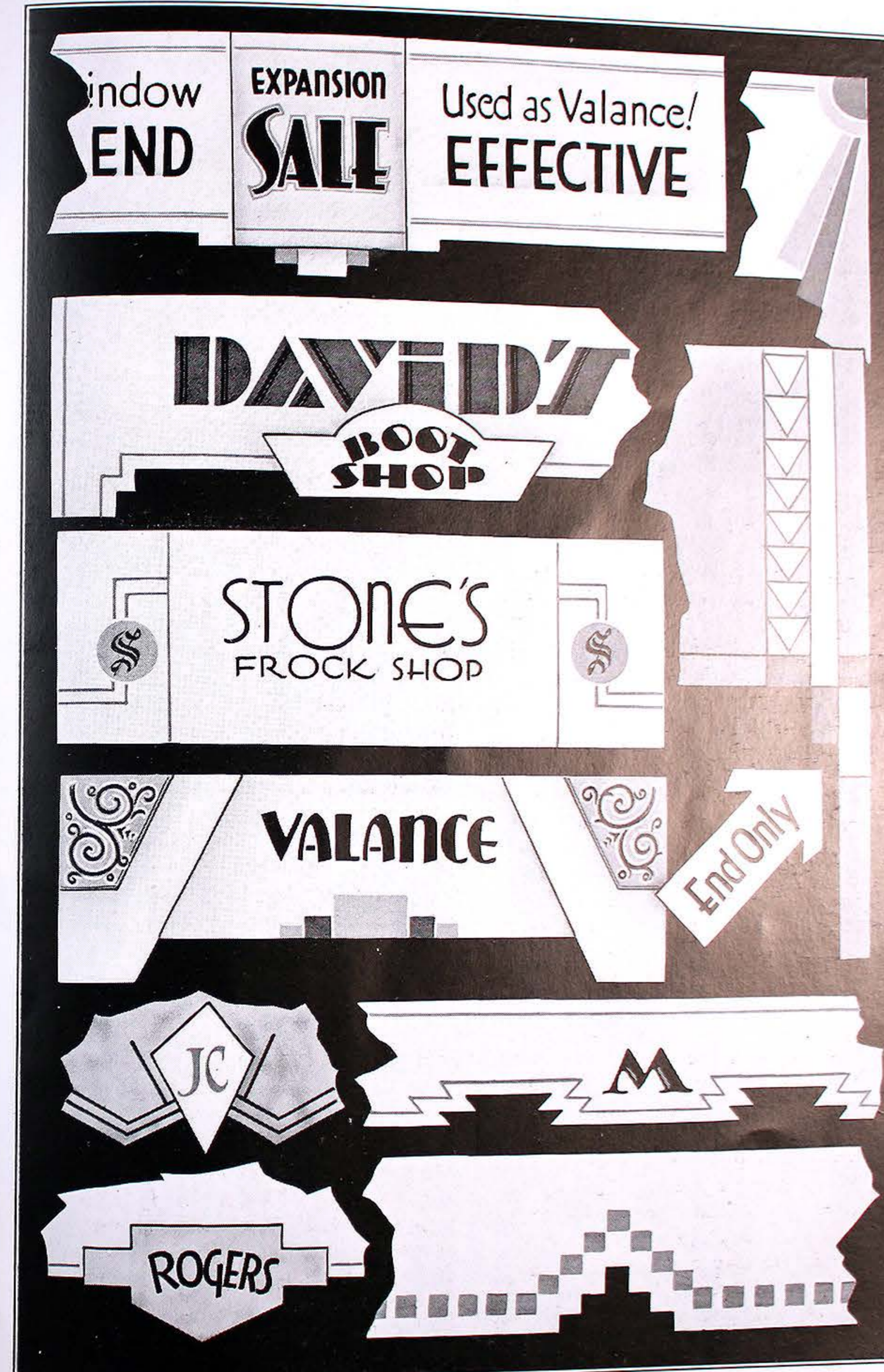


Plate 30—A handful of window panel or valance suggestions.

martin's ideas

THE modernistic in advertising art, summed up in one sentence may be described as the offshoot or swerve from, or break with the old traditions in fine art; a going back to original sources for inspiration. In sympathy with the modern, world-wide move for progress, as a legitimate outgrowth of the times in which we live, has come this most sweeping reformation of all time in the creative and graphic arts.

We fail to realize that there has been, perhaps in every age, a "modern trend". Back in the age even of King "Tut" of Egypt, in the times of Pompeii, in the period of Gothic art, or in the days of rampant Rocco ornament, it may be that there were those who, when some building went up and the lettering over the facade began to be chiseled in, the workman chancing to take a little liberty with the tail of an "R"—possibly then the conservatives passed by on the other side of the street, wagging their heads and muttering in their beards: "Go to! Modernistic stuff! It's a fad, it won't last!"

So down to these stirring times. When it first appeared on the horizon, like a little cloud no larger than a man's hand, as someone described it, it was denounced as the delirium tremens of art, as a passing fad; and its death predicted in six months. Some said that the quicker this sort of thing was allowed to go to seed, the quicker we would be rid of it and back to the rock-basis of world-old forms.

But was it a passing fad? Or was it here to stay? Six months—five years—who could tell?

No, the modernistic trend was not an unstable vogue; after the transitory stage was passed, the travail, the upheaval of monstrosities of all sorts, the Century of Progress at

Chicago put its stamp on the movement, not as a passing era, but established it as an entirely new one. Then we went forward. No longer was it a big city fad. Many changes in all ways, we who are slightly older and never expected to see come about, have taken place. "Main Street"—the masses, almost, have become modernistic-conscious, modernism-minded. It was here to stay; not an evanescent whim, but a reformation; and we are indeed fortunate to be living just at this interesting period of development—"born just in the nick of time", as Thoreau says.

In the mechanization of today lies a beauty of line; the "young modern" senses it, and free of inhibitions and traditions applies to his work new angles, a brightness and joyous life that is a refreshment. His work clicks with the man in the street; it is not 17th century, but—today! There's piquancy and interest in it—vitamines!

The author of this book does not boast that he can do the ultramodernistic, and hopes, furthermore, that he never can! There is little need to go on wild goose chases after short-lived vagaries and fancies, that will have but the briefest meteoric career—faddish grotesques that will be done to death in short order. But, recognizing the true underlying character of the movement as a whole, and so discarding the bad, making use of the good, instead of fighting it, let us use it, let us *cash in on it!*



SAYS Martin—"I doubt if I ever originated an idea. I just go around and see what the best of the other fellows are doing, pick up bits of things and try to put them into a pattern, try to evolve something better if I can." So also must you.



Plate 31—Good modern design in these outdoor signs.

Martin's Ideas

INTRO the displays of any line of business, freshness, variety, modernity may be introduced. Brisk, appealing displays may be arranged, vigorously treated, and "dramatized" with lettering and design in a way to catch the eye and best put across the message.

To illustrate: take the restaurant business.

Not to condemn too severely the price list sign to be seen in the average restaurant, downright common as it generally is,—why not supplant it with a smiling chef, cut out of wallboard, inviting the hesitant to come in? Posterized, of course—"dramatized" is the better word.

Or the neatly lettered, crisp, appealing panel of food offerings surmounted by a huge replica of a steaming mug of coffee? A fresh, vigorous treatment! Instead of the monotonous card "Ladies Invited",—a miniature cutout figure of a waiter with napkin over arm, the message to read—"It's a Pleasure to Serve the Ladies!"

Such effects would be real advertising, not merely dry-as-dust signs.

Some years ago, back mayhap in the days of our grandfathers, some one started the idea that restaurant cards, menus and the like, must be made on ultramarine blue backgrounds, as the "sanitary" color; there was no appeal from that. Now—any color will do, with the possible exception of rank yellow, which psychologists tell us is not desirable from a gustatory standpoint.

In the large menu panel shown in the plate, a rich coral coated background of wallboard was used, with checkerboard squares of vermilion and primrose; the chef, of course, in white with outline of slightly darkened blue; "Menu" also is in

this blue. The half-round strips tacked on form a frame-like affair, open at the top, and into which a card may be slipped each day, this to vary in color, light or dark, as wished.

The suggestions on the accompanying plate barely scratch the surface. The statement is made that any man with a half-way set of brains, whose work may lie along this line and require such ideas, may sit down and using those brains given him, work out enough schemes for *this one business* to fill a good-sized volume. So with any other business, no matter how prosaic!

But—it takes IDEAS!

In this rush, this bustle, ideas are the much-sought-after desideratum. Whether it be in the lofts where the shoestring-capital members of our craft snipe the orders and where the problem of "something different" occasions much scratching of heads and painful headaches; or the modern studio where the thoughtful artist, the up-to-the-minute fellow, who keeps a keen eye out for the new letter trends, the general character—so to speak—of "this year's hat", and what the well dressed display card is wearing; which ever it be, the quest is the same—"something different"! I repeat, what I have stressed elsewhere: Keep an Idea File!—whether it be in envelopes, scrapbooks, or filed away in the card index of your mind.

NEW ideas—fresh ideas—they're the cardman's stock in trade; he should always be on the lookout for them. Burbank once said that he "would swap a whole cartload of precedents any time for one brand new idea."



Plate 32—Any business may be similarly promoted.

martin's ideas

THE modernist in his typography has proposed only one rule (there *are* many others, but carefully guarded by the select few!) This one rule only: "Form should follow function." Which is self-explanatory. It certainly makes for simplicity, if intelligently applied.

I wish to add to this, for our use as cardmen and sign writers, another: "Form rather than finish". Good fundamental form, even if only the naked sans-serif,—though this may often become monotonous and tiring to the eye, just as much of the extreme thick and thin of certain favored modernistic styles.

Display card lettering has a job of work to do; keep it readable—"easy on the eye". It'll serve you well, if you let it. I wouldn't give a nickel for a bucket full of serifs and spurs, of fussily pointed-up ends, and strict type styles. "Form rather than finish"—remember this! Good fundamental form of character, appropriate to the subject in hand, and let finish "go by the board."

A studio man, originally one of the best letterers in the city of Chicago, capable of doing the finest of spurred or delicate work, finally abandoned all this (even as I) and as I have worked beside him at the bench he would dip his brush in the quart jar of white, bring it out fairly dripping, and put lettering on rough wallboard that—talked! "Form rather than finish."

So many things are competing these days for the passerby's attention—the lettering must be kept *easy to read*. Put most of the time you have at your disposal on the headline and the price. A "kick" in the headline—confine your modernistic innovations in lettering there. A modern layout with plain, legible lettering for body-text. Rushed for time? Throw your small copy in like tossing rotten bananas against

the barn door if you wish—if you must, rather. But don't slight the price. For the merchant, above all, wants a quick-working, well made price.

A caution just here anent too heavy-duty postery prices, which many are prone to use. Such prices may give a clear forceful display character to the card; again, reticence and restraint may be needed—for shouting is not in harmony with quality appeal. Similarly so—even if these large prices be used there is no need to scream at the shopper with overstrong theatrical lettering, contorted, malformed, gaucherie stuff to which the eye can never become reconciled. Resistance to mental processes and eye must be lessened as much as possible; let the lettering talk loudly, yet legibly; the modern window shopper doesn't stop to study out cards—she merely glances. Progressive, practical cardmen will not be blindly influenced by theatrical styles. If overmuch trick theatrical and bastard letters are used the window degenerates into a cheap ballyhoo.

Keep the lettering extremely plain, then, avoiding freak stuff, so that it may talk rapidly. Common sense should be your guide—there should be no guesswork as to what it's all about. Judge whether to use a poster style that can be seen from the "elevated" platform, or one suitable for beauty preparations in a beauty salon, or a card for filmy feminine apparel.

The varied samples of different modern styles shown here are an interesting study. The intelligent student needs no more than this,—whole alphabets down to "X Y Z &" are a weariness. Any one sample studied and studied and studied,—made over and over again, ten, eleven, forty-eleven times—will put the flavor, the spirit of it into your mind and work. Lettering is fascinating!

Caught HOSIERY MODELS
SALE Coats Wear
Coffee Style!
From the Writer's Lettering Scrapbook
A glance at the page will start your own ideas
These Smart Quality Clothes
COATED TUBES
The SALE
April
Shoe Signs
Taste
CHICAGO
DEVILS

Plate 33—Glance at this page to change your headline style!

martin's ideas

A good slogan is a help in studio advertising, rhymed if possible, as the famous dress slogan "Nelly Don, Try One on", or of the brickyard in Chicago, "A Million a Day, We Carry Away." Or one like this: "Martin put the ART in Signs!" or "Meet Martin"; "Depend on Dean". Study the situation as it exists in your neighborhood—make some specific claim. For instance, take this one-word slogan, "Dependable", consistently believed in, lived up to, convincing the merchant, advertised till it stands out like a sore thumb. This one point alone will get, and keep your customers.

A good slogan like this is valuable. But it should be wisely, carefully chosen; should really express the spirit of your shop. It should be short. It should be used constantly—on your windows, on your business cards, your letterheads, your blotters; then only is it valuable.

Again and again hammer home on your blotters—in bold, outstanding lettering or type; Johnson is *Dependable!*" "Johnson is *Original!*" "Johnson is *Prompt!*" Or "Modern Advertising"; or, "Hand Lettered Advertising"; or "Hand Painted Publicity"; "Are Really Better"; "Call Johnson of course!" "Cards by Carlson"; "Jones-of-Joplin"; "Pop Hiatt did it!"; "... more SALES!"

Just a word of explanation on the accompanying plate. These ideas are gathered from various sources: the design at the extreme lower left was seen in Chicago, being one of two, each covering the entire plate glass window on either side of the entrance. Choose your

own colors for this but let me suggest that "SIGNS" be black lettering on a white panel. Colors may all be edged with black, with gold, or with silver.

Above this design is a massive appearing sign taken from a German source. Again, above this is a figure close cousin to the famous English "Bass Ale" silhouette; it is readily adaptable in various ways. At the top of the plate (left) "Art Sign Co"; the name was white edged with light yellow; "Art" against a vermilion background, "Sign" against dark red, "Co." against vermilion. The ribbon panel was a light blue with a slogan lettered in white. A good chance here for cutout lettering, etc.

At the extreme lower right is an idea using the owl stunt; if you wish a dark sign, put your owl in vermilion! the eye white with black pupil. You might even arrange to light those eyes at night—flasher, of course—with green or blue lights. The four business cards: "Jones" shows a panel aplikayed on—note that—tipped on with glue; leave the corners to project off if you wish. For the card just above this, "Johnson" would be a very heavy black letter, "signs" would be magenta—or bright light blue or bright green—the dot over the "i" in black; small lettering black, but rule in magenta again. Above this is a business card idea from a printing journal.

(Next issue we plan to show letterheads, blotters, etc. Don't miss it—one idea may be worth the cost many times over.)



Plate 34—Advertising ideas for the studio and sign shop.

martin's ideas

PLATE explanation: at the extreme lower left is a simplified reproduction—interior blanked out—of a booth at the British Industries Fair, 1933, by Display Craft. It is a fine idea. Another booth was something like that shown in the extreme upper right; the magnet idea is very striking; note there are several in transition effect. "Dutch Sign Co.", Savannah, Ga., uses the hand idea at their door as a stickout (And there were spider-webs over the fingers when I was there!) carried out in orange and black—the hand itself and "Signs" in orange. Directly below this is one end of a sign that could be arranged for concealed lighting flasher also—a transition effect in colors ranging from vermilion through light orange, and yellow, into the cream colored panel with its dark lettering.

The goofy comic figure was on a second floor window in Chicago; smock and hair (!) were magenta, trousers bright green, etc. "Bill" Hodges (Tampa) suggests using with this, footprints processed or painted on the sidewalk, and going directly *up the wall* to the window! that is, if city ordinances will allow sidewalk painting at all. If used in downstairs door entrance, borrow A. H. Kent's slogan (Kent Sign Co., Atlanta) to go with it: "Don't stare up the steps . . . step up the stairs!" (What about that dead cockroach lying on his back at the entrance, Friend Kent!) The two silhouette figures in circular design, are variations on my own little "trademark"; use them if you wish.

MORE slogans and catchlines:
Advertising well directed.

"Step up and talk it over".
. . . planned to help you sell.
Another Martin job!
Call Martin, of course.
. . . if we DO say it ourselves.
The Shop of Individuality.
A glance—and it's read!
Capable workmanship!
Display cards with a kick!
When may I see you about this?
Talk to Martin about your win-

dows.
The cards that sell the goods!
Call on me for helpful suggestions.
Some of the firms we have served.
Martin's cards tell and sell for you!

MARTIN'S CARDS always get read!

Attention-value extraordinary.
It costs no more to have the best.
Advertising cards that—Pull and Pay!

Specialized Service to the Merchants of Jonesville.

LOOKING FOR New IDEAS?
Attention-compelling sales stimulants.

"GOOD WORK"—that describes it.

We want to do an unusual job for you.

Window cards that women read and heed!

May I help you in any way? I'm at your service.

Martin Cards will bring you *more store front* business!

. . . just a sidelight on my service, that's all.

Increasing your business is our business.

All kinds of advertising cards—and all good.



Plate 35—More ideas for studio front advertising.

martin's ideas

BOUND to have the last word! I gave up the "Foreword" to another; now I get the last. That gentleman gave me credit for a great deal of braininess. Again—blushing the while—I quote him:

"Lock that fellow Martin in a bare room with a pencil and a piece of paper and he'll come forth with a flock of new ideas." That's another bang-up compliment.

But I'll be honest and confess that I "hook" my ideas—steal them, if you wish. I admit it; give me credit for that, at least. Wasn't born in the cradle with them, I'm sure.

My theory is that once exposed to the oxygen of outside air (no oxygen in the average card studio—it's gas!)—they become then, forsooth, common property. When I walk past the plate glass window and see a new IDEA, I leap on it with glad cries of glee; it's mine by the age-old law, the "divine right of discovery!"

Seriously, my ability for stealing, and then adapting—combining with my own personal individuality—the good ideas of others, has resulted in this really valuable little book of PRACTICAL ideas. To those who have unwittingly helped contribute goes my thanks; the slogan these days being, "Share your knowledge." I myself have little in common with the impresario type of expert letter man and studio artist, but rather term myself the work horse or cart horse of the profession; the handy man-of-all-work if you please.

These pages should be particularly helpful to those who are just tak-

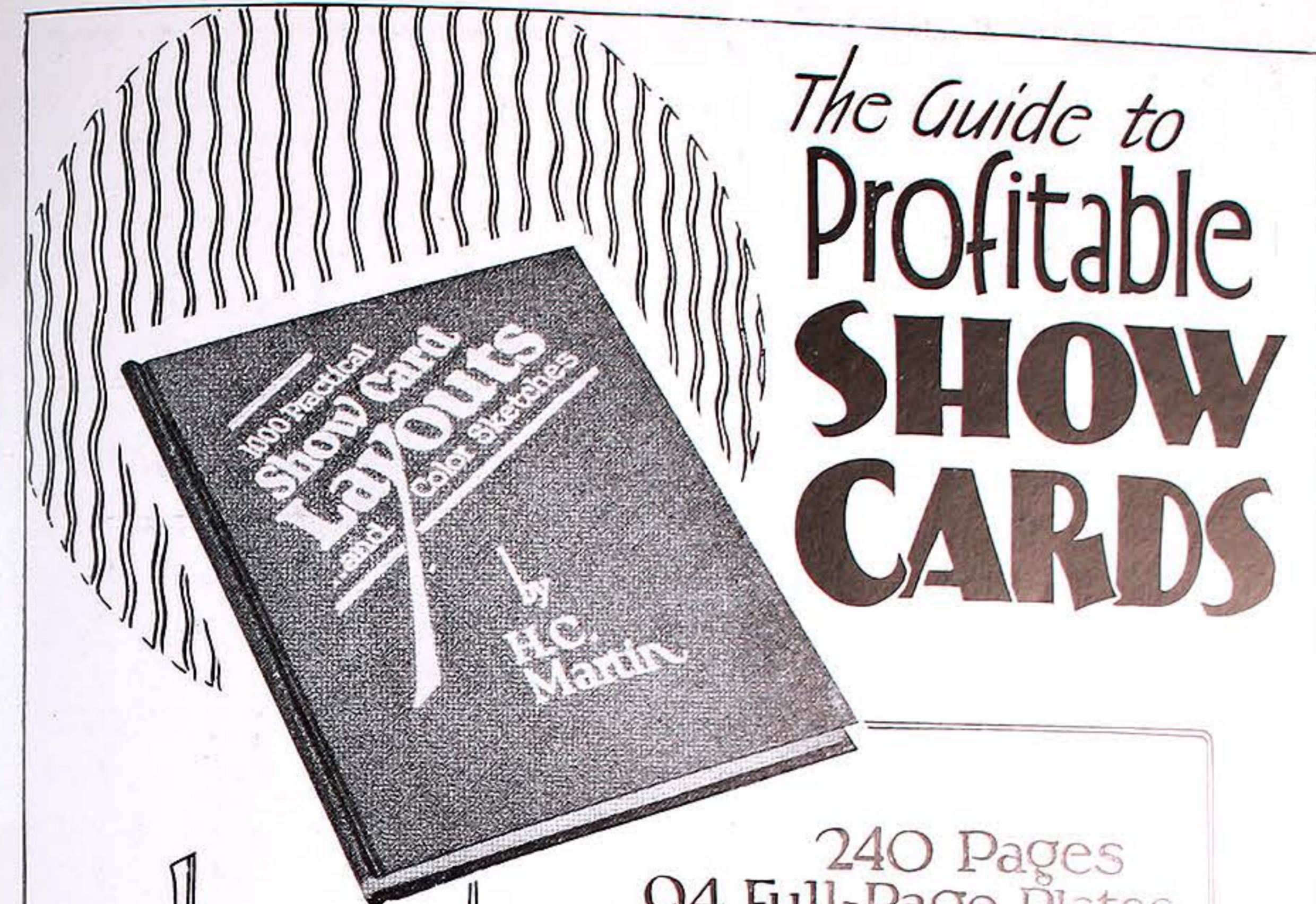
ing up or are well into the subject of display cards. And the average card writer—the one not over-burdened with sparkling ideas—will find much valuable guidance in this book, and will go further toward better work through its assistance than by leaning solely upon his own resources.

The isolated small town or department store man may be perfect in a very personal design. Take him out of his stereotyped style, and he's out of his depth. This clearing house for ideas, being drawn from varied sources, is for such a man, most valuable.

Again, the old "vet" professional may have plenty of ideas but be unable to locate just the right one in the moment or two allowed. In such emergencies this bench-manual or scrap-book will prove its worth with its wide variety of suggestions.

Let me urge,—do not miss a single copy of the series. What one lacks may be fully made up for in another. The next, for instance, might have, in addition to display card ideas—price tickets, window "chalk" layouts and ideas, letterhead suggestions, a couple of new alphabets, window background ideas, or even half a dozen or ten plates of pictorial cards, or posters.

H. C. MARTIN



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81 Chapters

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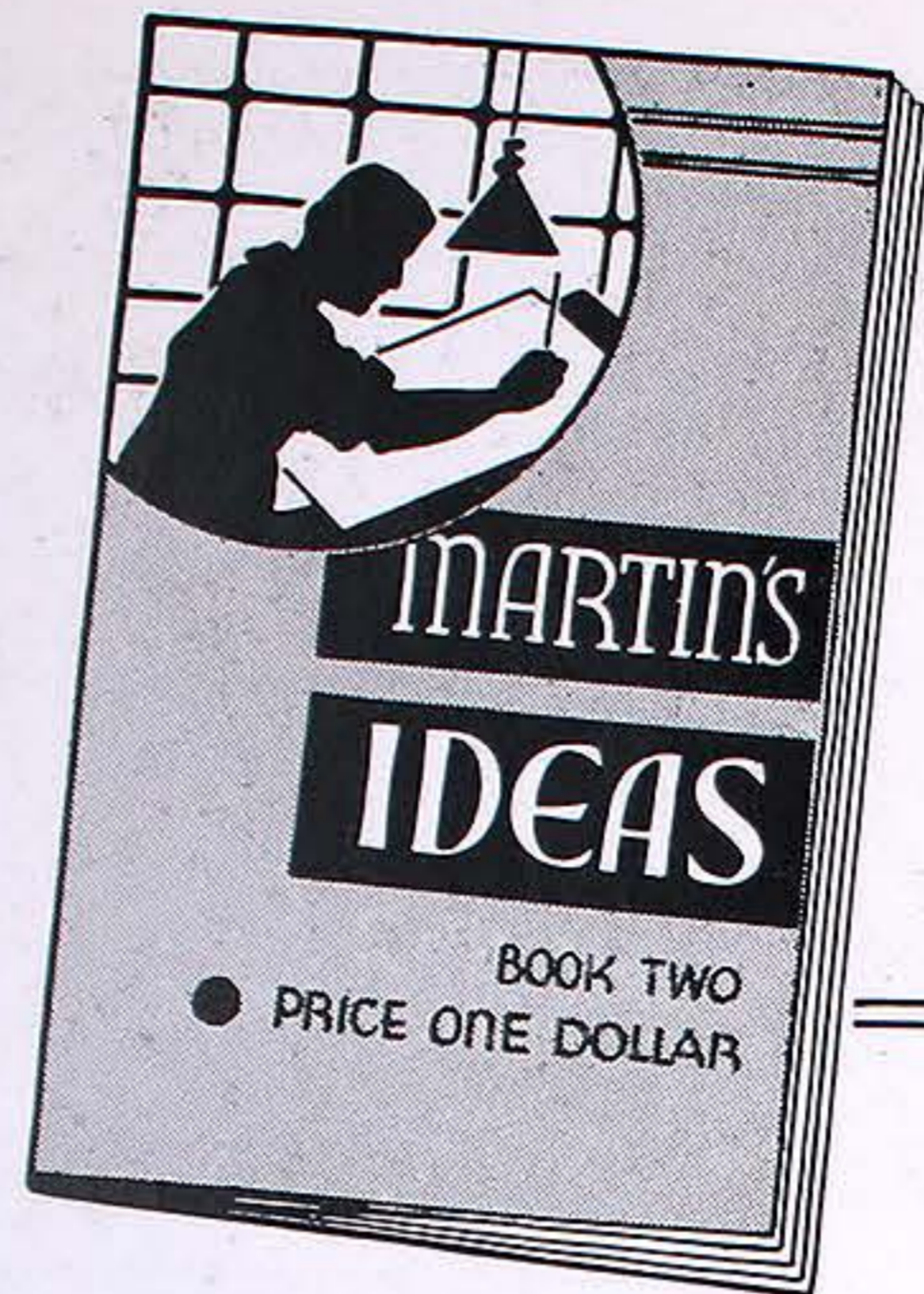
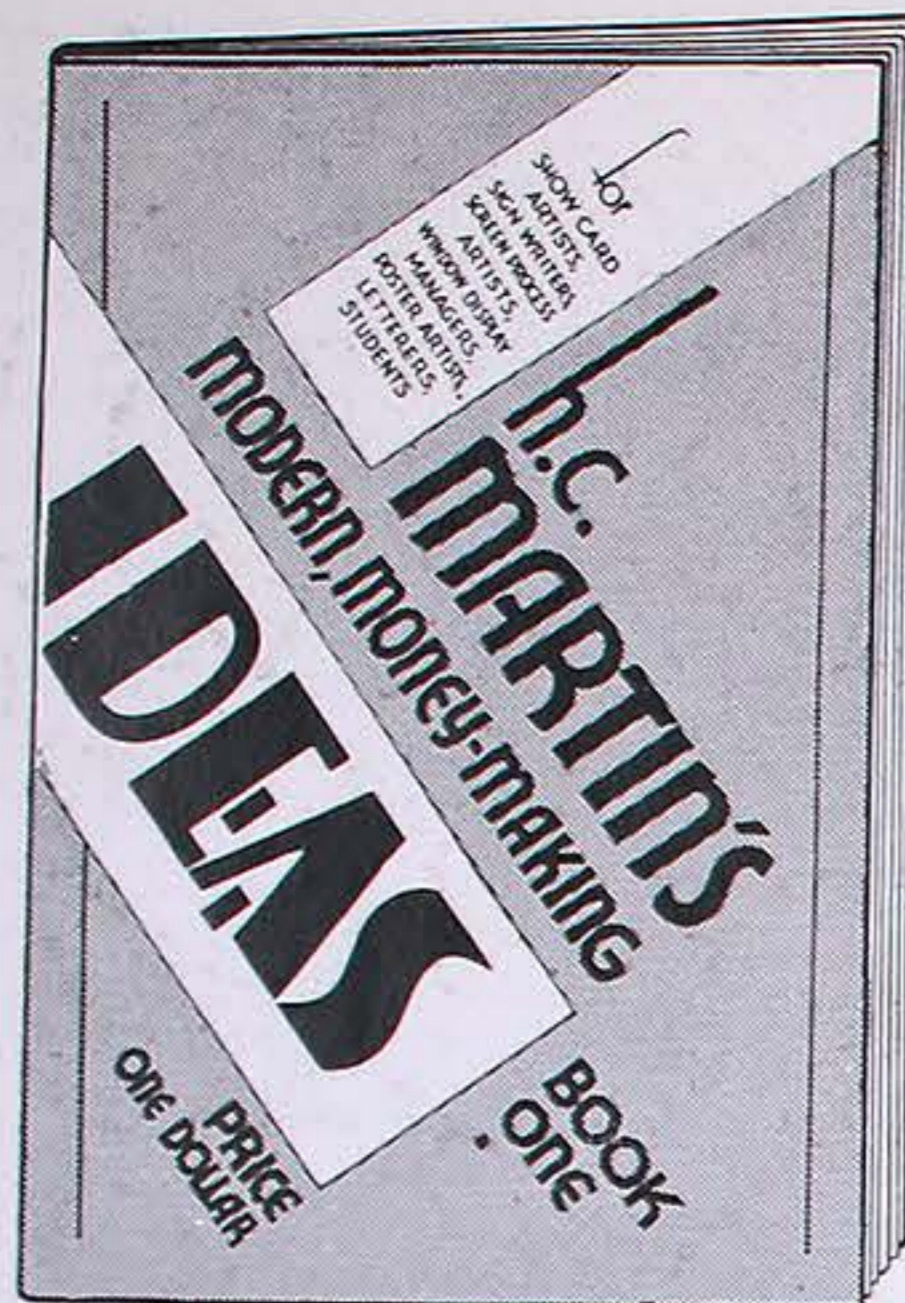
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They will contain

multitudinous display cards—both conservative and modern, for the advanced shop man, for the student; price tickets; pictorial cards ready for projection; sales series suggestions; airbrushed examples; dollar day ideas; numerous card ideas for Christmas, Easter, patriotic, radio, music, Spring and Fall opening, etc; "scrapbook" suggestions for card use; counter cards; displays and shapes for interior of store; many paper and banner suggestions; actual photos of windows and store fronts with sale signs shown; window backgrounds especially designed, made up and photographed; cut out shapes for suspending in windows; cut out shapes of every description; card shapes, conservative and modern, by the score; panel shapes, "ribbons"; valances or window panels; small stickout and hanging signs, and sign designs for plate glass; neon sign ideas; poster bulletin sketches, theatrical and other type posters; lettering plates—complete alphabets, with figures; sign shop front advertising; business card, blotter, letterhead and other printed publicity; various processes described and illustrated in detail; short cuts in the work; back-shop hints of all sorts; color schemes without end; together with much text and informal discussion on display card principles, salesmanship, estimating and pricing, shop advertising; and so on and so on.

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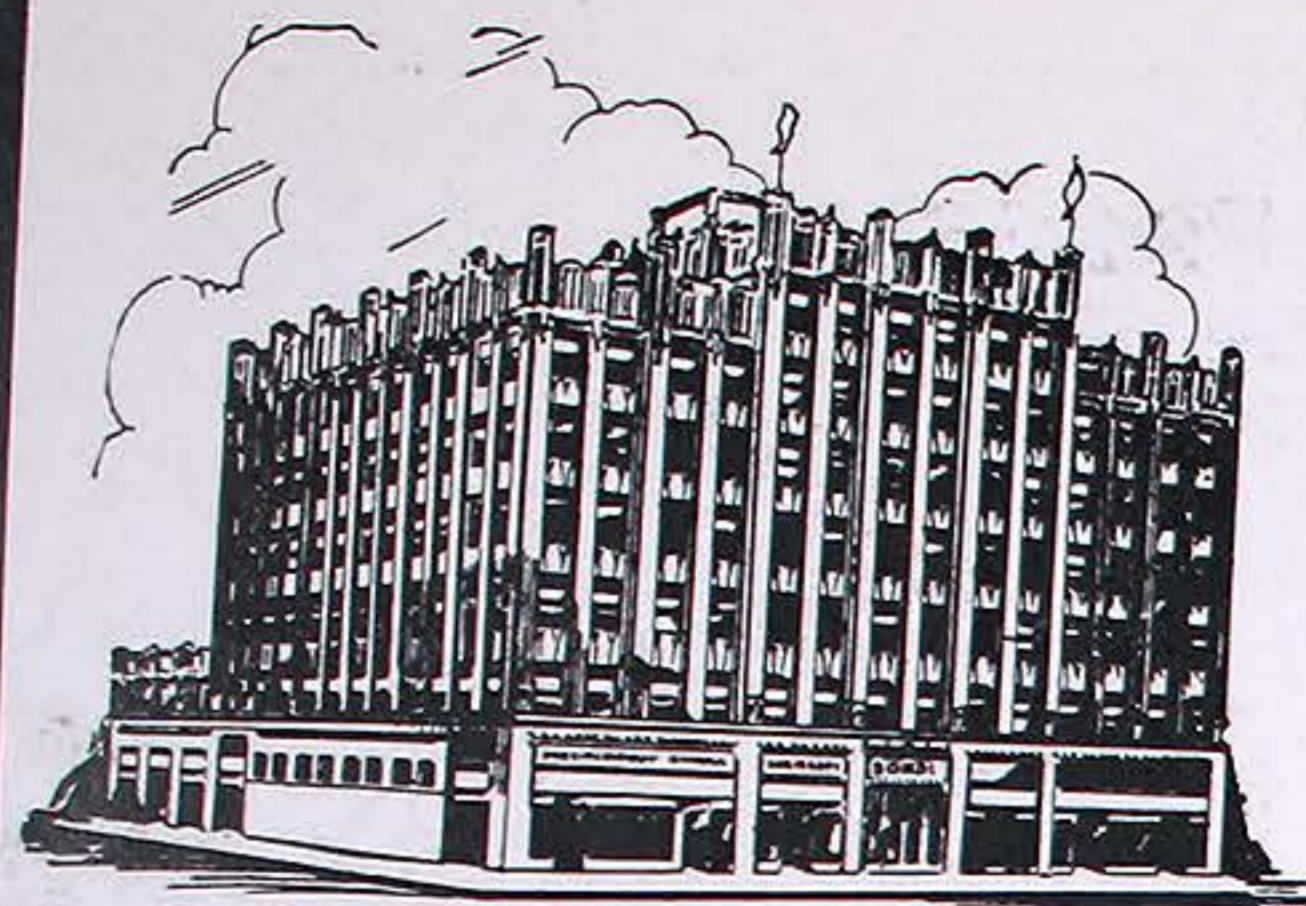
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