

BOOK
FOUR

MARTIN'S
MODERN

IDEAS

PRICE
ONE DOLLAR

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❖ 1935 ❖

H. C. MARTIN
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martin's ideas

IN this series of IDEA-Books, it is not my intention to set myself up in rivalry with the lettering technicians, the writers of distinction, the deep-sea thinkers in our craft, whose ultra-modern creations and conceptions are of value mainly to a select professional few in the largest cities.

There is in these little books no pedantic phraseology, no academic or professorial dignity. It is the language of the workshop, of the busy everyday workman; that is in fact, the only way I can set it forth, never having mastered the technicalities of grammar and fine writing.

To the man with trained logical mind many of these pages may even seem hacked out and pasted into place, paragraph by paragraph; capable of being read equally well backwards as forwards; just as many of the ultra-modern layouts look as well upside down as right side up!

Deal gently, reader, with your criticism, I am a bench worker myself, and appeal most often to the small shop man, even the student, than to the brilliant veteran. I confess often to stage-fright, to shaky half-confidence in my ability to instruct others.

It is stated that one of the country's greatest typographers, Bruce Rogers, refuses to even write a line for publication; he disclaims knowing enough yet to instruct others! This I hold, is too far fetched a view. One need not lay down a set of laws, no, not that; but let him impart what he can to others who are struggling upwards behind him or beside him. "If you have knowledge, let others light their candle at it."



IDEAS are the most valuable commodities in the world today; let me repeat that — *Ideas!*

. . . The wealth of the world is the result, partly of labor (and that may be very skilled labor), and partly of ideas. Most of us have not the time to think up new ideas in the daily rush and hurry, and so I have set myself to be a kleptomaniac of ideas produced by other skilled leaders, indefatigably gathering these together from various sources and so presenting them to the trade.

I am on constant lookout for new *ideas*. Searching, experimenting, picking them up one by one, adapting, simplifying, putting these ideas down and passing them on to others. Instead of making up elaborate creations to display any skill I may possess, and thus glorifying myself, I have concentrated on ideas,— *Ideas* one can use on bread-and-butter work. No masterpieces in workmanship, but—IDEAS that will click.

Modernistic, traditional, plain bread-and-butter sale type—all are here! Usable! Everyday! Practical! Workable!

THE AUTHOR

martin's ideas

ADDISON, the author of many of the famous "Spectator" essays, some century and a half ago said: "The great art in writing advertisements is the finding out a proper method to catch the reader's eye." Today, in this modern age of high powered advertising, we, in display card work, which is simply a branch of the greater advertising field, find this more than ever necessary, and are still striving to this end—to display our card-advertisements so as to first catch the reader's eye, then please.

Before the advent of modernism, a really original card seemed to stand out like an oasis in the vast desert of drearily indifferent stuff; display card-men were too bound by that great hobgoblin of precedent—by tradition. In a trip to Chicago some years ago, a small-town letterer noticed how particularly outstanding were the card creations of *one workman* in even that large city. Why can't more of us be "that one man" in our own localities?

MODERNISM" has long been a term to juggle with. We have been apt to regard it as a sort of jazzy, syncopated style. Syncopation in music, we are told, has a psychological, almost scientific basis under all its seeming wild freedom and disorder. So with display cards—there are times when the "ballyhoo" drum-banging type may be condoned, if the beating be in some sort of time or rhythm, and not all out of harmony, not in disagreement with the whole generally accepted scheme of design and order. Workmen in our trade, perhaps more than those in other branches of the graphic arts, seem often to be all at sea as to why they do what they do. Much crude, bastard work is seen in the windows, both of layout and lettering.

• • • • • **M**ODERNISM should be simple, consistent, fresh, direct; an elimination of frills, flounces and furbelows, of old-time meaningless, pretty-pretty scrolls and fussy little gadgets—should be, in short, an *impression* with lettering, with stock, and with colors that will best convey the message we wish to put across.

• •

One of the first questions raised in the reader's mind upon examining this Book Four will be—where are the color notes and other explanations? Indeed, there are not any—or very few. I ask you to use your "1000 Layouts" for that, till I get certain things "off my chest", then color notes, and some very surprising innovations, too, I promise you—will be gone into exhaustively. Such small books,—so much to say,—such a little space to say it in.

The larger former volume of "1000 Show Card Layouts" has for several years, I am proud to say, been considered the standard, fundamental book to the trade—not modernistique, but modern; universally used by the professional and veteran workman, as well as in classes and schools the country over; wagon loads have been sold abroad.

(You may possibly find it in your local library, or they can procure the loan of it if you insist.)

These new IDEA-Books are designed as companion books to the larger one—but not duplications. Neither correspondence schools nor books on the "art" of sho' card writing can teach the student as well as intensive study of these work-bench manuals—intensive study, not mere biting of the finger nails. They will set the beginner on his feet and teach him to walk alone.

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Plate 106—True modernism is simplicity.

martin's ideas

VERILY, the old order changeth. Last season you may have worn an odd little bow cocked on your hat in a peculiar manner—it was the style! A short year from now, or less, looking back it may seem ridiculous—so quickly and radically do things change.

A French comedian, when asked where he obtained his screamingly funny trick hats, answered that he simply saved his regular street headgear till it became old and out of style. So is there similarly danger in our saving old ideas; in failing to keep up with the times. You, as display card letterers, are making advertising. It is old-fashioned in dress? Dress your message modern.

Lay by the old stuff you've used for years. Be unusual and out of the ordinary; that's what it takes to make a definite impression. You came down to the shop this morning past rows of houses, and nothing in particular attracted your attention. But just suppose you had seen a rocking chair out in the gutter, or a tree uprooted—that would have stopped you and got your attention!

Purposely avoid the old trite tricks of yesteryear—the slanted line of script stuff in the upper left corner, the display line of all cap letters, the same big “bucket-of-blood” red price. I do not mean that you should be eccentric, but you should strive to be distinctive! Modernism, properly applied, will put novelty, charm and ginger into your cards, but it must never be allowed to ruin their selling power, their legibility, to any appreciable degree, by eccentricity.

Modernism is a delight to the cardman who senses the need for the unique. It opens a new form of expres-

sion, brilliant and fresh. The alert workman will find in modern lettering unlimited opportunity for versatile expression. But there is no excuse to use “moderne” stuff as a smoke screen behind which to hide poor workmanship and meager knowledge and lack of lettering skill.

•••
The first principle in judging the worth of a given finished piece of work is—is it legible? After all, that's its primary purpose; that's all that really counts. The job may be beautiful, it may have some pleasing, or contrariwise startling, attention-getting design idea, but unless it is *easy to read*—it is more or less a failure.

Don't crowd the card with small copy. Many people like myself, with poor eyesight, do not wear their glasses on the street; and they are not excited enough over your message to get down on their knees, nose pressed flat against the glass, to read it; make it easy for such persons—use fair-sized lettering, the copy phrased in terse, “telegraphic style”.

THEN again, in designing your card, vague terms such as “movement”, “unity”, “balance”—all words that sound very fine,—to the rank beginner are too vaporous, do not explain themselves. Each distracted student must almost dig within himself for the reason for what he does at times. I believe that the simple principles of simplicity and contrast, will be of more value, of more success than all the other talk I might spin out here, to confuse you. If these two only are rightly followed, you may make a triumphant job of your card design.

•••



Plate 107—Break away from antidiluvian Ideas.

martin's ideas

WITH modernism, layout has become paramount. How essential it is, a touch of something even if only a distinctively treated, odd-color rule or two added. The card design need not necessarily shock or startle, with everything "hiltie skiltie, tapsel teerie" as the Scotch say; with triangular beams of light and shadow shooting across the card; with "goofy" greens and bilious yellows—all foreign to the thought the card is intended to convey. May bread-and-butter display cards be done with such French pastry effects? Not so. In trying to be different with an over-use of stunts for stunts' sake, one produces a hodge-podge which is neither one thing nor the other, but a something that looks as if the house-wreckers had been busy.

During the World War the art of camouflage was developed to a high degree. This was an art to deceive and evade; it was a distortion of form and color which produced confusion. Today many loose-thinking workmen are doing this very thing under the mistaken notion that they are being very modern. In reality they are making themselves very absurd by their nerve-shattering designs.

The very essence of modernism is simplicity and an avoidance of detail, a clarity of thought and effect. Even the lettering of today that tends so strongly even toward san-serif, reflects this demand. The geometrical planes and lines and forms have also been a revulsion against the overdone flourishes and scrolls that formerly prevailed,—ornament that was pretty, but meaningless. Now the object is to see how much can be left out!

This is too much a day of hurry-scurry for complicated effects; the message must be put in such shape

that "he who runs may read". Just enough modernism should be used to show the up-to-dateness of the store and merchandise; but don't lose your head, don't lose sight of practicability. Give a moment's thought to what you are to feature and to whom it must appeal, so that all elements, masses, border effects, properly selected, suitably spaced and proportioned and combined, may make a pleasing card. In your originality, novelty, cleverness, avoid the effect that may produce an unpleasant reaction.

What is meant rather, by originality— is the handling of the problem in some new, fresh, unexpected way, so that it becomes a striking eye-catcher, so that it compels attention, so that it brings the reader up with a jerk, and—gets results.

A little ingenuity—tilting, vivid color, odd-shape—may work wonders, and take off that look of rubber-stampism too often seen; may make a weak, ineffective card—the run-of-the-mine type—into a thing altogether effective and pleasing, smart and distinctive.



During a twelve months' period of the depression, a large department store in the southwest discontinued all newspaper advertising for two of their departments,—yet increased their sales 50% over the previous year, solely through more careful planning and more frequent change of window displays.

The retailer must have *compelling* windows if he would loosen the purse-strings of the close-fisted passers-by. Windows are the merchant's bait; with them he fishes for business. Just as true today as ever is the adage "Seeing is believing". Tempting displays, with *talking* salesman cards, will coax feet naturally across the store threshold.



Plate 108—Flamboyance and acrobatics not necessary here.

martin's ideas

THE NEW modernism—rightly made and used is fine. But just what the reaction of the great mass of people is to certain aspects of it, is difficult to gauge; possibly, after all be said and done, it is little superior, or much more resultful than the smoothness and quiet tones of other days; that is still another question.

However, if the public show itself to be modernism-conscious, we must accede to the demand. If the small merchant—Mr. Average Merchant—develops a modernist complex and exhibits a rage for high color, for new effects, we must, as advertising men, be prepared to give them to him—display advertising is the spirit of the times—color, angles, dynamic designs; these need not be dizzy, ridiculous stuff; rather, refined, harmonious and pleasing effects, yet modern in spirit.

Beware of too stunt stuff; real advertising value must ever be kept in mind. The clear, bright colors of the new style, when used, should be kept outside the area devoted to the message; they may emphasize a shape or form, but should rarely shoot across the card in such a way as to render lettering placed thereon less readable. Effects employed must not overshadow the message.

To successfully manipulate effects so as to add to rather than detract from the message, one must possess the eye, skill and feeling of an artist—yet be versed in the principles of advertising. Fireworks and pinwheels and clowning will not sell goods; good common sense expressed in a clean-cut, modern manner will.

The card that clamors noisily for attention, that almost bludgeons the passerby into reading the copy, by strong color or sheer size, may have its place;

on the other hand, a simple and attractive design that does not bully but rather persuades, that invites the eye by logical arrangement to follow through, step by step, the selling argument, may be more often the appropriate thing to use.

Will lettering that stands on its head, figuratively speaking, with legs wildly waving in the air, thus persuade the man or the woman on the street to buy the latest type of electric toaster, or the new model automobile? No! The card must sell! It should have no other purpose. No matter what is done, what "faddy" letters or layouts are employed—keep this big truth in mind. It may sound trite and obvious, an oft-told tale, but we are apt to forget it. This modernity must be handled intelligently and sensibly.

•••

I HAVE known a cardman who seemed to get quite a kick out of his work,—lettering with joyous abandon, went zigzagging around as fancy dictated, threw in big color dots to emphasize, and typed out the bill. Then again, a lettering expert who advocated following of type closely. The latter man would probably wince at the former's style. But it was an individual style; he packed a wallop into every card—the theatrical influence, I take it. I myself like it—if "held in" just a bit more. Fundamentals and not too much freakishness or froth. Individual idiosyncrasies of style and downright incompetency are generally traceable to lack of study and fundamentals. We should take the middle of the road,—use some freedom and a style that is spontaneous, but not go too far either to the left or to the right.

•••

Brand new

IDEAS

are hard to snatch from the ether: use these in a pinch!

385

FINAL CUT

Men's Shoes

585

These articles are charming as gifts in your own home

CRYSTAL

FIRST-AID NEEDS

HANDY ASSORTMENT

98¢

Original PARIS MODELS

Inimitable Reductions

for Women seeking style and foot-ease

Sparkling Spring Styles

and less in price too!

1950 REGULAR

CITY CLUB SHIRTS

They launder well, and do not fade

\$1.95

STYLED for DISCRIMINATING MEN!

PRICED for FORTY MEN

GYPSEY DYE Instruction

Attractive wall hanging and table lamp made

NO CHARGE for instruction when material is bought here.

new FOR FALL

The SACCO

THE ACCEPTED STYLE FROM LONDON OF COURSE.

FREE

30¢ (includes Pattern and instruction NOW!)

Fancy Goods 2nd Floor.

Let the children eat them every day.

Dick's Health Cookies

CRISP DELICIOUS TEMPTING

SMART!

6

A young man's shoe... in the young man's style!

Note the "roller-plate" heel....

LAWSON

The ultimate of the modern trend in furniture.

LAWSON quality is un-
seen quality as well as visible quality - conforming to the finest principles in furniture making.

Guaranteed!

EASY

to buy the KIMBALL Way....

Ask us!

double compact

rigaud

with Poudre and Rouge

Just **40¢**

Middle Aisle...

TRADE IN DIAMOND

The Opportunity you've been waiting for

SALE

Plate 109—Bold, postery type with panels and bull's eyes.

martin's ideas

THE terrible bore and sameness of the shop windows, the displays without a flash or a flicker of spirit, with no life or sparkle, may, with cards of fresh style, withal good advertising have imparted to them a dash, and arresting quality—in short, the *selling* power.

Lettering men are prone to vie with one another in being unusual and catchy. An artist who for years had been in practical display poster work made the statement to me that artists, in commercial display work at least, do not paint for the non-artistic public, but for other artists; that the lay-public knows nothing about the merit of a picture or poster, whether it be really good or bad; if perchance one does, he is then another "artists"! There is danger in this theory; one may have pet ideas, artistic arrangements, and color tricks that he may think clever and stunning, but if no really intelligent concern about selling the goods has been considered, it may go against the cold-blooded, unsentimental merchant store owner's idea of a business bringer, of a real sales-clinching job.

Your customer—the merchant—is the one who should be kept in mind always; you are to be a salesman for him. He is for art as long as it is useful to him, but otherwise he prefers to get along without it. Like the little girl in the Metropolitan Museum he "doesn't know anything about art, but he knows what makes him sick!"

Clever tricks that, "like flowers which bloom in the Spring tra la", have little or nothing to do with the article advertised—anything to catch the attention—are not wise. A terrific struggle to be clever often results in being ridiculous; a display card must be more than a display of mere cleverness—it must assist in selling the product.

IT IS very significant that in Wellington's book on "Poster Art" (SIGNS of Times Publishing Co., Cincinnati) in his first chapter, and the very first page, he emphasizes the importance of looking at the design *through a reducing glass*; and also—to properly visualize the right tones,—to make "preliminary roughs."

Have I not repeatedly, in former IDEA-Books, insisted that every cardman have a reducing glass on the bench within hand's reach; that there should be a law requiring it? But where to buy one of these, Martin?—you query. Send to BART SUPPLIES INC., 915 Marquette Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. Here are the sizes and prices: 703-1 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. unmounted, \$.86; 705-2 in. mounted, \$1.56; 706-2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. mounted, \$1.87; 707-3 in. mounted, \$2.24; etc. The two or two and a half inch diameter are about right; the mounted are best to avoid breaking.

AGAIN if you are a really earnest student of display cards, and wish to get the full value for your dollar, I advise a plain reading glass, about 3 inch diameter (you can buy these anywhere cheaply), to enlarge and examine the small card layouts in these little IDEA-Books; for there are really many small kinks and "tricks"—more than first meet the eye—to be seen on close examination.

GET THESE two shop aides, learn to use them constantly, and you'll thank me the rest of your life. I know you will.

The layouts on the accompanying plate, as the explanatory comment tells you, are several of them very suitable for even the "baby bulletins" or outdoor poster boards; now on plate 111, next page, is an extremely different type of card design, very conservative and even suitable for the display card printing machine.





Plate 110—Card layouts; several possible for “baby bulletins”!

martin's ideas

AROLLICKING arrangement, the over-use of novel or mock forms of letters, the standing of half the elements on one ear,—a “whoopee” sort of style—is thought by many to be modernistic. There are those who can do no other; in the phrase of one caustic critic “some of the extremists in their desire to appear untrammelled, simply appear to be unbuttoned!” There are those who cannot pin themselves down to the straight-and-narrow, who abhor as oldfashioned the clean cut, orderly type of layout.

Modernism means above all—simplicity; absence of frills and gingerbread. Cleanness and simplicity, too, of letter; legible.

Modernism means more than merely using grotesque letters tilted at some absurd angle, with a few triangular “beams of light” shooting into the design. Better the saner, more legible faces, leaving the modernistic touches almost clear away from the display. The shopper should be able to listen to what the card has to say instead of thinking it some new form of puzzle; she should be able to read it without a struggle or the need to go afterward to a chiropractor to have her neck vertebrae adjusted.

The dizzy layout that almost knocks one over the head with a crash, fails to cause a pleasant reaction to the message.

Dizzy letters, distorted, shapeless; fanciful arrangements, sometimes even grotesque—where will it end!

The absurdity of too much tilting of display lines, of shouting out every feature, of hanging small-copy blocks by an eyebrow, of knocking the price askew, and with sharp angles and rays of light stabbing across the card from unseen sources—this is not always necessary even with the new modernism. Far from it.

But there should be an appreciation of design, orthodox design; in other words, *layout* is the paramount thing to be learned. Certain fundamental principles underlie both the traditional and the new modernistic. To do good

things in the Modern Manner one must first be able to do good work in the Classic. The ones who are doing the good work are those well versed in these fundamental principles of good lettering and good design; they excelled first in the old reliable, time-honored down-the-center layout before they presumed to chuck the musty timeworn systems out the window and strike out with the new.

Says Fuzzy Carter: “I just received your last book of ‘IDEAS’. If I don’t make as much as one hundred times its cost in the next year, I will be really disappointed, as this is my earnings on the investment I made in your former book of ‘1000 Practical Layouts’. Great stimulators for one making show cards, as well as general signs.”

Herb Simpson, Evansville, Indiana: “Frankly, Book—is about the biggest dollar’s worth of value I have ever seen. Any shop can well afford to own the wealth of material it contains. Put me down for the entire ‘library’. I like to spend my money wisely.” Bill Yeo of Blue Island, Illinois (Chicago): “My IDEA-Books are not up on the shelf with the dust, but open on the bench working.”

A New York City friend says: “Your IDEA-Books are going to be my working text books from now on. When ‘up a tree’ I can always juggle some of your Ideas into a presentable-looking card. Now, I know quite a few of the card writers around here, and they are too smart to bother looking for ideas. They constitute the old-timers, the “vets”, while in their minds my type of person is a ‘cluck’. But—they’re getting passe and a new generation is springing up, and they are the ones who thank their lucky stars for books like yours. And the business men are getting to the point where they recognize when a little time and thought has been expended on their cards. They realize that they must have ‘different’ displays to entice the public. (The old Spider and Fly business.)”



Plate 111—Selected from the busy “traffic of Ideas”.

martin's ideas

THE CONSTANT cry of the merchant may be for "something different." He may say "Show me something different, and I'll quit this present service I have, and you'll get my trade for life!" But does he really want something different? I say, No! He's too used to stale-looking productions, to mediocre presentation, to "sign cards" that would make a display card artist shudder; he's too bound and shackled by precedent to take it if it were really different.

After all, not to be different merely, but to be effective, to sell, is the requirement of the successful card. Put yourself in the place of the person on the street, one of the rank and file, and ask yourself whether the card you make would induce *you* to come in and spend your money.

Oddness may get attention, but freakishness is not effective always; it should be favorable attention. An illustration in point would be that effect occasioned by a man in perfect evening attire sauntering barefoot into some formal function. Or, like that of the man who several years ago walked down State St., Chicago, in a screaming bright red overcoat; he attracted attention, in fact, stopped traffic at the "world's busiest corner"; but such attention provokes a most unfavorable reaction.

The tipsy theatrical advance agent, who in billing the town during the night hours plastered the signs upside down, packed the show house with a record run. I admit that a drug store card which had fallen forward so as to be upside down stopped me, but only as a matter of curiosity, not as a purchaser. A series of sale cards may be set up on end sideways; but common sense says to use such ideas with caution. Pretty tricks that look new; "doggy" novelties; mere attempts to get away from the humdrum; clever-

ness and bluff; loud shrieks and yells—these are rarely convincing or enduring.

It takes common sense to produce designs with a wallop, cards that will pull like a mule, without being offensive; to fight the tendency to garish display, to keep from overdoing cards till they become a thing of distress to the eye. Horrible hideous examples in noisy, dizzy layout and colors are as thick as blackberries, bad breath, and washing-machines. Beware of being misled by them. A good proportion of the stuff you see is not good. Rivet-mill explosion, snake-dance sort of cards—everything topsy-turvy, standing on one ear—this is not true modern advertising.

MEBBE YOU think that this man Martin is a great egotist,—he admits it. The right brand of egotism makes for success these days. Too much brass band stuff,—you may say: I didn't spend a dollar to hear Martin tell "what a great guy I am"—but remember Martin has no publicity man, no press agent, and must do his own horn-tooting. Besides these expressions from friends often reveal how others use the Martin IDEA-Books.

Friend Kalal from Cleveland says: "From the last book of IDEAS I made up some fifty samples, and had a salesman go about with these to merchants; he received orders from practically all of them."

A friend from the "deep South",—Bill Hodges—says: "Martin did you know there are 547 layouts in Book Three alone? Your large book has only '1000 Layouts', and costs five dollars. What a bargain these books are, then! And do I get quite a kick from turning the book upside down and seeing about 300 more layouts that could be used in a pinch. Am using your books now as a starter for card layouts of my own."



Plate 112—Study the strategy of showmanship.

Martin's Ideas

IN THE comments on foregoing pages and in other IDEA-Books, I have called attention to the versatility of the various types of cards, how they may be made to bawl forth the virtues of the article in the voice of a vegetable peddler, to arouse attention by slam-bang methods; how they may be carefree and joyful; or may be as staid and dignified as a trust company official, clean cut, well groomed, perfectly mannered; or, conservative and cold as if in frock coat and silk topper, in order to give an atmosphere of super elegance.

There is the crowded advertising card as contrasted with the big, easily read, colorful poster card, or the card that makes itself heard with vociferous shouting; the card that, instead of being small and subordinate, is made to dominate through sheer size, crying "Look this way!" made large and even larger in size, till it becomes often the window background itself, and so flashes the message boldly that the reader, even the man across the street, may get it at a glance.

If I have explained it as I wish, you will see that I have emphasized breaking away from cramping precedent and tradition to dare to do something that is *your own!* Yet, too, while you should strive to produce creative design—not imitative work, beyond a certain training period—you should not too soon entirely disregard the universally accepted precedent and practice of the craft. Those who ape the modernistic tricks without possessing a true basic underlying feeling for design, will never produce layouts expressive of the simplicity and directness of the present art tendency.

Finally: though we may talk very glibly about this modernism and all such matters, at bottom we must admit how nonsensical much of this faddism really is. A great deal of it is horrible stuff. It leaves a sour taste in the mouth. Fight clear of the excess-

es, the fantastic attempts to be extremely bizarre, in which there is much danger of being ridiculous. Sound modernism, however, is good; put it to work for you!

And to those who believe we have reached the limit, and know all there is to be known, the statement is made all over America this modern spirit—this leaven is at work. It is just now beginning! ●●●

RAY FRANKEN of Chicago says: "I am an old Idea-grabber—always on the alert for new, fresh, different ideas. These Martin IDEA-Books fill the need exactly. I use the little books to set my own gray matter in motion."

H. W. Hardesty: "I recently purchased a copy of '1000 Practical Layouts'. I have spent about \$25. for various lettering books, but your book has helped me more in my search for something to better my work than all the others . . ." M. E. Klahn from Washington State speaks up: "Two years ago I paid \$140. for a 'course' in sign and show card work, but I didn't know as much when I finished as I learned from your book '1000 Practical Layouts'. How one man, Martin, can pack so many IDEAS into a book for five dollars is beyond me." (Thanks, Klahn, here are the cigars.)

"Although in another entirely different line of work," says Ernest Don of Chicago, "and never having sold any display cards, Martin's plain, outspoken advice and philosophy will make a cardman of me yet. I cannot forget the bits like this—'Slouchy work indicates a slouchy mind', nor 'Card writing is just a matter of many details'. Whatever books you put out on this subject—I *must have!*"

Thomas Federico of Niagara Falls, New York: "I wish to express my gratitude to be able to buy such fine sources of ideas; these books have practically changed my entire old method of layouts for cards, signs, etc."

Every good display card must begin with an Idea...

Study carefully to get the underlying Idea in each design



Plate 113—A double handful of "IDEA STIMULATORS".

martin's ideas

IT MAY often seem, judging from the incoming personnel, that display card work trends to attract many a youth who, figuratively speaking, is not strong enough to work in the shipping room, but who is too slow to learn the more skilled cabinet work—in other words, the plain carpenter, middle-ground fellow, neither cold nor hot, who has perhaps been a half-baked failure in some other line, and has now read some ad telling of the great profits in card and sign work (you've seen the bunk). Will he then, stay with it long enough to make a success as a lettering man? Doubtful,—if he lacks mental stamina and intellectual ability. For there *is* an intellectual side to it; this we must realize; it demands more than the average intelligence, even though we see the mechanical side stressed more frequently.

There is that familiar saying attributed to some great artist who when asked the secret by what wonderful process he mixed his colors, replied, "With brains, Sir." It is the same with every workman in our craft who would excel.

I don't mean to say he must be a genius. The only genius that counts is the capacity for hard work—"a slog-ging" along at it, day in and day out; but success may not be had on cheaper terms. There is no need for one to be an ordinary letterer, if he will but work a little harder than the rest of the ordinaries, and not be content to become the sort of fellow who just goes dubbing along. Set out to be more than just a dub. *Why be ordinary!* Be the exception.

Reader, you'll get out of this work just about what you elect to put into it. You may not be able to own the latest model, expensive make automobile, perhaps, but I assert that display card work can be made a remunerative and very well-paid business, if you will but take it seriously.

For instance, one young man employed by a corporation—a chain pro-

position—has worked his job up from \$28.50 a week to a salary of around \$60 a week. He has taken it seriously—created new ideas, studied advertising principles and a bit of drawing nights, and applied this in silk screen work, which he also learned while on the job. "It *can* be done"—paste this slogan in your hat!

Again, you may think that I stress the "joy of work" too much, that you don't see any "joy" in the job. Perhaps you call it "ambition", or some such name. If you have confidence and joy in your work, aspiration, inspiration, the mere matter of a job will take care of itself. You *wish* you could do this or that. Wishing will get you no place. To modernize an old childhood rhyme—"If wishes were cars we'd all ride in Rolls Royces."

You can do as well, or better than any high-powered expert; he simply *wanted* to badly enough. We're all doing in life just about what we want to do—*but no* more. Think that over. It's a sure thing that the expert was not born in the cradle with that skill. It's practice, and practice, till he attained the height he has reached.

THE TRAGEDY of carelessness in one's daily work: Recently in a southern city was a theatrical man handling the lobby fronts for several houses; some small talent he may have had, but didn't "put out". It wasn't appreciated, he said; "all they want in this 'game' is a gaudy flash." So he depended on the handy cutawl, and a bucket of metallics, and year after year turned out his execrable lettering, knocking out the work in the shortest possible time, in order that he could get downstairs and loaf around the corner smoke shop. Yes . . . and when some "scout" came gum-shoeing through the city hunting a man—his better chance—he was passed by. So the gray hairs came, the deadline of age crept upon him, and one day the bottom fell out of the job. . . .

martin's ideas

ARE YOU one, an experienced workman perhaps, who has begun to think that you are too good to be a mere display card man? Take your best samples, push about a bit; go to the foremost engraving studios, and I believe you'll come back, somewhat chastened, and take up the old brush, convinced that "all is not gold that glitters,"—that you can do just about as well at the lettering bench.

I know—I've tried it; I've had those same notions myself; in fact, went so far as to visit more than half a dozen of the leading commercial art studios and engravers in Chicago, with the best of introductions from two of the finest lettering designers in America, which were an entree into any studio. Several positions were offered, but—not to weary you with details, the result was the decision still held today—that display cards, etc. offered the more pleasant, reasonably profitable work; broader in their nature; easier! with needed variety in their color angle.

Don't get into that fatal error, then, of looking down on and belittling your work. Our field is just as good as commercial art. Don't despise your job. Endeavor to rise in it. There is always that room at the top. Go to any good medium large city in the U. S., there will be found only about two really accomplished cardmen whose work is outstanding—"Grade A" men—experts. I mean by that, all-around men, experts in every way. I am sure a survey will bear me out in this.

Then again, there are more imitators than creators. An art instructor in the East—New York, I think,—made an estimate that the students in that school numbering some hundreds grouped about thus: 90% imitative, 8% adaptive, and 2% creative. Be one of that 2%! *Be one of that 2%.*

In talking things over once with a letterer of twice my experience and much more skill, he remarked on how

interestingly I regarded the work; that he had never looked at matters from just such angles before. "Do you know why I do so?" was my reply. "Because I respect the business of display card work. It's more than a mere 'game', as so many term it; it's a *business*. And—there's real opportunity in it!"

You should try and keep on trying; if you are able to pick out a goal, make straight for that goal. Does it elude you? Well, so much the better. The man who plumes himself fatuously that he has arrived is irretrievably lost. Shame on the coward soul that with smug complacency settles down comfortably in the ill-paid, *easy* job, satisfied with a smooth, tedious and vapid mediocrity of existence. Rather the learner, the striver who gets out and grapples with problems, and develops!

I quote by special permission, from an article by Paul de Kruieff in the *Saturday Evening Post*: "If there is anything setting off this scientist (Kettering) from others, it isn't any excessively greater brain power or deeper thought, but that, so long as there remained snarls in his problems, he couldn't sleep. It was what made him say, long after, 'If you can become sufficiently dissatisfied with your business to make it keep you awake, then you will start to make progress.' It wasn't that he was better; it was only that he was a more incessant scientist."

(I was pussy-footing about the little "studio" about 2 a. m. one night, projecting some stuff, and my bulging brain-box (cranium) hit the home-made file-boxes on the shelf overhead, catapulting them over me with a clatter and rain of so-carefully arranged records. . . . There lay Cleveland, Ohio, and Aberdeen, Scotland, and . . . and Cuba and . . . oh, what not.' What a time I had for the next week getting them corralled back into line again.)

The effectiveness often enhanced by **Mounted Pictures** Keep decorative treatment simple



Plate 115—Several ways of handling mounted pictures.

martin's ideas

THE following is quoted from an English book "Showcard Lay-Out and Design", by Edgar Bond:

"While it is a fact, well known to every practical English sign maker or skilled letterer who has worked in the States, that, taken as a whole, the quality and finish of their sign card work will not stand up to ours, there is a reason for it . . . used a day or two, then scrapped . . . competition is keen among the writers, the average trader can afford to indulge in new cards every few days, if needed.

"Altho' the American showcard writer may be lacking in technique or polished finish, there is no getting away from the fact that he is a past-master at producing an 'effect' or putting 'snap' into his card work. Many of their designs and lay-outs, choice of subject, and use of correct colourings are veritable works of art."

(May I comment just here? From a careful examination of Mr. Bond's book,—made up entirely, not of his own work, but that of others, English and American—the English cards would seem to have been executed more in a commercial art or reproduction manner, probably taking one hour or more each to produce; many of them in a style we abandoned two decades ago!)

"What the Canadian or American trader requires in his window cards is 'attraction force', something 'snappy', therefore the card writers over there have made a specialty of the illustrated card, as being the most effective type of attracting the public."

(Now where does he get this impression and misinformation? From the numerous pictorial cards appearing in trade journals here, undoubtedly.)

". . . Few cards in the individual retailers windows or specialty shops are seen without being illustrated in some manner or other, usually with a subject having a definite relation to the articles on sale."

Just let Mr. Bond come over to "the States", and travel a day's journey and how many illustrated cards will he see? He claims to prove that last statement by showing a few examples from a department store in Wellington, North Carolina, which have the usual trick landscape scenes.

(Incidentally, Mr. Bond reproduced—without permission or acknowledgment of source, which is hardly ethical—whole pages of H. C. Martin's cards from "Signs of the Times". Furthermore, the cover of the book was red, as I remember, with tilted lettering block in white, evidently an imitation of "1000 Show Card Lay-outs".)

To resume: Regarding the next several pages, we resent the appellation *artists*—"Tod" Hodges and I—but bit, and fought, and clawed each other, over many of the pictorial efforts here, and that are to appear in forthcoming books; sometimes a burst of maniacal laughter rang out on the frosty air [Careful, Martin, that sounds poetical, but remember it doesn't frost here.—*The Printer*] as we gaily filched a picture from the good old morgue.

Now and then an idea may be filched, but most of them originate in my "IDEA-Works" here. Some of these are mine—some the other fellow's; which are which? (Give me credit for the best ones, now!)



"Agradescos se sirva mandarme su Book Three y al mismo tiempo felicitos por sus exitos al lansar sus muy buenos textos al mercado."—J. Jara, Monterrey, Mexico.

(What headaches I let myself in for, when I started trying to be a publisher!) Some smart-aleck might retort "You're another,—and so's your uncle!"—but I "gather" that Mr. Jara is complimenting me on Book Three, and so thank him, even though I cannot "savvy" or "compree" Espanol.





Plate 116—You can copy them—almost with a twist of the wrist.

martin's ideas

I ADMIT a prejudice against pictorial work on display cards, but expect to show in the future, hundreds of pictorial effects in *usable* layouts, and with suggestive copy, for those so-minded; *sensible* pictorial effects as an antidote for those frequently shown—and so impractical.

I can draw, but heartily dislike to! Yes, I shoveled coal for a living on the Louisville water front (autobiographical again), hoed cotton with negroes in Texas, was lot-man to some twenty-five mules, slaved in iron mills in Tennessee, was expert wheel-barrow man in coffin factory, rubber tire sander in Indiana, etc., till thirty years of age, while many of you fellows have been “fooling around” drawing since boyhood; yet I have done such things as the ship drawing in Plate 21 (Book One) after several months of study—of studying *lettering* (not drawing)!

Generally I prefer to leave most of the pictorial effects to my able bench helper here—“Tod” Hodges—who would rather draw than eat. As for the criticism of commercial art set forth in Book One, that may be considered as personal opinion, and even a confession of my own limitations and prejudices—a criticism not of art, but a bit of autobiography, rather. My opinion is very unimportant.

Yet there is a measure of truth in my criticism, at that. For as I write this, at the present time, many artists in New York and other large cities are sadly up against it because of the present trend toward realism, toward photography, to be exact. They're sitting around hoping times will change, are hunting jobs, are taking up the camera themselves.

But turning again to that other question of theatre art work: My orig-

inal plan was to show from four to six pages in each IDEA-Book; but the difficulty of procuring anything but big “star's” heads discouraged me. Heads! big grinning heads—do they really sell the show, sell tickets? I doubt it. It's the “stills” and the general lobby effect, too, if I (erstwhile mule valet) may timidly advance an opinion to you art experts.

So I have decided to just about abandon that angle and to pack stuff into the same pages that can be used by the rank and file of those in the display professions. “Theatre work? (I quote from a friend in Tyler, Texas; one Ike Davis.) If you can stand in with the manager, or can stand long hours and no pay . . . okay—but I can't stand it! They want you to work out your four to six foot heads, using eight shades of green on one, and fourteen shades of blue, and so forth . . . you work your heart out—then when the big chains (theatrical) want to cut down on their budgets, they start in the studio first . . . so out I came!

(He goes on to say: “Now I am just free-lancing, and boy-oh-boy this place has two shops and eighteen-eleven snappers. If you find yourself a client, better use chloroform on him or a sub-machine gun, and take the copy away from the victim before the other man comes along, and sees how cheap he can sell the job.”)

All of which is very illuminating!

There's no rest for the wicked! I haven't had my clothes off for more than forty-eight hours. There is so much that has to be done in the printing out of a little book. And if I am ever to get my next book—Five—done, not to mention earning my bread and jam during the interim, I must plug my ears so as to shut out the gleeful sounds of the rich tourist horseshoe pitchers and the rocque players over in Sunshine Park close by.

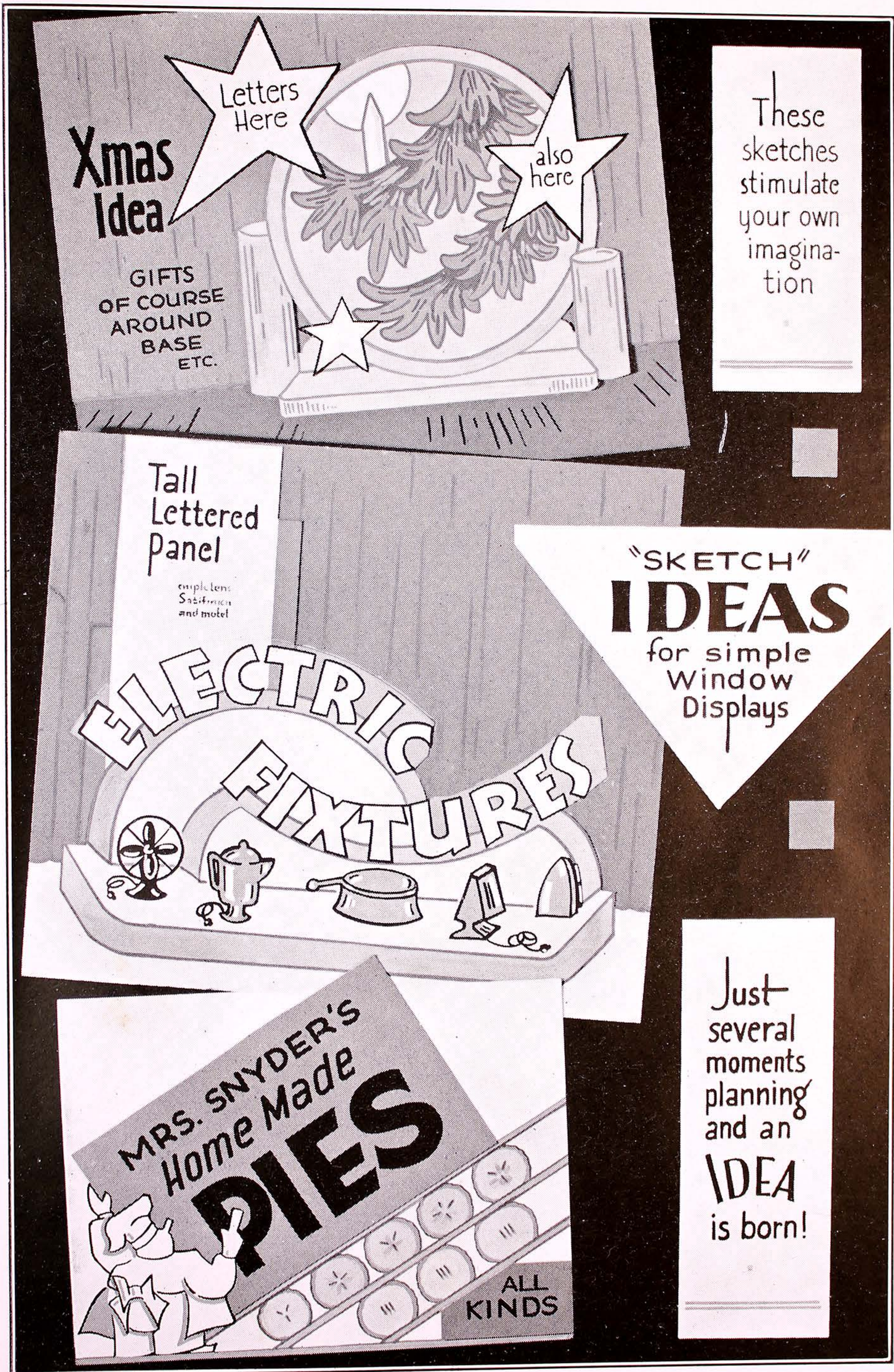


Plate 117—Basic Ideas for sound advertising window displays.

martin's ideas

THEN YET again: as to lettering effects. I often have the temptation to go hog-wild—there's no law against it, and do things in that so-snappy style myself. Yet, yet—is it wise, will it *wear well*?

I stayed up most of one night recently looking over, and examining work of various letterers in the display field, debating: should I set myself up and run a bluff as some sort of ultra-modernist, or keep sane and sensible—a practicalist? I decided in favor of the latter course; decided that I for one would ignore the grand-stand stuff and keep my lettering plain, simple, clean-cut, legible. Henceforth, expect no pyrotechnics in lettering; occasionally there may be what some would call radicalism in layout, but otherwise only practical usable ideas and effects, that will work in Pueblo, Colorado, as well as in Newark, New Jersey. Modern, yes, but not modernist. Years ago when I first faced an alphabet plate to really study it, I learned what it meant to spend three weeks,—all day, every day—for three weeks, I repeat, on a single small block of lettering, carefully drawing with pencil, outlining with fine crow quill pen and filling in,—till I had the fundamentals of good legible lettering imprinted on the walls of my mind.

If you care to add a few extra frills and fancywork to my Idea-suggestions, I say again—there's no law against it; but don't descend to mere "cleverness", puzzle styles affected by those not grounded in fundamentals.

THESE SEVERAL pages give but a taste of the pictorial effects, backgrounds and window displays, pictorial bulletin sketches, etc., that are to come. I have literally hundreds and hundreds of such Ideas already planned to be published in the coming books. A cheap projector (boy's magic lantern and mirror to reverse the image) or even cheaper pantagraph makes every

small card, shape, or window display effect usable, even to the beginner. A cutawl is *not* necessary (BUT advisable); a sharp mat knife and wall board, or even heavy matboard, and a bit of native ingenuity will work wonders. For certain cutout lettering the effect shown here may be approximated by lettering on suitable dark "retiring" card background panels or cards; and highlighting, out-lining, etc.

IHAVE never thought card profits permitted pictorial work, yet occasionally we see one who seems to make it pay; who is adept in cartoon work, for example, and practically holds his trade thereby, as for instance my friend "Soapy" McDonald, who made the doggy cartoon of Martin on the first page of this book. He uses illustrations on cards, paper signs, muslins even. This must be for the individual to decide, according to how skilled he is and what his locality demands.

"Soapy", go down there and kill that—in Denver who says he's my *brother*. . . ! Some friends in Canada asked me about him. There's not a man in America by my name in the trade. Right here in Orlando is a man, a shop owner, "Jack" Martin—but not a particle of kin to me.



(Credit where credit is due. To my helper "Tod" Hodges I acknowledge the main hand in this window display stuff. We have worked these displays out in sketch form—too expensive to make up large and photograph. Taken poetic license sometimes—"played fast and loose" with the rules of perspective in order that you might better visualize the principles of construction.

With the bulletin sketched on the plate—"Tod" and I divide the honors—if any!)

(Back in my little IDEA-factory here are enough Ideas still unpublished that placed end to end would stretch somewhere . . . What a "kick" I do get out of this . . . it's fascinating!)

More
Window
Display
IDEAS



Hundreds
of these are
planned for
succeeding
IDEA-Books

It is regretted
that a dozen
cannot be
crowded onto
every page!

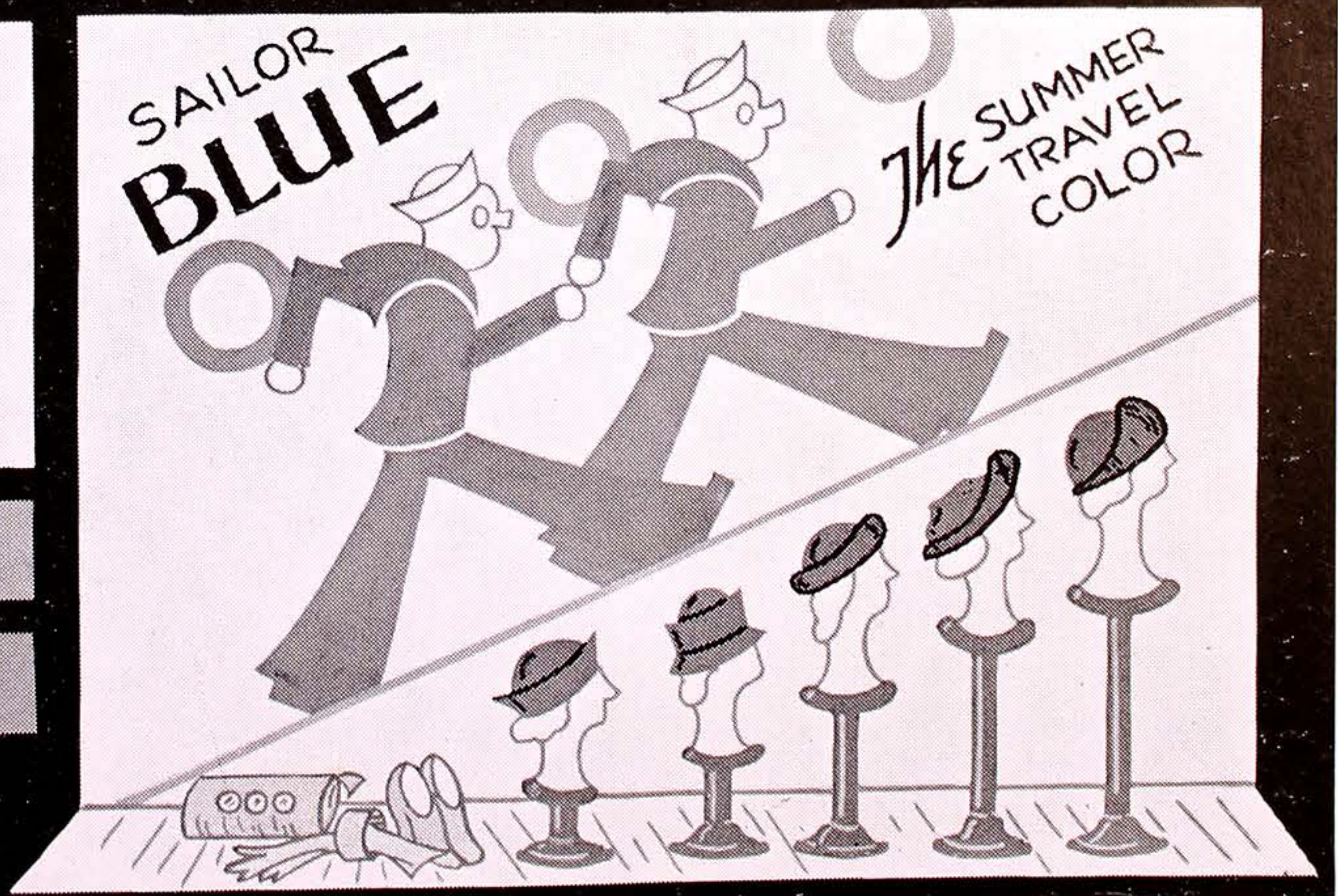


Plate 118—Ideas here which you can adapt with profit.

martin's ideas

FROM a correspondent in River Forest, Ill.,—a suburb of Chicago—Benj. T. Mihm (printed here by permission).

“Dear Friend Martin: I have been attempting to analyze your technique used in the display cards shown in Books One, Two, and Three. Instead of constantly referring to these books each occasion a display card was to be made or planned I thought best to study the underlying principles of procedure.

Here are some things I noticed particularly.

In layout design your shapes seem to be:

1. The square or rectangle.
2. Triangle, regular or irregular.
3. Circle or portion of circle.
4. The “stair-shaped” rectangle—up or down.
5. The curve.
6. The cross.
7. Other geometric shapes.

Card Shapes are:

1. Primarily, the rectangle.
2. . . . varied by aplikays or extensions or regular shapes to accommodate a letter, letters or designs.
3. . . . the rectangle narrowed at the base.
4. Tops or sides curved or rudder shaped.
5. Tops or sides saw-edge shaped:
6. Tops or sides “stair-stepped” up or down.
7. Tops triangle, or reverse shaped as—“V.”
8. Shapes most suggestive of the atmosphere pertinent to the sales talk.

Again, your borders are:

1. Parallel or oblique straight lines at the side or even through the copy itself.
2. Wavy parallel lines.
3. Triangles in tandem.
4. Circles or parts of circles.
5. Rectangles.
6. Saw-edge lines.

The ornaments observed were:

1. The circle or part;
- 2—The triangle;
- 3—The rectangle;
- 4—The “V”
- 5—The star regular or irregular;
- 6—The curved “rib”;
- 7—The tapered line;
- 8—The lightning bolt;
- 9—The scroll.

It was observed also that the “snap” of the card was given by the least variation of either a curve line, an oblique one, or just a word edged together.

Your letters are very suggestive of third dimension style or wood-cut, which make them seemingly stand up and out. I believe most oblique end letters or concave cyma Roman shaped letters are all intended to appear third dimensional. If a person gains this perspective by practice and has it at his command at all command at all occasions he should soon be able to become a master craftsman in lettering and might even design a so-called new alphabet.

The old “master” recommended in display card layout the 4-4-5-7 border proportions as the sides, top and bottom of the card. The displays in your books follow this rule frequently, but not to my own meager observation exclusively. They also stressed in the old copy books the so-called optical center point as the place for the “eye-catcher” or main copy line. This optical center is found by drawing lines from corners to oblique opposite corners, the crossing of these lines forming an x; the optical center being slightly above this. What is your moderne version of the importance of observing this optical center in display card designing? . . .”

This Mr. Mihm is a real student—he is going to get somewhere! My answer to him was perforce brief, as I simply cannot—cannot take time to answer literally hundreds of correspondents in detail, but I promise to take such questions up later as I find time and space.

Are you as much in earnest as this man?

Additions to your thought-store... **New Ideas** to set your mind to whirling away—



Plate 119—Use these Ideas to sell your own stuff.

martin's ideas

YOU may be one of those dissatisfied fellows who is always yearning to break loose and "open up a shop". Ah, what a mouth-filling sound that has! But pause and think! You *are* in business—now. Even the humblest office boy or janitor who sweeps out the halls is in business for himself. He is selling himself—his ability—which is his stock in trade—to another. His weekly pay check is his profit on his "capital" invested. Ever think of that?

True, to continue the illustration, he has no partnership papers—no contracts legally drawn—but he is in business just the same. And when he has undeniably got to a point where he knows he is not receiving the return on his investment (his skill) that he should, let him take his ability and invest it elsewhere in a business—a job—that promises better income.

So then, remember you are in business without investing real money. Your boss, same as you, is working for someone—that someone is himself. Or, stated another way, he has many "bosses" over him—the clientele of merchants he must serve.

If you are one of these "got-to-have-more-dough" workmen, censoring the boss for his strictness, for his tight fistedness, and wanting to break loose and go in for yourself—if you're one of these fellows, just pause some evening when you're light-heartedly departing for home and perhaps a night's entertainment, just stop and try to put yourself in his place for a minute, to look through his eyes.

When the gong sounds or the whistle blows, so to speak, can he slam the door, too, and forget things behind it? Maybe, yes; but I'm thinking—and it's most probable—no. More than likely he has plenty of business cares

to keep him there a while longer, or to carry home to mull over, and so have his peace of mind disturbed.

Don't lie down on the job that you have, thinking that you would do better in some more responsible position. Would you? *Cou'd* you? There is much food for thought and self searching here. Be sure you are well trained before you attempt to break loose.

These little IDEA-Books are written mostly from a "one-man" shop card writer's viewpoint. No formal chapters, but a storehouse,—a scrap-book of Ideas for your individual needs. They will help the veteran even in the larger studio to earn his wages; to hold down the job.

But my contention is that the small shop is always with us. I call to mind an item in the August "SIGNS of Times", 1930, where it was stated that in Kansas City 20 years before there were six sign shops with three to six or more men each, but at that time 20 years later, mind you, there were less than six employing that many steady—but more than *fifty* of the one-man type.

Hence I write mainly for the one-man shop . . . One-man shops are often best; if much help is hired, there will be found also much worry adjusting mistakes, collecting, rustling up a steady volume of business, and slack periods when all are unavoidably idle and on full expense.

Often the big organization "falls beneath the weight of its own overhead expense," as some writer has put it,—in bad times. They aren't always merrily making money, . . . nossir!

•••

The mental sandpapering on these Ideas has been done; now to commit them to cardboard!



Plate 120—More shapes for everyday problems.

martin's ideas

THAT ambition to "open up a shop"—to have a small studio of his own no doubt is in the mind and heart of many an able worker. With some the goal is so distant and circumstances prevent its realization, but with others the opportunity may make possible the wish into a fact. Many of the leading shops or studios have as owners those who have started as—well, as even delivery boys, away down in the ranks, and climbed steadily up the ladder into higher positions.

Who can cash in on his ability quicker than a card writer? One of my acquaintances started a full-fledged sign shop on \$25. borrowed from the Morris Plan. And it takes even less—it is possible, I mean, though not always wise—for the card studio. Any ambitious lettering student who has three brushes and about as few jars of color, several sheets of cardboard and enough nerve, can get a couple of hundred business cards printed and start in.

One may be almost poverty-stricken, and with the use of large gaily painted panels—a la' World's Fair—cleverly placed, hide the fact from the customers. The famous NRA—that gigantic scheme we are all too familiar with, started in one small room, with literally nothing to begin with—literally nothing. Not even a desk or a chair. It started into action on its feet, not waiting for the office furniture to be brought in.

They say that Henry Ford does not even have a desk. But—the IDEAS in that man's head! . . . So with two sheets of cardboard, several small jars of color, a pen and two brushes, and the "disappointed artist" essays to "open up a shop" as a cardwriter. I have in mind now two young fellows who drifted in here to Florida, rented

a room within sound of radio to keep them pepped up (!) purchased a new carton of cigarettes, and several modern art books, hooked legs around stools and set out to buck the "game". I looked them over, predicted—in my mind—they were due to lose their shirts, and go humbly back to the job. Which they did. If they had had real *Ideas* and—were good salesmen, had fertile brains and a small amount of money mixed therewith, they might have put it over at that. So much depends, so much depends. . . .

So you're really determined to do it? 'Tis not my place to throw cold water on your plans by coldly inquiring: Are you an expert enough workman to run a specialty card shop? Are you a competent enough business man to make it go? Might not some other city be a better field? Etcetera. I take it for granted you have thought hard, done a pile of hard thinking about this matter, and are really resolved to make the final plunge.

It is a good business; I always claim that, no matter how many others argue contrariwise against me. Even in hard times, signs are more popular than in good times. Then is the sign man's harvest. When times are tough merchants want advertising that they can understand, and that their customers or prospective customers can understand. The kind that can be placed where prospects will see when they are prepared to buy and the kind that doesn't cost a fortune even when it is the best to be had.

So there is nothing for one to be disturbed about. One may take the weight off his mind, don't look too far afield to what seem to be greener fields, but start right at his own door step, so to say,—begin a systematic campaign to get profitably located locally.

Additional **Variations in Shapes** ready for use



Plate 121—Achieve, if you can, individuality in your work

martin's ideas

BEFORE too definite steps are taken toward going into business for one's self, the personal equation should be considered. A certain young man bought a small shop, paying for it some hundreds of dollars. Others said: he has been all right as an employee—but how now will he comport himself as an employer? For we knew that if he allowed himself just one drink of wine—to which he was addicted—during business hours, that he was “gone”, as far as work was concerned, for the remainder of the day. No self control. In less than a year's time the unrestrained license to drink—having no authority over him—together with business responsibility and worry, literally put him in an insane asylum.

A merchant came into my little place; he had been getting his work done in the shop across the street; in fact, had just come from there. He said that three fellows were sitting or lolling on the bench tops, the room was blue with layers of smoke, his work was not touched; therefore he got his order off the hook and brought it in to me. Business and drink (on the job I mean) and pernicious or slovenly personal habits do not mix.

My little shop was not, by any means, the finest in the city with regard to business furnishings or equipment, on the contrary, was very modest, but without doubt there was none with a cleaner, neater, or more immaculate workroom in the whole city of Chicago at that time. Anyone coming into the shop smoking, would have such a hesitancy about dropping ashes on the floor that he would generally step outside in the hallway to deposit them, then return to finish the conversation. As one visitor with a twinkle in his eye expressed it, when he was invited to rub his finger on the floor for possible evidence of dust . . . “One could

eat an order of fried eggs right off this floor, it's so clean!”

Never let customers come in and catch you idle—guffawing over some risque joke and catch you on top of the bench. If there comes a little slack period (and the best of shops may have them), and it seems wisest to take advantage of the lull to relax before the next rush, rather than to go out and actively solicit—stir around and clean up the shop; clear out old accumulated debris under the benches; shine up the windows; wipe up the floor; check over the card stock; cut stock ticket sizes; wash out your japan and oil brushes in paint remover and reoil; make fresh samples for the wall display. See that everything you use is actually at your finger-tips, so as to eliminate unnecessary steps. Thus reduce your costs and increase your production and profits.

•••
A YOUNG lady in New York City writes me: “After trying quite a few fields ‘offered’ to women, I hit on the idea that if a person could make good saleable show cards it wouldn't matter how ugly or aged they became—they would still have a place in the scheme of things that couldn't be usurped . . . I started with nothing—no particular talent—but just the ambition to letter, and a dogged determination that come what may, some day I can compete with anyone.”

Bully! Banzai! and Bravo! This young lady has the right idea. Even the royalty of Europe, now so few left on the job, were taught useful trades, as locksmith, etc. This display work can be used as a stepping-stone, or adjunct to some other line of work, if one doesn't elect to stay with it as a trade, indefinitely. For many do not specialize in it, but branch out into broader fields.

•••

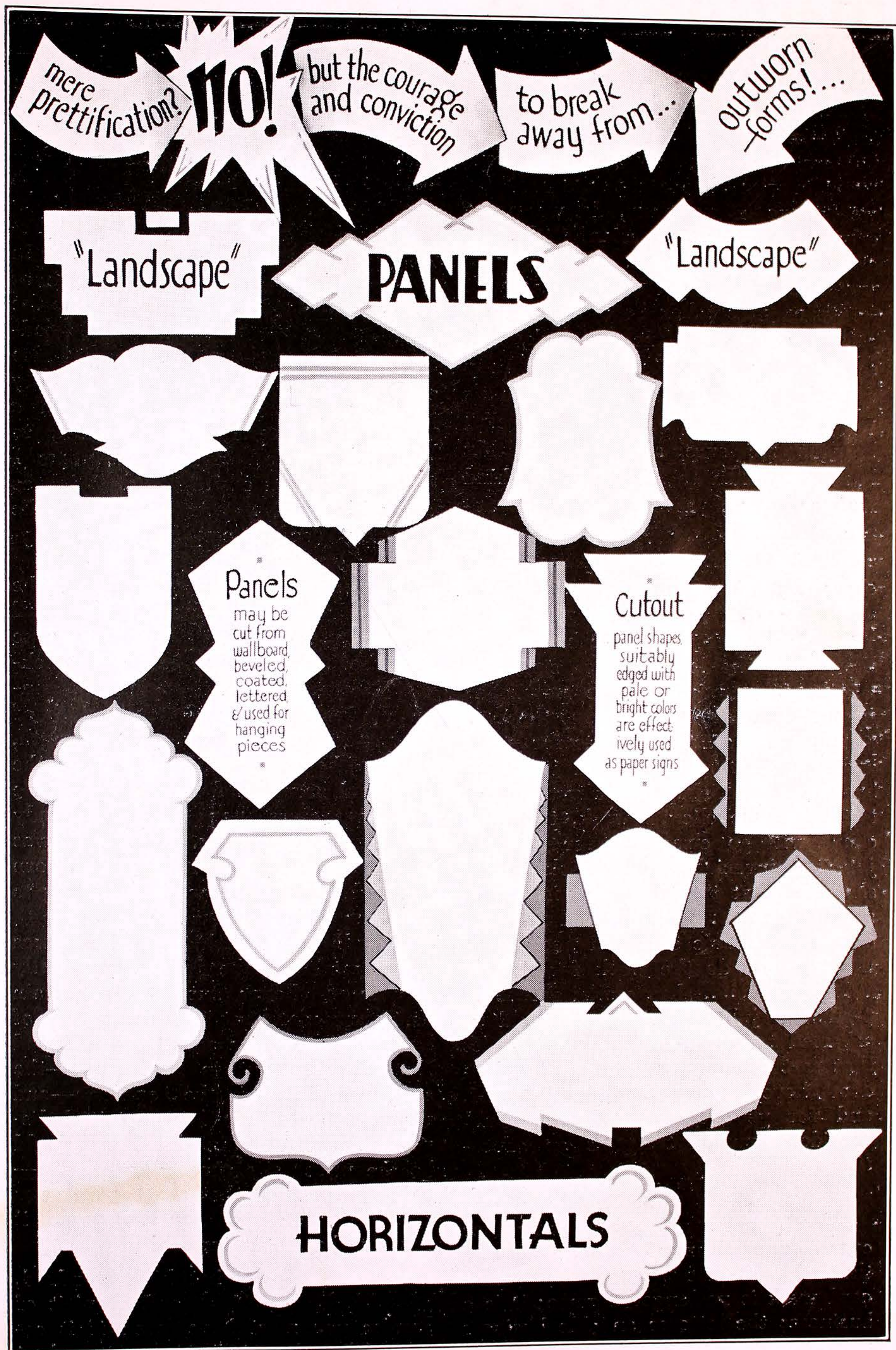


Plate 122—A couple of dozen interesting panel shapes.

martin's ideas

THE "ART of Card Writing"—how fine that phrase sounds—but are we really living up to the expression with all our capabilities? Do we believe in ourselves, do we properly respect our profession? "Knock-out" work degrades it. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well—this may be taken as a pretty good rule. In another line of work, that same principle definitely printed in my advertising and *lived up to*: "What's worth doing is worth doing well," brought me sure success. In that business, when a full week behind with my work, yet conscientiously doing each and every job as well as I could as I went, the customers would cheerfully wait for me to get around to them with my service.

Never do less than your best. One shop that holds to this standard whether the price on the particular job in hand seems to warrant the care or not, retains its customers for years and years. At times when it is too busy (and such shops *are always* busy) to handle the client's work, the merchant will go elsewhere for the one job, but invariably come back to the shop the next trip. (Which is saying something; I myself have had merchants put a sale off for a week till I could get to do the work for them!)

Despise boiler-shop work; refuse to produce a job on which you would be ashamed to put your name; never let that sort of work go out of the shop door; have better respect for yourself, and for your craft—for you should consider yourself truly as an *advertising man*.

The "card writing game" is another current expression. I want to tell you that a change has taken place; display card work is no longer a game; it is a business; the letterer an able business man. A game? Don't play with it;

sincerely live up to it; make it a man's job!

When starting the little studio, I had an unwritten standard in my head, that every job should be right, as absolutely right as I could make it, before it was allowed to go out; that in so doing not only would the piece of work be made an advertisement for the shop, not only would I gain the goodwill of the merchant, but I would also train and benefit *myself* by carefully working out each problem in such a thorough manner. I repeat that, to emphasize it: all through the years I have considered each individual job as a problem in my training, and the merchant (or my employer) was *paying for my training*.

For instance, a newcomer to the neighborhood was opening a small dress shop; it was to be a sale type of store. There were cards and tickets to be made, and two paper streamers 36 inches deep—the full width of the paper—and six feet or so in length, each. They were finished, laid on the floor and scrutinized through the little reducing glass kept always handy right with my brushes. The effect was so unsatisfactory that they were torn up, and I stayed later that evening to do them over.

It will be seen that the front was quite small and the job one generally considered cheap; but it was certain that every merchant in the same line of business for blocks around would read the advertisement in the paper—the announcement of the opening—and would come by to view the initial display. And there in the front would be the paper signs made by Martin—care being taken that my imprint was put boldly on one corner. Would it not also be an ad for me?

That high standard, and a spirit of *service* you must have, even if it occasionally goes against your own best pecuniary interest.

SMITH'S SHOES

\$2.85

PAPER SIGNS
of Varied Shapes

TRANSITION
EFFECTS

GREEN'S JULY SALES

JOHNSTON'S
4th Anniversary
SALE

STORE-WIDE
CLEARANCE

NOW 25% OFF!

TAKE YOUR
CHOICE

ONLY 3 DAYS

FREE

8x10 Photo
of yourself
with each
purchase
of 12
or
more

CARAMEL
PECAN
QUART
BRICK

42¢

CIRCLE
TREATMENT

50¢

PEONIES

39¢
ea.

8th
BIRTHDAY
SALE

8-PIECE
BED ROOM
ENSEMBLE

128. Value!

99

PAPER
SHAPE

ANNUAL

SHIRT

SALE

KRASMY
FACE
POWDER

39¢

Plate 123—"Verily, the old order changeth!"

martin's ideas

AUGUST is an excellent month, or September, to start a card shop, as it allows time for soliciting and promotional "missionary" work, and insures the shop being well under way by the time the Christmas business starts.

Being without previous selling experience, you may be a bit hesitant about the best procedure to follow in building up your business. Now to start and where to go. A fruitful field may lie right around you, profitable to a high degree if rightly developed. A few dozen likely prospects in the immediate locality should be carefully selected, and an intensive preliminary study made of their windows. Then go back to the shop and map out a little sales campaign; determine to canvass each one of these at least twice a month, systematically.

In your solicitation, if new at that sort of thing, remember Franklin's advice to one who was going about with a subscription: "In the first place I advise you to apply to all those who you know will give something; next to those who you are uncertain whether they will give anything or not, and show them the list of those who have given; and lastly, do not neglect those who you are sure will give nothing: for in some of them you may be mistaken". This is excellent advice yet today, and the plan keeps one from being too disheartened at the beginning.

The main thing is to go regularly. One swallow doesn't make a summer. "Accounts are landed . . . by sticking around and getting them used to you." (Somebody else's idea—but pertinent.) Don't become too weather or thermometer conscious. Be bigger than weather. In bad, rainy times when trade is bad, the merchant is always to be found in, with an open ear for business-building ideas; in sunshiny weather when business is good and the storekeeper making money he is not antagonistic toward spending more for good advertising. Again when it's

stewy hot, his sales resistance may be low; forget the perspiration, and put in even more footwork; the law of averages gives the salesman who makes the most calls the most sales. Even if only five calls a day, rain or shine, day in, day out—they surely produce results. Statistics show that out of one hundred salesmen surveyed, forty-eight made one call and quit; twenty-five made two calls and quit; fifteen made three calls and quit; twelve made four calls or more—and the twelve made 80 *per cent* of the sales.

No time for soliciting? Take some forenoon in the early part of the week, and just see how many calls can be made in two hours, otherwise spare time. You'll be surprised and they'll pay!

So every three months at least, make a solicitation, even to the "hard shells",—always with modest courtesy, but never with a pestering attitude. For in your solicitation the merchant should be left in such a frame of mind that you can return and see him again. You can't afford to be fresh, you can't afford to antagonize a single prospect or customer. Carry some good thirsty blotters with you as an excuse to "promote" a bit of sales talk, and maybe they won't turn you down so cold. Not the glazed-on-one-side kind printers urge on you, but *real* blotters that are thick and both sides are usable. You'll find you're welcome.

Next trip, some colorful advertising pencils with your studio name and address stamped thereon; leave one or a couple of these with each merchant, together with a few well chosen words. On the following go-round carry a quantity of telephone pads, printed in *two* colors. By this time they should begin to sit up and take notice—to at least remember who you are.

YOUR larger book (the Red Book) probably sold a thousand dollars worth of cards for me in the last several years. —A. K. ("Cy") Seymour



Plate 124—Paper cutouts "bring home the bacon".

martin's ideas

CLEAR shellac is very useful on the card bench. With dark green, midnight blue or maroon cards, for instance, when used as a loose outline or as an *edge*, or even as a drop shade to the display lettering, it gives depth and richness, without having added another color to the scheme. Water color black, if it were used in the same way, would appear, when dry, dead and dull. Another specific instance: suppose you are lettering with light colors on say, a medium green stock of nondescript character, neither this nor that; your bold display word, or very large exclamation mark, or price figures are to be in orange; outline this with *dark green*, then a broad band of shellac. See it "pop out."

Sometimes in extremely large posters—as theatrical—with larger sizes of lettering a thin outline may be needed to be used to give a sharper effect, but unless this line exceeds a certain thickness it is probably never noticed by the eye, hence not regarded as a line at all, and serves only to accentuate or define the outline more strongly. Shellac is best for this. If in the poster flat simple color masses are enclosed by bold or heavy black lines this becomes a different proposition and the line should then be regarded as another color and taken into account in the color scheme.

Dry white shellac may be dissolved in denatured alcohol, without heat; a saturated solution made of this. Then pour off the clear solution and this latter is just right to spray on card colors as a water-proof protection. Just dampen the board with this home-made "fixitif" using only a nebulous spray. If the solution be made of clean ingredients the card colors will not be injured or discolored.

WATERPROOFING with clear lacquer: Clear lacquer mixed half and half with lacquer thinner and sprayed on, makes

an even better card waterproofing medium than shellac. It seems to dry and disappear without affecting the velvet-like effect of water colors. Rain does not affect it. Delicate lavendars, magentas, etc. stand up better in exposed, light situations when protected with lacquer, as the natural air dampness cannot get to them; for oxygen in the air, strong light, dampness—all very powerfully reduce the brilliancy of colors and fade them (particularly is this true of dampness). In theatrical work such protection is a great advantage. Moreover, if the spray has been applied fairly heavy the old boards can be used over and over without the necessity of washing off the former job.

Lacquering is not supposed to be necessary when using the waterproof poster colors, which are termed sun-proof, and rainproof, very fine for wallboard, cardboard—even paper; some of these hardly crinkle paper when drying; will not "work up", nor chip when applied one over another.

A high-grade absolutely *colorless* lacquer for brushing or spray linoleum in one hour,—is Lowe Bros. Linoleum Lacquer (Water White), costing a bit over a dollar and a half a quart. Use some thinner in this if desired—the *cheapest* grade, not the best grade of thinner, because of the acid this latter contains, which may injure water colors and cause them to "blister". Devoe makes a clear lacquer which is very good; Sears Roebuck have a fairly clear linoleum lacquer, and there are even others; but this first, Lowe's, I especially recommend.

Any place in the world—be it Canada, England, Australia, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, Hawaiian Islands, Cuba, Colombia, South Africa, New Zealand, Mexico, Canal Zone, Dutch West Indies, France, Alaska—to order a *Martin "IDEA-Book"*, just go to your bank and get an *American Dollar bill*—(no Canadian dollar bills and such stuff!—they cost me 20 cents to collect) PRINT your name carefully and plainly—and mail it to "H. C." himself in ORLANDO, FLORIDA, and your book will come right to your work bench.

It's really quite simple to produce such effects

TOYS

GIFTS

Great
Gift Robe Values!
At these low prices
no man need go
without...

Give
Gift Certificates
and let him
do his own
choosing

GIFTS

Suggestion
for
SHADE

The
IDEAL GIFT
is
Footwear
Save here - to
buy other gifts
2nd Floor
The
Gift that
never disappoints

Surprise Gifts
for gentlemen, for
ladies, for children
in these
BARGAIN BOXES

Times
for
the **Motorist**

Letter Here

GIFTS

\$24.50 Value!
ELECTRIC URN SET
7cup urn, creamer,
sugar tray
\$17.50

To Hold
Her Trousseau!
A...
Walnut
Treasure
Chest
Cedar
Lined

Select
from this
Window
...GIFTS
appropriate
beautiful
lasting!

Plate 125—Brand new Ideas for Christmas.

martin's ideas

IN each IDEA-Book issued, no matter what time of year it comes out, will be found always two pages of Christmas ideas. Book One had cards, candle treatments, cutouts; Book Two a full page of cards and a page of cutout Kris Kringles with lettered shape cutouts excellent for projection or literal copying otherwise; Book Three some two dozen cards; this book several cards and many shapes. Eight pages in all!

The reason for Christmas decoration is psychological; it may promote a holiday spirit in the prospect's mind, not that holly borders or Santa Heads in themselves, no matter how finely done, have any selling ability to them. The window may be so highly decorated, so florid itself, that it will be most imperative to have the cards plain; with the reverse—the window plain, more may be done on the card.

What is done *must be simple*—at least to make—if *we* would realize any money on the job. Imagine a workman with any common sense (verily sense is *not* common) making fourteen cutout wreaths with holly leaves painted in full detail . . . I saw it done! Man alive—flat masses with inset lines of darker green perhaps, *big* berries, edge the berries with “fire” flitters and highlight,—you'll have the effect, you get more kick!

Make a jolly pattern of your stars, and have them (the stars themselves) odd, distorted shapes if you wish. Put huge white *spatter* work (effect of snow) over some colors of lettering; where suitable use great animal cutouts against the background in the window—as giraffe, elephant, etc. Such cutout stunts generally fall to the card-writer's lot. Don't shirk from the job; projector is not necessary; “square off” your small picture, and so reproduce accurately to scale.

There is space to describe only several of these plate cutouts. In plate 125, “Tires” is a wallboard cutout

shape, of course. Letters green, cut edges or even topside edge may be a light red, sparkle snow on the lettering below; the base is coated the same red, light enough that black lettering will be well legible.

The large “Gifts” cutout candle was about five feet in height. The lettering was silver flitters topside, with light green cut edges against a red-orange candle. Inner center of flame was orange, outlined corn, outlined cream, all aplikayed on the main body of flame, which was lavender, then medium purple, and midnight blue. The bands of the circular portion were pale turquoise, alternating with gold flitters; separate these by rules of white. The base was first—gold in center, flanked by two of light yellow; the bottom now had turquoise in center, light green each side, red each side of these again, then light lavender touches on each extreme end. We certainly had a flash there, and so simply made.

To the left of “Tires” is a card shape, about as simple as can be, the only tie-in with Christmas being the holly sticker above, yet several identical shapes in a window give the “atmosphere”. A pale green card may be used, edge pale lavender, and mount on dark green or gold. Have a touch of vermilion somewhere on the card—in the berries may be plenty.

In plate 126, “Harponola”: black card, candle ring orange, inside this is white (or *cutout*), flame light red. Vertical rules and leaves are yellow green; berries orange. Lettering may be cream or white. Leaves may be cutout with crinkled metal foil behind, but this is apt to look strained and forced.

“**L**IKE thousands of others, I wish to join the swelling chorus of acclaim, and shout, “YOU'RE THE TOP!” Your first three books were masterpieces, and I am eagerly awaiting the same sparkling material in BOOK FOUR!”

USE...
COLOR

at Christmas till the cards fairly sparkle!

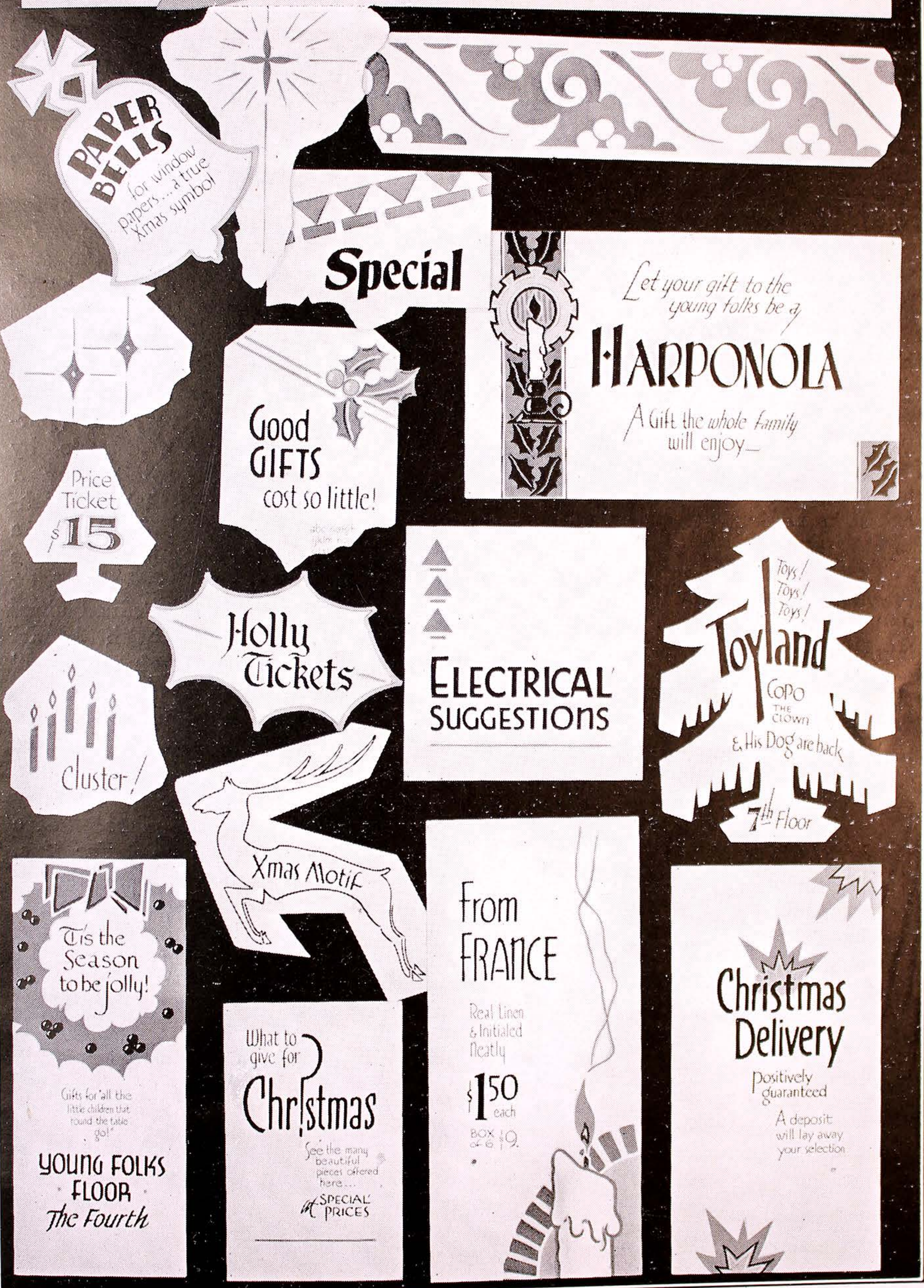


Plate 126—Additional Christmas Card Ideas.

martin's ideas

ADHESIVES: If having difficulty with your water color, perhaps you can do better work if gum arabic or some good standard office muscilage is well stirred into the color; it helps to keep the brush chiseled. Too much gum arabic in colors used to coat wallboard, however, will cause lettering applied over it to "check". *Never use glue*—it gums and clots on the brush; this warning has been given before but needs repeating, as some beginners will overlook it.

And be careful about adding any adhesive to your color till you have experimented with a small amount to see that no chemical change takes place; the binder used in the color may not mix with gum arabic, and a clotty mess be the result. Likewise this holds in mixing two brands of color together.

The new pure white powdered arabic does away with the bother and difficulty of dissolving crystals; it is immediately soluble in hot water; and is, I believe, reasonably so even in cold.

For other purposes you will need *glue* about the shop. The ready prepared glue—Le Page's—if bought in large sizes, as quarts, is reasonable in price and keeps perfectly; home mixed glue sours very easily. *Dextrin*, a product of corn, comes in powdered form and for use is dissolved in water; in appearance, as bought, it is dark like the prepared glue one buys, but it has no odor, and is not apt to spoil. If used fairly thick is very satisfactory. Some use dextrin in color when extra adhesive is required; this is not wise. Use gum arabic muscilage.

The best *cold water paste* comes in long tube-like cans and is simply mixed with cold water into a smooth, transparent paste. Will not sour or thin out when standing. Best for mounting photostats, novelty papers for backgrounds, etc.

Water glass, or sodium silicate, may be bought at paint stores in liquid form and used for nearly every rough purpose as a substitute for glue; it is much cheaper, and seems to stick even better; does not curl badly as does glue after drying; it requires, however, careful weighing. Use it for easels, for affixing cutout letters to wallboard panels, etc. (linoleum paste also for this latter purpose). Never use it for fine cardboards, as it stains the surface in a peculiar manner, even though transparent. Its extreme cheapness as compared to glue outweighs its minor disadvantages.

There are certain rare brands of *rubber cement* that are very fine (particularly "Liquid Patch", made by Locktite Patch Co., Detroit; buy a dozen tubes at a time); there are others that are not worth five cents a bushel basketful for our purposes. The best of all is that made yourself by procuring a quantity of refined sheet rubber and dissolving with benzol (which is simply a "high powered" gasoline). Very quickly, easily done, and you can thus have it as thick or as thin as you desire. To use, as for photos, coat *both* surfaces separately, letting them get first practically dry before pasting down in place. Have a cheap brush kept special for this, which may be left suspended in the solution; don't ruin a \$1.75 red sable (as I have seen done) by putting it in the rubber cement, afterwards expecting it to function as a crack lettering tool.

•••
My imagination takes an idea, polishes it off, relates it to other ideas, puts it thus—new-shaped—to practical application. I am blessed, or cursed, with a photographic mind, that will some day get me into serious legal trouble. I am afraid—that I remember too well thoughts and phrases, even, as well as Ideas, of others.



Plate 127—Hanging wallboard cutouts.

martin's ideas

THESE are interior over-counter cutout designs, typical of the progressive chain stores. Instead of the plainest printed signs for counter designation as "Counter 10—Hardware," more often now is an effort made to create an "atmosphere," in certain departments, at least, with such displays as shown here. Some are suspended or hung from the ceiling, others built up in archway form, on a sort of lattice work or other arrangement, which in turn in itself becomes a merchandise holder, with ingenious shelves incorporated in it.

It is all-important to have a knowledge of good line in planning such designs. These sketches are merest suggestions; lack of space forbids more; it is hoped to show others, and—better, in forthcoming IDEA-Books. These were glimpsed in Savannah, Indianapolis, Chicago. Of course it is understood that I have taken what liberties I wished, in reproducing.

"McCrary's." This was all pale green with darker self-color edges; cutout portions (all edged this light green) had red cellophane with illumination behind. Not the best aesthetically, but a flash. "Cosmetics" was black panel.

"Letters." Gold with blue letters. May be solid panel or cutout. The three diamonds, at least are cutout, with red cellophane behind.

"Perfumes." Small panel above was pale lavender; larger panel was rose magenta or pale pink. Scroll decorative work in gold. "Toiletries" had a purple panel with silver flitt letters; the decorative work was all magenta-pink sprinkled over with silver flitts.

"Cosmetic Dept." A solid circle of lavender, with ribbon of cream; the ends of each ribbon are a light, almost pale green.

"Radios" was an ultramarine blue panel; the top and bottom edges—not ends—had half rounds painted silver. Circle that shows is orange. The

rays—in center above was yellow, flanked each side with pale green, then light blue and magenta.

"Hardware." The center was dark blue, almost a midnight; then ultramarine, so on out to turquoise. The solid circles were yellow with under-"shadows" of orange. Inset line along the top edge only, was silver flitters.

REPORTS have come in that there is a "representative" up Chattanooga way, who has been sneaking around up there with some magazine combination offer—using Martin Books as a bait, as a "draw-on", or some such, and collecting money—then, of course, neglecting to fill the orders for the Martin Books. Don't trust that man around the corner with a postage stamp! He's a crook, and a LIAR, as far as my interests are concerned. Don't ever trust any such cockroach. Only one solicitor has ever been out for Martin—a Miss James who is my typist, and neighbor here, and who was trying to pay her way north by selling Martin IDEA-Books (and she SOLD them, too!) She's all right. So if you ever fall for any such song and dance act as this cockroach's (DE G—something is his name) and the breed, you are just out of luck for your money, that's all. **MARTIN HAS NO REPRESENTATIVES, ABSOLUTELY NONE!**

"H. C." is having to take a rest trip at the present, and his helper, Tod Hodges, is having to carry on until his return. My advice is to keep your eyes open, lock up all the red sables, put away all the books, "H. C." might even be across the street spying on you! And, fellas, whenever you see a bit of "sour" looking lettering, or read a bit of copy that sounds a wee mite lame—well, just be a little lenient on Tod, and sorta skip over it—on to something "H. C." did, himself. When Martin returns, the wheels will turn again on Book Five and "IDEAS" will become BIGGER and BETTER!

—*Tod Hodges*



Plate 128—For Departmental table or counter display signs.

martin's ideas

THE MERCHANT very frequently wants effects such as shown here, as formal window settings, with platforms or ledges on which to display merchandise, or a small manufacturer—coffee blend or tooth paste it may be—may call for built up designs to display his product.

There is no reason on the top side of the green earth why card studios shouldn't get and do this business, with resultant credit and profit for themselves, if at all handy with saw and hammer. Too bad that we have room for only a few. Likewise, if they had been made up any way but sketch form, the reduction would have blurred the detail too much. Not all original with the writer; the "Bond Prices" was, I believe, by McAllen Poster Service, Chicago, exceptionally fine; Maling Bros., below this, also from Chicago, by their own display manager. I was told (am always open for correction); a Tampa display to immediate left of Maling Bros.

A few color notes: the large central display had a panel across the top of ultramarine blue with silver half-rounds on top edge, and as end decorations; massive side columns of orange. These were flanked by side wings of light blue with silver half rounds; platform base black. Central lettered panel—interchangeable, I suppose—was a buff card set back or recessed for night illumination from above just under the top panel. A lower panel of ultramarine blue connected the two side columns.

Maling Bros. (small shoe chain) was very beautiful, using a cutout silver figure. The three tubes silver, having recessed concave cutouts also of silver, lighted from inside below—the center one a beautiful pink glow, blue lights at two sides. The large maincenter panel soft light yellow, flanked by three transition greens. Lettering cutout silver flitters, cut edges green.

To the left of this is a built up dis-

play with main area of silver, recessed, with several planes below of light blues back to the main inner panel of ultramarine—which to further elaborate the effect has a black aplikay panel of on which the lettering is placed. The base is black. The half rounds at lower right are silver; the tubes to left are silver, or may be black with gloss finish. Such an effect of silver, blues and black will require some warm treatment in lettering.

To right of Maling display is one with arched panel of midnight blue, hairline inset of ultramarine. Turquoise cutout letters, silver flitt inline for the lettering; with recessed part silver; lettered arch flanked by silver, then turquoise side "drops." Suggestive only: changeable to magenta and silver, black and vermilion, gold and black, gold and vermilion, et cetera.

The REK design was an enamel display in Chicago. Very outstanding color treatment and best of design; perfect! Center upright element was vermilion with yellow lettering; note how massive and thick this was built. Across was a panel of white with black lettering. Flanking this was silver, then black, then the quarter circle elements in blues. A few touches of green would seem necessary for eye satisfaction, even if only an inline on the letters REK, or on each side in the quarter circles.



PLEASE—friends when you write us down here, would you slip a pretty blue stamp into your letter; we always try to answer every letter—every purchaser of a Martin Book we consider a personal friend and must be answered. (About one in one thousand is exceptional enough to think of enclosing a stamp) . . . "Oh, yes, you're rich, Martin."—you say, "selling all those little books at one dollar each." "Oh, am I? I'm several thousands in debt right now on these books—no car—no radio—two "shows" in about the last four or five years—I pay about \$2 a month for a tiny office—and my monthly postal bill—! Have a heart, and send a blue stamp.—"H. C."

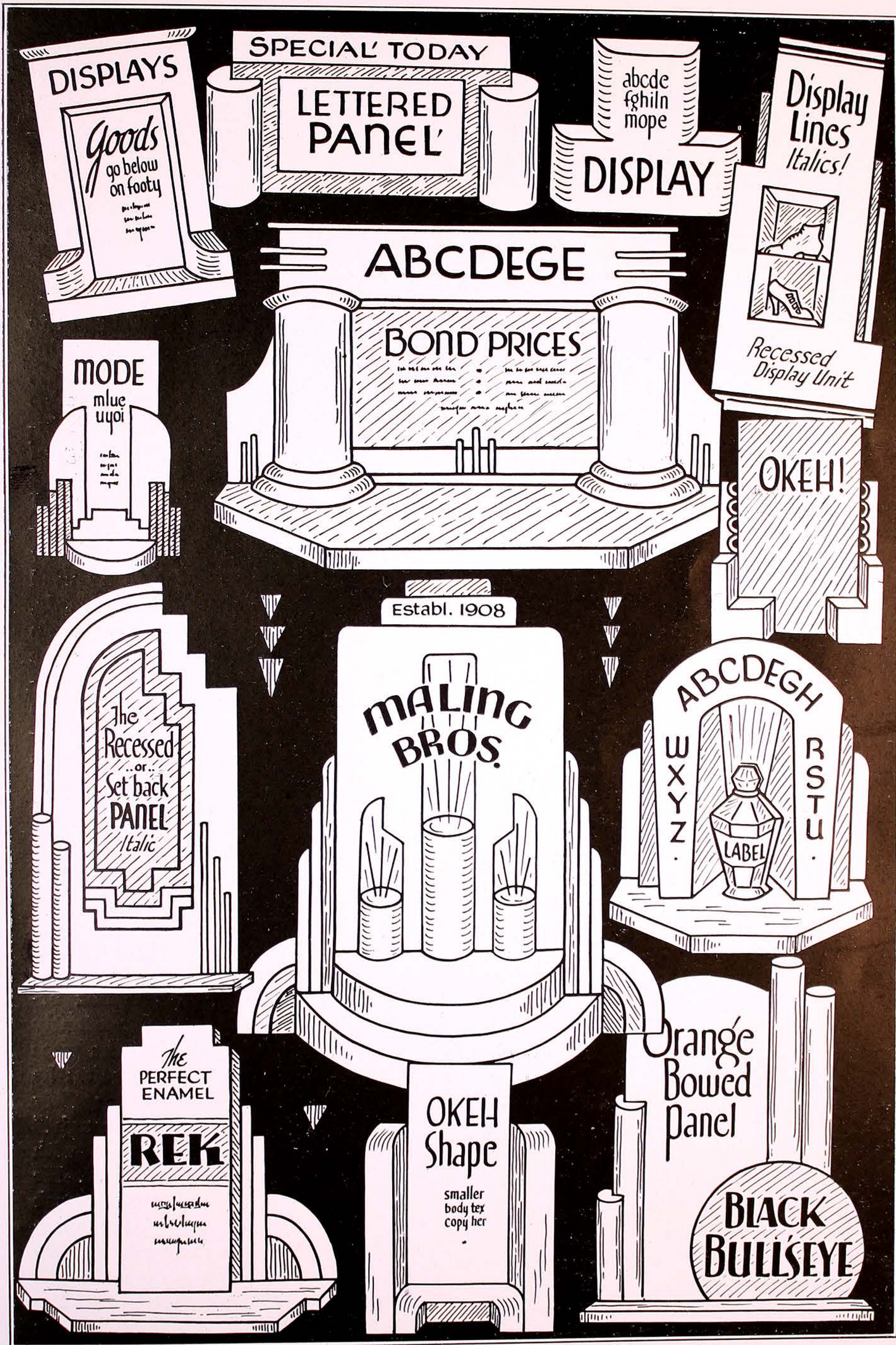


Plate 129—The cardshop often is required to build such effects.

martin's ideas

WHILE a firm believer in originality, I think the untrained man would better stick to simple layouts for a time, as worked out by others more experienced. To develop this sense it will be found useful study to sit down with pad and pencil and "play" with layouts, making miniature designs of cards, modeling after others' work. Procure a large size, but cheap, note book; first sketch and draft your layout designs with very soft pencil; then go over these with India ink. Finally erase all pencil groundwork lines. Later you may wish to work these out into a better book perhaps—in loose leaf form, with binder.

Let me describe, just here, a little layout training method of my own origination, used some years ago. Each week two copies of the Saturday Evening Post magazine were purchased from the news stand by my wife, and before I had seen them, one was gone over and ads suitable for the test selected and clipped. The illustration was cut out as one element, the trade name or "logotype" as another, the various copy masses as other elements; the feature display lines, however, and any secondary display and the firm name, were written out in long hand, so as to conceal from me the key to the original arrangement. Then the size of ad was specified, and I arranged these elements as I thought best, and pasted them on a dummy page, "roughing in" the display and other lettering lines. This completed layout was afterward compared with the same ad in the uncut copy of the Post.

Again, newspapers or magazine ads may be selected for good arrangement but not removed, and with a soft, broad-lead carpenter's pencil or with black "grease" pencil, the copy masses and display lines may be squared off and roughly shaded over to give

a tone. View these blocked-over ads through the reducing glass, the magazine on the floor at your feet, to see how the advertising man balanced his elements in the layout. It must be emphasized that as far as possible, these examples should be of the very best.

If you have already begun to practice making cards, place your finished efforts a short distance away, perhaps in a poor light, and examine them through this reducing or diminishing glass, not with any feeling of smug satisfaction, but with the most harsh, critical, and analytical eye. I once coaxed from various store proprietors and one drug store window display man a number of already used half sheet and full sheet display cards, which, as practical examples to train my eye, I put up around all over the walls, in my bedroom (and also practice workroom) at home. A workman sent by the landlord to clean the wallpaper, looking over the various rooms before commencing operations, fell back in amazement before the "art gallery" which burst on his sight when my door was opened!

THERE is something a little odd, not to say illogical, even unreasonable about the merchant's attitude toward the cardman. He will go to the box office of the theatre and wait patiently his turn to purchase tickets; he goes to the postoffice, there too he waits; he can't brush aside others, saying "My time is valuable, rush me through!" But when he goes to the studio with his piece of flea-bitten copy . . . He demands SERVICE! He must push ahead of all others; he ignores those waiting as if his was the most important store in town. He wants his job out right away. He wants "something different!" What a trade this is. . .





Plate 130—Identical copy in seven different layouts.

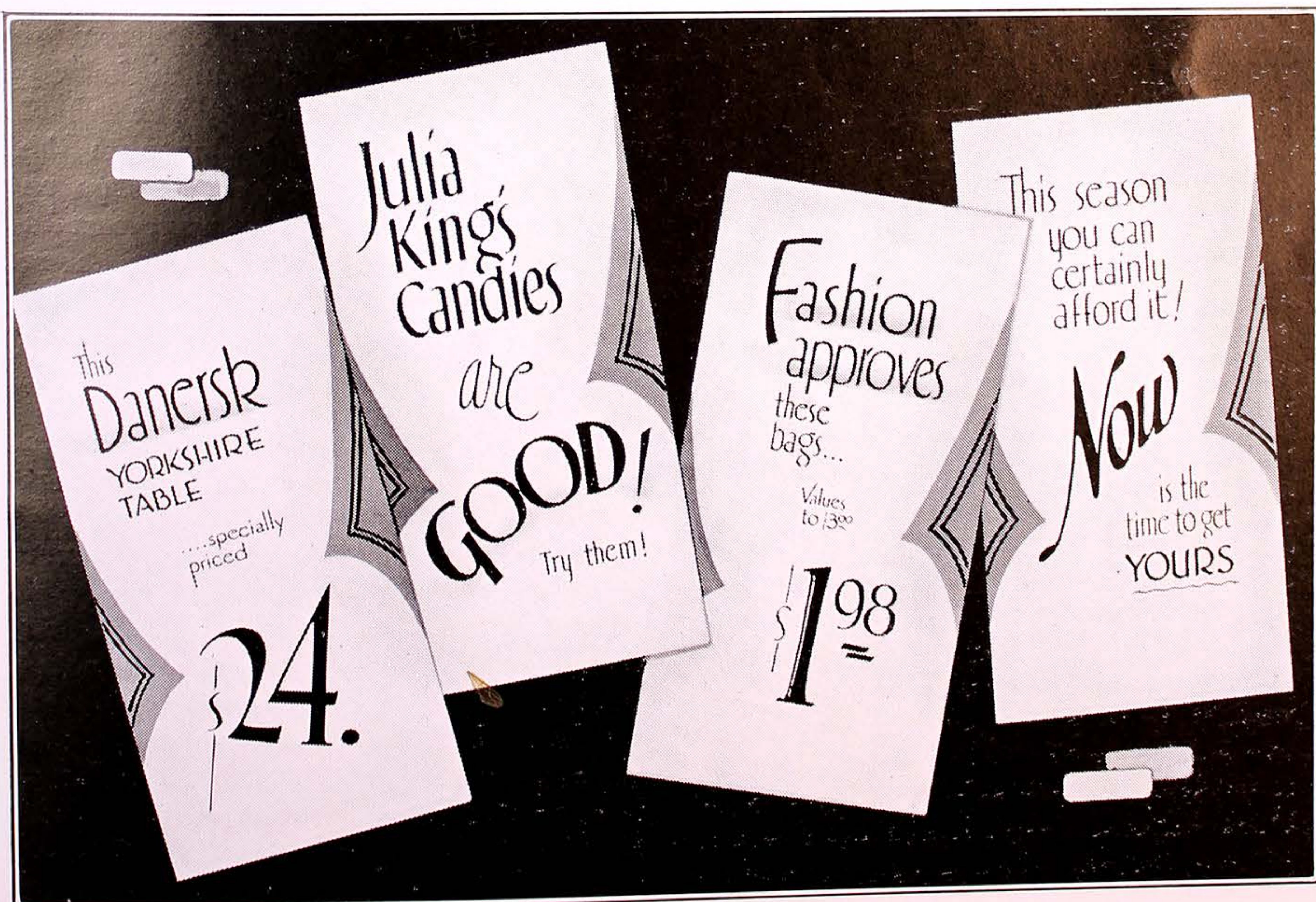


Plate 131—Four copy changes, using one given layout.

martin's ideas

A GOOD drill in layout is to observe carefully a chosen card seen in a window—photograph it on the brain, so to speak. That evening at home reproduce it, as accurately in miniature (say 5x7 in. size, in the same colors) as can be. (It is presumed that you will have a full set of small jars of color and a great number of these 5x7 cards, ready cut, in all the colored matboard stock.) Next morning pass by again and compare. On going home again in the evening, take up your little dummy and see what's wrong. Hogarth, the painter, would pencil on his thumbnail a striking face in a crowd that he wished to preserve. Look squarely at things; make a mental picture of them. An effect once absorbed can be reproduced to your mind's eye, giving you thus an inexhaustible storehouse to draw from.

The writer in the beginning of his training made approximately 150 of these small cards, in full color, and firmly believes that such a set, worked out faithfully from good examples, will prove of incalculable benefit. Some years later, during a period while incapacitated for active work at the bench, he went even further and made up 1600 in smaller size—less than half—in high color, from notes, and found it to be, as before, as good as a "course" in the work.

An ambitious Bohemian—a coffee roaster in the "old country"—determined in this land of his adoption to become a window trimmer and display card letterer. He worked on a "hack" job during the day, and certain nights each week he walked the streets with a keen eye and a note book, observing the manner of window dressing. Every Tuesday night he traversed one prominent "White Way" thoroughfare, making copious notes as he went, Wednesday night another, Thursday night still another—regular routes. For this he was fortunate to have the advantage

of the large city, being in Chicago. His was a case of what Wm. Hugh Gordon calls being "eye-minded".

Using the cheap, blank order books with 7x12 inch page, costing around twenty cents, paste in them samples of extra good and modern lettering, certain definite styles, as seen in newspapers and magazines. This, well studied, and the various examples worked out with brush at the bench into good layouts taken from a book of such layouts, may be about all the "course" one needs—certainly better than spending \$75 to \$125 or so for schooling. Direct contact with the teacher in the school is undoubtedly the most excellent method of training; the foregoing remarks have been directed mainly to the ones who must watch the little economies of time and money, who from necessity for thrift, often may better invest a little on shoe leather and note books, and follow the example of the Bohemian. Quite frequently the man who benefits from a course would have had as much or more benefit from the same amount of time and effort applied in a homely way as I have suggested. The school method may put the beginner in the right way; if he will now just go on and grow and develop—always careful to avoid the rut of commonplaceness, of routine, of being content to produce the same stale stuff month in, month out.

•••

Thousands of cardwriters have real Ideas that would help them make more money, but if not noted down at once scamper away and are gone. Always carry in your vest pocket a stub of pencil and several bits of blank cards for notations (I have written in the palm of my hand!) I have made thousands of such notations—just a scratch to keep the Idea alive, so that it does not escape, till I can get home and file it for later use.

•••

Restaurant
PAPER SIGNS

Pork Chops

sherbetsm
much mores
leads ridem

30

**CLUB
BREAKFAST**

letbony need not
be sdeewt doom
wreck htiw rstus

15¢

SPECIAL

BOLD
Restaurant

40

**Club
Steak**

saw ands
praha san
styles

30

SPECIAL

LUNCH

Small copy goes here
keep it neat abc wrst
Schiaperella breasted
one mtualsm

50¢

SPECIAL
FRIED SPRINGS

eubl akm
sserd raigh
noit nton yvai

25¢

35¢ LUNCH

smaller
lettering goes
in circles

also small
copies

Sandwiches

central wx
executive
parentage

15¢

Special
"BLUE
PLATE"
LUNCH
TODAY

35¢

Plate 132—A distinctive type of restaurant paper signs.

martin's ideas

SOME years ago, while taking a short course in lettering for reproduction, in art school, I was preparing, in conjunction with a dear little old lady who had spent her life teaching art, a memorial presentation book illumed on parchment. When she was told of my inclination to get into display card work, her eyes lit up, and she urged me to make the most of the opportunity; to apply all art possible in the new work; to endeavor to "do my bit" with well designed lettering in elevating some small phase of it.

A short time later, one of America's foremost lettering and type designers, in Chicago, in a conversation urged on me the same bounden duty, to respect the possibilities in display card advertising and not to prostitute my ideals by stooping to some of the atrocities even then all too common.

Alas, Martin—how hast thou changed! In the thick of it with the rest of them—high art flown to the winds! Is it "Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis"? (as the Latin has it: The times are changed and we are changed with them.) Or as another writer says:

"Change not? Why all the world's
agog for change,
'Twas constant change that built
up this fair world!"

I confess to being for awhile in a state of bewilderment myself. What was the use, I queried, of spending years trying to make good *readable* letters—suddenly to learn that it was all a mistake!

I refer, of course, to the modernistic whirlwind that had struck the lettering craft no less than other arts. True, the tenor and tempo of the times demand more than the moderate degree of artistic accomplishment in conventional lettering which was once sufficient. We are in a period of more sophistication in all the graphic arts. Yet the craftsman with a true love for let-

tering will almost literally wince at some of the bastard or mock forms of lettering that have recently been in use—and still are today, many of them—over-zealous attempts to be modernistic.

Why is there any need to go beyond the bounds of all moderation and good taste? Why deliberately try to make letters "so ugly they can't be missed"—which seems to be the ruling principle, almost, upon which much of it is based? Why be eccentric to the extreme? Why all this acrobatic jugglery? Some one, in condemning certain modern advertising and layout, cleverly describes it as "chop suey for breakfast instead of the conventional breakfast food and eggs."

Women are surely sensitive to such burlesque stuff in lettering on window cards. If it be true that women influence the buying to so great an extent (90% it is said), why not then endeavor to attract women? Some assert that the feminine public is not letter-conscious, yet one of that same dear public when shown an advertisement done in modern monstrosity, makes a grimace and declares to me that she never attempts to read such ugly display stuff.

Rival studios are all trying to outdo each other with tricky technique and freakish creations of all sorts. This habit of lettering at too dangerous angles, up hill and down hill and around the mulberry bush, of grotesque layout gymnastics, of weird antics and acrobatics, tain't right.

Such antics may be likened to the red hot sauces, spices and dressings crowded on the short-order lunch counter—one's work (same as the food) may be quite ordinary, but by means of a few acrobatics one can divert attention from his poor lettering. It is easy to make a loud noise and raise a lot of dust.



BOLD, SMASH
Poster-Style Roman

a b c d e f
g h i j k
m n p

r s t w l
u x o v
y q z

BOLD...SMASH
POSTER-STYLE ROMAN

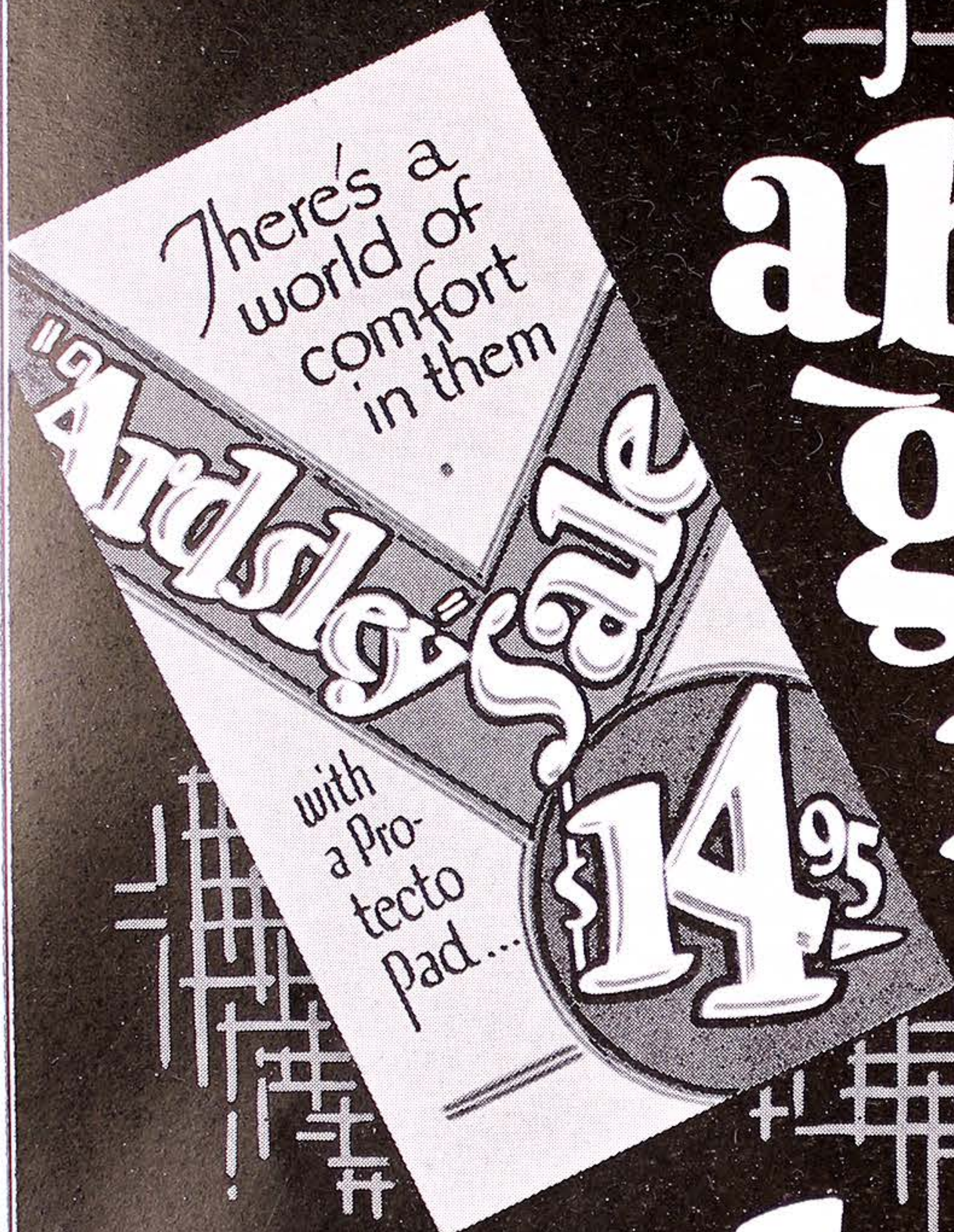


Plate 133—Free-and-easy modern poster Roman.

martin's ideas

WE MAY go only just about so far without hurt. To take occasional liberties and depart from orthodoxy is all right; but "enough is enough", and too far soon becomes absurdity. If we will but be honest with ourselves, we must admit that much of the modern lettering is ugly, and disfigures instead of enhances the card message. Many of the poster letters in use have qualities of simplicity, directness, and vigor that make them admirable. But I decry the invention of mock forms of modernity; rather, preferring the artistic arrangement of a simple, existing forms—clean, bold, striking effects than can be obtained through normal letters.

The same impulses that have brought on this present upheaval in the arts have been probably only dormant or suppressed throughout the centuries, with but sporadic outcroppings here and there. A case in point is shown in the rampant decoration and overflow of almost animal spirits indulged in by the o'd monks in their missal illumination

With all the yapping about this new modernism, is it then so new and up-to-date? In an o'd, o'd book of type faces, a book issued by the DeVinne Type Foundry, the writer has seen many of the so-called "modern" letters. Again, pen flourishes were in great vogue a hundred years ago, in the early nineteenth century—yet they were revived for a time, foisted upon us and dubbed "modern". In short, "modernism" is not new—it has always been. It is a mouth-filling word, but really means little.

The designers of modern lettering today have much less originality than appears on the surface; what is meant, rather, by the term an "original" alphabet, is that it partakes of the individual designer's own character, the same as does his handwriting. The most "original" letters may be traced with the keen eye of the student of

historical forms, back to fundamental alphabets of long ago. Often the sad, garbled messes evolved contain inconsistencies of the rankest sort.

Let us, rather combine common sense and enthusiasm so that they pass for originality. I might as well be frank . . . I admit often just "doing stunts" . . . many things not exactly fundamentals. So many readers are seeking such stuff.

I believe, with others, that in our work "traditional" design will probably be in as good taste in 1950 as today; the more pronounced "moderne" earmarks will have all disappeared.

An example of harking back to times of antiquity is seen in certain of the sans-serif or spurless forms, which are merely adaptations of the early Greek letter forms. In some of the designs even the rough, inherent stone-cut characteristics of the inscriptions have been copied; in others the letters are so bare as to look positively naked. In passing, one thing at least, may be said for them—the sans-serif forms—that whatever merit they may possess must depend on intrinsic shape rather than on tawdry ornamentation or on froth of decoration.

Radically new forms are very difficult to develop, having been definitely fixed long before our time; therefore resort is had to distortion of old forms. And here is where the lover of true, sincere lettering must almost "hold up his hands in holy horror".

•••
DELORO Lotion . . . DORO Cream!

No formula—no, but the address where to get them in bulk, or ready put up, with or without your own label, copy for label, and a selling circular, and suggestions for introducing. This is entirely different in every way from the OZO and Vonite copy.

Send "two bits"—as we say down south—(25c), and I'll mail the "dope".
"H. C."

These two alphabets illustrate what may be done with a jar of color, and a few "cat hairs" on the end of a stick ...

Strange Bedfellows/

A B C D E F G H J
 K L M N O
 P Q R S W
 U V X Y Y

Modern
 Thick-and-Thin,
Blood cousin to
 "BROADWAY"

1 2 3 4 5 6 ¢/\$
 7 8 9 & X

Below....
 An easy-to-read,
 rapid, lower-case Text,
 or "Old English" letter.

a b c d e f g h i k m
 o p r s t y u w y m

Plate 134—Two strongly contrasting alphabet forms.

martin's ideas

WHEN revisiting a small city, where formerly I lived and worked, to see a card and sign man, an old acquaintance. His shop was in a poor location—in the first place; one went bumping up ill-lighted stairs, and the first thing that struck the sight on coming on an eye-level with his open door at the top of the flight of stairs was a pile of trash in the center of the room that was all but garbage. An enormous, old-fashioned padded leather arm chair, of the vintage of twenty-five years back, dominated the shop like a throne. More trash was all about the cast iron, pot bellied, "railroad" stove. He ensconced himself in the throne chair and talked of the business in this strain—"that there was no business, for it had entirely gone to the demnition bow-wows," and so on, ad manseum.

He had long wanted to get into something more along the line of art. "Now Martin," said he: "if you had it to do over wouldn't you choose some higher type of art work?" The answer was plainly No! Was there "higher work"? that, moreover I was proud of my work—would be of any work, in fact, if only a vendor of second hand clothing. But that he should be ashamed of his attitude toward his chosen work, ashamed of that pile of dire, ashamed of those filthy windows . . . But enough! Let us hope that we are getting out of the era of such backstairs, up-alley, rat-hole sign shops.

Merchants most surely notice and take account of all these things; they are shrewd enough to have succeeded well in business themselves, and while according us some modicum of ability as artist, must look down on us in other ways. It should not be so. The merchant should be educated to consider us not as beggars for bits of jobs, but as craftsmen with sound professional knowledge of advertising; not as long haired artist chaps, but as solid business men.

Have respect for your profession, if you wish the merchant likewise to do so. The building need not be expensive, so modern, fireproof,—neither should it be rattle trap, of outdated architecture and unsightly entrance, tenanted by fly-by-night business concerns, bookmakers, racketeers, and the like.

You should consider first, the advisability of being right in the neighborhood from which you expect to draw trade. There is a special advantage, a real money value in this. To get business—go where business *is*! The biggest department store in your city undoubtedly would be more noticed if it were set three miles out in the open country, away from the city, but it certainly would not be as successful. So with our work; looking at it from a matter-of-fact dollars and cents viewpoint, considering the *delivered-to-merchant* cost, should show you that being in the heart of the immediate neighborhood from which your trade is drawn, is best. The mere matter of a few dollars cheaper rent is not to be considered.

It is unwise to locate up an alley simply to save several dollars a month. One man going into this work, rented part of a basement in an apartment house, on a side street, because he could get it for several dollars a month. On a side street, and with a side entrance; a sign on the door "Beware of the dog!" And at certain times of the week there was steamy laundry work being done at the other end of the premises. Such folly!

Have you a good street location with plate glass frontage? How valuable it may be. Note how even the smallest watch repair man, who also sells a few trinkets, necklaces and what not—all too rarely probably—yet dresses and "undresses" his window *every day*. It is his sample case, he keeps it alive, changing. Why not also the sign man? Does one shop in 500 do it. NO! Why not?



Plate 135—Cardmen, as well as sign men, profit by these.

martin's ideas

THESE two plates, 135 and 136, show some excellent sign designs picked up from Miami to Chicago, and points between, together with several of my own. Some were painted, as the "Sam Caldwell" (Cincinnati), others neon, as "Dinty Moore" (Chicago), and still others standard enamel type, as "Blue Lantern" (Richmond, Ind.). Several I suspect, as the three "Selig" signs (from Nashville and Louisville), to be originally from stock electrical designs published in some book of that nature; if so, let me explain that I sketched them outdoors on the spot, having never seen them between book covers, and so plead not guilty to plagiarism.

The "Sam Caldwell" example was bold, talking white lettering on dark green panels, the "Sign" half circle edged with emerald green; flanking this latter were short orange panels, as was also the center above the long narrow panel. All else was cream or buff. Very good design and color treatment.

"Outdoor" was midnight blue with moulding, all around of silver. Lettering may be gold wood letters, or tan or cream painted—Decorative spots orange and bright green. (You sign men will smile at a cardwriter's way of describing a sign!)

"Drugs," dark blue main panel, light blue panel below with white letters, also bright blue around main panel. The "kick" was in the color spot which was a broad outer circle of orange, then blue and black and, I believe, orange again.

"Dinty Moore" (neon), orange lettering, blue outline shape design. That panel is a dandy! "Fox"; let's put "Fox" in red-orange, "Money to Loan" blue, likewise the curved portion over "Fox," the main part of border in green. That'll make a very "foxy" color effect in neon, too!

"\$ Cleaners." A rich primrose edged

tan or gold, the lettering dark brown, or gold edged dark brown. The dollar mark gold edged brown.

Plate 135. "Blue Lantern"; one of the most perfect signs it has been my good fortune to see in many moons. Dark blue with two glass blue lanterns *built out* from the face of the design and well illuminated from inside. You couldn't miss seeing it on any street. Bravo!

"Drugs" was yellow main portion of sign, with dark blue letters. Lower portion was orange with dark red design on. Above this orange base part was a loose, or "inset" bold white line, also on the top side. This was very fine, strong effect—it carried!

"Smith" was by Sims Sign Co., Tampa—a window design. Some sort of gold background (smile, sign painters), sprocket wheel gold and black, flanking wings were vermilion and black, also on bottom edge were bold vermilion and black bands. Exceptional design and color.

Card writers, here's how to adapt these ideas: take "Falk," use a buff panel, edging it white with inset hairline of orange, dark brown lettering. "Falk" is cutout letters with silver flitters, may be edged on top side and cut edge, at least, with cool light blue, or—orange.

"Murray's," next to this, was all black, with vermilion letters, panels being edged with raised moulding, or as I would describe them—half rounds—of silver. At left and above the "Beaute" panel were decorative touches of greens. This was in Cincinnati, from Stanfield-Lewis Studio, I believe. Thanks!

As cardwriters we cannot ignore such signs; they are worthy of study. Adapt them whenever possible, just as sign men borrow ideas from us for their own line of work.





Plate 136—Good design in these outdoor signs.

martin's ideas

WE ALL like a peep into the other fellow's studio. The writer has crowded onto the accompanying plate floor plans of three shops where he has worked, but there is page space to describe only one in detail, that at upper left.

As you stepped from the elevator in this absolutely modern office building and glanced to the right, there appeared a ground glass door neatly, not flamboyantly, inscribed: "COMMERCIAL LETTERING. John Smith,—Specialist in Lettering for Advertising, Posters, Display Cards, etc."

Two red leather overstuffed chairs, a deep-piled rug, filing cabinets, a modern flat glass-topped desk, a swing-frame display arrangement for samples, typewriter, and other accessories were the furnishings of the office. Yet it was just about large enough to turn around in! The whole room, from which this office was partitioned off, was little over 10x20 feet! It was necessary to enter the workroom proper by a side door around the corner in the hallway.

Small as this workroom was, in addition to the card bench, there was a 5x10 foot table provided for, suitable for paper streamer work; and ingeniously arranged under it, orderly racks for fully 3000 or more 28x44 sheets of card stock—all placed flat to prevent warping. Every last smidgen of scrap was kept cut to stock sizes as price tickets (it was generally difficult to find anything for palettes!)

The customer could absolutely not see the progress of the work, not of his competitor's work being planned and put through the shop. This may be made a fine talking point—that the studio arrangement is such that nobody can find out—no outsider see the work in hand: that the first anyone will know of the piece of publicity will be when it is flashed in the merchant's window. (Leaks often thus occur through lack of privacy.) But still the waiting customer could easily converse through the partition. Little did he realize that the proprietor

might run out of a color and be necessitated to slip the shop boy out the side way with instructions to run like sixty and fetch another jar from the supply store, in order to finish the job in hand for which the customer waited! It is not wise to deliberately choose such cramped quarters, but I have gone into detail to show what can be done if forced to it.

●●●
IN some shops the scheme to prevent customers from getting in and tenderfoot and breathing down one's neck! In the one just described, the workman is not seen, but can hear and be heard easily through the partition. The only way the customer knows to get in is to climb up over the desk!

In the plan below this, the proprietor may keep right on working, can see and talk to the customer yet loses no time. He has only to reach out to get the phone; only to make a half turn to put finished work behind him to dry. With the long workroom plan shown (right) the customer can neither get in or see in. The pen drawing of cardmen at work shown in Book Three was of the extreme end of this studio. Highest efficiency here, too.

The work bench should have light, be kept neat,—have shelving for all accessories; good air (not drying drafts); warmth; quiet. Brushes, handily arranged; pens, each in permanent holder; shears and cutter; art gum, pencils, lacquer, flitters, glue, weights (wrapped bricks), cutawl. Never start to work in the morning till colors are all checked over, bench cleaned and dusted, the whole place cleared up and swept, fresh water brought, and plenty of palettes. Have a good variety of cardboard stock on hand, heavy ply. You must have good colors—snappy, easy-working clean colors to letter with; kept always in A-1 condition ready to dip a brush into; good variety, well placed, only several inches away. You must be master of layout if speed is to be made; should of course have reference books on these, for emergency shapes, etc.

THREE ACTUAL STUDIO FLOOR PLANS

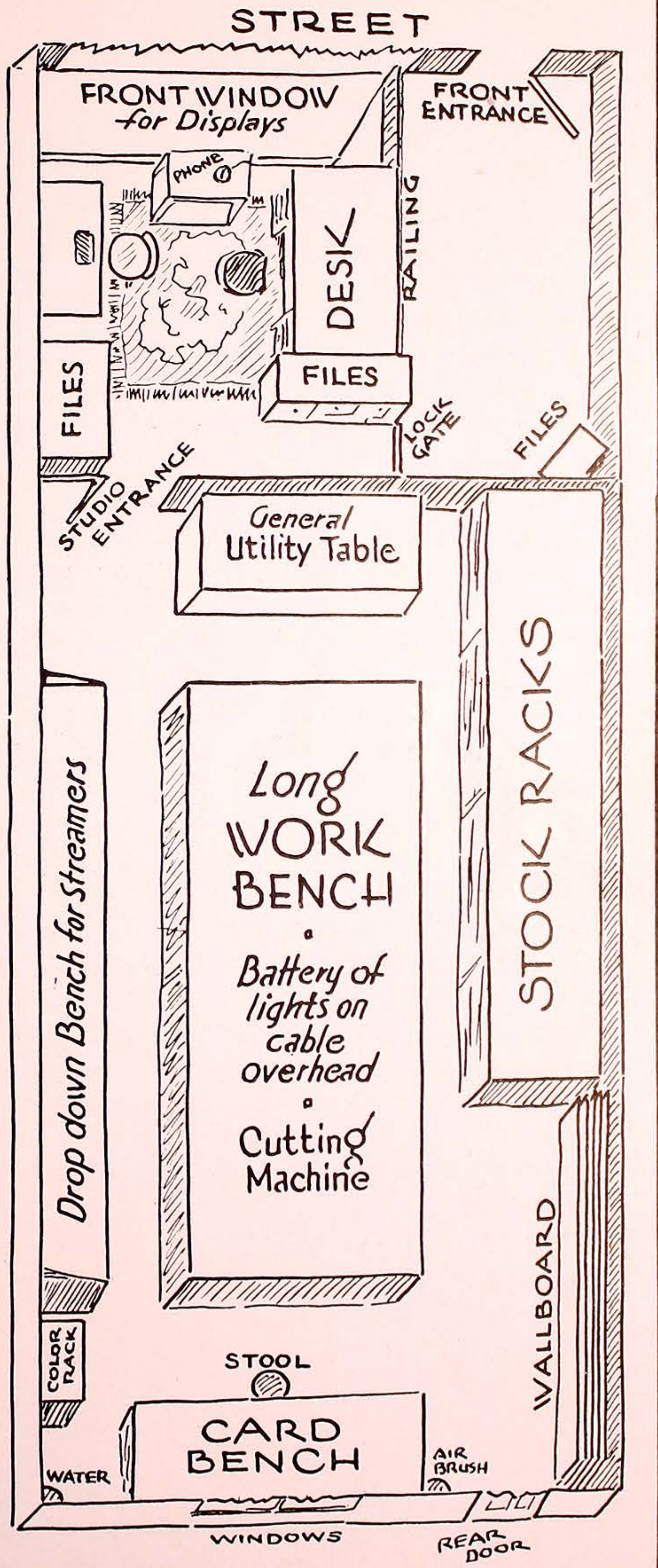
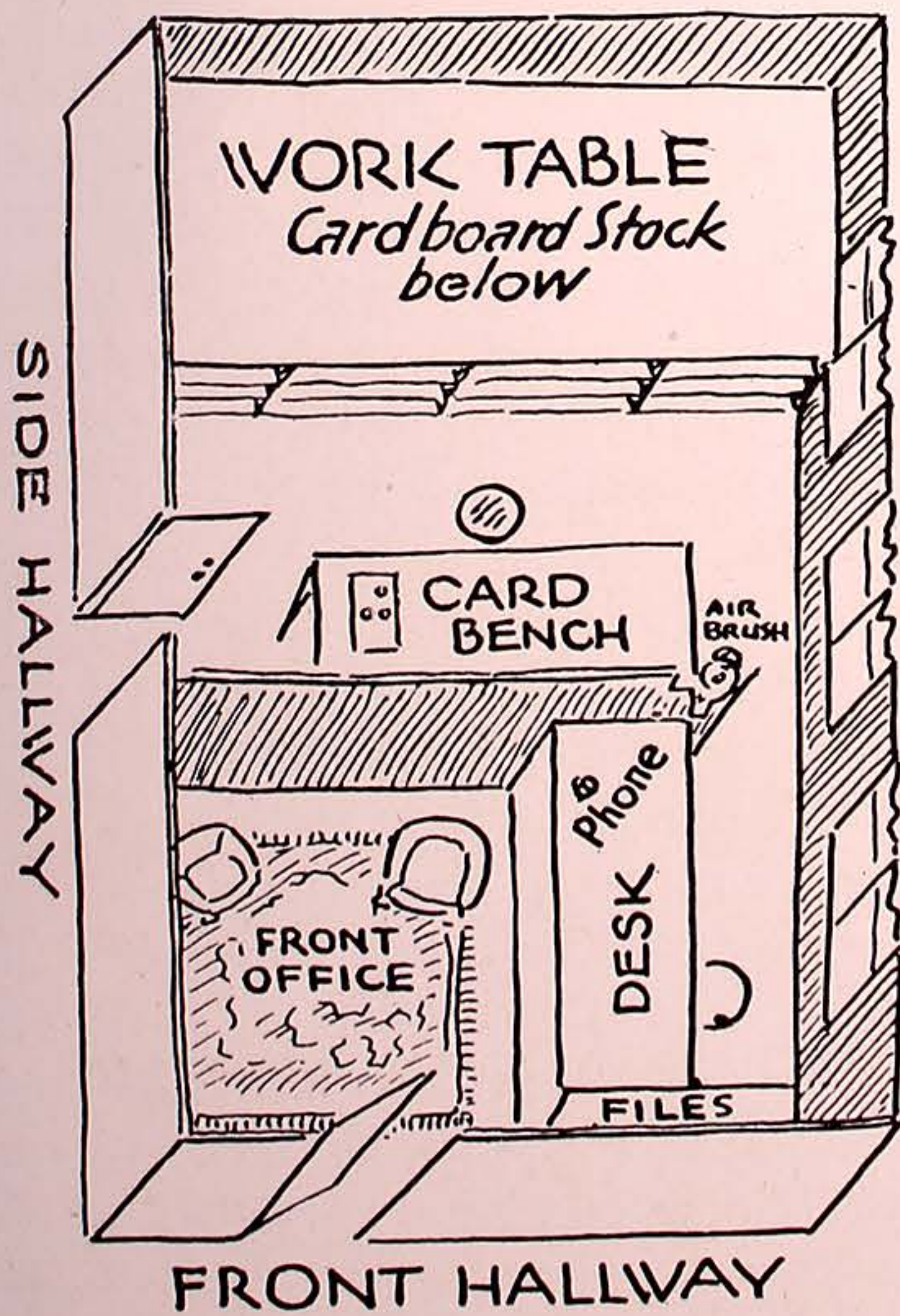
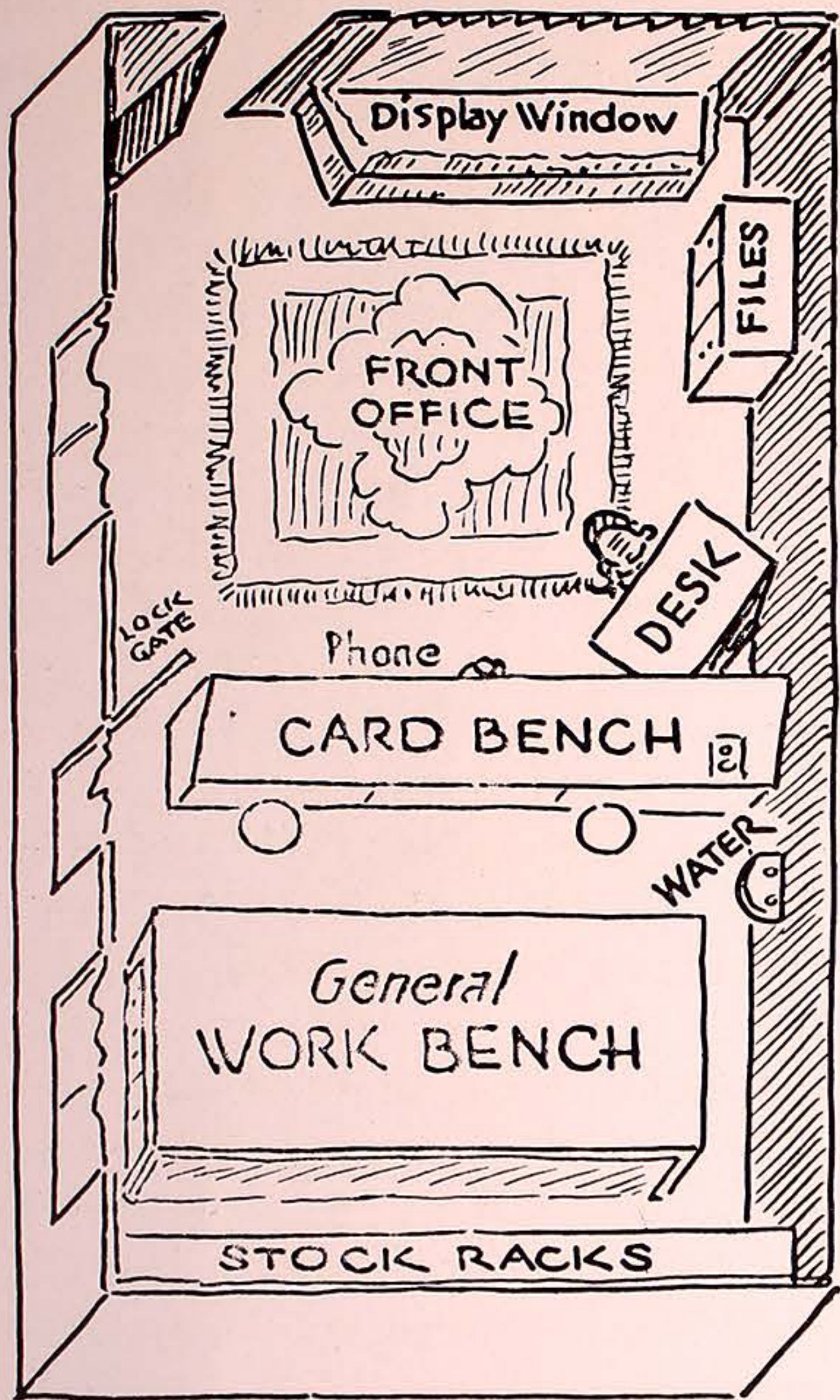


Plate 137—Study these actual studio arrangements.

martin's ideas

IN Book Three of IDEAS was given the bare bones of suggestions for marketing a hand cleaning soap and also a washing powder, well illustrated with Ideas for poster cards to advertise these. Formulas, working plans, etc. were offered at a nominal price. You see ads of advertisers who have amazing offers, apparently guaranteeing you against loss, of "wildfire" sellers, to be made up and bottled at home from powder concentrates—auto polish, hair shampoo, liniment, etcetera,—things worked to death generally. Personally I dislike to dabble in anything outside of my chosen work of IDEA-Books, and value my reputation for integrity and honest dealing too much to get tangled up with anything that is not right, open and "above board."

Here are two pages of modern cards when a merchant or manufacturer comes to you seeking ideas to promote the sale of a beauty product or similar feminine merchandise. It's possible to work these layout Ideas into most anything (except mebbe beer!)—jewelry, clothing, even furniture.

I would advise sign men to keep their clumsy feet out of such promotion for themselves, but if wife or feminine relatives should have inclination to handle such a thing, here are suggestions to start a train of thought. You can process up beautiful cards and put the stuff out on consignment to druggists and similar places and thus avoid door to door peddling, which would probably involve personal demonstration. You would have to have really beautiful cards, or built-up merchandising display stands, as shown elsewhere in this book. It is not advisable to even put up such a product yourself at first; it must look right. Creams of all kinds, same as the advertised brands and just as good, may be purchased from reliable pharmaceutical houses in bulk or in private brand

packages in lots of as low as three dozen up!

What chance in the world, you query, have I with a new beauty cream or lotion against the heavy competition of advertised standard preparations? All the chance in the world. It's a statistical fact that the life of toilet preparations is about seven or nine years, if I remember rightly. The manufacturers deliberately change the names to catch the fickle fancy of the feminine taste. "Hope springs eternal" with them in their quest for beauty in spite of the fact that "skin foods" and "muscle oils", etc. (it is to laugh!) are just awful nonsense, and that women had just as well or better invest their money in Crisco, rather than pay the fanciful prices they do for vanishing creams, foundation creams, creams for massage, cleansing, tissue, skin foods and lotions. The list fair makes me dizzy. It's elbow grease that smooths out the wrinkles, I claim. But 2,500,000 people are born in the U. S. every year and high-powered advertising is getting them. No matter how hard times get in this land, people moving into cheaper quarters, clothes and shoes a bit out of date, even the pantry not well stocked with nourishing food (note those on "relief funds" buying fancy pickles and sauces and cakes), in most any home you go into, the boudoir or bathroom cabinet will be found to contain greasorinos for the hair, smearines for the face. They may have to skip a meal now and then to do it, but the ladies will find a way to get these toilet necessities (?) to ward off age lines and skin irregularities, to catch or hold their man. Am I not right?

You have standard brands with their tremendous advertising to work against you, but a local trade could be developed, to augment your sign income. For the whole scheme is to use your skill and advertising ability profitably.



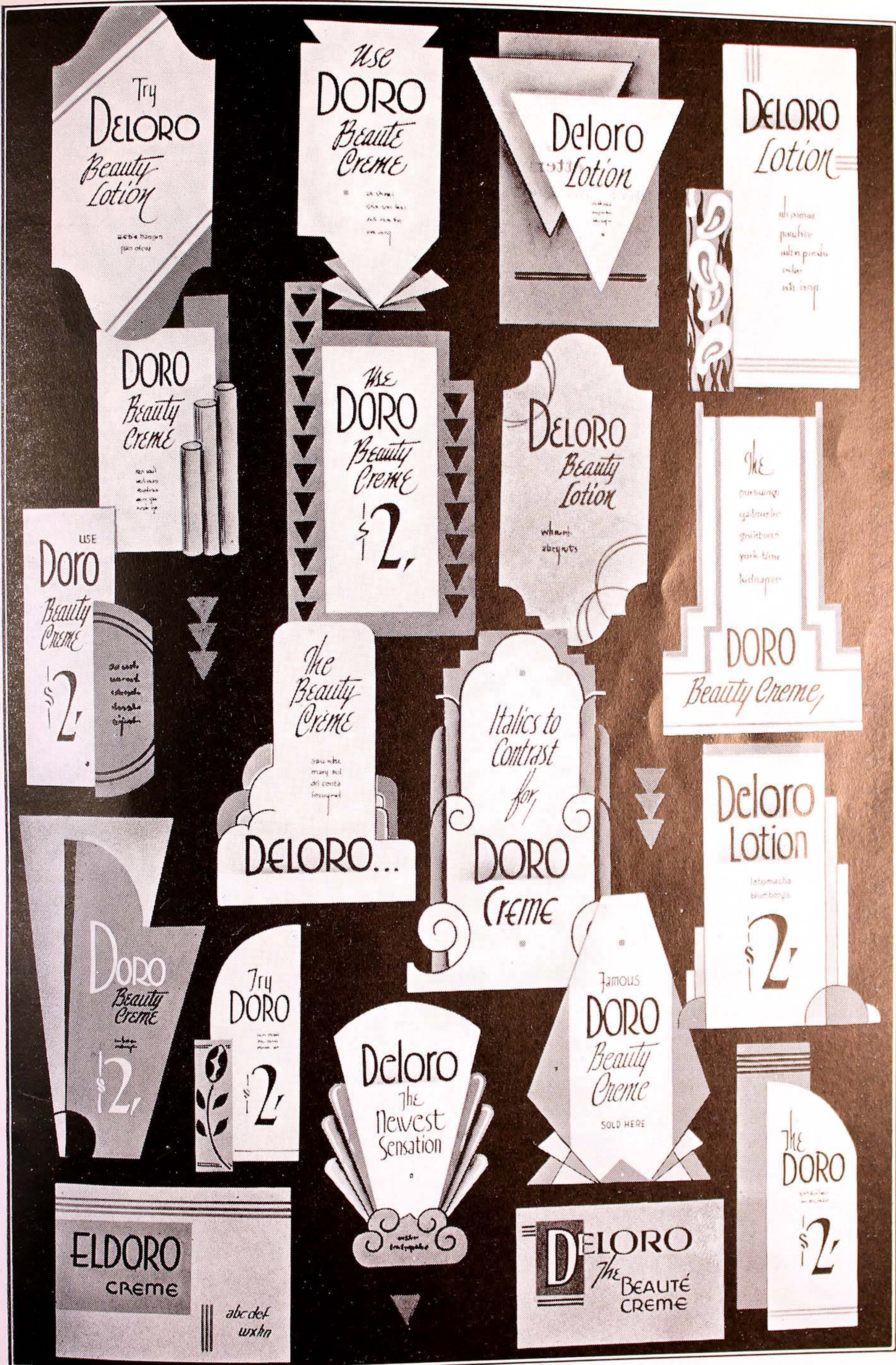


Plate 138—Suitable cards for featuring toilet preparations.

martin's ideas

A FEW NOTES on plate 139: At extreme upper right, cream card, inner rule next to lettering is black, with rest of rules and curved band all orange. The card below this has aplikay lettered panel; decorative rules may be metal foil papers cut and pasted into position as shown. At bottom (right)—an aplikay panel, and triangles also. The dark card, at bottom center, has panel aplikay, set out in some fashion from card underneath; but at the left of this, the bull's-eye may be painted on and lettered over, or airbrushed either before or after lettering, or lettered on other stock and then cut out; lettering and all. If aplikay circle be thin stock, it may be put in position and lettered right over. (To get this "thin stock"—split your thick matboard and thus have a color circle of paper with only about two ply of stock adhering to it.)

So on: the card second down from top, left corner, has two vertical rules that would look snappy if half rounds tacked on, and panel slightly set out to correspond. The mounted panel lifts the effect out of the commonplace with even very ordinary card lettering; uses up all the scrap; takes only a few moments extra time. One should always have, as I have emphasized before, half rounds always at hand, some already coated gold or silver, or enameled vermilion, bright blue, green; clear lacquer and shellac should be part of bench equipment, as also airbrush and tank within arm's reach.

On preceding page, plate 138: note the different means employed to attract the eye, set off the lettering message, and get it read with a favorable reaction. In the extreme upper right corner and another at the lower left bottom have gaily bedecked flower panels in high color, set out away from the lettered panel. These are made up long in advance in odd time, or are processed. A couple or three, as—second from bottom, lower right "De-loro Lotion," and the center shape in the bottom row, have side wings or back drops in harmonizing colors. The

general practice is to have the base in "cool" colors, the sides in "warm"; with the latter shape, this would mean a center lettered panel if primrose, side wings of yellow, corn and orange, with base of black, boldly edged ultramarine, small white store name thereon. Or, if the center panel were midnight blue with orange display, have side wings of blues or greens, and base in magenta possibly, if you like an extra strong flash. Several of the shapes, as that at the extreme lower right, and three on the left side of plate, have snappy contrasting panels, that rightly chosen and striped up—will make a card that certainly looks like more money and costs you such a fraction more. The top one at the left, under the panel shape, even goes to the elaborateness of three tube effects. But what a card it makes.

Next to this—toward center of card is an effect with cutout panel and contrasting card stock set *behind*, and on the frame effect so started, aplikay the triangles cut out for you by the shop boy, or *beveled* yourself from wallboard scraps, and special-coated with color, the beveled edge painted with silver if you want something extra elaborate and the merchant will stand the price; thus you have a frame for long use, the card panel being changed occasionally. If this shape be matboard with triangle opening cut, then crumpled metal foil can be applied behind, a la theatrical—Tack, of course, against a light framework to stiffen and strengthen.

The elaborate shape near the center is all painted design on the shape; the shape to be made from paper pattern, one half drawn and folded over to mark the other half. After two colors are painted on, then edge all about with the decorative lines; as—primrose card, two shades of lavender, lines of gold; lettering maroon or dark green with touches of vermilion if it be maroon, or of emerald green if it be dark green. The two panel shapes are to be suspended in the window, or placed against the window background.



Plate 139—More cards for promoting a cream or lotion.

martin's ideas

WHAT use, you say, for letterheads? Well, at least to stir up inactive accounts; use the same design also, printed on about 5½x8½ in. or half letterhead size, an invoice head. In printing letterheads use several tints on the same run. For tests conducted on lists of many thousand retail buyers show tinted papers—even if ordinary “form” letters—printed in tints, I repeat, showed wonderful increase in returns over white. I would advise palest tints however as “primrose”, pale pink, “robin’s egg blue”, palest green. Have crisp and crackly letterheads with copy—crisp, and to the point. Not the smart and flippant, wise-cracking, jazzy letter, however. There is no place in the business world for that sort. But your letters must be direct, personal, to win attention and get results. Real advertising letters will help you *get over*.

IHAVE an unquenchable faith in *right* blotter advertising. A fresh one issued occasionally will keep your random customers interested in you and maybe stir up a few brand new ones. I consider them as the finest advertising medium studios can use. You can mail them free of extra postage by enclosing with invoice statements, etc. The little check blotters 1¾x5 in. are better than nothing.

Blotters! Blotters . . . you say. Everywhere you see them—chucked unused into waste baskets. Yes, I admit it. Why are they? Because little or nothing of value or interest on the face of them. And the blotting stock—thin, poor, hideous blue, the prettily glazed-top kind. Have them ink-*thirsty*, usable both sides.

A good calendar on them; some *startling* COLOR, or unusual treatment; downright valuable information; even humor, as the printer’s blotter with large red spot: “TEST YOUR

LUNGS! Blow hard on this red spot; if it turns blue see a doctor or an optician *at once!* If it turns red then you are fit . . . if you are fit, then you will appreciate the ‘snappy’ printing produced by Eskew, 825 Third St. Portsmouth, Ohio.” (of course it was only regular red printer’s ink, and forever remained that one color; but who could refrain from blowing on it, and passing it on to another? What an ad—if featured right!)

Something new—something unique something fine. A sensational, blatant, often a “screamer” type of advertising may do the trick—for we as sign men may be allowed that, being in the ballyhoo type of business.

Never put one penny into blotters unless they are—*right!*

ENCLOSE your business card in a sealed glassine envelope. Printed tersely on the outside of the little envelope, in red perhaps: “Slip this card under the glass top of your desk. Consider us as associate partners in business *with* you!” (This idea I discovered in a prominent printing journal—am uncertain which—but thank them.)

The waiter in the little short-order hole-in-the-wall place, when anyone came in, invariably shouted “How many?” I could never figure it out; used to go in there purposely just to hear him shout that “war-cry”. It set me to thinking (rare thing): I used to wonder if any small restaurant owner would ever have nerve enough to break away from “Elite” and “Ritz” and just have this lettered on the glass, and no more: “and YOU came in!” Those odd queer things often stick in the mind. An idea here for you?



Plate 140—Letterheads and business cards.

martin's ideas

CLOUDS of gloom hung about our shoulders, business was so slack; in fact there didn't seem to be any business, but we decided to act like it anyhow. We'd take a bit of our own medicine—advertise; for a change using the old patent medicine show technique. (I was allowed around the place on sufferance, had hat room there; so being nearly idle was always in mischief, thinking up crazy ideas.) That afternoon neighboring business store owners were gaping over at our place at the activity, two "sign men" pasting up huge paper circles in two of the big windows—circles of tinted poster paper, pink, light yellow, palest green, pale blue, goldenrod, with bold dark blue or black lettering. When up and adjusted to a gnat's hair with much gesticulation, a bold edging or outline of orange was put about all, with the result as pictured in the plate you see. The camera's color blindness prevents showing you the kick and snap we had achieved.

But that wasn't all. There was a running of cutawl, a lot of hammering heard and much laffin' inside, and presently out was borne a double-faced (two sided, I mean) seven-foot figure cutout of McManus' "Father"—Jiggs—of comic strip fame; brightest blue suit, red waistcoat, gates-of-heaven-ajar collar, green tie, tile hat, spats! . . . in one hand a yaller sign lettered: "DAD" JONES, Sign Shop. This was brought out every morning, taken in every evening; became a landmark—effectually "spotting" our shop. We made another, a duplicate, but only five feet in heighth, to stand right back of the cab on the truck—bright blue suit, squint-eyed; buttons on the vest, huge shiny affairs bought at a 10-cent store. The truck was deliberately shifted about the downtown district to a new parking space every hour or so, with a lot of "busy business" about the parking—thus advertising us.

Then we went to rental agents and procured permission to clean up win-

dows in vacant store rooms, and put in large neat, specially-made "For Rent" signs—"This desirable location, so-by-so feet (measurement) for rent," etc. For this free service we were allowed to place our own propaganda signs alongside—44 inches or so in heighth, wallboard, of which three are here shown. In extreme lower right: black panel, cream display, cold light green small copy, bull's-eye yellow edged red-orange, black display. The sign in lower left corner had white bull's-eye edged yellow, then a ring of orange, vermilion, maroon, ultramarine blue, purple; lettering was mostly blue. Above this: a black panel with pale lavender display, and orange touch over, small lettering cold green; the decorations above and below were yellow, against orange, brown, black and purple.

. . . That was about half, but there is no space to tell more. It goes without saying that this ballyhoo-showmanship caused comment and the thermometer of business went up considerably.

The "Sims Sign Service" was from Tampa, Fla., painted on the plate glass: black background, white lettering, vermilion rules. In center of plate is shown a cutout silhouette figure in vermilion against a black panel background, lavender side panels, white panel below with black letters edged light green, vermilion spot. The "SIGNS" figure was in Daily News Bldg., Chicago; was animation (patented or copyrighted so it stated) of a child with sponge with moving arm, "wiping" out the world that whirled around on black disk (same as card) behind,—the word reappearing in a moment, to be wiped out again. (Remember, this is patented). Two studio doors are shown: one, something like, but changed—of the Hodges Studio in Tampa (door knob is hidden on left); the other, an alternative idea. All plain ideas, but they give you a hint if you like strong ballyhoo.

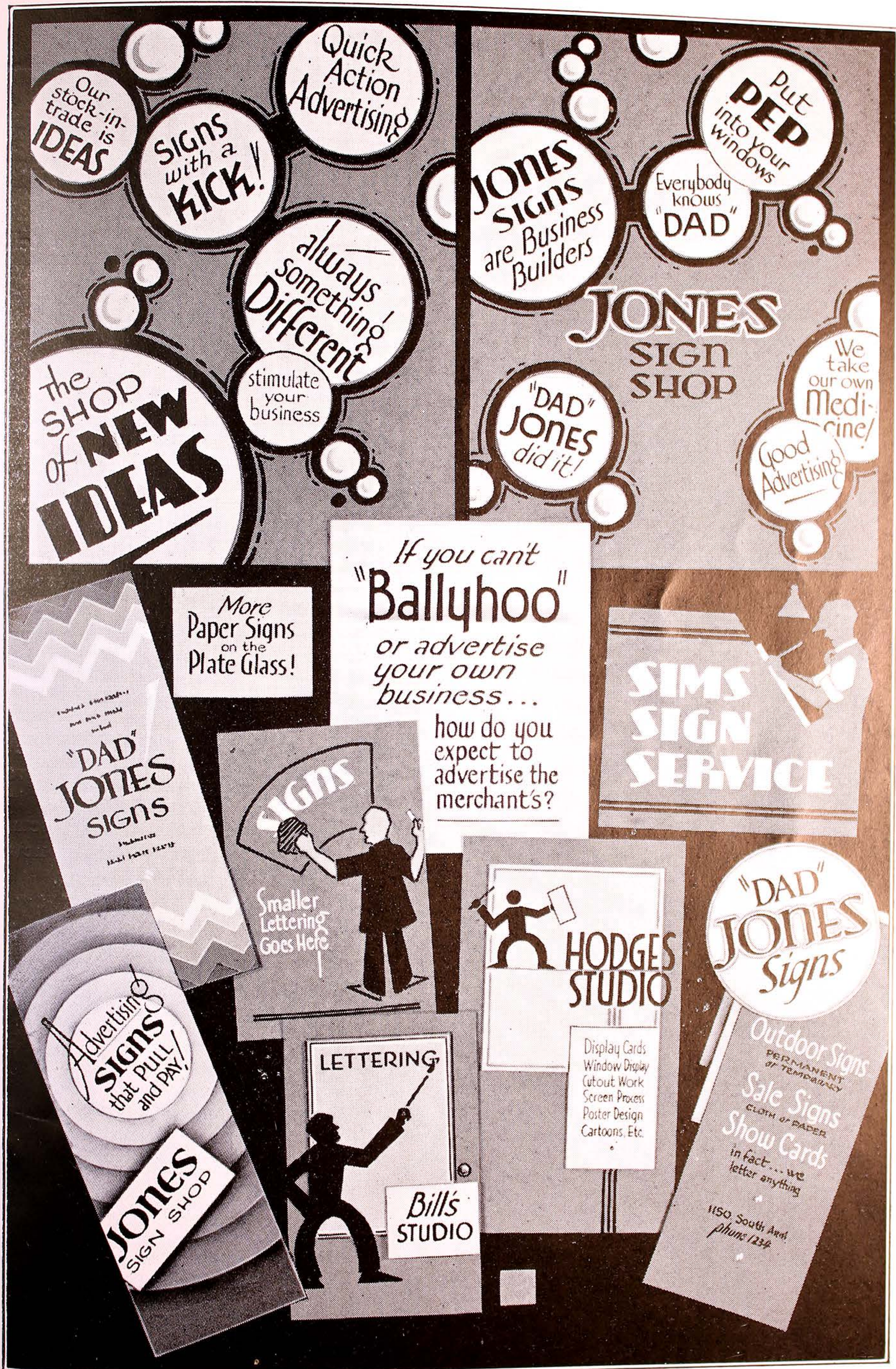


Plate 141—Ballyhoo and "patent medicine" technique!

martin's ideas

WELL, that's that! Book Four is finished. It's 76 pages of mental stimulation, if I do say it . . . They can't argue that down. Usable as a dictionary, I believe, for the card artist, sign writer, student. (Thinking out loud!)

YES, reader, this is an attempt to give a helping hand to the fellow who is struggling along in the work under many difficulties, perhaps. My purpose has been to gather ideas from the best studios the country over and compile them in this series. I wish I could have obtained this information as easily as you are doing—but I couldn't; had to work tarnal hard for mine.

I have tried to show you, to tell you the principle—read carefully, then think. There is no royal easy road. Long ago I started to prospect a route seemingly never considered or at least little traveled to any considerable extent by anyone else in our trade—did much pioneer clearing away of brush—made the road much easier for others. But—you must do the traveling yourself. There yet is still stiff climbing in places, and you cannot get there by wishing.

To change the metaphor—do your own chewing; digest these ideas for yourself—too many completely predigested ideas will give you little real nourishment.

Again: I realize that I am probably often talking to hard-headed shopmen who want no half-baked theories. They want plain, tried-out facts.

Nor do I expect to be able to tell these old seasoned card artists anything startlingly new—just emphatically stress again things they likely already know.

Sometimes I peep into my Idea notebooks to see what I can find that will be of most value. I decide on something, and sit down that evening with green eye shade—work a while, tear up the papers, write—tear them up again, finally turn on the radio. It must be something worked out—*lived out* at the bench; one can't theorize or fake stuff for my readers; they are quick to sense it. I never have, and never will.

AND “new” ideas? Yes—but aren't they really the old proven ideas, after all? Ideas that have been tested, have made money. Just freshened up in modern dress, so that you can use them. Just old ideas revamped with new force, looked at from a new angle.

So, when you're off by yourself, trying to worry out some problem for a client, you can't do better than open up your IDEA-Books and look for a Martin recipe. And thank fortune that Martin is always on the job with thousands of collected ideas and notes.

“H. C.”

(Himself)

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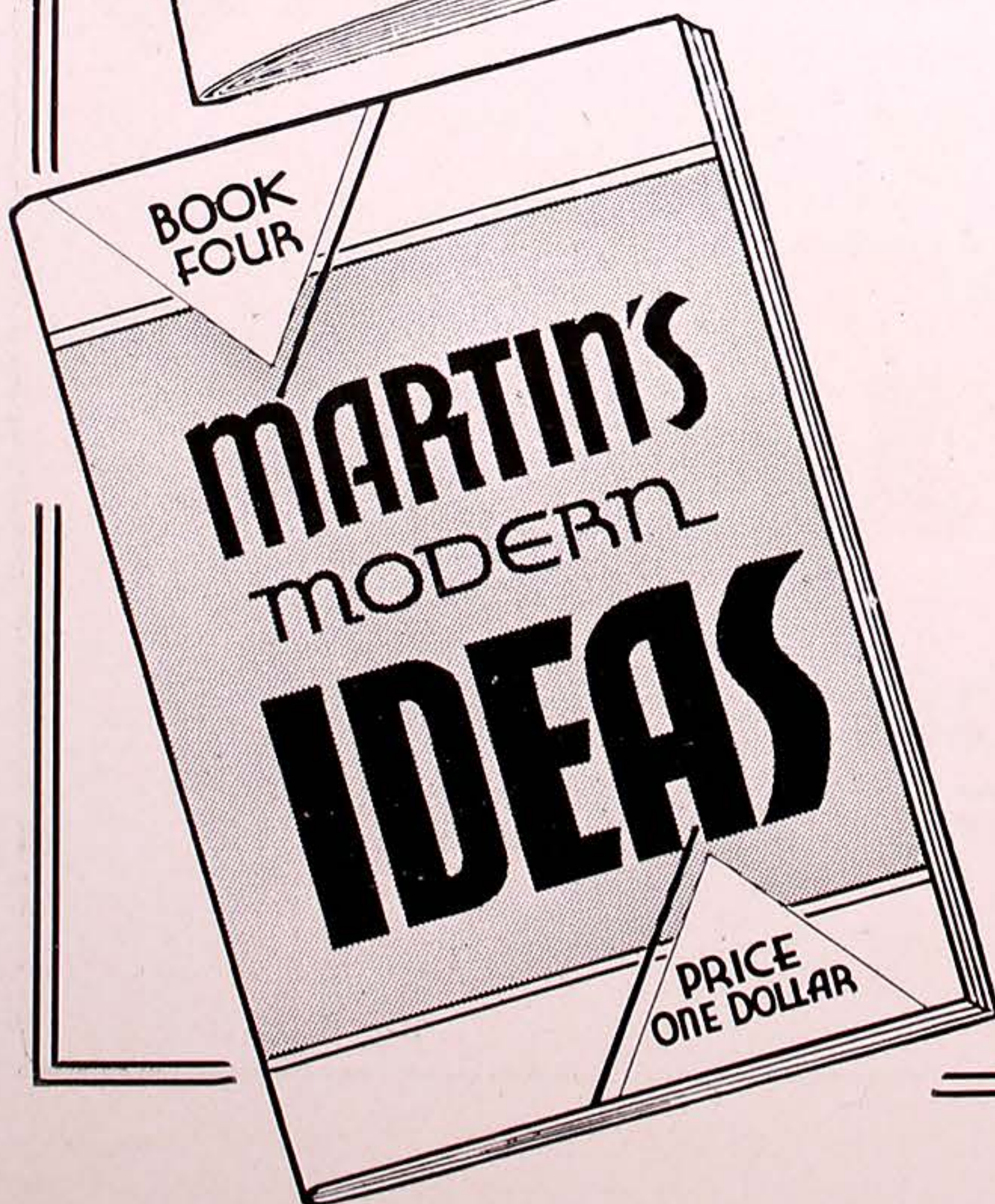
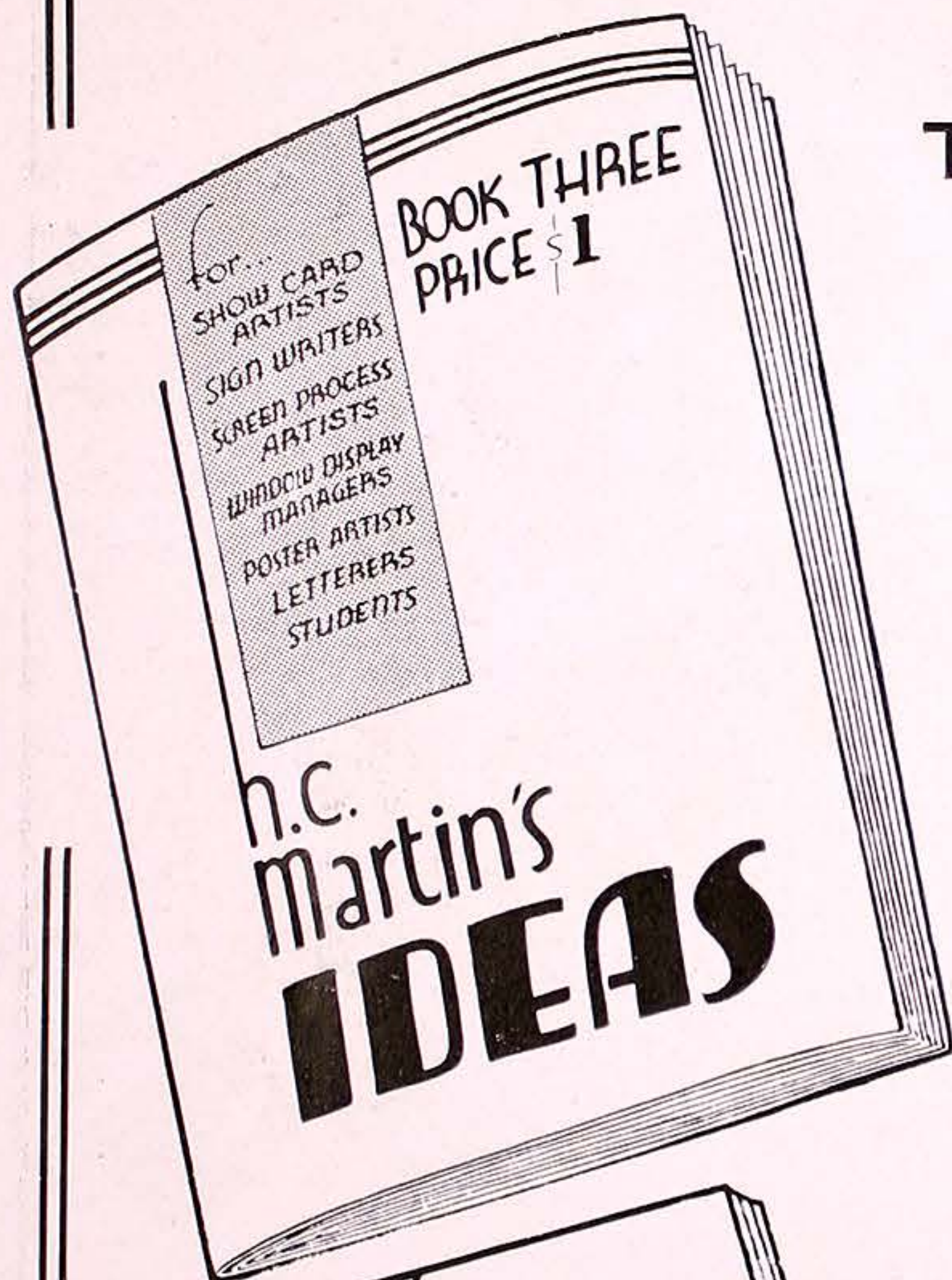
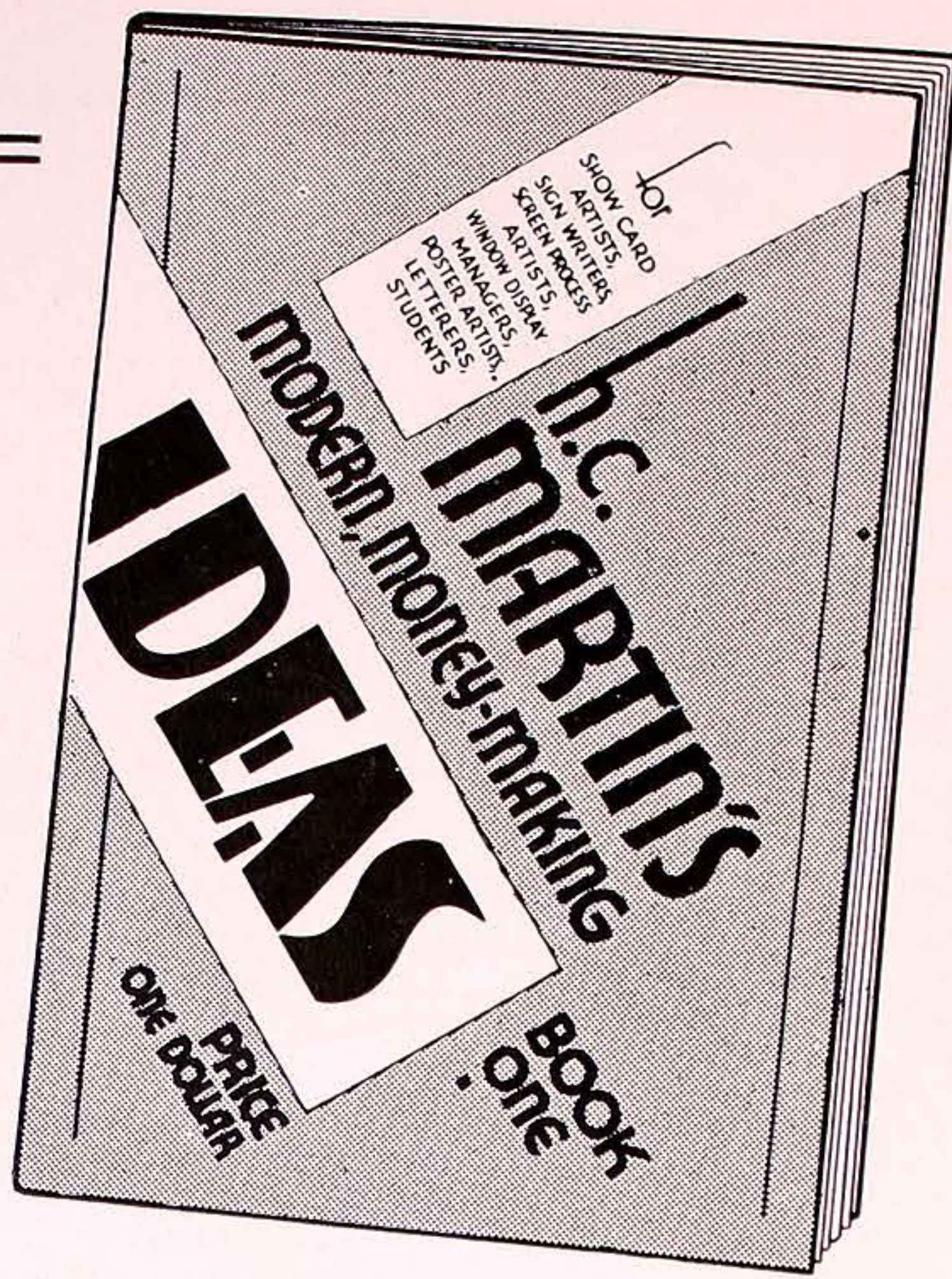
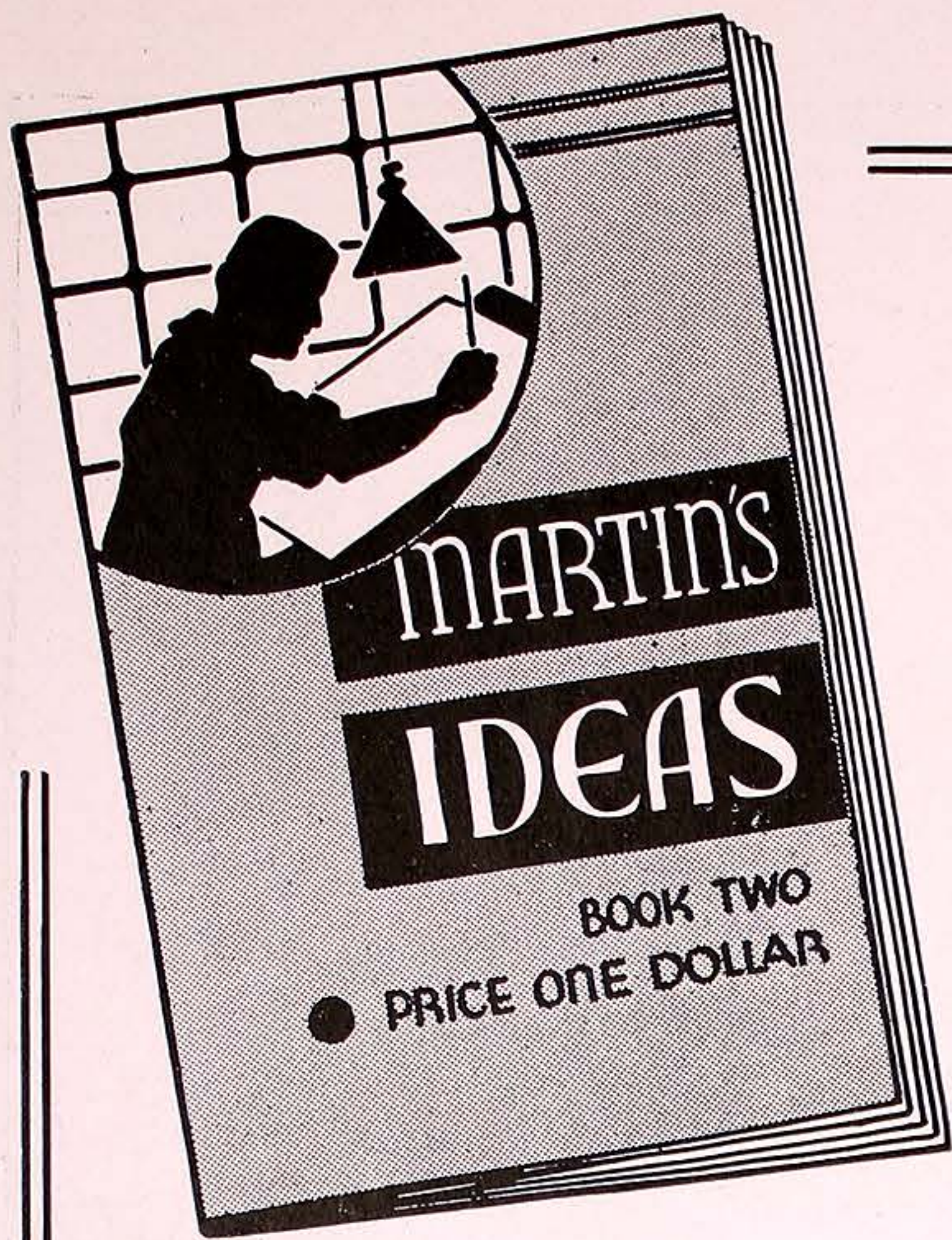
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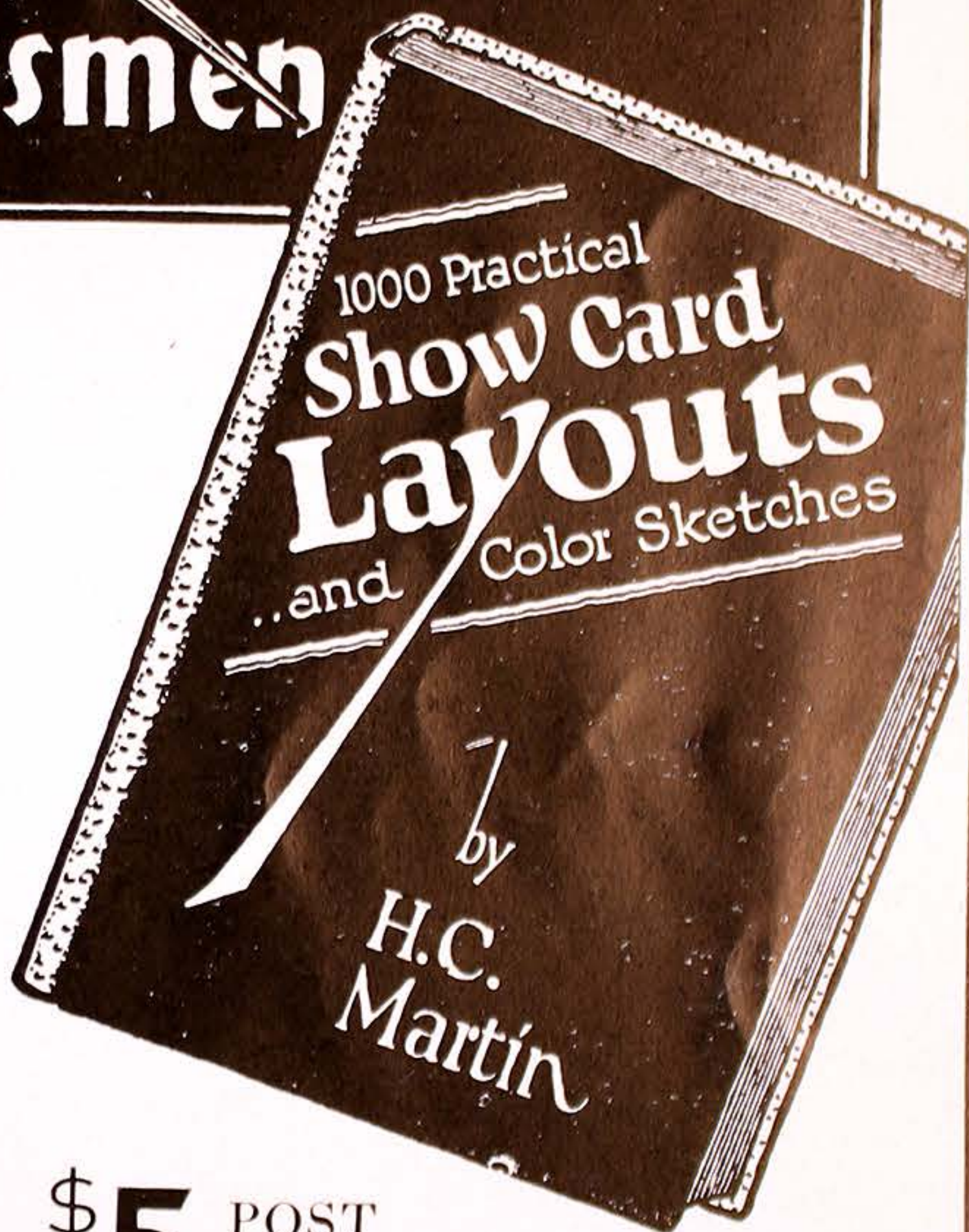
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