THE ART OF LETTERING,

AND

SIGN PAINTER'S MANUAL.

A COMPLETE AND PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION OF THE ART OF SIGN WRITING.

By A. P. BOYCE,

AUTHOR OF "THE MODERN ORNAMENTER AND INTERIOR DECORATOR," &c., &c.

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PREFACE.

SEVERAL books of letters have at different times been published, presenting quite a variety of excellently drawn alphabets. None of them, however, have given any special attention to the styles in common use among sign-painters. In the present work, the aim of the author has been to convey a distinct idea of these styles, and to present them on a scale large enough to make all of their peculiarities apparent, and their proportions unmistakable; indeed, it may be safely said that fully one half of all letters made by sign-painters, in the ordinary course of business, are not larger than those given in this book.

Following the alphabets will be found a collection of Ornaments and Designs, which will be appreciated by sign-painters, and others not accustomed to designing, whose business requires a frequent use of them.

In the explanation and description will be found remarks on the various alphabets, preparation of different kinds of work, spacing, gilding,—in fact, a condensed statement of the sign-painter’s art.

Although this work would appear of importance only to sign-painters, it is of equal value to all persons who make letters for any purpose, for the alphabets are of such a size, and the instructions so distinct, that even a novice, with careful application, may in a short time become master of the art of Sign Writing.
A B I J, Spur.
B E G J, Small curve or grace lines.
B C J K, Spread of the grace.
R S T T P Q, Large curve.
D R S T L Q, Hairline.
The thickness, E F, is seven-ninths of the height.
The width, E S G P, is seven-eighths of the height.
The thickness, M N O P, is a little greater than E F G H, on account of the curved lines, which cause the thickness to appear less than it really is.
The hairline, S T, is a little above the centre.
The distance, B C, is a little less, and J K a little more than one-half of C D.
The lower grace, G J, is slightly longer than the upper grace, B E.

CHARACTER "AND."

The circle is about two-thirds of the height.
The thickness is a little more than two-ninths of the height.
The greatest width about equal the height.

The Roman character æ is a modification of the Latin word æt. The left-hand side was the s, which it very much resembles now; the right-hand side was the t, and although it little resembles that letter at present, the character æ of one hundred or two hundred years ago had quite a perfect t. The present character is much prettier than the old-fashioned one, which can be seen by comparing the present letter with the Antique or Old Style.
BOSTON FULL ROMAN.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

FGHIJKLMNOP

LMNO
BOSTON STRAIGHTH ROMAN.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
HIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
OPQRSTUVWXYZ
BOSTON OCTAGON EGYPTIAN.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
BOSTON ROUND EGYPTIAN.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
BOSTON EGYPTIAN LOWER CASE.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

NEW YORK EGYPTIAN LOWER CASE.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
BOSTON OCTAGON FULL BLOCK.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

GHIJKLMNOPQRS
These are the only letters in the Round Block which differ from the Octagon Block; in all other respects they are identical. (Shades of these letters referred to on another page.)
NEW YORK ROMAN LOWER CASE.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
NEW YORK ROMAN.

ABCDFG
HIJKLMNOP
OPQRSTUVU
NEW YORK ROUND FULL BLOCK.

BCDGJO

These are the only letters in the New York Round Full Block which differ at all from the Octagon Block.

PQRSU

NEW YORK ROUND EGYPTIAN.

BCDGJQPRSU

The A, G, H, I, and other straight letters of this alphabet will be found in the Boston Octagon Egyptian, with the simple alteration of making the thickness one-fifth instead of two-ninths.
ANTIQUE OR OLD STYLE.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

VWXYZ

12 & 34567890
OLD ENGLISH.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
LMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
WXYZ.
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
uvwxyz
DIRECTIONS TO DRAW AN OVAL.

To draw an oval of any given proportions, with string and tacks. Suppose it desirable to pass an oval through the four points A B C D: first draw the horizontal line A E C, then at a point just midway between the points A and C erect the line B E D, exactly perpendicular to it; next set the dividers the distance E C, place one leg on the point B and describe the arc F H G; the two points on the horizontal line where this arc intersects are where the tacks are to be put; around these two tacks a string is to be tied so loosely that a pencil put in the loop will just reach the point B, then by passing the pencil completely around, while guided by the string, the result will be the oval A B C D.
BULLETIN SCRIPT.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ & 1234567890
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz & 1234567890

IONIC ITALIC.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
STUVWXYZ

STUVWXYZ & 1234567890
CLARENDON EXTENDED.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z &
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

TUSCAN EXTENDED.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 &

TUSCAN LOWER CASE EXTENDED.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z
GERMAN TEXT.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
NPQRSTUVWXYZ
WXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

abcdefgijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
GERMAN TEXT, ORNAMENTED.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
FANCY GRADED SHADE LETTERS.

The above letters may be worked up with any colors to suit the taste. The shades of the I and S are usually different tints of the same colors. The management of the Egyptian S is that usually adopted with burnish gilt letters on glass. The outline of the letters is burnish gilt, which is filled in with any brilliant color graded to different tints. The darkest line on the shading is black, and marks the limit of the shade, while the fainter line outside is of Umber or Sienna; between these lines and the letter is the fancy graded shade, of any bright color harmonizing with the other colors used on the letter. The study of this style of shaded letter offers a fine opportunity for the display of taste in colors. An article on shading may be found in another place.
ORNAMENTED DESIGNS.
This letter is claimed by the Boston sign painters to be the proper letter made for the Boston Roman. Its most distinctive feature is its line-like, the cover of its centre line is also prominent. In the New York Roman everything may or may not be correct; but the Roman Q for this reason a perfect circle, as in the case with the Boston Roman, but an easy curve of the Boston Roman the curve is distinct and sharp, some of them resembling the sharp and of the egg, as in the P and R, then followed a perfect point or hook at A and the tail of R. The curve stresses are long and sampling, and differ entirely from the corresponding lines in the New York letter.

The design of the letter is equal to a general rule, although it may vary slightly in this, as in other respects, with its height, but some variations in the size of the letters are to be expected. The style of this letter is very small, not a line, and the same large as the general observed in the letters, but their line in height and the stress to develop or condense the letter.

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OLD ENGLISH.

The Old English letters need no special remark. It may be said of it, as of the lower case, that it has no distinct standard of style. The short horizontal lines should all be drawn at the same angle, and the long lines be of uniform thickness. The letter is sometimes made wide and sometimes quite narrow, and the thickness may be made very heavy or very light, according to the taste of the person using it; in fact, such great liberties are taken with this alphabet, that the judgment must, in a great measure, be depended upon. The proportion of the capitals to small letters is the same as in the Lower case, and the spelling is about the same.

PUNCTUATION MARKS.

The punctuation marks—comma, period, &c., need mention only to observe that those belonging to line-hand or Roman letters are round, while those used with Egyptian or block letters are square, and they are always of the same thickness as the letter they follow. The position of the apostrophe is always on a line with the top of the preceding letter. The period belongs close to the letter it follows, and not half way between it and the next letter, as it is sometimes erroneously placed.

NEW YORK ROMAN.

See page 14.

New York painters will not admit any style of letter to be superior or even equal to that in vogue in the greatest American cities; they consider the New York style as more regular, steady, and efficient. It must be admitted that the New York style is the latter of the two, and therefore a little more easily read; in fact, its regularity makes it entirely different from the Roman letter, so distinct that a person accustomed to it could not fail to recognize it as the New York style on a minute examination. And undoubtedly one great reason why the New York painter can execute the Roman letter, and even trace, is the decided difference in the style of the former, from the one to which he has all his life been used to see.

The outlines of the New York Roman is bold, the small line or hair-line is thin or stout, and the body of the letter solid and strong; the curves are easy rather than elegant; in fact everything stiff or set is avoided as much as possible. The C, G, O, and Q are made a perfect circle, but an easy, graceful curve; the small curves are short and sharp, and want to give the letter its bold look; the stem, or short line, extends over the letter about one fourth of the thickness; the width of the letter is generally more than its height, and the short line, or hair-line, is made one fifth or one sixth of the width of its base. The best way to study this, or, in fact, any letter, is by comparing its different parts with its height; thus, we see the descenders and hair-lines to be about one fourth of the height, the width of some of the letters to be more and some less than the height, etc., etc., and in this way, together with careful practice, the learner may gain a better idea of the letter than any written description could possibly convey.

The Roman A is smaller at the bottom than the height of the letter; the crossbar is two thicknesses of the height; it comes to a point; the top of the bar should never be more than one height from the hair-line, and this thickness can be obtained only with the upper line, and sometimes at a slight angle with it.

The height of the B is the same as its height, but it is frequently made broader. The cross-bar is put in the centre, the right hand curves extend the same distance from the upright part of the letter, but the lower curve is sometimes made to pass a very little beyond the upper.

The width of the C is greater than its height, and its thickness should be more than that of the B. It is not a perfect circle, but an easy, graceful curve, not to be described by the dividers. The exterior of the lower hair-line should be made heavier than its other parts.

The D should be made wider than its height, its principal difficulty being the convexity of its large curves, for which the eye alone must be depended upon.

The E may be made wider than its height, with its crossbar just at the centre, or a little above; which may also be said of the F, except that some painters consider its appearance improved if made narrower than the F. The G, H, like the C, is not a perfect circle, but an easy curve, its thicknesses and widths being the same as the C. The lower right hand part may be made less than the hair-line; the horizontal line should be placed below the centre. The width of the H is equal to its height, and the cross-bar at the centre, or a little above.
NEW YORK EGYPTIAN, OR HALF BLOCK.

This letter is distinguished by the equal thickness of all its parts, and the entire absence of hair-lines. It is made great use of by printers, since 8 minutes of being made very much higher than any other letter in the same space. Its thickness is usually one-third of the height, and its width three-quarters of the height. It is so simple in construction that the beginner, with but little use of the division and careful study, will not find great difficulty in understanding it. There are two alphabets of the New York Egyptian—the octanta and the octogen. The octogen, however, is but seldom used.

NEW YORK FULL BLOCK.

The Full Block is the same as the Egyptian, with the thickness of a slightly extension or space to the right and left of the letter, so long as it is sometimes one-third, and sometimes one-half, the thickness of the letter; the width is the same as the height, but sometimes much wider; so in extended letters, its thickness is generally one-fifth of the height. It occupies the same space as the Roman, and, with a little study, the reader will find it an easy alphabet to comprehend.

NEW YORK ROMAN LOWER CASE.

This letter differs from the other New York alphabets, its peculiarity being that parts of some of the letters extend above, and others below the main body of the letter; the length of these extensions above and below the base differs at times, being made to some particular requirements; they are one-half or two-thirds of the main body of the letter. What is meant by the height of the letter is sometimes the base of the letter, and sometimes one-third or one-fourth of the width of the height, accordingly as the letter is compressed or spread. The letters all occupy the space of the letter, as determined above, with a space of the letter a, b, c, d, e, f, etc., which, being one-half the ordinary width, of course require less space. After some acquaintance with the New York Roman, the pupil will have but little trouble with the lower case.
The space for J, the second for H, the third for G, etc. It makes no difference what kind of letter is required, whether it is Roman, Greek, Egyptian, or Black. All the letters of the name must go in their corresponding space, and the height of the Full Roman is two inches in the space, but it is best to desire the letter as large as possible, for it will be made to produce a printing letter, that is, as the space, say, to be found in twelve inches, the full space will produce four and three inches high, if it be required to make a large letter. In the same twelve-inch space the Straight Roman and Latin are equally good, but, although it looks well when made as small as three inches of the space, it is not usually made so small. In the nine-inch space, the height of the Egyptian is greater than being missing, so that in a twelve-inch space, the Egyptian looks best forty or more lines high, but it can be made, if desired, twenty, or even twenty-two inches high, or one half, two or more lines higher than the ornaments extending below. It is on this account a very popular letter, and very frequently used maso in the signatures. The times mentioned above refer to the ordinary letters; that is, in the name of J. H. Smith, the letter J is given the same height as the letter T, and are called leading letters, or capitals.

The leading letters are composed of F and sometimes one fourth higher than the ordinary letters. The leading letters are eighteen inches high, or twice the height of the ornaments, and can be made so high: in fact, the leading letters can be seen to letter one fourth higher. These remarks on leading letters do not apply to lowercase letters, which have some peculiarities of their own, and are very different from the other letters. Some of the lowercase letters extend above the line of the ordinary letters, as D, I, L, T, H, E, F, G, R, etc., extend above the a, c, v, etc. Now the effect of limiting the length of the e, b, d, h, f, etc., etc., above the leading letters, would be to give the letter a curved, crowded, and very angular appearance. If the leading letters, and d, h, f, etc., were made about one half higher than the ordinary letters, the effect would be entirely different. The thickness of the lowercase is the regular two-thirds of the ordinary letter; that is, v, e, m, n, d, t, d, e, and any other letters which extend above and below the line, are also of the same thickness; the capital letters, however, are two thirds of their own height. In spacing lowercase, the space is allowed for b, t, d, h, f, g, r, s, and v, and one half space for l, e, a, little more than half a space for n, f, a, and one letter space for m, w, and all capitals.

A great advantage of the lowercase is, that by its low proximity in a line of large, heavy letters, the letter can be seen by contrast, to appear very much more bold and distinct than would result from the use of some style in place of lowercase. Thus, if were required to put a sign on the following: Brown & Black, Wholesale Dealers in Fish, and request that the word Fish should be made as distinct as possible, by putting Brown & Black in Roman letter, wholesale goods in Roman, and Fish, in large, deep letters, it would look much more prominent than any other line on the sign, and the lettering would be much more distinct. In placing a sign with several lines of letters, it is sometimes a difficulty in making the spaces between the different lines, and it is an expenditure of much time, to have the space the same on every line. The best way to do this is to make the space the same on every line, and then remove the lines by the same amount. The best way to do this is to carefully mark out the space that is to be used for each letter, and then space the letters accordingly. The length of each line letter is to be measured, and then the spacing of the letters is to be done accordingly. A great advantage of this method is, that it enables the artist to see the letters before the work is done, and to cancel by the space, so that the layout of the letters, and the arrangement of the letters, can be easily made as desired, and satisfaction thus guaranteed in advance. In making letters on a circle, they should be straight across the top and bottom, and the letters should be observed at the bottom of the top, and vice versa. The letters should be slightly contracted, and the tops and bottoms on a line with the curves, as in Numbers 2 and 3, etc. However, the correct methods.

BOARD SIGNS.

The amount of pitch in the best letter used for signs is such that the beauty and durability of the painting is very great. The best letter is one that has been told in a very large size, and is very much used, being sufficient to start the pitch to running out over the surface of the sign. All the varnish being the only known article which will dry hard over and
SHADED LETTERS.

A letter is shaded, with the addition of another color, generally to its right side, and under parts at an angle usually above or below, to the letter itself. This shade may be made at any angle, may be put on the right side or the left, if the letter be at the top but the most usual is on the side. This shade is a thickness, because treated in this manner, it resembles a letter cut out of a block of wood, this shade shows the thickness of the letter, or it may be shaded thin, or the side and the face of the letter, and sometimes it is printed to a distance from it, leaving a narrow space between the letter and the face, the first is called a shade, the other a line shade. (See illustrations B and D page 4). A letter cut out of a block of wood would be this thick or thin, and the surface would be the original letter. The letter may be made of every conceivable color, but should always be in harmony with the letter and shade. The two should be managed in such a way as to make the letter prominent and distinct and the shade conspicuous.

ORNAMENTAL LETTERS.

The ornamental letter may be made entirely according to the fancy of the painter, although the most successful ornamental alphabets are those where the original form of the letter is most preserved. The best method to follow is to draw the letter distinctly in the first place, work the ornamentals on to it, taking care to alter the form as little as possible. Points, curves, serpentine lines, leaves, and vines may be added, according to the character of the design or the taste and some of them, while the letter itself may be made of a different color, and vines, with as different forms of ornamental letters it must be beautiful.

MEDIEVAL.

The Medieval alphabet is seldom used now. It might be employed for an old established book-keeper, antiquary society, library, etc., but it is principally used for monograms on church walls and tables.

ANTE OR OLD STYLE.

This style of letter has come to be quite popular of late years, being a plain and distinct alphabet, easily read—having some of the characteristics of both the New York and Boston Roman, and yet being so decidedly different from either of it to make its occasional use quite acceptable. It seems to be the one style which looks anywhere appearing to good advantage over a merchant’s door or on a church tablet, and it has the additional advantage, notwithstanding so odd look, to be quite easily understood. It has not the held look of the black-letter, and it would not be advisable to make use of it where a large and heavy style seems best suited — such as on high brick walls, etc., but it may be introduced wherever a neat and pretty letter would be appropriate.

SCRIPT LETTER.

The script letter is never employed for boldness, nor in any case where it is desirable that the sign should be quickly read. It cannot be called plain and distinct in the same sense that other alphabets can have some of the characteristics of both the New York and Boston Roman, and yet being so decidedly different from either of it to make its occasional use quite acceptable. It seems to be the one style which looks anywhere appearing to good advantage over a merchant’s door or on a church tablet, and it has the additional advantage, notwithstanding so odd look, to be quite easily understood. It has not the held look of the black-letter, and it would not be advisable to make use of it where a large and heavy style seems best suited — such as on high brick walls, etc., but it may be introduced wherever a neat and pretty letter would be appropriate.

COLORS FOR SIGNS.

The cheap kind of board sign is in a white ground-work and black letter. This style is the plainest and simplest looking, and is sometimes thought to be the strongest contrast to be made with paint; but it will be found by comparison, that a sign with black ground and white letter is a stronger contrast, and makes a much better sign. It is, perhaps, a little more easily taken on the ground, but when once is required to put a letter to a paint it in, and there is also the expense of the black paint. But the sign looks more than enough better to balance the difference in cost, for which reason this style has become the most popular of the cheap signs, and is almost sure to give satisfaction.
A blue sand-ground and white letter with black shade, is a neat and quite a shawny style, a little more costly than black and white, but very much in the style of the shaded letter box of the blue sand, which is a little more expensive than the usual blue box. The blue, green, brown, and white, and other fancy-colored sand are generally considered to have an asphalt base, unless the letter be shaded. The quartered and shaded shade on a sand ground-work is black, and this color is usually employed on all. These fancy-colored sand-ground are sometimes very much improved by putting a blue stain, a tint of two from the underbase, around the face of the sign, and filling the margins with light verdigris, or any bright color, either of paint or sand, which effects a good contrast. Sometimes the ground-work is ornamented with black and other colors, and made to resemble some pattern of cloth, and, although this style of lettering is in good favor, advocates for its use are few, for the neutral base gives a flat look. This is of course a great advantage for sign-makers for their signs, and it is very popular. But the painter must not confine himself to blue, for really all the other fancy sand may be treated in a similar manner and give a superior effect.

GOLD GROUND-WORKS.

An expensive venture has been made in gold ground-works. They look smart and pretty, but are not showy enough to balance their extra cost.

The lettering on gold ground-works is usually black and tanned, and is usually finished up with brilliant color, and before the gold is put on. Two coats of paint are put over the design after which it has been dried, and the whole surface given the effect of a gold ornament on a gold surface. By letting the sign at the same time of putting on the ornament, the effect of the letter can be seen under the gold sufficiently to work by, without making a mark on the gold, or the letter may be cut in and not gilded. The style of the ornament can be varied to suit any taste, so as also can the style of the lettering and shading.

GILDING.

The signboard, when supplied, should not be so cut as to prevent its working easily, should be free from acids or waters, and be put on evenly, and will work best if allowed to dry in a moderately warm room. Before proceeding with the gilding, the signboard should be carefully examined, as its condition makes or mars the beauty of the work. Experience is the best judge to decide when the one is in the best condition for the gold; but as a rule it should be dry enough to bear considerable pressure of the knuckle (which must be clean) without losing any work, while at the same time being slightly tacky. When the sign is in its right condition, the gilding has a better texture, but when too tacky it has no taste at all. And, if exposed to the air for any length of time, will be very liable to turn a rusty color. When the work is made for the gold, the best should be handled in such a way as to place it on with as few wrinkles as possible, covering the large places first, and afterwards the smaller places and whatever breaks occur. After the signboard is entirely covered, it should be polished down and carefully rubbed smooth with a lot of cotton, or a burlap brush. The superfine gold may be collected with an old stocking, slightly moistened with oil, and lightly pressed round wherever the loose gold lies. There are many different styles of gilding, but the above is the only one having any relation to lettering except burnish gilding on glass, which will be spoken of in another place.

PREPARING WORK ON SMOOTH SURFACES.

On japanned tins and iron, and other smoothly finished surfaces, where it is impossible or unadvisable to make a mark by the ordinary process, the marking out may be transferred from paper.

The surface is first carefully cleaned by being wiped with a clean chamois-skin; a little powdered rotten-stone is then scattered over it, and carefully dusted off with a soft dusting; to this the gold from adhering to the surface, which is then ready for use. A piece of black paper is then placed over the surface, and a round mark made with chalk or lead-pencil, after which it is taken off and its reverse side rubbed over with chalk and afterwards well dusted off, when the paper is removed, a good mold is laid over the surface, and the pencil marks traced over with a metallic point. On removing the paper, the marks are found to be transferred to the surface, with a chalk mark as fine as the metallic point used. This process can be used on any work where a clean, fine line is important.

BURNISH GILDING ON GLASS.

The following is the method pursued with the brilliant burnish gilding and fancy shading on glass seen in all the large cities.

The work is first carefully marked out on a paper, and these marks are all traced over with a pencil or crelcell, and the outlines of the bakes carefully sand-papery drawn. This pattern is laid on the outside of the glass in the desired position, and a powder (Note: A powder is a soft cloth

GRADED GROUND-WORKS.

Graded ground-works are made by using the lightest tint of a color for one part of a sign, and grading it down to the darkest for the other part, or, for instance, to make it more clear: if we have a tablet sign on which we wish to put a graded ground-work of red, we commence at the top with a shade of white, and work down, carefully blending the colors as we go into light English verdigris. Chinese dot, India red, which, red, and, finally, the cardinal red, which, if we wish it to make it still darker, giving the sign the appearance of being one part of the light and the other part of the dark, which is the break between the light and dark shade. Either the top or bottom of the letter is to be lighter: the lightest tint in the centre, and the darkest tint wound round it, according to the style of lettering.

The success of graded grounds has not been marked enough to make them popular, and they are seldom used.
SIZING FOR BURNISH-GILDING ON GLASS.

The point to be gained in preparing this sizing is sufficient adhesiveness to hold the gold, but not enough to interfere with a brilliant polish. Several different articles are in use for this purpose, but the most popular, and perhaps the most, is a liquid, for two or three minutes, after which it should be carefully strained, and the result will be a sizing of about the same thickness as a pen; put it into a clean vessel with a soft cloth and roll it for two or three minutes, after which it should be carefully strained, and then the result will be a sizing of about the same thickness as a pen; put it into a clean vessel with a hand of water, right strength. But if the beauty of the work depends almost entirely on the sizing, it should never be commenced until the sizing has been thoroughly mixed; for this purpose, any piece of clean glass will answer; now run a little of the size, and put on a little of gold. After it has become dry, rub it carefully with a little of linen, and if it present a clear, brilliant look, the size is about right; if it appear dull and dingy, with streaks and spots, it is too strong and needs reducing with water; if the gold rubs off, it is too weak and requires a little more glue. These changes can be easily made; but after any alteration, the size should be allowed to boil half a minute or so.

OIL SIZING FOR GOLD.

The ordinary gold sizing is usually made with oil which has been allowed to stand until it has acquired a sticky property, so as to be fluid. What is needed is, of course, oil which will give the best lustre to the gilding, and still take the gold readily and without trouble. The following is an excellent method of softening oil: — Pour nine parts very warm boiled oil into a shallow tin pan, stir into it a little red lead, put a sheet of glass over the pan, and set it in the sun; the lead will soon be found settled to the bottom of the pan, and it should be stirred every day for two or three weeks; after it has become sufficiently fat, it may be poured off into bottles for use, leaving the red lead on the bottom of the pan. The oil should then be strained; discard the lead; the red lead imparts a drying property to the oil; most of the impurities in the oil will settle with the lead, leaving it clear and beautiful for use, and sufficient in amount. The oil will settle with the lead, leaving it clear and beautiful for use, and sufficient in amount.

This oil will be found to dry in about forty-eight hours, but may be made to dry more quickly by the addition of Japan. If it should prove too stiff to work well, it may be thinned with boiled oil.

QUICK SIZING.

It is either a difficult matter to prepare a quick size which will stick well, from the brush and bear a good polish when the gold is put on. The great difficulty with articles which dry quickly being, that they dry up hard, and leave no back to the gold. It is of prime importance, in making use of quick sizes, to watch it closely, and put on the gold when it is in just the right condition.

The following receipts for quick size are in common use with sign-painters:

Sizing, and add plenty of Japan, and a little quick-drying varnish; if too thin for use, it may be thickened with a little dry chrome yellow. This size will dry in five or six hours.

Number one varnish and Japan, thickened with dry chrome yellow, makes a size which will usually dry in a warm shop in four or five hours.
Quick-drying linseed varnish and japan and a drop of oil, make a size which will dry in two or three hours.

Application varnish and dry while hot, with a drop or two of linseed oil, and it will dry in about three minutes, but must be very closely watched, as it will burn.

Miner's Indian gold size, which may be bought at any hardware store, will dry in about three minutes, but may be made to dry more slowly by adding a little boiled oil, and is, perhaps, the best article to use for quick size.

TO CLEAN PAINT OFF OLD SIGNS.

To such as find trouble in cleaning the paint and sand off old signs, the following mixture will be of great service——

Two pounds sal soda, one fourth of a pound of unslacked lime, and one gallon of warm water. The warm water is to aid in dissolving the soda and lime, which being accomplished, the mixture can be used cold, by spreading it over the applied will not be affected by its use.

The paint afterwards