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DESIGNING

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Ticket and Show Card Designing

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BATH, MELBOURNE, TORONTO, NEW YORK

1924

PREFACE

THIS work owes its origin to the interest taken in the subject by C. L. T. Beeching, Esq., the Secretary of the Institute of Certificated Grocers. To his experience and aid the writer owes a great measure of the success which may attend his efforts. In the midst of many other activities it has been Mr. Beeching's constant aim to raise the standard of Ticket and Show Card Printing throughout the trade.

Much of the value of any book is lost unless it be properly read. The manner of reading depends, of course, upon the manner of writing. This book presents matter which has been thought over and written out several times with the aim of deleting all non-essentials, and presenting vital information in a form as condensed as possible. It is, therefore, recommended that if full value is to be extracted by the reader, the following procedure be adopted. Read right through the book rapidly, glancing at illustrations and getting a general idea of its scope. Then read through it again, this time slowly and deliberately. Check every statement by its accompanying illustration. Imitate each illustration when possible. Work through the book slowly that the matter may sink into, instead of run off from the surface of, your mind.

F. ARTHUR PEARSON.

May, 1923.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	PAGE V
-------------------	-----------

Chapter One

NECESSITY OF ADVERTISEMENT	I
Importance of detail—Advantages of hand-drawn cards—Practice and drawing skill	

Chapter Two

THE ALPHABET	3
Capitals—Correct letter forms—Common errors—Origin and production of book-print—Characteristics of lettering—Unity of style—Guide-lines and letter proportion—Small letters—Books of reference	

Chapter Three

STYLE IN LETTERING	14
The four qualities of the successful card—Clarity of style—Choice of style—Extra guide lines—Instruments and their effect on style—Pen, brush, chalk, and stencil knife—Italics	

Chapter Four

WORD MAKING	25
Letters and word form—The varying importance of letters—Essential and non-essential letters—Letter spacing—Preserving word outline—Spaces between words and between lines	

Chapter Five

DESIGNING AND TOOLS	30
Lack of drawing skill no obstacle—Effective ruled work—Designing, from first idea to final card—Alternative treatments—Instruments and appliances—Cards and substitutes	

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Chapter Six	
COMPOSITION AND CARD FORM	36
Simple rules of card designing art—Contrast in colour, direction, size, and type—Balance and the broad base—The point of interest—Secondary interests—The border—Purpose, effect, repetition, suggestion—Border and contrast—Card form—Tapering—Balanced and ill-balanced—Variations of the rectangle—Straight line designs and lettering	
Chapter Seven	
COLOUR AND ITS PRODUCTION	46
Powerful effect of colours on the mind—Need of colour-knowledge in card design—Principles of colour—Primaries, secondaries and tertiaries—Colour mixing—Selection of contrasts	
Chapter Eight	
COLOUR AND ITS APPLICATION	49
Transparent or water-colour method—Laying a colour wash—Colours to buy—Body colour—Glossy colour—Waterproof coloured inks—Indian Ink—Metallic colours—Pastels	
Chapter Nine	
ORNAMENT	57
Instrument and effect on ornament—Geometrical ornament—Nature as source of ornament—Ornament and unity—Pattern and free design	
Chapter Ten	
STENCIL, SPLATTER, AND SPRAY	65
Advantages of hand-printing methods—Principles of stencilling—Designing, cutting and printing—Working hints—Splatter and when to employ it—The spray bottle	
Chapter Eleven	
CONCLUSION	72
Refacing old cards—Designers' reference file—Working conditions—Vital importance of practice	
INDEX	75

Ticket and Show Card Designing

CHAPTER ONE

NECESSITY OF ADVERTISEMENT

NOBODY in these days will seriously contest the need for advertising. It is an essential feature of life. As soon as a man has more of anything than he requires for his own use, he advertises, in some way, his desire to part with the surplus. For continued success in this process of exchanging a surplus for other essentials, it is necessary that one offers for sale goods of sterling quality. Even so, it is necessary to let people know that such goods exist. This would be necessary if only one shop supplied the wants of a community. Where so many competitors present their wares to the public, it is more than ever necessary to demonstrate clearly, not only that you have goods for sale, but that they are superior to those offered by other people.

You must keep on asserting this, and you must keep on in such a way that your public does not weary of the information. It is not an easy problem, but you may do much to educate your public without their knowing. Utilize the force of suggestion. It is a mighty and unresting power. Direct it along channels which will make it most useful to you.

Your brass and glass sparkle. They betoken not merely care for your fittings, but care of your wares. Your personal aspect and manner are perceived in you—and conceived of your goods. Your shop and all its contents abound in suggestion for all who enter it. It is for you to ensure that the suggestions are of the right sort. Your shop is full of details.

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

Details, seemingly unimportant, are the bricks which build up your reputation.

No detail is so small that it does not matter. Your tickets and show cards are details. Study them in still greater detail. Convince yourself that they are a detail of the greatest importance. Do they, in every respect, radiate the style you would wish to characterize your establishment? Does each one peculiarly suit its subject? Can you, at reasonable cost and notice, display a set of cards which carry out a colour scheme you have in mind? Can you always ensure producing just your own ideas in cards just when you want them?

The production of cards which will fulfil these requirements is of necessity a task for hands, not for the machine. Such hand labour, too, must generally be your own. Hand-made cards are best, just as hand-painted pictures are better than printed reproductions. By no other means can you exactly express your own ideas at your own time. You experience the real and rightful pleasure of creation. You add to that pleasure the knowledge that you are obtaining your cards more economically than in buying machine-made articles. You exploit to the full the precious quality of distinctiveness. YOUR cards can be just a little better than the cards in other windows.

To some the pen and brush are natural servants; others make a barrier of their lack of special skill. These should remember that once they learned to write. Now writing is just drawing letters. We learned to draw letters at a very tender age, so we may look with confidence now to a very considerable advance in the quality of our achievements.

We learned to write by practice, little and often. This is just how we may learn to draw again. By practice wonders are achieved. We all walk. This is a feat of constant balance, a remarkable performance, due entirely to practice. Far more difficult accomplishments result from a little practice every day. So with printing. Make firm your foundations. Get a thorough knowledge of the alphabet. There is much more to learn, but with practice and attention to detail it will follow.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ALPHABET

GET a thorough knowledge of the alphabet. One does not really know a thing until one has done it, made it, as it were, a part of oneself. Draw an alphabet of capitals now, in pencil, on any scrap of paper. Make them about an inch in height, of perfectly plain type, and without reference to any copy. Now compare them carefully with the printed model (Fig. 1). Particularly look at K, which is often rendered as shown at Fig. 2, at N, S, and Z, which are fatally easy to reverse. See, too, if any small letters have slipped unnoticed into your CAPITAL alphabet. Should you find any errors draw the corrected form several times, so as to break your old, bad habit, and watch for it in future.

Now that you have made the letter-forms your own, take pen and draw them again. Use a broad pen. You are now making lettering as it was made before the days of the printing-press. See how your split nib opens under pressure to make thick downstrokes and closes to make thin upstrokes under lighter pressure.

This habit of the pen—it was a goose quill in the early days, or a thick dried reed—is the cause of all the variations in thickness you see in modern book type, both in capitals and in small type. You see it in the type you are reading now. When men first press-printed, they modelled their letters, naturally, on the pen-made forms of their fathers' books, and these pen forms persist in the present book print. So used are our eyes, through our own custom and through inheritance, to this type that, should it be drawn with the thicknesses in the wrong places the effect is disagreeable. You must learn where to thicken. Fortunately this is easy, since it is natural. The pen, so to speak, will do it for you. Make each letter, say half an inch high, in as few strokes as possible. Go heavily down,

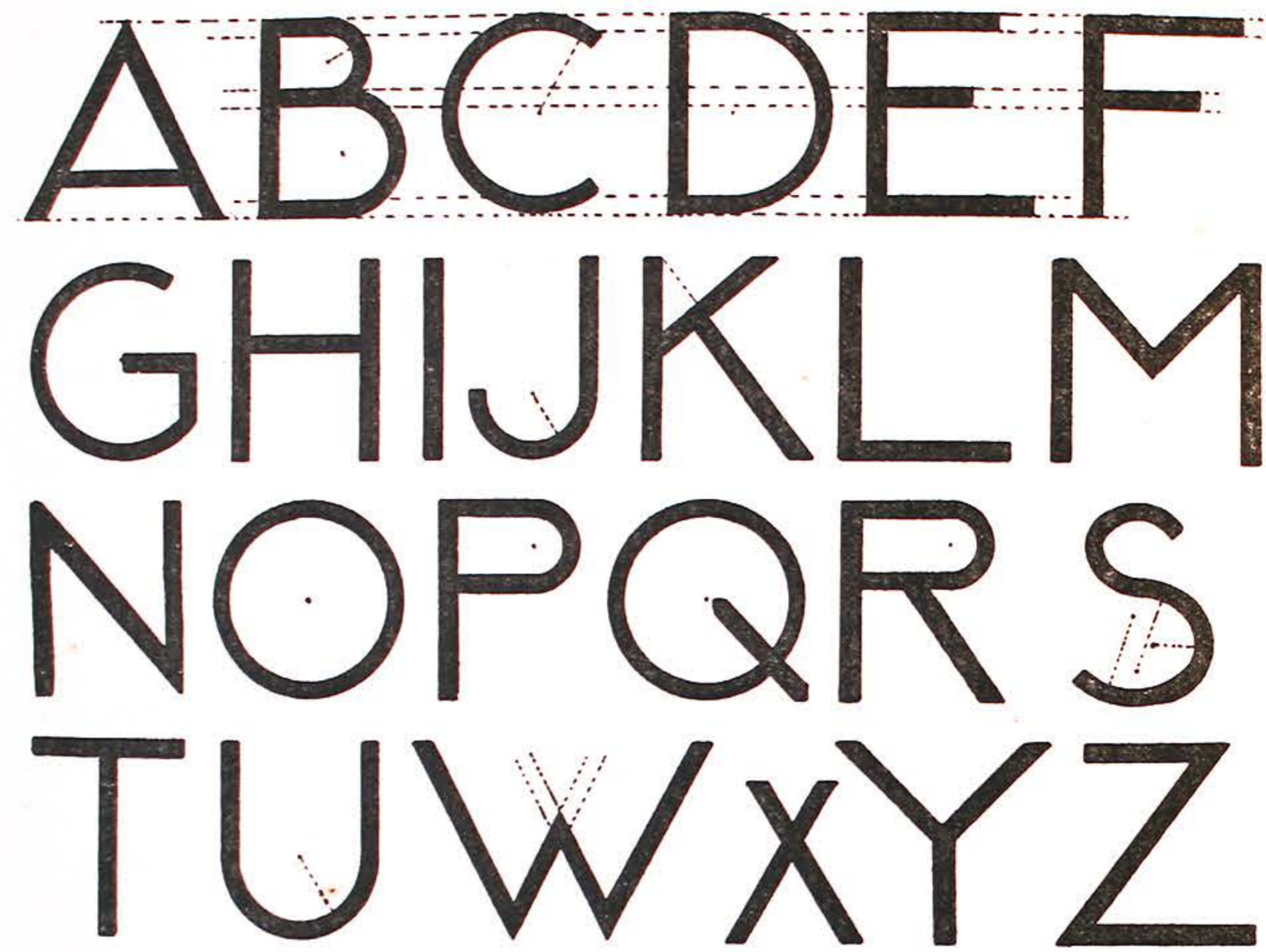


FIG. 1



FIG. 2

COMMON ERRORS

THE ALPHABET

lightly up, and go over no stroke twice. Compare your result with the alphabet shown (Fig. 3). If you have made any mistakes, correct them from this and note how they arose. Perhaps it was from starting at the wrong point, perhaps from

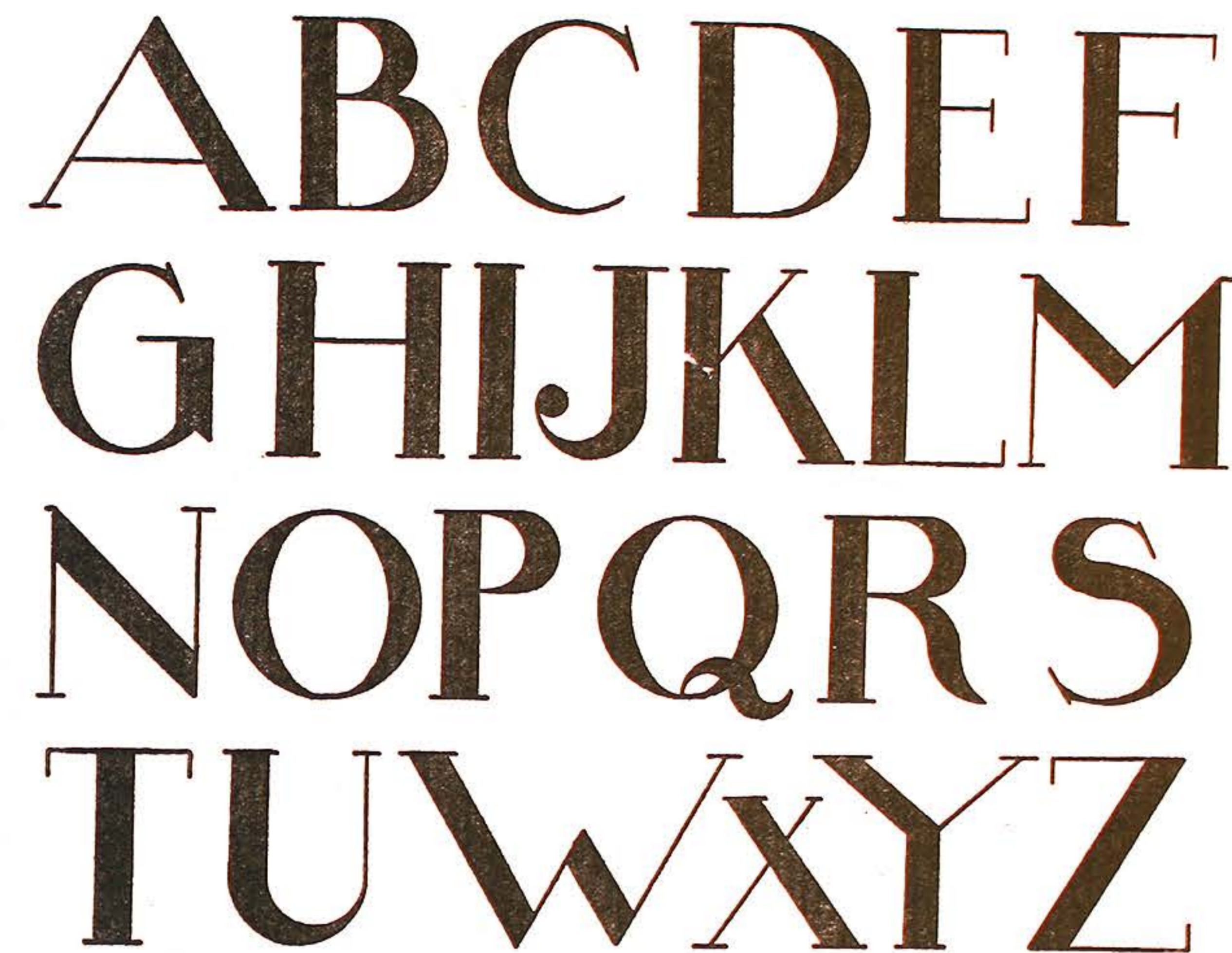


FIG. 3

making too many separate strokes. Remember to go over no strokes twice.

You will find that the ends of your strokes, especially of the thick ones, are untidy and ragged, detracting from the trim appearance you desire. See how the old writers overcame this difficulty. A little side-stroke, commencing or ending the offending line, produced order and ornament where a raw edge was. These additions are called "serifs" in the printer's language. On looking round you will see many types in which

CENTRE

FIG. 4

UNDER

FIG. 5

HIGHER

FIG. 6

this system of thicknesses does not prevail. These, however, are not wrong. They are simply the product of tools other than the quill, or of the quill maintained at another angle. Being the natural, and not the forced, product of a printing tool, be it chalk, pen, brush, or knife, they are quite good style. Of these more in place.

Now let us examine our alphabet again. You see that the letters will group themselves into several parties. Some are based on the circle or oval—C, G, O, Q. Several consist mainly of uprights, as H, N, I, L, so that they may be packed very closely together. Others, as A and V and the round letters, keep their neighbours at a distance, and so are more clearly read. Many have the pleasing quality of stability, as have A and B, but several are top heavy, as F, T, and Y. This is a disagreeable quality which we seek to minimize. When these letters become parts of words, however, their lack of balance is not so apparent. A few letters have great width, as M and W. A large party have either crossbars, as A, E, H, and F, or crossing points, as X and Y. P, B, R have loops in common. These qualities are important when we begin to design alphabets in given styles or set ourselves to construct words.

We have seen, in studying the book-alphabet, how unpleasant a breaking away from style may be. It is indeed a fatal fault. To be a success, an alphabet must be designed in one style. It must be adhered to. Even the latitude allowed to a master-hand does not trespass beyond UNITY in style. See how style is achieved; first by the use of guide lines, the scaffolding of printing, disappearing when the structure is completed, but essential to its erection. Now draw two. These bound the letters top and bottom—but they are your servants, not your masters. There is a natural sort of rule-breaking. They will not prevent the flourish of Q and R and J, but only confine the general letter forms so that all may be in keeping. The third guide should now be drawn. In Figs. 4 and 5 it has been placed centrally or lower, and the effect is not over-pleasant.

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

FIG. 7
PEN LETTERING ON FOUR GUIDES

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

FIG. 7a
PEN WORK

l l l l l
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.

FIG. 8
PEN STYLE

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

See (Fig. 6, etc.) what happens when it is slightly raised. The tops as a result are smaller, the lower parts of the letters are greater, and the pleasant quality of balance, of stability, is made apparent.

Try now the effect of drawing four equi-distant guides to work on (Fig. 7). Now you can make several improvements. The cross stroke of A is lowered, adding to its pyramid effect of steadiness. The loops of P and R become bolder and gain balance. The crossbars of E and H, pushed up, give added grace to these letters. Letter X, crossing higher, is more firmly based. Pick out the other improvements entailed.

The width of the individual letters will, of course, vary very greatly. I and W are the extremes. For normal letters, such as E and N, the most legible and graceful effect is obtained when the width is about two-thirds of the height. This cannot apply to all letters. You may still make your O, and all letters based thereon, circular in the same alphabet. Where, too, spaces have to be filled, wider or narrower type is often necessary. Its use is permissible so long as the same style is maintained throughout the piece of work in hand. Do not make the mistake of imagining that all this matter of guides is over-emphasis of detail. What now may seem a confusing burden of detail soon becomes subconscious knowledge—part of your mind—as are the arts of walking or writing.

Guide lines never appear in your final card, but for all printing, unless it be a single price-figure, they are necessary. For very small lettering, one is enough, but for type of the size generally used on show cards, two are essential and more a great help.

You must study the "lower-case," or small alphabet, in equal detail. It is the type in which all our books are printed. It is the original alphabet. There were no capitals once. They arose when the need was felt for some more conspicuous form to mark name-words and the beginnings of sentences. They are altered small letters, altered for the sake of increased speed

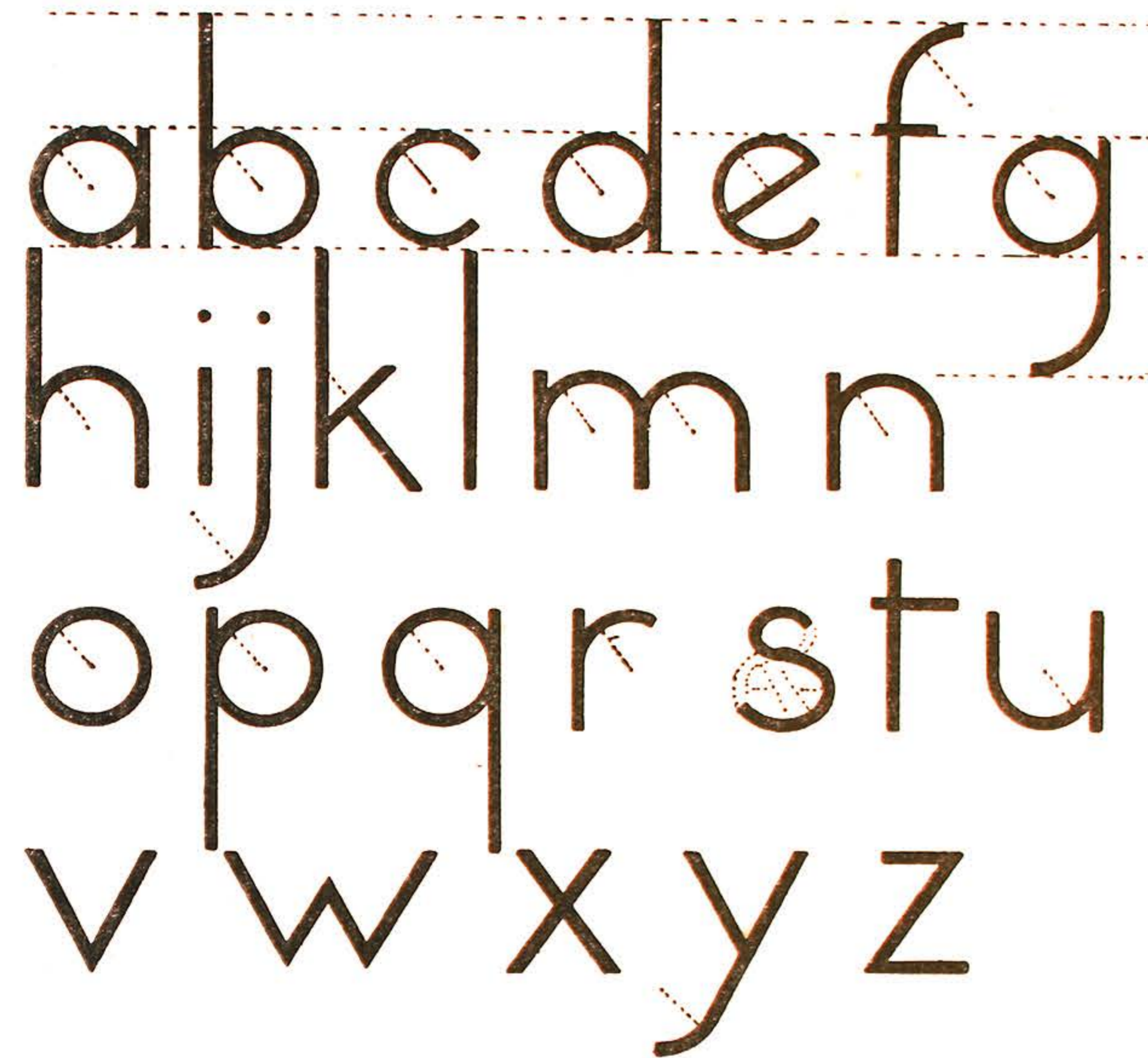


FIG. 9



FIG. 10

FOR UNITY OF STYLE

in reading, just as we join letters in the ordinary "cursive" or running hand for writing speed.

Our eyes are very accustomed to the small type. Since we are so used to it, we find it easier than massed capitals to read. It has many letters with long tops or tails. These force us to print it in widely separated lines and so add clarity to custom to make reading easy. If, in drawing these lower-case letters, you elongate these vertical strokes, you will, in one action, increase the legibility by enforcing wider spacing and gain the added elegance of height and slenderness (Fig. 8). Group the

FIG. 11

letters according to form. Nine, a, b, c, d, e, g, o, p, q, are based on the ring. Letters h, m, n, u, may be built from the semi-circle. Some, k, v, w, x, y, z, contain diagonals. Five, g, j, p, q, and y, are tailed. Four, b, h, k, l, are produced above the line.

These features will be enhanced when you design small alphabets, and will, if observed, produce the unity of style which is your aim.

Try now to draw a small alphabet in as simple a style as possible. That shown (Fig. 9) is in the Script style now taught in some schools in place of, or in addition to, writing. It is extremely clear to read and swift to write, owing to the elimination of all unnecessary detail. When it is mastered, variation of form may be essayed—indeed must, for, as it stands, this type has no great pretensions to grace. It is, however, the

foundation on which more graceful work depends. Draw it in four guide lines, equi-distant. The central pair contain the body of the letters. The outer ones limit their long strokes. There are one or two letters here whose uprights cause slight confusion. For this reason one may resort to shortening the middle leg of m, or sloping the final stroke (Fig. 10) in m and n. This, of course, modifies in the same way the forms of h and u, and possibly of p and y.

Now move the outer guides so as to permit of lengthening the verticals. The effect has already been noted. Distinguish between g and q, but retain simplicity of form.

Figures are in constant use, and by their fewness leave no room for error. Their construction and reduction to style is fairly simple. o, 6, and 9 are similar. The loop of 2 and the loops of 3 and 5 generally correspond. The closed 4 is neatest.

Make these two basic alphabets and the figures the subject of daily practice for a little. A few minutes daily are of greatest value.

You should criticize, in the light of this chapter, the hosts of printing examples in every publication and on every hoarding. Obtain from the nearest stationer, or from Messrs. Blackie & Sons, of 50 Old Bailey, London, the *Vere Foster Printing Book No. 10*, for 4d. Seek, if a library is available, books on printing, notably L. F. Day's *Alphabets, Old and New*.

CHAPTER THREE
STYLE IN LETTERING

THE number and arrangement of the guide lines you employ have a marked effect upon the type of letter you produce. In order fully to understand what style is most suitable for various occasions, it is necessary to remind oneself of the actual aims and purposes of a window-card.

The first duty is to arrest, to check the passer-by, because of some quality in its appearance, bright or contrasting colour, bold design, and so on. When it has checked the potential buyer, it must detain him or her. To do this it must be more than merely startling. It must possess, also, attraction. It must be pleasant to look upon, so that the eye instinctively lingers upon it. You will not expect to find a crowd of people lingering over a few of your single-figure price tickets. But you should aim to make them so attractive that people will cast a glance over the rest of your window because they like the look of them, and will possibly come in because they feel that the inside is as good as the outside is attractive.

This brings one to the third purpose of the card—to enhance the value of the goods it labels. As previously pointed out, the virtues of a card are conveyed, mentally, to the goods. Cards in good style suggest articles of good quality. This is the reason why successful wholesalers spend huge sums every year on well-designed and gaily-coloured cartons. They are employing the force of suggestion. Look at the dainty and brilliant dye-packets you stock. They suggest the brilliant beauty of the result the contents produce. Put up in plain containers, they would lose none of their effect upon the material dyed, but go per cent of their effect upon the people who buy.

When your cards have done all these things, they still have not done all their duty. It is not enough that they stop people,

STYLE IN LETTERING

keep them, and radiate suggestions of quality which are unconsciously accepted by the onlooker. Besides this they must convey an actual definite message in words or figures—and such a message as can be read in the minimum of time and with the least effort.

To do all this with a window-ticket sounds somewhat far-fetched until the matter is considered. Then it will be seen that there is a reason for everything, however small, and that we must take advantage of the smallest details if we are to achieve the utmost efficiency. It is only by close reasoning that we shall discover the best way.

What must characterize the styles which shall possess these powers to arrest, to attract, to enhance, and to communicate? Take the last first. Surely all our printing must be simple. No forms overburdened with ornament are any use on a window-card. Such lettering is in its place on an illuminated manuscript which one may admire in a leisure hour. In a ticket, however well done, it is wrong. Your type, then, must be simple. It is a two-fold virtue. It forces you to seek beauty in the letter forms themselves and not in trimmings. This clarity is essential.

The slope of your style must be considered with clarity in view. Perfectly upright type is easy reading. Forward-sloping type, since it follows the direction taken by the eye in reading, is easier still. Separate letters are distinct, even when very close. Imitation of writing is not so easy to do, and it is not so easy to read. Its employment should be occasional.

One pitfall yet remains. Each instrument is capable of producing many forms, and a designer may find himself guilty of the horrid crime of displaying clashing styles on one card. Guard against this at all costs. The severest extreme of simplicity is preferable. It is wise to make unto oneself a law never to use more than two styles to a card, and to see that these have a good deal in common.

The subject, or that particular feature of the subject you desire to emphasize, will, of course, be the prime factor in deciding the style you choose to write in. You stock, for

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

instance, a beef extract, whose most advertised virtue is its quality of strength-giving. Should you need to draw a card for this, your print will be sturdy, solid-looking stuff. If you wish to advertise the dainty little plain biscuits which go with your beef essence, you adopt a style plain but elegant, probably using as a background white, which suggests cleanliness in packing and conveys the pleasing picture of a spotless cloth on which to serve the dainty meal. A tiny border pattern, suggestive of a lace edge, would enhance the effect. It need

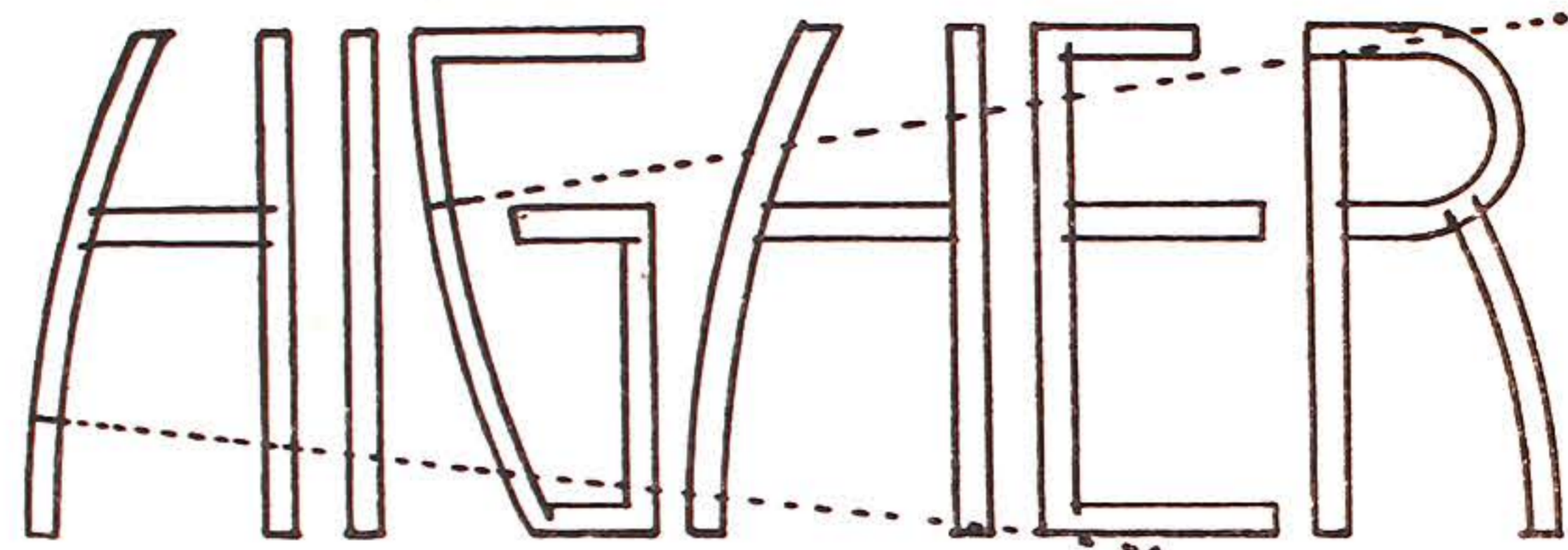


FIG. 12

not be elaborate; in fact only the corners need be drawn—the rest of the border may safely be left to the imagination.

The right kinds of printing and border take no longer than the other sort once they are decided upon. Their superiority of effect cannot be questioned. Guide lines will enforce this UNIFORMITY to a great extent. They will regulate loops and crossbars and the like. Vertical guides will ensure the uprightness of standing strokes, and sloping guides maintain a constant angle in slanting print.

When quite large work is being embarked upon, more than the usual three or four guides may be required. Guides will be necessary not only to regulate the positions of the limbs of the letters, but also their thickness. There is an obvious difference in style between the LONDON and the EMERY in Figs. 18 and 19. The best plan is to sketch roughly in pencil two or three letters of the type you fancy, and then take from



FIG. 13

BRUSH LETTERING

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

them the measurements you require for the laying of your guides and completion of the lettering.

Several examples of single and double guide lines are shown. The word BRAND is in a heavy-based style which gives an impression of great steadiness, while the lighter treatment of the tops of the letters prevents them from being too heavy. The solid masses of the letter-bases, too, are sufficiently bold to attract attention to the card, while the type has a certain interest through being out of the ordinary. The perfectly plain type, sometimes affected where a severity of effect is sought, needs the most careful guides. It is ruled lettering and so does not bear the characteristics of the instrument to the degree that pen or brush type will. Its construction is shown in Figs. 1, 9, and 12.

When a type is designed for reproduction by printing-press it is often drawn with elaboration, on the lines of book type, but when originals are displayed, one seeks instruments which will produce stylish results with less expenditure of time.

There are several instruments at one's disposal. The brush is the most ordinary. Its effect upon style is most marked. A brush consists of chosen bristles, each of which has a degree of life or spring. When moistened, it will draw to a fine point, so that, if lightly wielded, it will produce a hair-like line. When pressed upon the hairs part, just as the prongs of a split nib expand, though the brush is infinitely more sensitive to pressure. The simplest brush stroke is the form shown (Fig. 13)—just point, press, and lift. This form has innumerable variations. Some are shown, in the form of natural objects, suitable for card decoration. The lettering in Fig. 13 is speedy and, with practice, will produce a very readable type, owing partly to the forward slope. Much heavier lettering is done in two outlining strokes and then filled in. Such type naturally suggests filling in with a different colour, producing a bordered type that is very effective. If the brush is filled with liquid colour and held point down, the paint flows to the tip and prevents the brush from pointing. An entirely different style results.

A set of lowercase letters from 'a' to 'z' written in a fluid, cursive brush script. The letters are arranged in two rows: the first row contains 'a b c d e f g h i j k l m n' and the second row contains 'o p q r s t u v w x y z'. The strokes are dark and show some texture, characteristic of a brush.

FIG. 14
BRUSH LETTERING

A set of uppercase letters from 'A' to 'Z' and numbers from '1' to '9' written in a bold, blocky brush style. The letters are arranged in three rows: the first row contains 'A B C D E F G H I', the second row contains 'J K L M N O P Q', and the third row contains 'R S T U V W X Y Z' followed by '1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9' on the same line. The letters are thick and have a slightly irregular, hand-drawn appearance.

FIG. 15
FULL BRUSH LETTERING

No pointed strokes are produced. The shapes are bold and rounded, and may be employed to produce an effective style for large announcements. The serifs, of course, display the same characteristics, and may be made a very important feature in the style produced. Full brush styles with and without serifs are shown, and, though much more dainty printing can be conceived, it will be seen that the style is not without attraction. It is not difficult. The slight irregularities which really give a human touch to hand as distinct from machine-done work may be exploited here and made deliberate.

Never force an instrument to make strokes that it does not make easily. Discover its typical stroke or strokes and work on them to produce your types.

The pen has a most marked style of its own. The best pen for card writing is the reed pen, cut after the fashion of a quill from a dried reed-stem of suitable thickness. It is cut to a rigid, chisel-edge, which, though split to conduct ink to the paper, does not expand under pressure like an ordinary nib. Hence, in order to obtain variation in the stroke-width, the pen must be twisted, not pressed. If you now imagine the pen to be held at a certain angle to the direction of the work throughout an entire alphabet, it will follow that, given the necessary guide lines, an alphabet of uniform style results. One such is shown at Fig. 16 and the pen-angle is indicated. When the angle is changed a very different style results.

The work of the quill is similar, but since it will spread under pressure greater freedom is obtained. The reed pen really produces the most distinguished looking letters of any instrument, and card writers would do well to familiarize themselves with its use. It is wise to make oneself master of one pen alphabet in the style that appeals most. Variations upon it will soon occur to the mind when needed for special purposes.

There are several broad metal pens to be obtained which claim to equal, if not to supersede, the reed and quill. All metal pens, however, are harsh in action and tend to scrape the paper. To avoid this soft tips are used, and very springy,

yielding metal employed. One modern product is really a very satisfactory article. It costs more than the reed but has the virtue of long life with careful treatment, and turns out very fine clean-edged work. The clean edge should characterize all pen forms.

Chalk is an ill-treated medium. To commence with, never use chalk! It is dull and often gritty. Pastels are what you need. They are very refined chalks of extremely brilliant

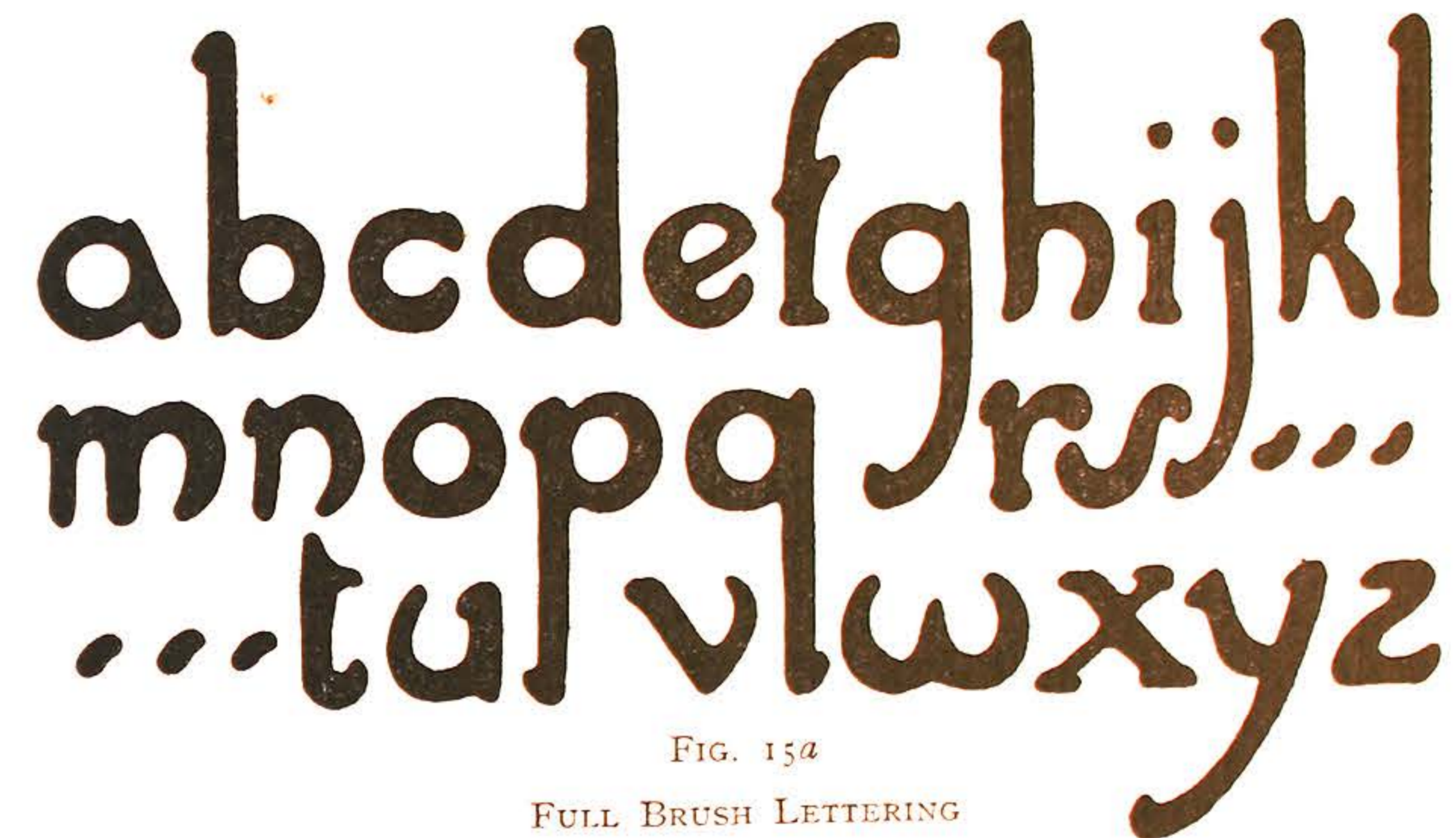


FIG. 15a

FULL BRUSH LETTERING

colour. Since chalk has an unyielding point, it only produces a line. You may, therefore, imitate the styles of other instruments without transgressing good taste.

The knife has a definite style of its own. It is used for cutting out stencil plates—cards, through holes in which colour is dabbed on to the card being printed. Card-cutting is hard work, and therefore is marked by simplicity—fewness and easiness of cuts. The easiest cut is a straight line, and the easiest curves are gradual ones. Such lines, therefore, are most commonly met with in stencil work. “Ties” are an essential feature of stencil design. They are the little bridges of card



FIG. 16

STYLE IN LETTERING

left to hold the design together. If they were cut out the design would cease to be—it would become one big hole. Skill is required to arrange these ties so that they give the maximum of strength and yet do not obscure the design. Do not attempt



FIG. 16a

PEN WORK



FIG. 17

ITALICS

to hide them. It cannot be done and should not. They are a feature of the art and much should be made of them.

In Chap. X are shown good and bad ties. The bad ones leave long projections which tend to curl up under the application of paint. Good ties are arranged so as to keep the stencil plate flat all over. In the examples shown, the black masses represent the holes in the stencil plate. The white surround is that part of the card protected from paint by the plate.

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

To sum up the matter, then, one's decision as to style is made because of the subject. The actual style itself is governed by guide lines and instrument. It must be marked by extreme legibility, high quality, and attractiveness.

Emphasis in style is often necessary. Size will effect it. Size is not always convenient, especially if one wishes to be emphatic twice on one card. The second time use *italics*. Anything in italics gets *special attention*. These italicized words get your special attention. Let your italics be in "lower case," too, for particular clarity. Do not overdo emphasis. If a card is all shouting, its effect is merely to deafen. Fig. 17 shows construction and effect.

CHAPTER FOUR WORD MAKING

THE making of alphabets is an art that must be mastered, but, when letters are combined to make words, fresh problems arise. In an alphabet, each letter is a separate problem. In making words there arises the new question of arrangement. Words are not merely strings of letters any more than houses are just piles of bricks. The relation of the bricks to one another is food for much thought. The word is an entirely new thing. When you read this page you do not take each word and visualize each letter therein, and then decide what the word is before going on. We see each word as one piece, unless it is an entirely new one which we have to spell out before we can understand. Take, for instance, the word LONDON. Its shape decides you at once. Indeed, if you were to mask the word so as to conceal all but its outline, its meaning would still be apparent. Moreover, if in the masked word a letter is omitted—say the first O, the eye sees at once that something is wrong. If, however, the letter is omitted but its space is left, one can easily pass the word for LONDON. Word-outline is what matters, then. We must construct each letter in a word with a view to preserving its peculiar outline.

Some letters are much more important than others. In the word LONDON, which we have already noticed, it was seen that one letter could be omitted leaving the word still legible. Now remove the second O, you can still see LONDON in what remains. The letters you have removed are vowels. Generally speaking, vowels are of secondary importance. If any letters are to be compressed or modified in order to suit a word to a space, vowels may be treated first. The vowels are A, E, I, O, U, and, more seldom, Y.

In the word LONDON it is noticed that the first and last

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

letters remain. They are the most important letters in the word. Even if a word begins and ends with vowels, they become the most essential letters. EMERY illustrates this. The initial E and final Y, though vowels, cannot be dispensed with, or word-outline is lost at once. The central E dropped out does not affect word shape. Should either M or R be



FIG. 18



FIG. 19

removed, though, the word disappears and meaningless letters remain. They are the consonants and, as a rule, consonants are the backbone, the framework of words. It is possible in some cases to modify them, however. Many words have pairs of consonants in them, as LETTER, BUBBLE. The second T and the third B may be modified without affecting legibility. All you have been aiming at in this examination into the importance of letters, is to maintain legibility and to enhance style.

WORD MAKING

There are some letters which, even when compression is not necessary, read just as well in a narrow, as in a broad, form. E, F, T, and N are like this. The narrow forms, as the figure shows, are sometimes the more graceful. In Fig. 20 is shown a word in which each letter has equal space. The result does not make a word. Outline is lost. When it is drawn again it becomes a solid piece and is at once a word. Some of the letters take less space than others, and some, because of their shapes, will pack closer without apparent crowding. A and V,



FIG. 20

SPACING

with sloping sides, hold other letters off. They should be packed closely to overcome too great an effect of openness. They actually overlap without being too close, as in AVENUE. Round letters as O, P, and S have a similar effect. The straight letters H, I, N, need a little more room to be seen clearly, but E, F, and T keep their neighbours aloof and can stand a certain amount of compression.

The illustration shows letters reduced to accommodate a word to a space. They should be examined and criticized in the light of the rules contained in this chapter. After all these

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

considerations there is a final test of good spacing—the eye. Stand well back and look at what you have printed. Find as much fault with it as you can. You will thereby save other people from doing so. If it looks well spaced, well and good.

FIG. 21 (a)

FIG. 21 (b)

If not, you must move your letters back and forth until they are right.

One cannot do too much juggling with letters on the surface of a window card for fear of destroying the surface. Therefore, in drawing out a card containing much wording it is customary to draft the design on thin white "kitchen" paper, and, when the spacing and design are satisfactory, to transfer it to the final card. Simple cards do not, of course, call for this treatment. Since word-shape is of such importance, avoid certain arrangements which tend to destroy outline. An initial letter of colour

WORD MAKING

strongly contrasting with the rest of the word will be read separately from it. Lettering of two colours, as shown, is similarly unsatisfactory, while a sudden change of background is equally destructive of legibility (Fig. 21).

In a card which bears a legend of several words a fresh detail arises for consideration, namely, the space to be left between words. If the card form requires that you spread out the lettering, be careful to ensure that the space left between words is always greater than that between letters. The wider gaps isolate the letters, even if they are wide apart themselves, into groups, and these are then read as words. In normal or close-spaced lettering, the ideal space is the width of an ordinary letter, but wider spaces do no harm.

Some cards bear several lines of lettering. They may be giving instructions as to the best use of some commodity, or contain arguments as to its superiority. They will be in moderate-sized type. The space left between the lines may vary a good deal, but for easiest reading let it be equal to the height of a capital letter in the style adopted, or very little less.

Such a card is still readable when the lines of print almost touch one another, for the eye has most strongly the habit of following print in horizontal lines, and rarely mistakes, but such close printing should only be used when lack of space enforces it.

CHAPTER FIVE
DESIGNING AND TOOLS

LET us suppose that you want a show card to push the sale of, say, cocoa. You may have an excellent loose cocoa which you consider worth exploiting. There are many aspects which you may present to the public. You decide to appeal simply, not employing statistics of food value, though this might well form the subject of another card, while the matter of comparative prices will not be omitted. Your main appeal is to a sense of comfort. You want your card to make people fancy a cup of warm cocoa—so that they may be more inclined to buy yours. It occurs to you that a steaming cupful on a tray gives this pleasant suggestion, so you have to decide where to arrange your cup and steam, and what and where your lettering shall be. Try to see it in the mind's eye. Then sketch it, roughly, on a scrap of paper, whose size is immaterial, so long as its shape is that of the final card.

At this point many readers will decide that drawing cups, or anything else, is outside their limits, and that they must content themselves with the less effective appeal of lettering only. But see how much may be done by the use of instruments which cannot go wrong. With a ruler and compass you can produce a very satisfactory cup and saucer, and the tray is simpler still. Now, still with your ruler, draw a dark night—or a dark window, which tells the same tale, and you have only to fill the cup—to put the steam on, that is, to present your customer with temptation in an attractive form. No drawing skill you see—all ruler work except the steam, and that you do with your eyes shut.

Now, as to wording. Yours is good cocoa ; so do very good (that is to say, very stylish) lettering. Be brief—"Brevity is the soul of wit." A fine pen style would look well. If you wish to stick to the ruler and compass, however, the circular



FIG. 22

(COMPARE WITH FIGS. 24 AND 25)

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

type shown is effective. It is drawn with the ruling pen, to be described in this chapter.

The steam looks best sprayed on. The process is described in the chapter on stencilling. We have finished the card rather too hurriedly. Let us look into the processes connecting the first little sketch with the show card in your window.

When satisfied with the sketch, take a sheet of the smooth white paper sold by stationers as kitchen paper. The white paper often used for the outside wrapping of bacon is also suitable. On it draw your design, in pencil, full size. Do your letter spacing and any other re-arranging you wish on this copy. See that your wording is not rendered illegible by crossing the dark window or the steam. Find out just where the centres of your circles are. When you can find no fault with the arrangement, rub over the back of the paper with a blue crayon-pencil, *not a copying-pencil*.

Lay the "backed" drawing on the card exactly in position, and secure them both with drawing pins to the drawing board or surface you are working on. Go over all your lines again and you will find your drawing in faint blue lines on the card. Of course, no alterations or guide lines have been traced through, and all the blue lines which have been traced on will be covered with ink when you set to work with ruling pen and compass to finish off your card.

There is no occasion to keep it to the black and white of the illustration, though black and white are very safe and very effective. A pale biscuit-coloured card with a blue cup will have a very good appearance, and, if tray and lettering still remain black, strong contrast is still utilized to make the card catch the eye. Too much trouble? Not if it sells your cocoa.

This description has purposely been detailed. To realize how one such card is made up, from the germ of an idea to the completed article, is to have as part of one's mental equipment the system on which all cards should be made. The problem is not always so advanced. The treatment is often much

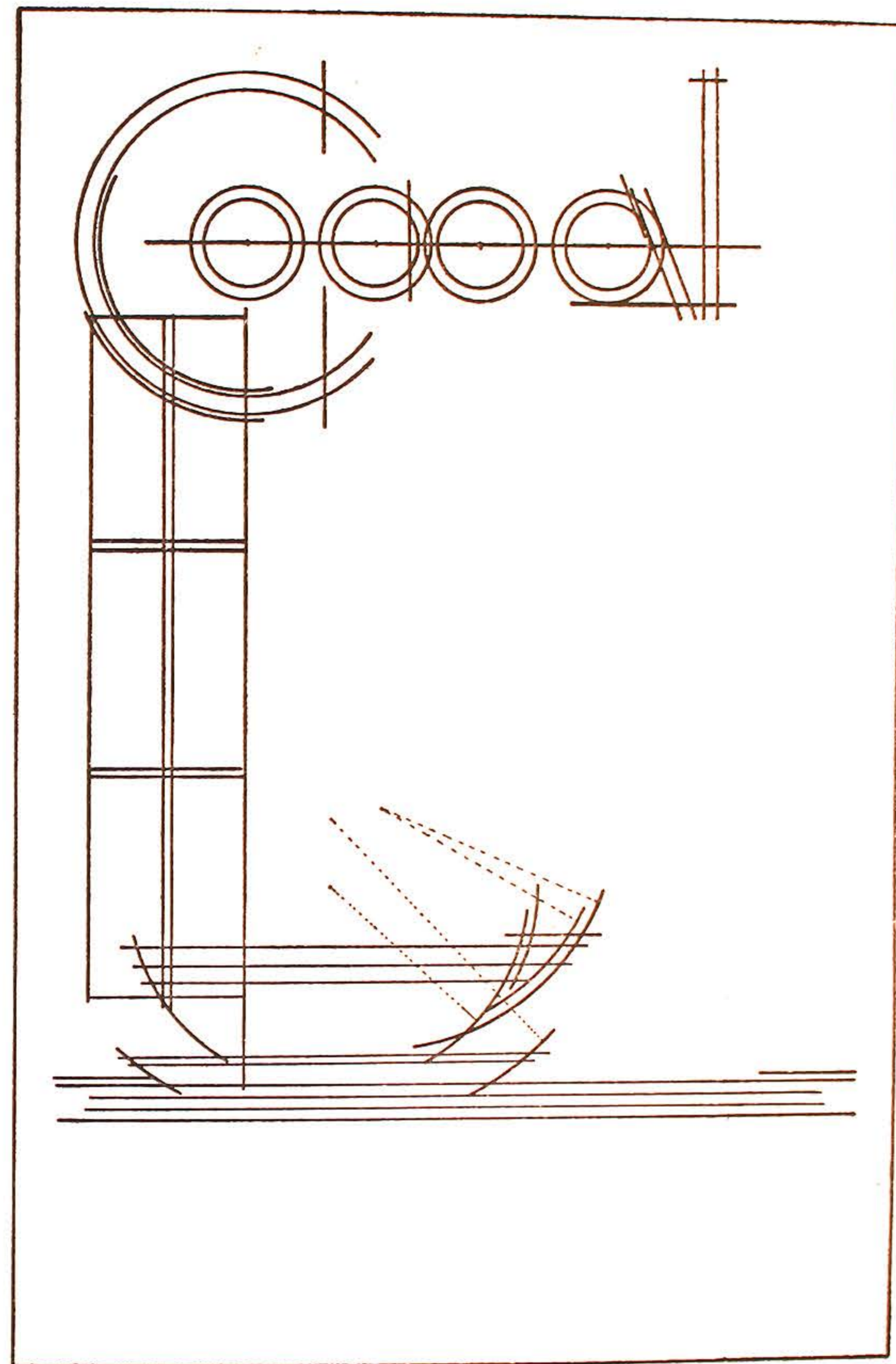


FIG. 23

AN ENTIRELY RULED CARD

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

simpler. The ornamental additions may be entirely absent. The lettering may be so simple and brief that the first drawing and tracing may be neglected. You *may* even use pen or brush without a pencil-touch on the final card. But you must know the way to go to work before you begin to dispense with aids. Walk before you run.

There are some tools and materials needed in this designing which must be particularized. You need first a smooth, flat, unwarping surface on which to fasten your card with drawing pins while you work. A drawing board is best, as it is of convenient size and weight and can be moved and sloped at will. Any smooth, unyielding surface will do at a pinch. The card itself may be very expensive. Best card certainly is, but there is a card made, consisting of a hard paper surface pasted over cheaper card, which is perfect for the work in hand. It may be obtained from stationers or, more cheaply, from the firms who also supply printed cards. It may also be obtained even more economically by pasting hard white paper over old show cards. You also need a T-square, as this produces your horizontal guides with most speed and least trouble. A set-square, sliding on it, gives correct uprights and makes exact corners to your borders, and a ruler, of course, is essential.

The familiar H.B. pencil is good enough. Buy a six-sided one. It will save you the trouble of picking up the round one when it rolls off the table. It is a handy ink ruler, too, when using an ordinary pen. Rubbers must be soft, to avoid ruining the surface of the paper. Rub only lightly to remove lead, not paper.

A reed pen is also required. They are cheap but not widely obtainable. The Publishers of this book retail them at 3d. each. Each pen is a dried reed-stem, whose hollow shaft is trimmed at one end to a chisel-edge. A small metal spring serves to retain an ink supply. Worn edges may be trimmed. Before cutting, look at the edge on both sides to see how it has been cut, and be sure that your knife is very sharp. Cut clean; do not "nibble." Cane is hard. A metal substitute

DESIGNING AND TOOLS

is shown. It works very well. Known as "Boxalls," it is widely obtainable.

Brushes are expensive. Sable is the best hair to buy. It is so springy, and its spring lasts. Spring is the essential quality of a brush. Fitch brushes are not so good, but they are still very good. The writer has had splendid service from fitch brushes, and their price is not so ruinous as that of sable. Four brushes are recommended: a medium-sized flat one for putting washes of colour on a card, and a large, medium, and small round brush. On a good round brush the hairs will all draw to a point when moistened. You may dispense with the large and with the flat if you wish, but they are very useful.

The compass is an essential tool. Fitted with a pencil it produced the circles on which the cocoa lettering was based. Substituting a ruling-pen point for the pencil enables the designer to finish off the letters on the final card. The compass is also a great time-saver in the transferring of measurements when card planning, and saves a great deal of ruler work, besides giving more exact results.

A ruling pen consists of two steel strips, each tapering to a point. The distance between the points is regulated by a screw. The ink is held between the blades by the natural attraction of the metal. The attraction is only slight, and if the gape between the prongs is too wide, the ink will fall out. The tool yields a line of constant, and, in practice, of narrow width, but with perfectly clean edge.

CHAPTER SIX

COMPOSITION AND CARD FORM

MANY books have been filled with the laws and methods of art. Pure Art—the making of pictures for themselves alone—contains much matter for study. Our card designing is no less an art because it is an applied art. We must master its fundamental laws before we can produce master-cards by judgment and not by luck. The laws are few but far-reaching. Let us recollect what our cards must achieve, and under what conditions. Thence we can deduce what rules we must follow.

Our cards must attract the passer-by, retain his attention, enhance the value of the goods, and convey some sort of message or suggestion—with or without words. They must do so under conditions of severe competition, against rivals, noise, and movement. Movement attracts most attention. In still objects colour is the most arresting quality. Colour though, however brilliant, is not seen unless it differs from its surroundings. Hence, CONTRAST is of prime importance in our cards.

How may contrast be obtained? First in colour, of course. There is no greater contrast than that of black against white, but many pairs of colours give strong contrasts and are less ordinary. In the colour chapter, the selection of contrasts is explained.

You may also secure contrast of direction in your cards. In the cocoa card, the horizontal tray contrasts with the vertical mass of the window, and the window with the wording. Other examples show how lettering is forced forward by a background of verticals or curves. Card form may be modified to develop the feature of contrast in direction.

Contrast in type? In size, certainly, to call attention to the important words. But in styles certainly not, for the same reason that you would not utilize the contrast between, say,



FIG. 24



FIG. 25

COMPOSITION AND CARD FORM

black ink and coloured chalk. The artistic sense feels the incongruity of such an alliance at once. The contrast in slope in type has been discussed.

Have you ever looked at a drawing of the pyramids? There is not much danger of their overbalancing is there? They are far too firmly based. Now there is a certain satisfaction to the eye in gazing upon such a structure. We are interested, of course, in a view of the flat-iron building, or some other such sky-scraping, steel-framed miracle, but though we know the latter to be safe, the pyramid leaves in our minds the greater sense of security. It is always pleasant to find this quality of balance in a picture. The eye instinctively seeks and stays on what is pleasant. It can, of course, be attracted by the fascination of horror and disturbance, but such qualities are not to be associated with your shop. We must design, then, with balance in our minds. Sometimes we shall flout it—but we shall do so deliberately, with a special purpose, not blindly and accidentally.

We obtain balance by laying a heavy base to our design. Perhaps we actually paint in a broad colour mass, perhaps we arrange to leave a broad band of untouched card, but the result is the same, whether it is drawn or suggested.

In cocoa (Fig. 25), the white breadth below the tray supplies the stability needed. An alternative treatment (Fig. 22) shows a solid border and a black base. Yet again, a mid-colour, represented by shading, gives it stability and permits the wording to thrust itself into prominence (Fig. 24).

Take a piece of blank paper rather taller than it is wide. A sheet of notepaper will do. If you can glance at it without directing your gaze to any one point, you will find that it rests upon a spot rather higher than central. This is the point of interest. Here, then, is the place where, in general, the most important feature of your card should lie. The word "Cocoa" does. Moreover, if you look at the cup the eyes naturally follow the rising steam until they come to the word again. Like all rules, it is your servant, not your master, but, when

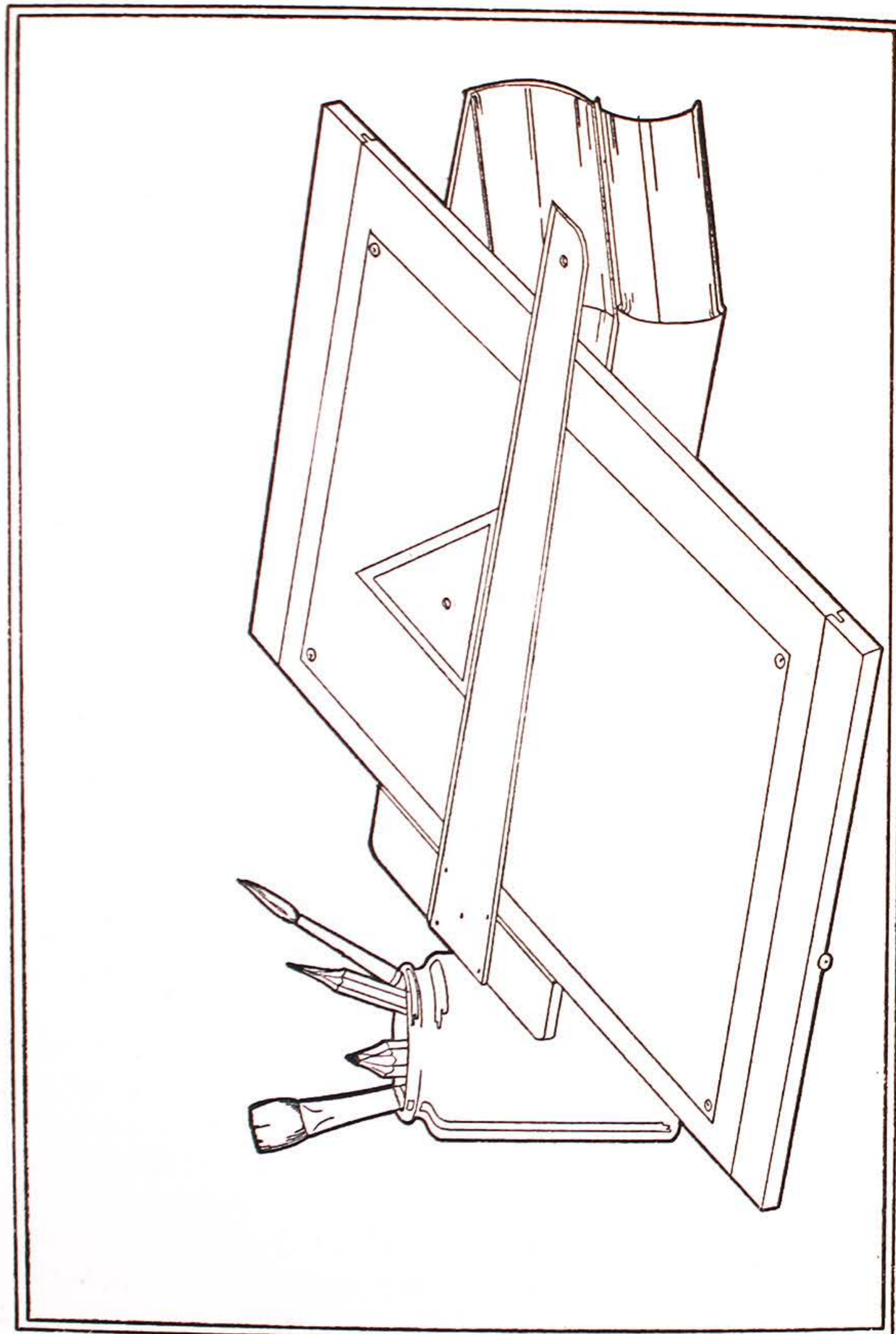


FIG. 26

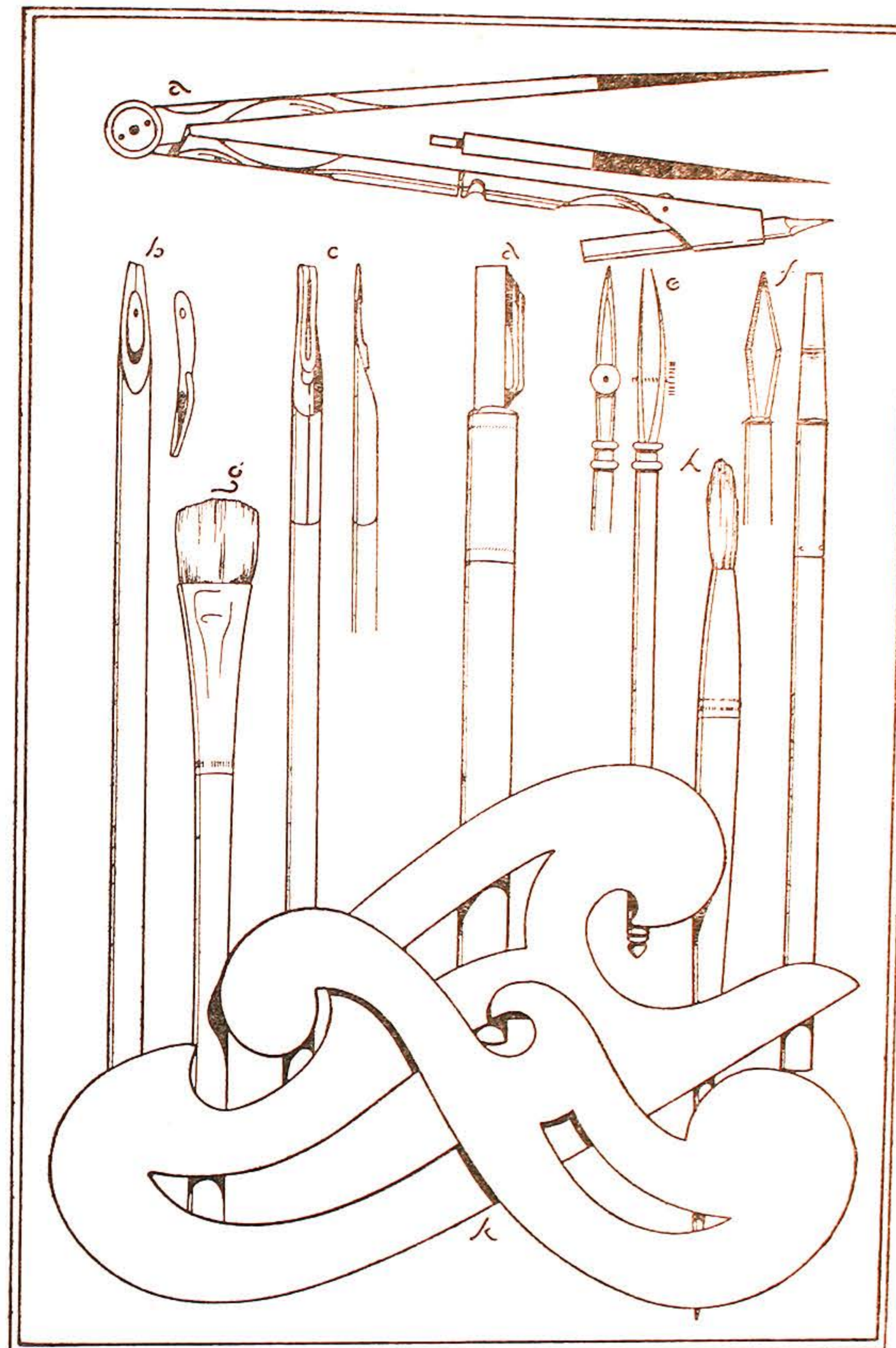


FIG. 27

- a.* COMPASS. *b.* REED PEN. *c.* PARCELS PEN. *d.* LEAF PEN.
e. RULING PEN. *f.* BOXALL'S PEN. *g* and *h.* FLAT AND ROUND BRUSHES.
k. FRENCH CURVES FOR LARGE LETTERING AND ORNAMENT

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

you break it, have a reason. It is noteworthy that if you draw a rectangle at this point whose shape is the shape of the paper, it leaves the broad border of stability at the bottom (Fig. 28).

If you have a secondary interest—a matter of less, but still of some, importance—on your card, it will best fall below the other, in the position of subsequent reading. Type less in size will, of course, be used, and small italics give the emphasis required.

The border demands full consideration in card design. Its effect is that of a frame round a picture. It limits attention within its bounds. Like the frame again, it may be ornamental. It is there whether you draw it or not. Take a plain card. Its four edges form its border. When you draw a frame shape on it, there are three borders: the edge, the line you drew, and the space between it and the edge. You cannot, and will not attempt to, avoid this, but will exploit it to gain desirable features in design.

The broad-based border is desirable for reasons of balance. Diagrams show how telling a broad border is, and especially a broad-based one. A broad border round a card of close lettering is particularly necessary. Border ornament is detailed in another chapter. You may utilize your border to gain the advantage of contrast of direction. Words or objects which break the border stand out from the card with telling boldness.

It is not, we have noted, always essential to draw a border when you want one. The card forms one. If you want another, you can produce it by suggestion. The parts of a border which matter most are the corners. Draw these in and they suggest the rest to the imagination. Sometimes one, two, or three sides may be drawn, depending on the design and its purpose (Fig. 28).

The form of your card may vary greatly. What may be called normal shape is about half as high again as it is wide. A card of extreme height is very elegant in appearance but does not lend itself to much wording, since it cuts up the matter into such short lengths. The normal shape turned sideways is a

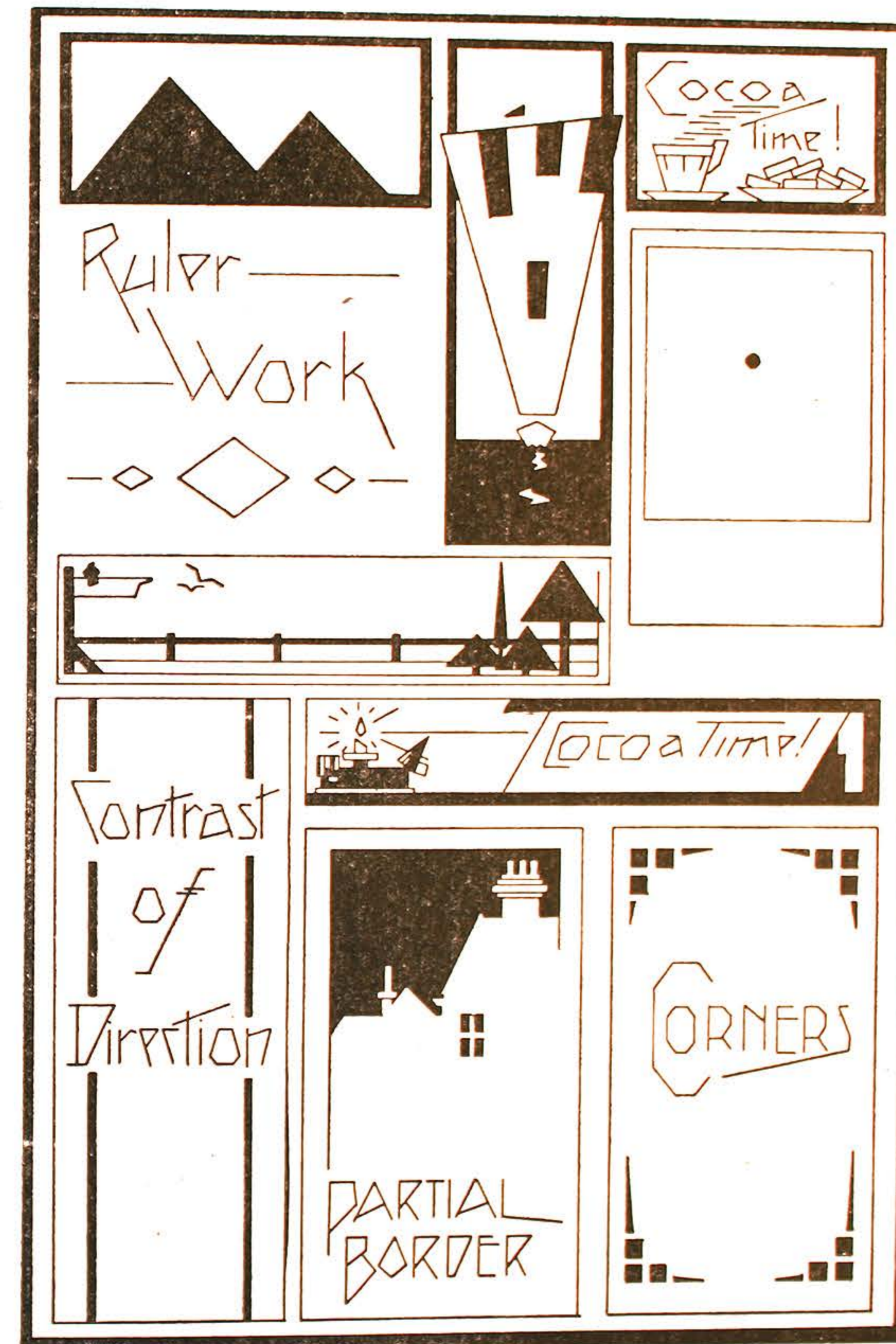


FIG. 28

STRAIGHT LINE DESIGNS

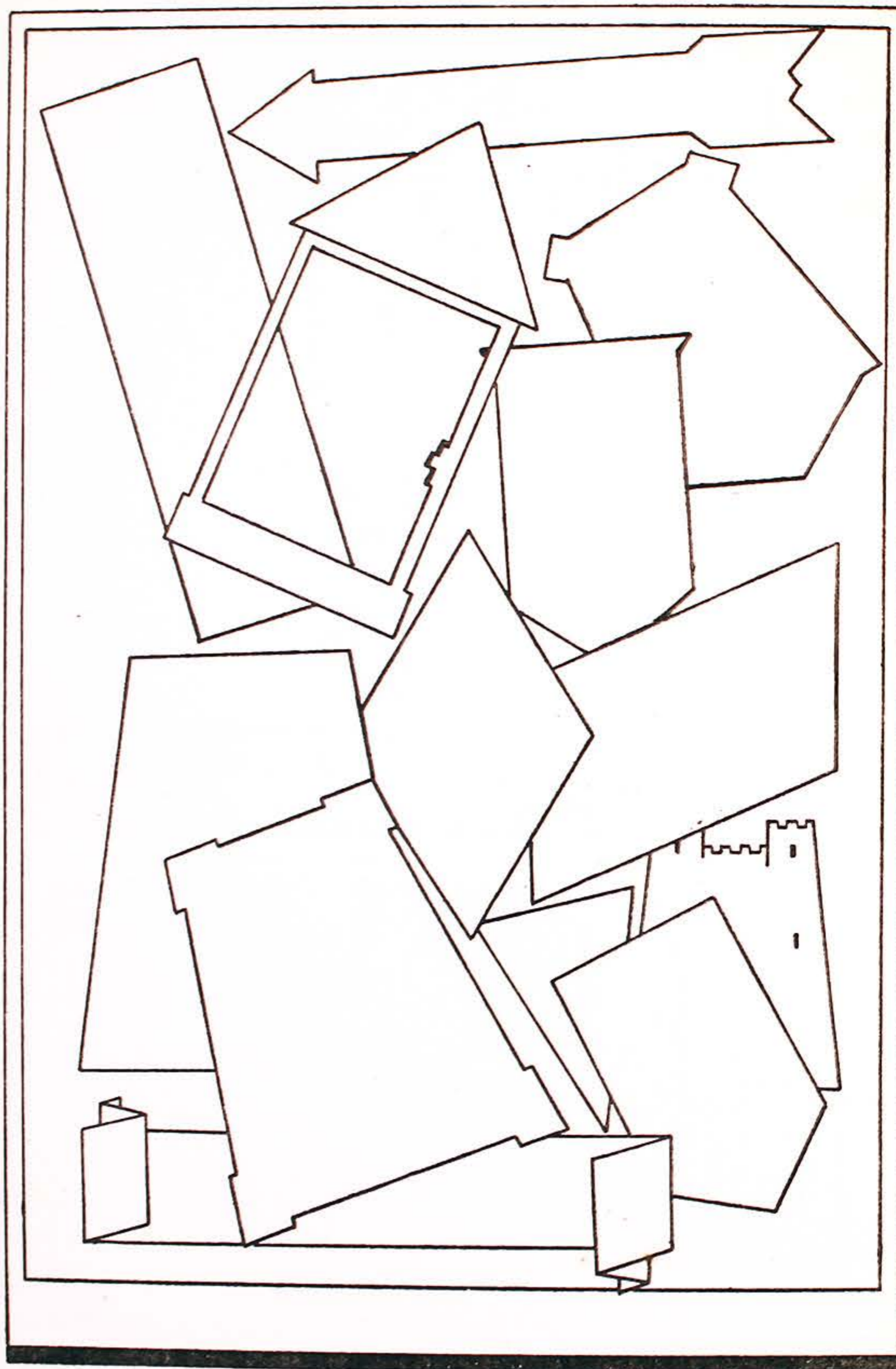


FIG. 29
CARD FORMS

COMPOSITION AND CARD FORM

good form for reading-matter. Horizontal strip-cards may be used with good effect, whether for wording or to pictorial advertisement. The tapering forms shown have a pleasing effect of broad-based balance. Unbalanced forms are best produced only in small sizes, for single figures or brief wording (Fig. 29).

Curved forms have often a very elegant appearance, but their cutting is a matter of some difficulty. Some variation of the rectangular shape is best. The grace of curves may be secured in the applied design. Rectangles, moreover, are the easiest and most natural forms to design in. Practically all pictures are rectangular.

CHAPTER SEVEN

COLOUR AND ITS PRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT our waking lives we are constantly under the influence of colour. From our very earliest days colour attracts and affects us. A tiny child will distinguish between a couple of coloured balls and show a preference for one. As we grow older, our colour-sense grows too. In some people it grows apace, and, by special training, grows more than in ordinary people, and artists are produced. Everyone, whether interested or not in the way colours are produced, is affected by colour in a hundred different ways. Colour is brimful of meaning for us, and it is immensely powerful over all.

We speak of gay or sombre hues, and really mean that certain colours have an effect of gaiety upon us, while others quieten, perhaps even depress us. "The sad sea waves" owe some of their sadness to their cold grey-green hue. When the sea is blue under a summer sky it does not seem so sad. The "angry glow" of sunset expresses our recognition of the effect of certain reds upon us. Royal purple has an effect of majesty quite apart from the royal choice. Some shades irritate, some exhilarate, some soothe. There are colours cold in effect, and warm colours. See how wallpapers affect the comfort of a room. Colour, indeed, for its immense effect upon the mind, is employed as a definite curative treatment in some nervous disorders. Many shell-shocked soldiers underwent colour-treatment with successful results. We doctor ourselves by going into the country and instinctively seeking the restful effect which is the first quality of the innumerable greens of nature.

Colour, then, is a wonderful and powerful instrument upon which you may play. You must believe in colour in order to convey its full effect. Your cards are not just cards and nothing more. They are art, as much as the art of the

COLOUR AND ITS PRODUCTION

picture-makers, even the simplest of them, and you must be as proud of your creative craft as they.

The actual statement of the principles of colour is simple. Their application demands your practice. There are three colours—red, yellow, and blue. These are called primaries, the original colours. They cannot be produced by mixing other tints, but are derived straight from various earths or vegetable tissues. From these three all other colours are made. Mix red and yellow and you get orange, or, as you may vary the proportions of the ingredients, so your tint will approach to red, like a tomato, or will draw near to yellow. But it will not be pure yellow nor pure red.

Mix red and blue. You may put the merest touch of blue and get a wine colour, or equal parts and get a purple, or very little red and get a shade which is almost blue, and there are innumerable shades between. Mix blue and yellow and you get a green, which may vary from the almost yellow of a lime to the almost blue of a peacock's neck. These are two colour mixtures, or secondaries.

Now mix red, yellow, and blue and produce a tertiary. Here your difficulties increase apace. Try to mix them, a very little at a time, until you get a tint which reminds you of no other shade, either primary or secondary. It is pure grey. Now, if you drop in a little red, you get a tint which reminds you of red but is not pure red; it is a red-grey. Put in more red. Your shade approaches more nearly to red, but it can never be pure red. You will find it difficult at first to accustom yourself to the new use of the word "grey." It is, popularly, applied only to the pure grey. You must keep constantly in mind the real origin of the colours you see. If you stir into your pure grey a tiny spot of blue, you get a blue-grey. If, instead, you stir in a speck of yellow, a yellow-grey is the result. Red and yellow make orange, so if you put in both you get an orange-grey. By adding red and blue to the pure colour you get a purple-grey, and by the addition of blue and yellow a green-grey is made.

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

Read these sentences again carefully, and discover each fact for yourself with actual paint. You will not know them by reading alone. Do not tell yourself that paints and common-sense are good enough for your cards. Develop a colour-sense as well, and make your cards better than good enough. The posters you see are most valuable object lessons. Hunt for primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries in them. You will find that the colours were not just the nearest to the artist's hand. Each was chosen to gain a certain effect upon the public—your public. It is worth while.

The quality which cards, like posters, must develop is contrast. We all know that some colours contrast. We talk of dark and light, cold and warm colours. Let us systematize it. The greatest contrast is that of black with white. Such a combination is not always the most effective, however, because it is so ordinary. It may be made more telling by arranging the opposites in bold masses, but colours are more attractive. Black and a light colour will give most brilliant effects. Black has the desirable effect of making other shades look brighter, but it is not essential. You know how your colours are made. To obtain contrast, just select those, at first, which have nothing in common. They make the strongest contrast. Thus, red contrasts with blue; red contrasts with yellow; red contrasts with green (blue and yellow). Red does not contrast with purple or orange, for each of these contains red. Similarly, yellow contrasts with blue and with purple, but not with green or orange.

Look at the hoardings and see how often these contrasts are utilized. Now choose those colours which have very little in common. For instance, blue contrasts with a very yellow tertiary such as cream or biscuit or khaki, because, although there is blue in each of these three tints, it is only present as a mere trace. Similarly, orange, containing no blue, contrasts with purple, in which blue predominates.

Once again remind yourself to study the posters. They are your school of colour.

CHAPTER EIGHT

COLOUR AND ITS APPLICATION

THERE are several different methods of applying paint to the card when you have decided, by the use of your knowledge of the theory of colour, what shade you will employ.

In what is generally known as the water-colour method, the pigments are stirred into water until the desired shade is obtained. When that shade is pale, little colour is added to much water. When water is lessened and colour increased, the shade becomes, naturally, richer, until at last the only moisture added is that contained in the wetted brush. Most of the work in this method, however, is done with a thin mixture. Consequently, in nearly all cases the background on which you work shows through the colour which you apply. See how this affects your work. It means that your background, your card, is generally white, always light. If you painted transparent washes on a dark ground they would be invisible. It is a disadvantage thus to be confined to light backgrounds. You will not always get cards of the exact tint you require, and, in order to carry out a certain colour scheme, may find it necessary to tint your own white cards. Place the card on a slight slope, as if on a desk-top (Fig. 30). Mix plenty of colour. At first you waste paint, but soon you will accurately gauge the amount required, and it is better to make too much than too little, for it is most difficult to match a tint exactly. Take the broad brush, and, working in clean strokes across the card, paint the surface with clean water. The tilt will cause the surplus water to run to the bottom edge of the area being wetted, and there it may be collected with a nearly dry brush. Now you are ready to colour. Stir your wash of colour up and keep it stirred each time you fill your brush. If it is a mixture of pigments this is especially necessary, as

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

some colours are much heavier than others and will sink to the bottom, causing a change of hue.

With a full brush lay a streak of colour across the top of the card. Make a short down-stroke at each side. Continue thus, keeping the brush fairly full. See that the side-strokes are always a little lower than the cross-strokes. Collect the surplus paint with a moistened brush, and watch if any more comes down, as, if it is allowed to dry at the bottom, it will make your wash darker there. Beautiful effects are obtained by grading a wash from dark to pale or *vice versa*. A fading wash of blue, for instance, suggests a sky. Start as before but with a strong mixture and, after every two or three strokes, drop a brush-full of water into the saucer, till your tint pales to the desired degree. Remember that it will look a little paler dry than wet. If you want the colour deeper at the bottom, as for the sea, turn the card upside-down and proceed as before.

When buying colours, get as few as possible and always buy in tubes. It forces you to make your own shades and is a most valuable training in colour control. Get red, yellow, blue (the primaries), black, and white. The following are recommended: Crimson Lake, Chrome Yellow No. 1, Prussian Blue, Ivory Black, Chinese White. You will find many more at your disposal, but do not invest in them yet. When you find yourself able to make what tints you want, it will be convenient to add a few time-savers to your list, such as Vandyke Brown, Vermilion (a vivid scarlet), Emerald Green, Ultramarine Blue. They will save considerable time and trouble in making up shades.

Clean all brushes thoroughly in water directly after using, and always avoid stubbing the hairs, either in cleaning or storage. The most useful method to card designers is the body-colour method. Water-colours are used, but "body" is added by stirring in Chinese White till the mixture is as thick as cream. It is opaque, of course, owing to the Chinese White included, so you may use it on any background.

Some very striking effects may be obtained by the use of

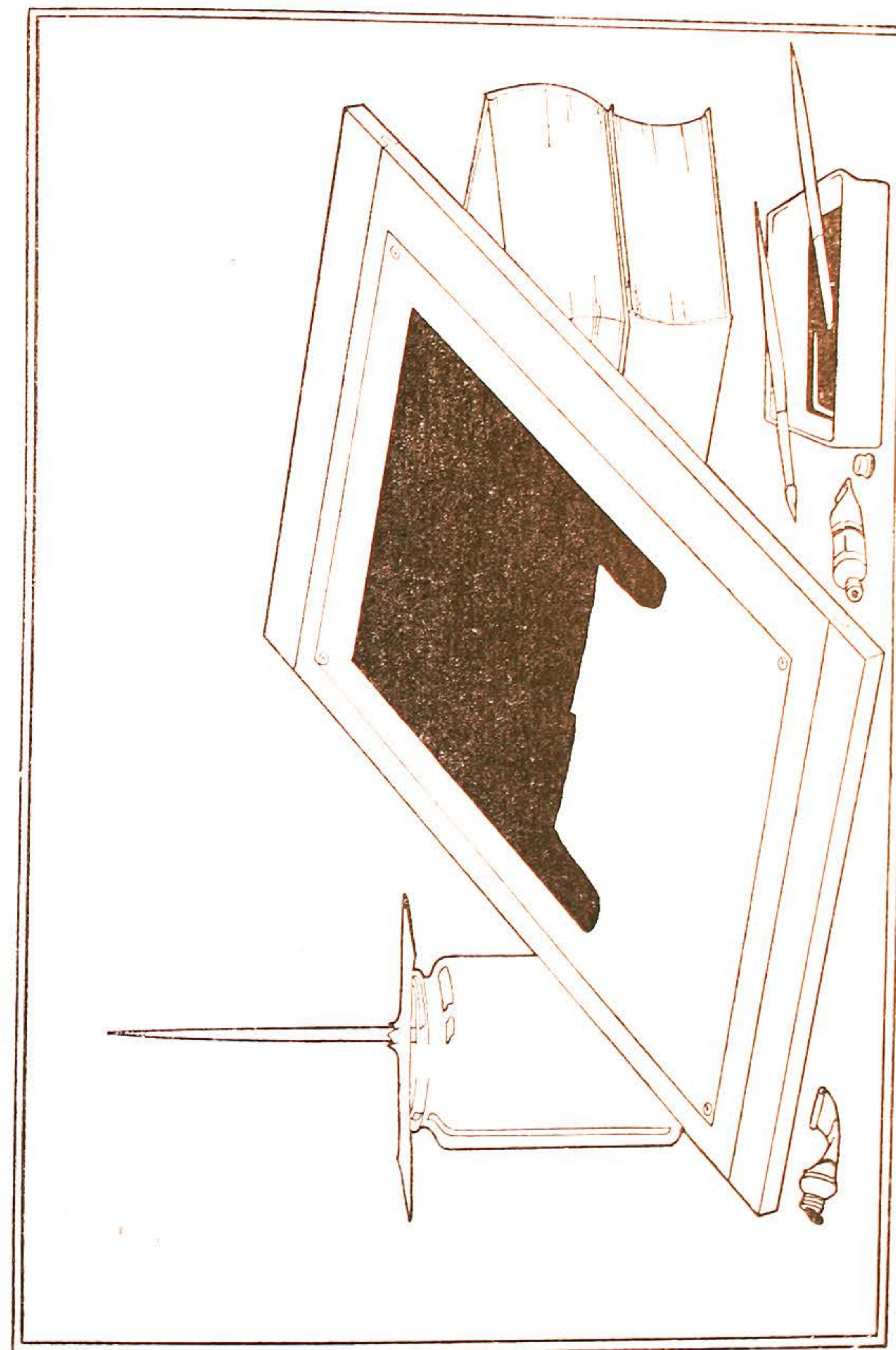


FIG. 30
LAYING A WASH

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

light lettering or design on a dark ground, and such treatment is very restful to the eye as well as being attractive. Paint firmly and with the brush not too full. Brush marks will show at first but will sink out as the paint settles. Your best results will be obtained by a combination of this method with water-colour treatment.

The illustration (Fig. 31) suggests, as well as black and white will, a background of shaded wash, with body-colour, lettering, and design superimposed. If the paint is not too thick, it may be applied with a ruling pen. Keep the points from clogging as the pigment dries upon them, or you will not get a clean-edged line. A coloured edging to the cocoa wording could well be added with body-colour and a ruling pen. Keep all mixtures stirred. The danger of heavy pigments sinking is as real as with water-colour.

An attractive feature in some cards is the glossy surface of the lettering. To obtain this, add to the paint either dissolved white sugar or a little clear gum. The gum must be as clear as possible. Yellow gums change the colour, often with undesirable results, especially in light and delicate hues. Gummed cards need careful storing. They should be stored in a dry atmosphere, as otherwise the surfaces are apt to become sticky.

Do not lay on body-colour too thickly or it will crack and perhaps peel. It should be just thick enough to conceal the background.

For cards of lettering, brilliant effects may be obtained by the use of inks. Do not buy ordinary writing inks. They are never very vivid and their colours soon fade. Get architect's waterproof inks. They cost a shilling a bottle but last long, keep their colour (a most important quality), and are made in many brilliant hues. They may be used with brush or pen, but are most satisfactory for pen work. They do not dilute very well with water. They are quick-drying liquids and need sure and careful use. As a medium for reed pen work, they are excellent. If brushes are washed directly after use, plain water



FIG. 31

CONTRAST ON GRADED GROUND

will clean them. They are, of course, transparent and so have the same background limitations as water-colour.

Indian ink is a waterproof, jet black. It is really black, not like black writing ink. It contains solid pigments finely powdered, in a quick-drying liquid. It clogs brushes, and a special brush for its use is best. Clean directly after use with methylated spirits or with warm water and yellow soap, working the brush on the soap to get a lather. Do not leave the bottle open or the spirit will dry out.

For all pen work aim to have the board so tilted that the pen may be held practically horizontal. The broad-ended pens hold much ink and, if sloped down, shed ruinous blots on the card. A smooth-surfaced card is essential for pen work or the edges will not be clean. Brushes, since the hairs are so resilient, may be used on a smooth or a granular card.

Metallic colours, gold, silver, bronze, are sold. They consist of finely powdered metals in a gum and spirit solution, which dries very quickly. They are difficult to apply evenly. They clog and spoil brushes. Their effect, unless very sparingly used, is to dazzle the reader at certain angles of vision. The writer prefers to rely on pure water-colour.

Chalk cards may be things of beauty, and joys, if not for ever, at least for quite a long time. They need not be looked upon as makeshifts. Brilliant and beautiful effects may be secured by the employment of chalks, or rather of pastels, and with reasonable care such cards may be preserved as easily as cards in other media. Pastels are put up in packets of ten or upwards. The smallest number is ample. Your card or paper must be rough. The texture of the unglazed blue paper often used for tea and sugar wrapping is ideal, though the colour is rather too bright to be suitable as a background. Choose dull and often dark colours for your backgrounds. The various grey and brown wrapping papers are ideal in texture and in colour. Art dealers keep pastel papers in a considerable range of tints. These can be mounted on old show cards and then cut to size. A quick, firm wipe with a moist sponge will often

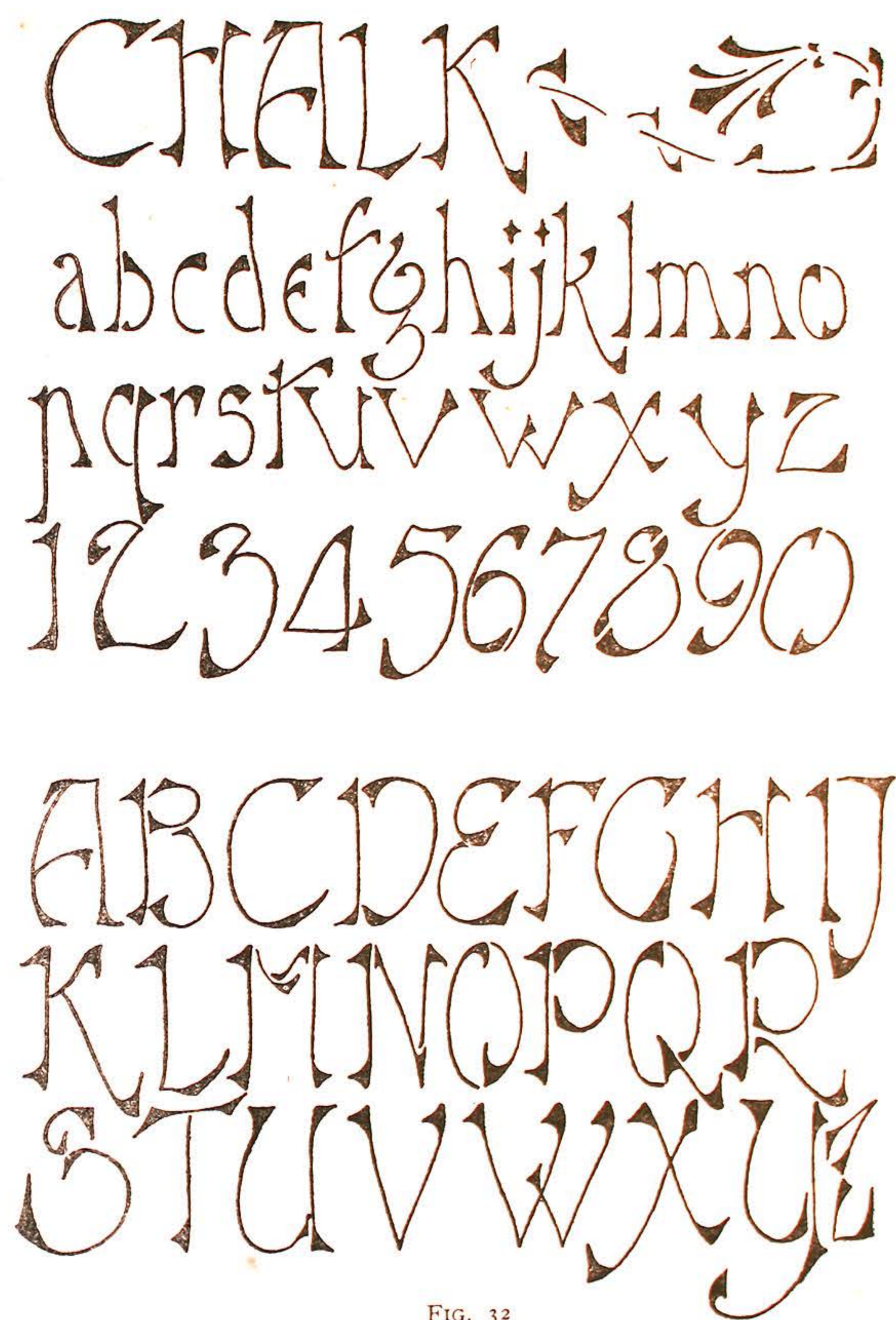


FIG. 32
CHALK LETTERING

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

clean such a card for re-designing. "Flat" black paint (lacking varnish) is often used to make permanent cards. Paint smooth wood with it. Such cards will clean like school blackboards.

Chalk produces a line of little variation in width. This produces lettering such as that shown at Fig. 32, for a tendency arises to elaborate the stroke ends. Again, you may draw letters in outline and fill them with a different colour. The sketchy strokes which chalk produces when lightly applied, lend themselves very readily to certain forms in ornament. A few are suggested. See how distinctive the effects of the various instruments are upon the same subject. Chalk is the swiftest means of colour application. It is that attended with the least trouble and apparatus. Its possibilities are very well worth exploring. Care in storing is essential. Interleave your pile of pastel cards with old newspapers to obviate blurring.

CHAPTER NINE ORNAMENT

WE have seen how, in the construction of lettering under certain conditions, of measurement and instrument, ornamental form naturally arose. Let us trace now how pure ornament, apart from letter form, may be developed further to distinguish our cards. A little touch of ornament, added to a plain lettered card, may improve it immeasurably. There is infinite scope and material for ornament, and even those most diffident of their powers may safely assure themselves that most of it lies within their reach.

Much ornament originates in the instrument. We discovered the brush characteristics in letter making. The same forms lend themselves most readily to utilization as ornament. Dip a brush in ordinary ink and, on a piece of scrap paper, see how many variations of the normal brush-stroke you can find. Numberless combinations of these may be assembled. A few are shown (Fig. 33). The full brush is equally facile as a means of design, especially as it may be the means of lightening the effect of what is sometimes a heavy type.

The pen yields a variety of strokes which arrange in very pleasing patterns or stand by themselves as useful "spot" ornaments (Fig. 34). Pastel, a description of the use of which concluded the preceding chapter, has equal possibilities. It may be developed along two lines. The first is the simplest method of all—that adopted by the child in its earliest efforts to draw—scribbling. The infant's tendency is to scribble round and round. Its unsteady efforts produce a mass of circular scribble like a tangled ball of wool. Under the control of the adult hand, however, this method may yield effective results. Try it. Make a chalk dot. Enlarge it by a gradually increasing steady circular scribble until it is large enough to represent, say, a pea. Further enlargement will produce the form of a



FIG. 33
BRUSH FORMS IN ORNAMENT

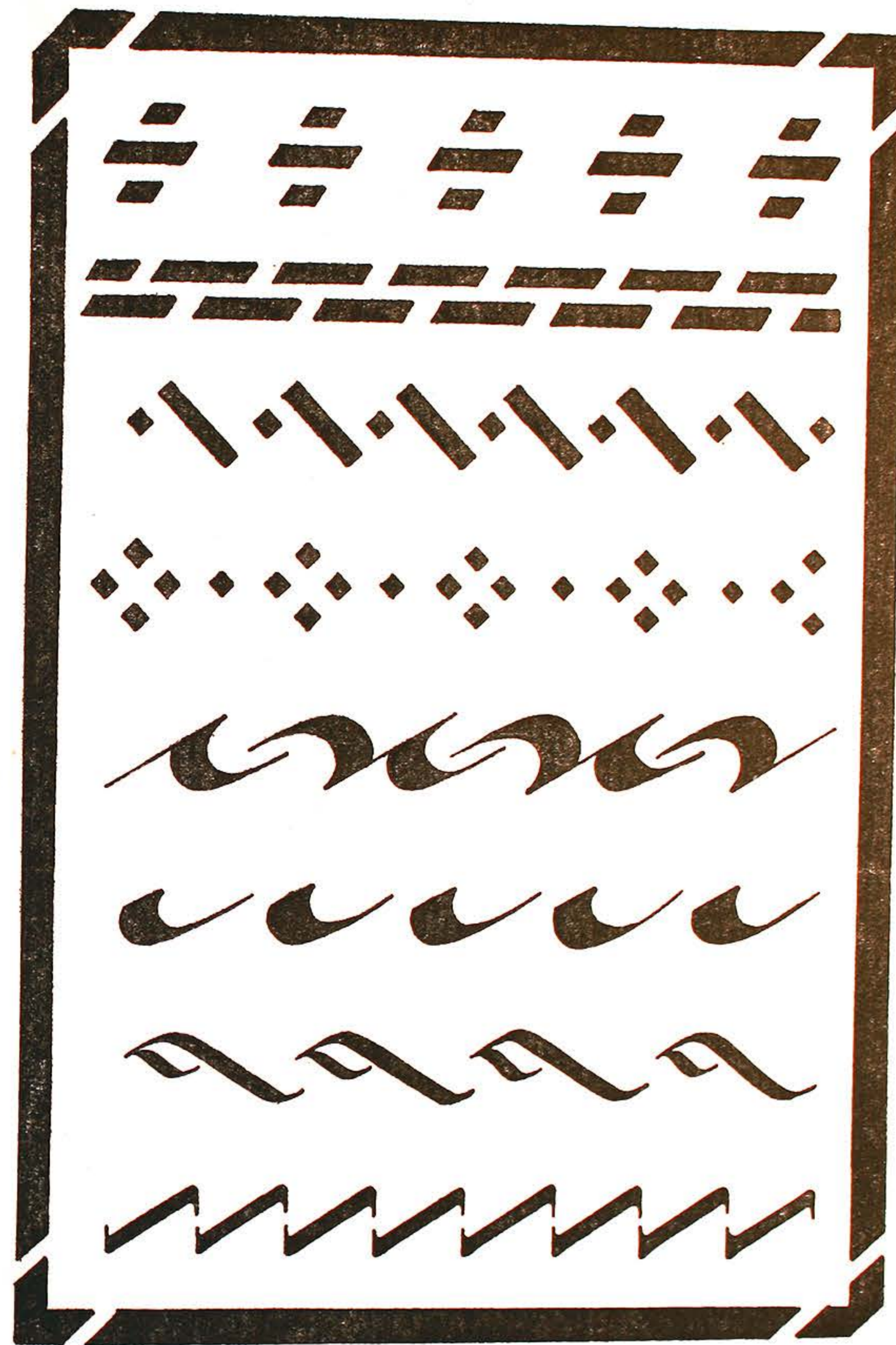


FIG. 34
PEN FORMS IN ORNAMENT

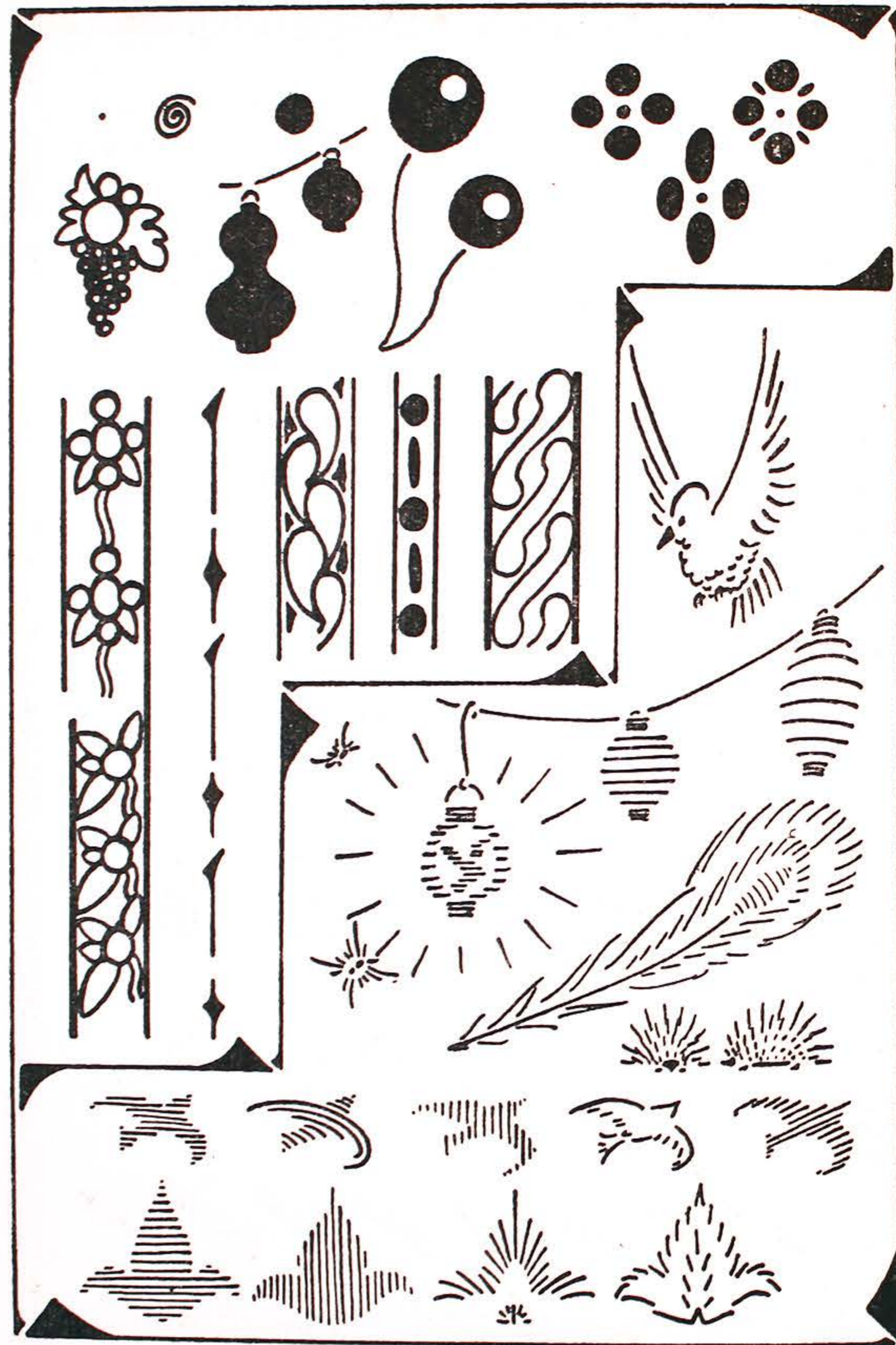


FIG. 35

CHALK STYLES—SOLID AND SKETCH

cherry, an orange, a balloon, or the moon. Combinations of these forms may be arranged. By the use of black pastel outlines quite glowing, stained-glass effects will result. Sketch ornament in chalk is a style quite distinct from this. Fig. 35 shows better than words its possibilities and some of the most suitable subjects.

The same qualities of style that apply to stencil lettering are apparent in stencil-cut ornament. Simplicity is the keynote. Marvellous intricacy may be achieved. Some plates by Japanese artists, who are supreme masters of the stencil craft, are a delight to look upon, but not, for our purpose, to emulate.

The forms yielded by the ruler and set-square produce a vast quantity of design. The square, the triangle, and hence the diamond and hexagon, are capable of infinite variety of colour and arrangement. Check, in small patches, has a most striking effect. Too much, as you have doubtless discovered, is unpleasantly dazzling. A study of the diagrams (Figs. 36 and 37) will help more than words to an understanding of the methods of construction of these basic forms of ornament. Note here the utility of the dividers (the two-pointed compasses) in stepping off the intervals required in a piece of check, or in any area or border of repeats.

All such pattern as this is built up on a network. Circular repeats need a network in order to locate their centres. Even when natural or instrumental forms are *regularly* repeated, an accurately measured line network is required as part of the scaffolding on which to build the design.

The third and greatest source of design is nature. Even when instrumental form is aimed at, nature frequently steps in to suggest the design-motive. The normal brush stroke very readily represents a leaf or a petal or a blade of grass or a fish. When this fact is realized—which means made real to you by actual practice—you will find an inexhaustible field of material open to you for design. Such forms as you employ, where natural shapes are modified to meet the tendencies of tools or the limitations of space are called conventional forms. You

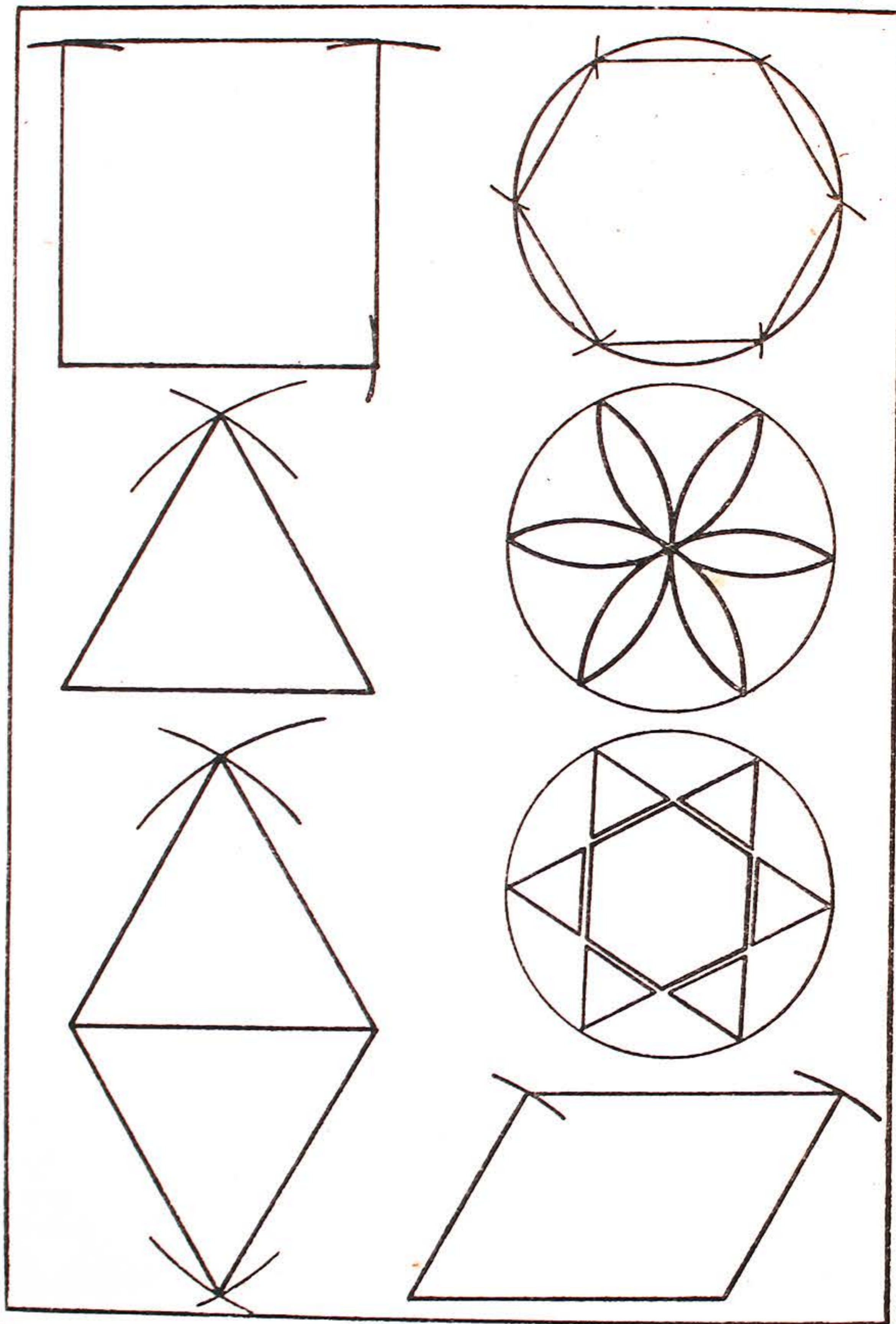


FIG. 36
CONSTRUCTION OF ORNAMENTAL FORMS

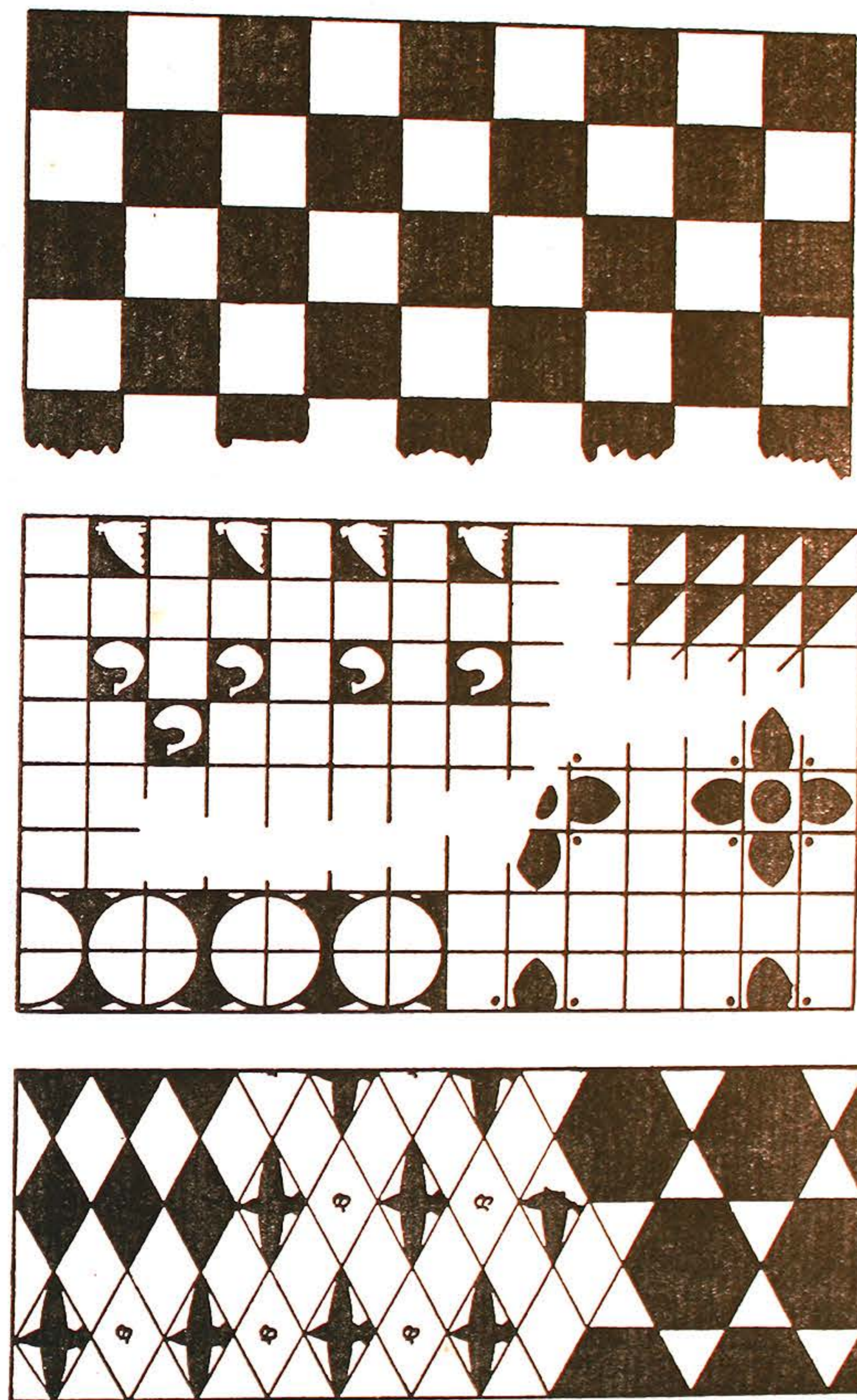


FIG. 37
DESIGN FRAMEWORK

are not called upon to make exact representations or to adhere to natural colours. Your silhouette shapes, outlined or not as you please, may be in any tint to suit your card, and may or may not contain features of detail, all according to the style you are producing. Just as the brush produces these natural forms with unmistakable brush features, so the other colour methods have their effect in the conventionalizing of the forms of nature, which they imitate.

In the application of all design, remember first of all to be guided by the law of unity. Let the letter style coincide with the ornament style, just as you maintain a uniform style throughout the lettering itself. In border drawing, a difficulty will sometimes arise in filling a number of repeats into a given length. To obviate this, always commence from the corners. They are the important points of a border, just as the initials and finals are the important points in a word. Work to the centre. If a gap occurs there, fill it up with a modification of the design unit.

"Over-all" patterns will not be frequently employed. The use of irregular "spot" patterns, and head and tail pieces will be, however, very common. They provide little difficulty, since the matter of arranging for repetition of the design unit does not occur.

Free design, as opposed to ruled form and to pattern, is simple in principle. Rules cannot be made for it. It is the utilization of the force of suggestion. Simplicity—the omission of detail—is its keynote. It may have a most uplifting effect on card style, and, with a little practice, is the quickest ornament method. The cocoa card is an example of this treatment, and the page of ruler drawings (Fig. 28) shows other suggestions.

STENCIL, SPLATTER, AND SPRAY

ONE of the greatest reasons why handwork is not more extensively used is that its production demands time. Time is money. For this reason a great many shopkeepers prefer to spend money on machine-printed cards and to make money by using their time on other activities. This does not mean for an instant that hand cards are unprofitable labour. It is a matter of personal preference. The machine cards, of course, however high in quality, will not always express just your own individual inspiration at the moment you require it. Moreover, unless you are prepared to pay disproportionate prices, you cannot ensure that the designs you buy will not adorn other shop windows. If, in addition to securing to you this quality of individuality, hand cards may also be turned out with reasonable speed, their case is made stronger than ever. The stencil method achieves this. One simple stencil plate will produce a hundred copies before becoming defective, and it may be re-conditioned with very little trouble. Stencil materials are inexpensive. The same water-colours may be used as are employed in making your brush drawn cards. A stencil brush costs 6d., and the plates may be cut from card that otherwise might be thrown away.

If the drawings on Plate 38 are compared, the principles of the stencil method will be seen clearly enough. The stencilled bird is an arrangement of several pieces. The pen-drawn O is a complete ring. The stencilled O has ties or bridges to hold the central white portion in place. The other stencilled letters are similarly constructed. Nowhere do you see a white "island." The blacks, the holes, are cut out; the whites, the remaining card, are all joined together, however narrow the ties may be.

Let us go through the processes of designing, cutting, and printing from a stencil card. The sources of design have been

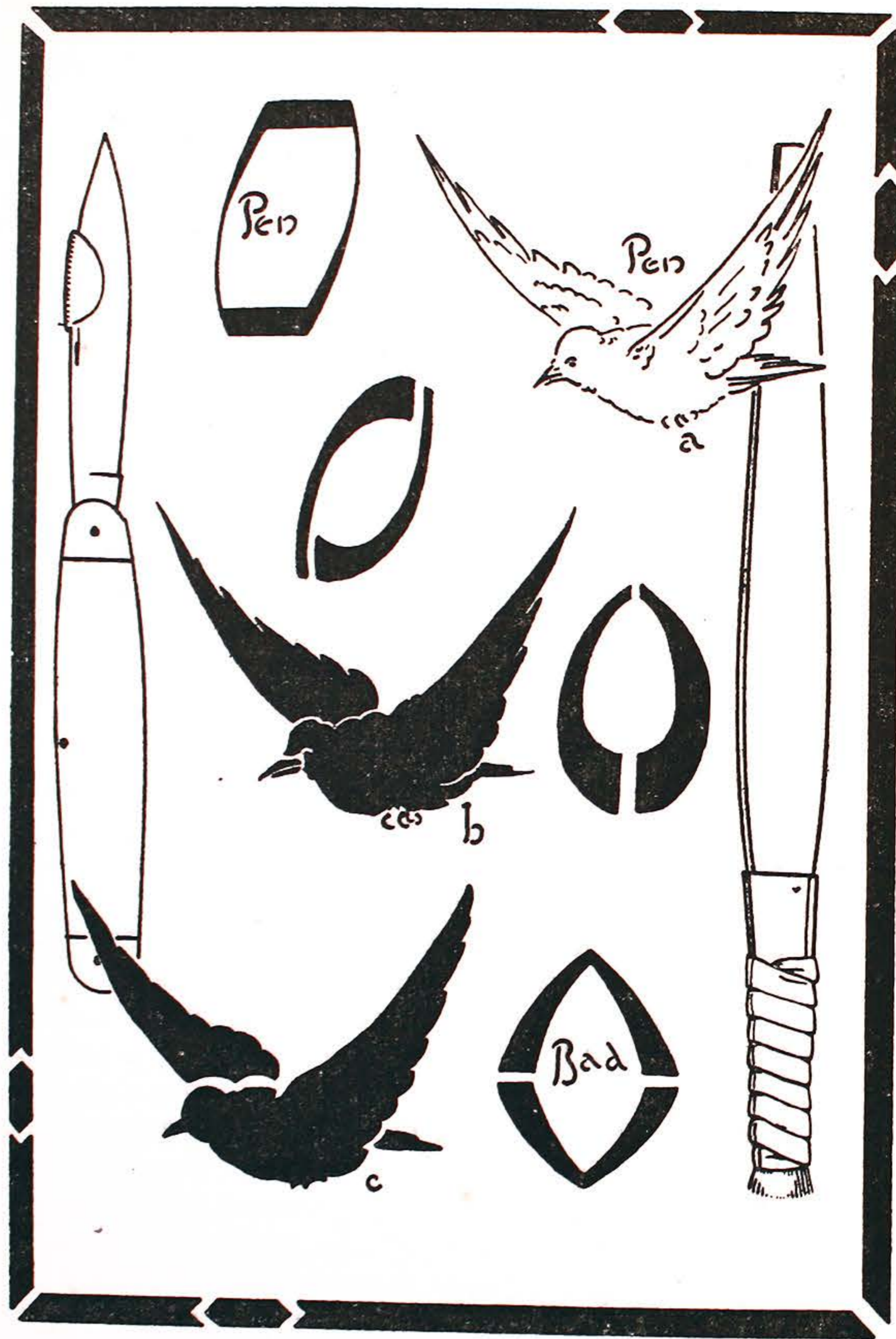


FIG. 38

a. PEN SKETCH. b. STENCIL—CORNERS TOO FINE. c. STENCIL

noted. Measurement, instrument, and nature affect it. Suppose we decide to use a sycamore fruit. First sketch one roughly from nature or memory. Now, where shall the ties be put? Remember that they must give strength where needed, so that the design may lie flat (Fig. 39). They must also look as natural as possible. The whole "fruit" consists of two seeds, two wings, and the stem. The natural divisions, then, are as shown. Note that for easier cutting the round ends of the seeds and of the wings have been drawn pointed. Clearly outline these shapes with a sharp pencil. The plate is ready for cutting. If, when designing for stencil, you doubt the effect of the arrangement, fill in the shapes with brush and Indian ink, carefully leaving the ties. You can alter again and again, before cutting. Very fine lines and very sharp corners clog up with paint. Such a design as that shown in Fig. 38*b* would, therefore, soon produce imperfect copies.

Place the design on a sheet of thick glass. Place the glass on a flat surface—two or three thicknesses of old newspaper will do very well as a bed for the glass, but be sure they lie on a flat surface, or the glass will crack under the pressure of the knife. Grind a pocket-knife blade back as shown, and make the end half-inch of the blade extremely keen. Stick a piece of fine sandpaper or emery cloth on to a strip of wood, and sharpen your knife every few cuts. It must be so keen that it cuts through at one stroke under firm pressure, with no trace of a ragged edge. Where possible, cut away from corners and cut across projecting points.

A useful but not absolutely necessary precaution is to paint the plate on both sides with clear varnish. This makes it waterproof, so that the moisture of the paint will not soak the card nor make it swell and buckle.

Now place the plate on the card to be printed on. Fasten down at least two corners and lay something, ruler or set-square, across it so that you may keep it pressed quite flat while you work. Take an old saucer or a piece of glass to mix the paint on. Squeeze out sufficient Chinese white and very gradually

STENCIL, SPLATTER, AND SPRAY

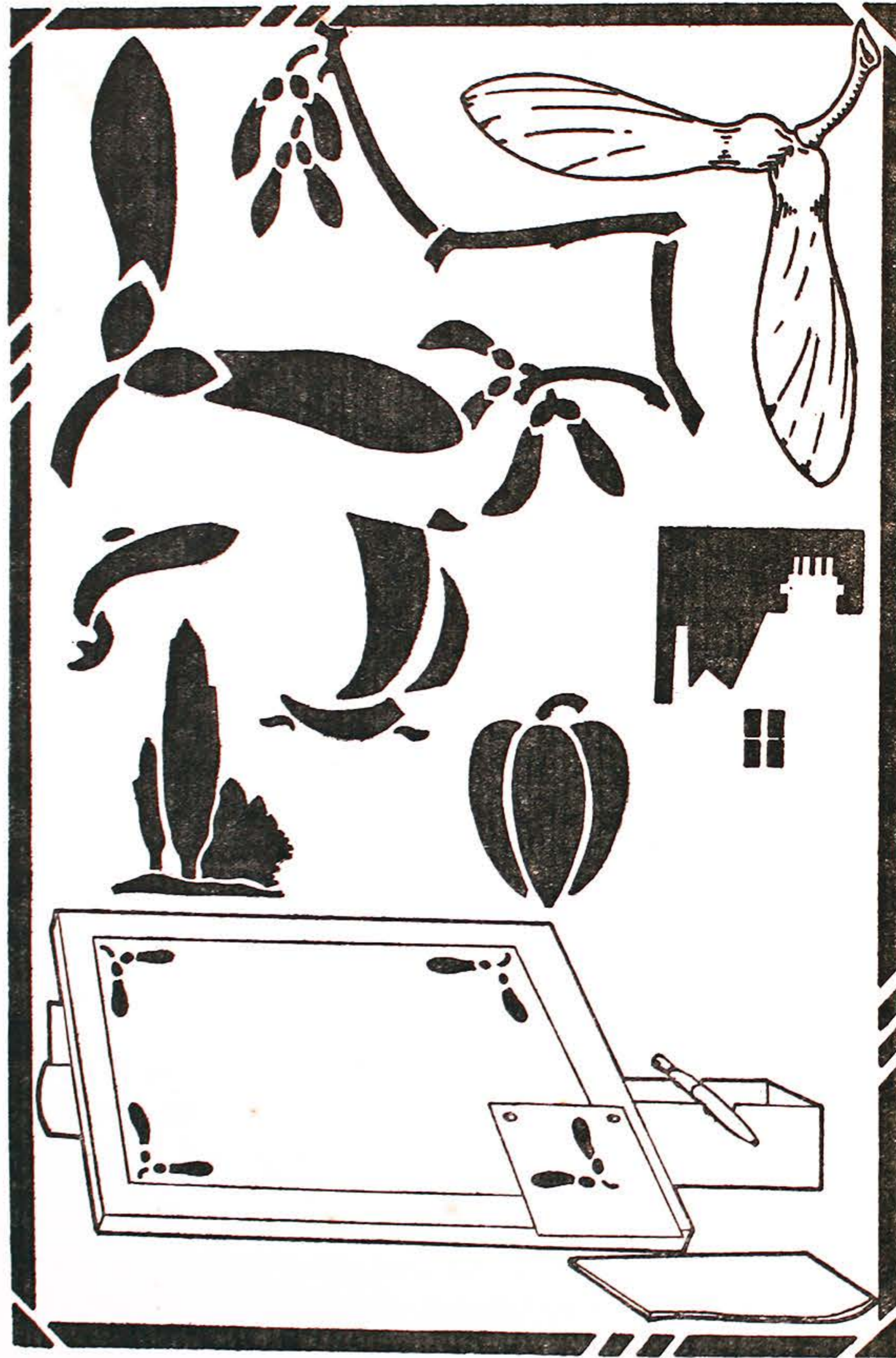


FIG. 39

STENCIL DESIGNING

stir in water until the mixture is as thick as cream. Add the colouring pigment you wish to use with equal care. Tap the flat head of the stencil brush into it. Do not let a clot of paint hang to it. Charge the brush lightly and be content to use a little paint at a time. If you apply too much, some will find its way beneath the edges of the openings in the card and will ruin the print you are making. The same trouble will arise if the paint is too thin, or if the brush is dragged sideways on the card instead of being struck straight down and lifted straight up. It is the ends, not the sides, of the bristles which apply the paint. If you are using two colours, two brushes are necessary. Beautiful effects are obtained by graduating tints so that one merges on to another. You may also produce two or more coloured work from one card by masking various apertures in turn with scraps of paper.

Inks may be used instead of paint, but not with brushes. Small soft pieces of sponge are best for this.

Clean the plates directly after use, so that the paint does not dry and clog the corners. Use a soft old tooth-brush, or, if you like, a stencil brush, and plenty of water. Take care not to break the ties.

Clean the brushes very thoroughly, too. Colour, owing to the constant tapping, works up into the roots of the hairs and, unless soaked out, it will sink again when the brush is next used and spoil your new colour. Most new brushes have the bristles too long. They then curl in use and push under the edge of the plate, spoiling the design. To prevent this, bind the bristles tightly with tape to within about a quarter of an inch of the end. Remove the binding as the brush wears down (Fig. 38).

Some particularly useful designs are like those shown in Fig. 39. These may be reversed, twisted into various positions, and partly masked, and may be used several times on one card. Note that they are adaptations of the brush designs shown earlier.

Splashing or splattering is another effective way of getting

ABCDE
FGHIJK
LMNOP
QRSTU
WXYZ

FIG. 40

STENCIL, SPLATTER, AND SPRAY

colour on to a card. Dip the end of a tooth-brush into the paint or ink and spray on the colour by scraping the bristles with a pocket-knife blade. As the spray flies like shrapnel, you must protect all the card and anything else within range which you do not want sprinkled. Practice will soon localize your efforts. Stencil plates may be used, or masks may be cut from any odd scrap of card or paper. The method may be used instead of wash to get a graded effect, as of sky or sea. This was done in Fig. 31. A little practice will reveal the great possibilities of the method. Do not over-employ it. Avoid making the splashes too coarse or it will have the effect of dazzling. Both stencilled and splattered colour is always a shade darker than it appears with the mask on. The plain paper shows up the tint in a stronger contrast.

If you wish to produce many cards in one colour through a stencil plate, an ordinary scent spray-bottle is useful. The colour must be absolutely free from grit and lumps. It should be shaken slightly, but frequently, to keep it from settling. For this purpose colours will be quite thin, so do not apply too much or the surplus paint will flow under the mask and ruin the card.

All these methods combine very well with ordinary brush work. They are detailed at some length because their methods are quite different from the ordinary applications of brush and pen.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
CONCLUSION

IT has been stated that old cards may be re-faced as an economy. To do this, buy kitchen paper—a white, thin, glazed paper sold at about 10d. a quire for lining drawers and shelves. Make sure you get the glazed variety, not the duller, greyish kind. If you use flour paste for sticking, be sure that it is boiled in the making, so as to thicken it properly. The gum, such as Seccotine, may be diluted with warm water till it is thin enough to apply with a paint brush. Cover the back of the paper evenly. Lay it on the card. With a clean handkerchief as a pad, stroke firmly outward from the centre to expel all air bubbles. As the paper dries it will shrink slightly and will then present a smooth, hard surface, which, however, should not be treated to too much india-rubber work.

It is the custom of some designers to cut out and keep in a scrap-book or in a file, with an index, pictures of birds, beasts, flowers, etc., and specimens of printing, which suggest themselves as providing suitable examples for future work. It is not, of course, meant that your productions should be slavish copies of someone else's brainwork, but such a file will provide you with suggestions from which you may build up your own original design. The idea is of especial use to those who intend to develop the ornamental side of their cards to a marked extent.

Although this book has detailed methods of producing quite elaborate cards, it is intended to prove equally useful to those who propose to confine themselves to the limits of printing only. Printing is an art itself. First-class printing will produce a first-class card without the addition of any ornament. Of course, the more elaborate cards make a great appeal and are well worth producing, but no amount of design will cancel the

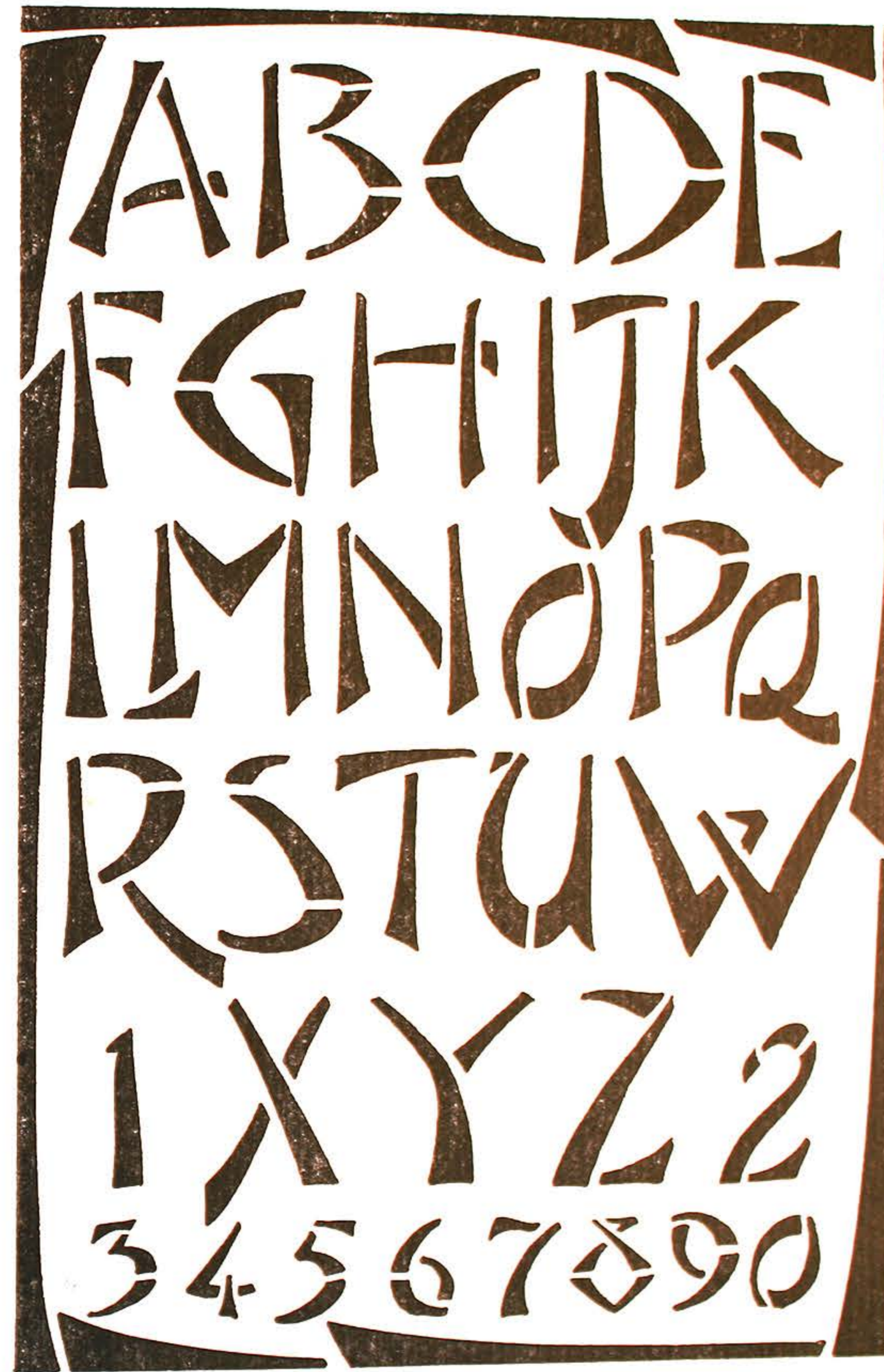


FIG. 41

TICKET AND SHOW CARD DESIGNING

ill effects of poor printing. Printing is the basis of the card. It must be good.

Whatever be the reader's aim, it will not be reached merely by reading, or re-reading, this book. Card designing is a practical art, not a theory. Practice, experience, is essential to its mastery. Try to apply, soon after it is read, every chapter of the book. Practice, to be of the greatest effect, should be little but often.

Have confidence in your own powers. Do not imagine because you have not done a great deal of drawing that you never can. Remember how you learned to write. This does not mean that you must not be ready to find fault with your work. Criticize it as much as possible. Study and criticize the hoardings also.

When possible, work under favourable conditions of warmth and health. Try to place yourself so that the light falls over your left shoulder. Otherwise your own shadow is apt to be a nuisance.

First and last, hold as an article of faith that all the trouble you are taking, all the details you are bothering about in your cards, are thoroughly worth while. This belief—and practice—will work wonders.

INDEX

- ADVERTISING, need for, 1
Alphabet, 3
Application of colour, 49
- BALANCE, 39
Border, 42
Brevity, 30
Brush, 18, 35
— forms in ornament, 58
— lettering, 17, 19
- CAPITALS, 3
Card cutting, 21
— forms, 44
—, shape of, 42
Chalk, 21
— cards, 54
— lettering, 55
— styles, 60
Coloured lettering, 28
Colour work, 46, 49
Common errors, 4
Compass, 30, 35
Composition, 36
Construction of ornamental forms, 62
Contrast, 36
—, colour, 48
Cutting stencils, 67
- DESIGN framework, 63
Designing, 30
— for stencil, 67
Drawing board, 34
- FULL brush lettering, 19, 21
- GLOSSY lettering, 52
Guide lines, 7
- INDIAN ink, 54
Inks, 52
Italics, 24
- LAYING a wash, 51
- METALLIC colours, 54
- NARROW forms, 27
- ORNAMENT, 57
- PASTELS, 21, 54
—, ornament by, 57
Pencils, 34
Pen forms in ornament, 59
— lettering on four guides, 8
— styles, 9
— work, 3, 20
— —, illustration, 9
- QUILL pen, 20
- REED pen, 20, 34
Re-facing cards, 72
Ruler work, 30
Ruling pen, 35
- SCRIPT style, 12
Serifs, 5
Shape of cards, 42
Slope, 15
Small letters, 10
Spacing, 27
Splattering, 69
Spray, 69
Stencil designing, 68
— lettering, 73
— method, 65
Straight line designs, 43
Style in lettering, 14
- "TIES," 21
Tools, 30
T-square, 34
- WATER colours, 49
Waterproof inks, 52
Word making, 25

