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HOME MADE
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A L B U M S
AND OTHER
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HOME MADE

STAMP

ALBUMS

AND OTHER

DEVICES



HOME-MADE STAMP ALBUMS AND OTHER DEVICES

A NEW IDEA FOR A COLLECTION



THE present methods of stamp collecting were inaugurated years ago when varieties were few and cheap and albums small. The only noticeable change in later years has been towards specialism, which has had for its aim the lessening of varieties in the individual collection, but which, in fact, has only multiplied the number of varieties in catalogues and albums and made collecting all the more difficult for the every-day collector. If stamp collecting were a pursuit just discovered this year, it would be undertaken in quite a different way from the present method, there is no doubt. The old-fashioned idea of a single collector obtaining a complete, or even a fairly-complete, collection of all the varieties of postage stamps in existence, would never have entered the heads of its present-day promoters. This idea has grown with the pursuit from the days when such a collection was possible. To-day it is an absurdity for anyone to hope to obtain fifty per cent. of the varieties of adhesives which have been issued since 1840.

Let us compare for a moment an old-time collection with the paraphernalia which goes with the modern outfit. Notice the comparative size of the albums then and now, and also the catalogues! More than twenty-five editions of Scott's catalogue were issued before the book contained fifty pages. Now we have seven-hundred pages full of minor varieties, by means of which a stamp is multiplied into several stamps, just as if the number of distinctly new issues were not alone sufficient to swell the tide of varieties into a sea wide and deep enough to drown the enthusiasm of a staunch supporter of the pursuit, to say nothing of the novice who embarks on his tiny craft with a twenty-five-cent album under his arm and twenty-five cents in his pocket to blow in on stamps. Over stimulation is the cause of men seeing double vision with one pair of optic nerves; and when we take a common stamp and multiply it into twenty varieties, we may lay it to an intoxicated brain and not to cool, clear judgment. When philatelists sober down to a clear vision of things, they will regard this minor-variety business as the greatest folly of follies that has entered into the pursuit.

What can be done in face of the present state of affairs? The

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blue lead must be drawn through something. First of all, it ought to strike out every minor variety—whether variety of shade or of watermark, perforation or roulette. Then we get back to where we were about fifteen years ago, except that we are still snowed-under by subsequent philatelic storms of new issues which become more numerous each year, as time goes on. Here, then, is another problem to be solved now or in the near future.

The anti-specialism movement must not stop half way on its journey towards reform. It must carry out to the extreme the principles on which it is founded, if it would make a lasting impression upon the minds of philatelists. And here let us suggest what it ought to do with the set of stamps which are all of one or similar design. It ought to select one stamp of the set for the representative of that issue, and regard all the other stamps in the set as minor varieties of that particular specimen. A collection founded on that principle might be as complete as it would be unique. Let us illustrate more fully what we mean by this, by telling how such a collection could be made.

—AUSTRIA—



1850



1858-9



1861



1863-4

First, get a good blank book, or better still, a couple hundred leaves with holes punched in the left hand margin so that the pages can be assembled, tied with a cord, and inserted in a loose cover made to fit the book. Then, write the names of countries at the top of each page, and rule off squares, one square for each set of stamps of similar design. Where every stamp in a set is of an entirely different design, however, two or more of the cheapest or most common varieties might be collected. Our illustration of the first four issues of Austria will make clear the arrangement we recommend here.

If, instead of sending a man to Congress to represent a large body of people, each person went to Washington as his own representative, the city would not be large enough to accommodate the crowd. Send a representative stamp into your album for each issue and you can make a fairly complete collection for a modest outlay.

HOME-MADE STAMP HINGES



IT WOULD BE AS DIFFICULT to make a suit of clothes without needle and thread as a collection of stamps without an album of some sort to hold the stamps and a package of hinges to attach them to the page or card. Yet, some collectors still hold to the old way of pasting the stamps firmly to the page, often using cheap mucilage which after a time discolors stamps of certain shades, rendering them valueless. The first innovation over this method was a gummed wafer which did away with the mucilage pot but offered few advantages. With the stamp hinge began the careful preservation of postage

stamps and a desire for more perfect specimens. When we come to remove the stamps from the pages of the old-time collections, we find that the early collectors didn't care much whether the stamp was whole or in pieces, provided the remnant could be glued to the page, and even a stamp with a third gone was collectible. Some of these stamps are torn into several pieces but each piece is glued to the page in its proper place, giving it the appearance of a perfect specimen.

Anyone who ever bought an old collection, paying for what he supposed to be perfect stamps, has learned to his sorrow of the deceptive methods of the old timer who covered up scores of imperfections in the rarest stamps in his collection by means of a copious supply of thick, varnish-like mucilage, which acted like Russian cement on broken dishes.

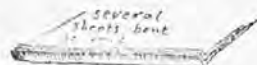
The pursuit was not as well advertised in the fifties to seventies as it is to-day, and the uninitiated who tore open envelopes bearing rare stamps in the corner paid little attention to the specimen which afterwards was to be placed in somebody's collection. To-day almost everyone has heard of the popular pursuit called *philately* and of the intrinsic value of used stamps; so that foreign specimens received on letters are now handled with greater care, even by those who do not collect themselves. As a result, there are less damaged specimens of later issues.



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The stamp hinge (called in England the "stamp mount") is a small, rectangular piece of paper gummed on one side. As every collector knows, one half of the hinge is stuck to the back of the stamp and the other half, after the hinge is bent in the middle, is glued to the page. Mounted in this way, it is an easy matter to examine the front or back of a stamp, or to remove it from one book to another. The business of manufacturing die-cut hinges has become an important one, next to the trade in stamps and albums. Our first sketch represents a die which will cut out 50 to 100 hinges with each strike of the mallet. It is made of a high-tempered steel capable of resisting heavy blows, although the cutting edge is almost as thin as that of a razor.

Some collectors buy gummed paper and cut out their own hinges with shears, cutting through several thicknesses of paper at one time. They can make the hinges any size desired, which is an advantage over buying the hinges all cut to one size for both envelope stamps and the ordinary adhesive.



Did you ever think of the time lost in stopping to bend each hinge as you use it? Why not bend a hundred or more hinges all at one time! It is very easy. Fold 8 or a dozen sheets at once as shown in the illustration and cut off a strip running the length of the sheet. This strip can then be

cut up into a great many hinges already bent for use.

Those who use a great many hinges ought to make their own gummed paper, to be sure of getting the purest and best. It is not necessary to use the grade of gum Arabic sold by the apothecary, however, as any grade of the *pure* gum will do. Arabic can be bought at a wholesale paint store as low as 18 to 25c a pound. Dissolve the gum in water, strain, and apply to the paper with a paste or paint brush, and dry the paper on the floor or clothes line. When the gum is dry, it naturally wrinkles the paper, but the wrinkles can be ironed out or a heavy weight on a board can be used to press out a number of sheets placed under them. When a weight is used, it is best to fold the paper up into quarter sheets, if large, so that the pressure will be about equal over the surface of the paper. Any printer will sell you sheets of onion skin or of French folio paper. A sheet 17 by 22 inches is a convenient size to handle.

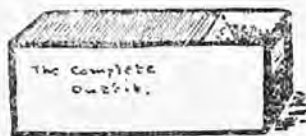
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ANOTHER METHOD OF PRESERVING A COLLECTION



It doesn't take a business man long to see the advantages which the card index system possesses over the old method of keeping and filing accounts. The card ledger system is fast superseding the old-fashioned method of writing the accounts in a book, and almost every day a new use is found for the card index. This device has been rightly called the elastic system, for cards can be inserted or removed from a file whenever desired.

This fact suggests a suitable substitute for the old time stamp album and also offers certain advantages due to its elastic nature. The idea, in short, is to mount the stamps in your collection on cards and file the cards away in a box the right size. There is a card for every country. Where there are more than enough stamps of one country to fill a card, as many cards are used as necessary. If there are no stamps in the collection from a certain country, the cards for that country may be left out until the stamps are obtained. So that, as the collection increases, the cards multiply, and when one box is



filled, the collection is spread into two boxes, and so on.

When the stamps are examined the cards need not be removed from the boxes except when a stamp is to be viewed close to, as the cards can be tilted in the box, as shown in the first illustration, enough room being left in the box for that purpose. Any size card can be used, but as it is sometimes necessary to remove all the stamps on a card for a new arrangement, it is preferable not to have the cards too large. Neither should they be too small, for in that case the stamps will not make so good a showing as when combined with other stamps of various designs and colors, all on the same card or page.

An envelope box or shoe box makes a good case for the cards when the cards are cut to a suitable size. A full sheet of cardboard is

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usually 22 inches one way by 28 the other. Therefore the index cards should be cut some size which does not allow of much waste to the full sheet. A narrow strip of waste running both ways, however, should be left on the full sheet for the convenience of the cutter. After a suitable box has been found, the card should be purchased of the printer, who will cut it to the right size. This should be a trifle narrower than the width of the box, and excepting twenty-six alphabet cards, which should be just as high as the box measured from the inside, the cards for the stamps should be one-half inch shorter from top to bottom than the depth of the box. The object of this is to have each one of the letters of the alphabet written at the top of a card which shall stand a little higher than the rest. The first letter, of course, will be A, and all cards for countries beginning with A will follow this. Then will come the B card, and so on through the alphabet. This classification will enable one to turn rapidly to any country represented in the collection.

The thickness of the card to be used should depend somewhat on the size the card is to be cut. For a large card thicker stock, which will not bend so easily, is to be preferred. For a card large enough for, say, a shoe box, about 140 lb. stock is sufficient. This will cost anywhere from about 2½c. to 5c. per sheet, according to the quality. There will be an extra cost of about 15c. for cutting. To start with, two or three hundred cards will usual be enough, and this will require some eight or a dozen full sheets of cardboard, so you see the expense of such an "album" will not be great.

The box, however, needs to have a little expense laid out on it to make it more durable and to add to its appearance, and for this purpose a piece of black binder's cloth large enough to cover the four sides (inside and out) and cover, should be bought at the book bindery, and carefully glued on. First cover the back end of the box, then cut a strip large enough, if possible, to go around the other three sides. For gluing on the cloth use paste containing plenty of glue. Cover the cloth well with paste and apply it to the box before the paste is dry, and rub the cloth for several minutes with a dry rag. Each side should be glued by itself to avoid air bubbles collecting under the cloth on account of the glue drying before the rubbing commences.

If you are handy with tools, you can make your box of thin boards of say one-quarter inch. This should be stained and varnished.

A DUPLICATE-STAMP FILE



EVERY collector is more or less of a stamp dealer. It is impossible to collect stamps without picking up duplicates in one way or another. These duplicate stamps must be sold or exchanged for stamps not in the collection, if they are to be of any benefit to the collector. One of the pleasant features of the pursuit is this exchange of stamps among collectors.

Collectors who have numbers of duplicates, and all stamp dealers, large or small, must make use of every systematic device for the classification of their stamps into small lots assorted alphabetically or by their cata-

logue value. An envelope file, therefore, is a great time-saver to both collector and dealer, and can be made for little or no expense. A couple bunches of new envelopes (or old ones not torn and all of the same size) and an old envelope box compose the material.

The box may be cut down to any size desired. When using new envelopes, the flap is cut or torn off. In order that the letters of the alphabet or the prices of the stamps shall stand out plainly to view, the envelope is cut away on top except where the letter or figure appears. It is not necessary, however, to cut away the paper on both sides of the index but only to the right as shown by the envelope in the diagram bearing the letter C. As the index nears the right-hand side of the envelope, however, the paper is cut away on both right and left hand side (see K), the object being here to open up space enough to the left to make visible a new row of letters in the rear. By cutting out only as much of the paper as is necessary, and leaving as wide a lip as possible there is less danger of the same getting torn off.

We have already described the method of covering the box with binder's cloth, to improve its appearance and make it more durable, if desired. Two holes about three inches apart can be punched through one end and a piece of cord run through for a handle. When a cigar box can be found of the right size for the envelopes it will make a better case than one made of cardboard, but cigars and envelopes, unfortunately, are made from different measurements usually, and a card box is easiest to cut down.

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A STAMP CABINET

THERE are cabinets for music, coins, minerals, etc., etc. Why not a stamp cabinet? Some twenty-five years ago, when the pursuit was in its infancy, a blank book alone was the only requisite needed to complete the collection. To-day there is a demand not only for an album or set of albums to hold the collection, but for a variety of books bearing on the subject, the foremost of which is the stamp catalogue. This book appears every year, and as collectors like to compare prices from year to year, the old catalogues are hoarded up and, in the course of a few years, make quite a set of books in themselves. Then some kind of a stamp dictionary, glossary or encyclopædia is owned by most collectors, as well as various stock books or duplicate albums. Most philatelists take a paper devoted to their pet hobby and these papers are kept for the information they contain and because of the advertisements which reflect the actual selling prices of certain stamps as the market fluctuates from month to month.

There is then an accumulation of papers and also of various small books which appear almost monthly, giving information on stamps of a certain country, on how to collect stamps, detect counterfeits, or what not. In fact, so great is the demand for this kind of literature that some dealers make a specialty of the publishing branch of the business. Papers and books and loose stamps accumulate fast. They are scattered over the house unless a special place is provided for them and for nothing else. The stamp cabinet solves the problem.



It is made out of a box, either planed or sand-papered down and then stained. A good box of any size will do. On the right cleats are nailed in for boxes or drawers of index envelopes or cards to run on. As we have described, these index cases are made of old envelope boxes cut down to the right size. The shelf is made of the original cover of the box. Anyone can make a creditable case without much skill in carpentry, by simply using a hammer, saw and jack-knife and either a plane or sheet of sand paper. To keep the dust out, a piece of calico or other cloth can be nailed on at the top of the cabinet so as to hang down, or it can be run on a rod, to slide to one side when the cabinet is in use.

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A VARIETY OF HOME-MADE STAMP DEVICES

STAMP TONGS. Experts do not use the fingers, to any extent, in handling stamps of great rarity. Such stamps are usually old and too fragile to be handled without the greatest care. If the stamps are in perfect condition, their value is enhanced; a slight tear, on the other hand, may bring their value down to about one-half of the catalogue price. Many of the early issues were printed on thin paper, a paper which sticks best to the envelope when glue of a poor quality is used. Modern gumming is done by machinery which spreads the glue or mucilage more evenly over the backs of the stamps, and the glue itself is more adhesive; hence paper of any thickness can now be used. The early issues are therefore often found printed on a thin, almost transparent paper which is easily torn, and a pair of stamp tongs is almost a necessity to the person daily handling such stamps.

Soiled fingers are nearly as bad as cancelling machines for defacing stamps which were in fine condition. Stamps which are constantly handled with the fingers get soiled and greasy and in time become classed with torn or defaced stamps which are worth but a fraction of the catalogue price of a good specimen.

A pair of stamp tongs can be made by bending in the middle a short strip of waste tin. Any tinsmith will willingly give you all the waste in his shop, for it is of no value to him. A strip five or six inches long and one-half inch wide will make a convenient pair of tongs.

WATERMARK REVEALER. Lay the stamp face down on a black, smooth surface and pour over the stamp half a teaspoonful of benzine. When the paper is thoroughly soaked the watermark is usually revealed, for the paper is so thin where the watermark is impressed that the black shows through from the object underneath. A piece of glass with black paper or cloth underneath makes a good surface to place the stamp on. Benzine should not be used near a flame as in evaporating the gas becomes highly inflammable.

DAMAGED STAMPS. Don't throw away any common stamps which may be damaged, for while they are valueless as specimens for the collection, they may be used as patches, so to speak, when more valuable stamps are to be repaired.

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A stamp with a piece missing may sometimes be mended so skillfully by pasting a stamp of the same shade and color on the back that it is difficult to distinguish it from a perfect specimen. It therefore pays to save stamps of no philatelic value, but of different colors, and also odd bits of perforation, to use for this purpose.

HEAVY CANCELLATIONS may be partly removed with a common rubber eraser, but if one is not careful, the stamp itself is injured. Do not use an ink eraser, for this rubs off the surface of the paper, as well as the ink.

A GOOD STOCK BOOK.

Cut a full-length strip about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch deep off the bottom of an old envelope. This makes an excellent pocket for the stock book. As many pockets can be made as you have old envelopes provided the envelopes have been cut open at the top and not at the side. Spreading them far enough apart, about 5 or 6 can be glued to the page of a blank book. Several pages make a book sufficiently large to hold hundreds of duplicates. It looks better if the pockets are made of envelopes all of the same width. A drop of glue should be placed in the center of the pocket to glue the inside and outside strips together at this point, dividing the pocket into two halves. If this is not done, there may be too great an opening in the center of the pocket, allowing the stamps to slip out.

SCRAP BOOK. Every collector should have a blank book in which to put newspaper or magazine clippings pertaining to stamps. Any article giving information likely to be useful to a collector should be saved. Many collectors have literary aspirations. Not a few have issued a small stamp paper at some period of their career. Others have written essays or lectures on some branch of their pursuit either for publication or to be read at a meeting of their stamp club. To all such the scrap book at some time may be more valuable than any other book to be consulted. It should be indexed. In the back of the book leave a page for each letter of the alphabet. Also number the pages in order throughout the book. The important word of the title is the one to be indexed. For instance, "Some Facts About Counterfeits" would be indexed under C, "Counterfeits" being the subject in a nutshell. If it is on page 5, say so. The title should be indexed thus:

"COUNTERFEITS. Some facts about C. 5."

Indexed envelopes may also be used for clippings.

HOME MADE ALBUMS



E don't want to say a word against the printed stamp album. For average collectors it is the best album to buy. For very small collections, for collections from special countries only, and for minor varieties of shades, watermarks and plate numbers, the blank album is better than the illustrated book with special squares for the straight issues only.

The collector of minor varieties is by no means in the majority today, but almost every collector has stamps such as foreign revenues, telegraphs, private locals, cut square or entire foreign envelopes, and post cards, which are not provided for in the printed album. A blank album therefore is a necessity to almost every collector who wishes to have a place for every stamp in his collection. We will tell you how a home-made stamp album, suitable for a general collection, or for odds and ends, can be made.

The material for the inside of the home-made stamp album can be bought at a wholesale paper warehouse or of a printer, and the cloth of a binder's supply house or of a printer also. Seventy-five sheets of twenty-four pound folio, worth about eight cents per pound, will make a good book. The paper will cost about thirty cents. It should be cut into quarters, each page measuring about $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 11. For cutting the printer would charge you about ten cents extra, although you can fold each sheet and cut the paper yourself with a long knife, just as you would cut open the leaves of an untrimmed magazine.

Two pieces of heavy cardboard, each one-quarter inch wider than the paper and one-half longer from top to bottom will serve for the covers.

A piece of binder's cloth should be cut for each piece of the cover, so that it will cover one side of the board and lap over about three-quarters of an inch on the other side. Before putting on the cloth, cut a strip off of the cardboard, on the left-hand side, about three-quarters of an inch wide, so that each cover will hinge back when the book is open. This narrow strip of cardboard, should be put in the same position it occupied before it was cut, but the edges of the narrow piece and the board from which it was cut should not quite

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meet. The cloth then covers both pieces. The side of the board not covered by cloth should be covered neatly with paper. The cloth sides are for the outside of the book. Great care should be taken to spread the glue or paste (boiled flour and water containing plenty of glue) evenly over the boards before applying the cloth. There should be no dry spots on the board when the cloth is put on, and the cloth should be rubbed briskly with a dry rag for several minutes to prevent the cloth from wrinkling.

You now have two loose covers and a bunch of loose leaves to be bunched up and tied together. The printer can punch two holes through the covers and paper, so that cord or tape can be run through, drawn up tight and tied in a bow knot. The best substitute for a punched hole is one made by driving a sharp wire nail of good size through the entire book. The holes should be about six inches apart, one say two inches from the top and the other the same distance from the bottom of the album, and both should be in the left hand margin as the top of the book faces you. Furthermore, the holes should run through the narrow strip of cardboard which was cut off from the whole cover, so that, as the book is opened, the left-hand margin remains firm.

The object of such a binding is that loose leaves can be put in or removed from the book, as occasion requires. If a new page is necessary for new issues of any country, the cord can be loosened and the page inserted. It is well to reserve the pages in the back of the book for this purpose. They can be taken from the back and placed in any part of the album whenever it is necessary.

Those who wish a more expensive album can purchase a better grade of paper, and for a post-card album, less pages of thin card are better than paper leaves.

It takes a little practice to rule off the pages into proper squares for the stamps. With a jet black ink, a good pen, and a ruler suitable for ink drawing, the pages can be ruled equal to a printed page.

The trouble comes in getting the lines at right angles to each other. To overcome this difficulty, use a card with distances marked off upon it. First rule off lightly with lead pencil tracing over afterwards with ink. To get the squares at right angles to the margins, place one side of the card flush with the edge of the page and you will then have a side at right angles to work with. With care and patience and a careful study of the above, the album will be a success.

HOW STAMP CATALOGUES ARE MADE

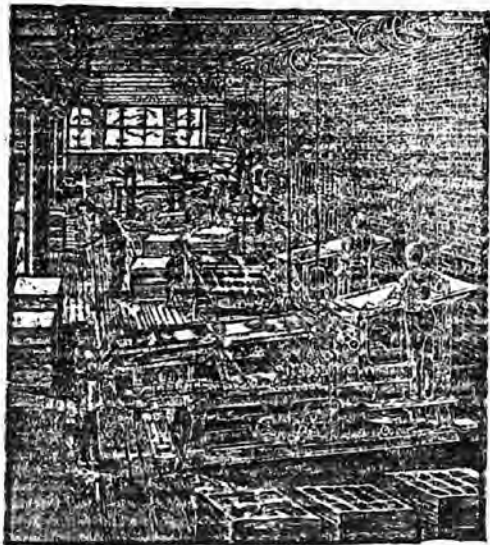
[Editor's Note: While we do not expect collectors to make catalogues at home, we thought an article of this kind would be interesting in connection with this series on "How to Make Things."]



WHEN the publishers of the Collector's Own Catalogue conceived the idea of an illustrated priced catalogue of the stamps of all nations, which should retail for ten cents per copy, they were not sure that such a book would meet with the approval of both collectors and dealers. In the fall of 1903 the first catalogue was published as an experiment. Its reception

by philatelists generally was far beyond the most sanguine expectations of its publishers.

A catalogue to the average collector is as necessary as a dictionary to the literary man. The catalogue is good only for a season, however, while a good dictionary will last for years. Hence the necessity of a catalogue which could be sold at a popular price—one which collectors could afford to buy as often as it was revised. The ten cent catalogue met this demand as soon as its first edition appeared. It took about one ton of white paper for the first printing. It was supposed that this would be sufficient for the entire first edition, and that the cata-



PRINTING THE TEN CENT CATALOGUE.

logues would last about one year. In two weeks or less time there were not one thousand books which had not been sold either in wholesale or retail lots, and extra runs had to be put on the

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presses at once. Judging from its circulation, this catalogue is the most popular one in use, and it is safe to say that more copies of it have been sold in the past year than of all the other catalogues, both foreign and American, put together.



The work of getting up a small catalogue is by no means a small undertaking. Larger catalogues in different languages have to be examined and prices compared, also retail and wholesale price lists of leading European and American dealers. Chronicles of all new issues must be read over and all necessary material selected for the publication. Collections of stamps must be ex-

amined, especially for the new issues, and in fact no pains spared to make the copy clear and complete before sending it to the compositor.

The work of setting the type is carefully done in the composition room and electrotype plates are then made from the type forms. This is done by taking an impression of the type matter in wax, powdering the wax with black lead and causing a deposit of copper to settle on the mould while the same is suspended in a tank of vitriol water through which a powerful current of electricity passes. The thin shell or crust of copper left on the wax, having been brought there from the positive pole of the battery, is then removed from the bath, backed with lead and trimmed ready for the press.



The plates are arranged at equal distances from one another on



the bed of the press, so that when the sheet is printed and folded the pages will be in the right order. Then the great presses begin to grind out the sheets of printed paper, and this is kept up for several days until thousands of copies have been printed, ready for the bindery. Sixteen pages are usually printed at once, then sixteen different pages printed on the opposite side of the sheet, and so on

until the book is finished. Each sheet is then folded on another machine and the various sections of the book, called signatures, are assembled together to complete the catalogue which now only needs to be stitched on a kind of sewing machine which uses thin wire in place of thread. This is the way the ten cent catalogue is made.