

STATIONERY NOVELTIES IN EUROPE.

From Paris and Berlin Correspondence.

PARIS.

POKER work has ceased to be popular with amateurs, says The Stationery Trades Journal correspondent, I imagine because it was like the little girl in the nursery rhyme, "When it was good, it was very good indeed, and when it was bad it was horrid," and, unfortunately, in the hands of the inexperienced amateur it was more often bad than good. No doubt, this was partly owing to the pencil, which had a long india rubber tube fastened to its top extremity. Nerves are naturally nervous, and require to be well schooled before they will consent to work under unusual conditions. Anyone may easily convince himself of this by tying a piece of string to the top of his penholder, and holding the loose extremity of the string in his left hand. He will find that his writing is by no means improved, his right hand being always afraid that the left is going to play a joke upon it. Besides, in poker work, the brain being interested mainly in what the right hand was doing, did not see that the left hand kept up a steady draught. A recent invention has removed these disadvantages by doing away with the long india rubber tube, and making the pencil a kind of portable gas lamp. It contains a reservoir which is filled with sulphuric ether, a little tap or stop-cock at the bottom of the reservoir being first turned off. The pencil is then held for a few moments in the flame of a spirit lamp to warm the ether, then the tap is turned on, the vapor of the ether which escapes through the nozzle is lighted, and it continues to burn with a tiny but powerful flame for a considerable time. The flame can be regulated to any degree, or it can be turned off altogether and a fresh jet substituted and relighted in a few seconds. The left hand being free, the work can be held or turned in any direction.

Post cards have become a veritable plague. It is not too much to say that scores of new designs are brought out every day. They are adorned with every sort of subject, from the masterpieces of ancient and modern art to photographs of young women, whose costume begins too late and leaves off too early. Every known process of engraving has been employed, and religion, history, art, and the drama, to say nothing of music, heraldry, caricature, and other arts and sciences, have all been pressed into the service of the omnipresent

post card. I would undertake to find at least 3,000 different designs in a square half mile of Paris. One of the latest series is the flags of the nations—or rather, those nations whose flag is simple, as France, Italy, Belgium, and other tricolors, with a few bars of the national air printed in gold along the top.

It is curious to note that the post card has quite knocked out the poster. Only a few months ago, it was customary to see a notice on some posters that they were not to be sold, and anybody found with a copy in his possession would be prosecuted. At the shops where posters were sold, it was not unusual to ask four or five francs for a copy, and now they are to be had for as many pence. The reason of this is said to be the difficulty of knowing what to do with a collection. They are too big to put in a portfolio, are not good enough to go on the walls, and, if they were, they would hide all the pictures, to say nothing of getting dirty. A stand made of hinged bars projecting from a central pole is about the best thing, but that is apt to give your friends the idea that you are about to start a patent laundry.

There is absolutely nothing new in stationery, and in fancy goods the only thing to record is the appearance of a new sort of china or faience, which is a tolerably fair imitation of Wedgewood. It cannot, of course, be compared to the real article, but it has the merit of being very cheap, and an ash tray or bonbonniere can be bought for a few pence.

BERLIN.

There is nothing particularly striking among our latest novelties in notepaper. "Eagle Post" is the silvery inscription on a box covered with dove grey crinkled paper. The sheets and envelopes it contains are of plain white, but, of course, very superior material, and the envelopes are secured against indiscretion by a colored backing. "Vulcan" is the name we read on the lid of a box which is a splendid enlarged imitation of a safety-match box. The contents are the same as those of the "Eagle Post." A box of greater than the usual dimensions bears the inscription "Modern." In it we find an assortment of sheets and envelopes in four different fashionable tints, and decorated with pretty floral designs. Butterflies embellish the notepaper of the "Butterfly Post," and the

box in which it is sold, with its envelopes also, contains a number of tastefully designed and executed pictorial post cards.

It is a well-known fact that people who have to write a great deal, frequently, but quite involuntarily, change their position and that of the paper they write on. The consequence is a certain irregularity of their handwriting. This can be avoided by a new kind of pad, which consists of a thin but rigid board, measuring two feet by one. A rail, which extends across it and can be moved up and down, sliding in grooves along either edge of the board, holds the sheet by means of spring action. The board itself can be fixed to the writing-table in any desired angle. It consists of several layers of veneer, and is made to fold up.

Although many substitutes for the old-fashioned blackboard of the schoolroom have been introduced of late, inventors cannot rest, and the consequence is a novelty which we might call a veneer slate. It looks like an enlarged edition of the ordinary slate of our earliest schooldays, for it has a frame in which four layers of thin veneer, strongly and crossways glued together, are stretched. The greatest advantage of this contrivance seems to be its lightness, but it is also less rigid than the old board, and therefore presents a much more agreeable writing surface than the latter.

I have just read that a large concern has been started in the United States for the manufacture of envelopes, with a wire for opening the same running along one of the edges. This kind of envelope has been tried long ago in Germany, but was found impracticable for one reason or another. In the meantime, another envelope with opener has been patented, which might have a more successful career before it. A little corner of calico, or some such material, sticks through a horizontal slit in the closing flap. The continuation of the same we find stuck on the inside of that flap, of which it forms the lining. The gummed strips, therefore, are to be found on that lining. I need hardly add that when opening a letter enclosed in such an envelope, it is only necessary to tear it open by pulling the protruding corner of the calico in the downward direction.

A very useful and, at the same time, ornamental clip, particularly suitable for the display of cards, etc., in shop windows, has the shape of a star made of metal. Two stars are stamped out of some sheet metal, then embossed, and finally joined together by an eye-rivet being driven through the centre of the two. A card or sheet pushed between the same will be tightly held, and can be hung up by one of the top points