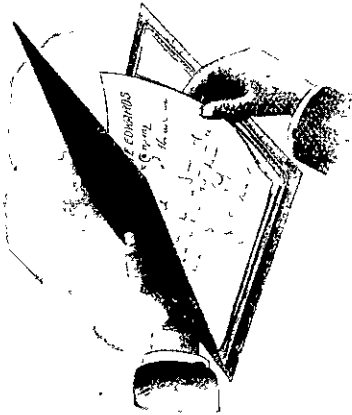


were added. And so the process went on, until many small libraries had such a look of disquieting heterogeneity as you may observe in a second-hand shop. The effect



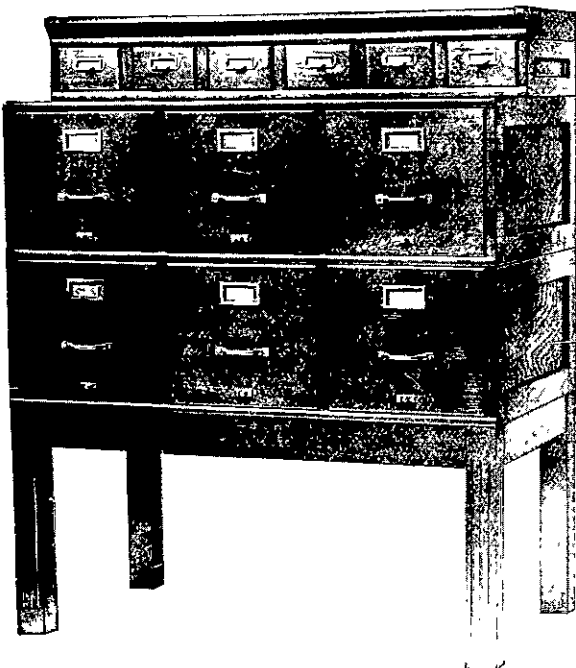
VERTICAL FILE HOLDER.

might occasionally be picturesque, but it was not satisfactory to the earnest reader, and it was (this being a matter of more importance) excessively wasteful of space. Many of the old book-cases, and all the old shelves, were open, so that the books were



FOUR DRAWER VERTICAL FILE

exposed to the dust that disfigures, the fly that corrupts, and the moth that destroys precious bindings. Between loved pages flies were often enough entombed. When bookcases were enclosed, they generally had



VERTICAL FILE ARRANGED NUMERICALLY.

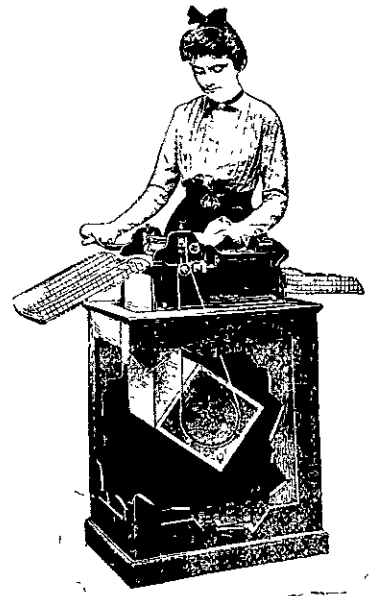
ungainly doors that swung outwards; and at the end of each shelf there were small hidden spaces in which books hurriedly needed had a habit of hiding themselves.

These amazing Americans have improved on that. Their bookcases are sectional. As a man's books increase in number, he adds section after section to his case. He can get sections of almost every conceivable shape—sections that will serve as window-seats, esecritoire sections, sections with shaped ends to fit in corners of any angle, special sections to go round corners. The sections fit together perfectly, but each section is complete in itself, every book is fully visible, and each has a dust-proof glazed front that slips back as required, and lies snugly hidden away on the top of the section. This system of sectional bookcases is not only convenient and economical—a man need not waste an inch of his wall space—it is also beautiful. Books are the loveliest adornment of a quiet room, and by this sectional system books are shown to excellent advantage and perfectly preserved. The glazed fronts or doors slide noiselessly on roller-bearings, and cannot stick or clog.

Further, the sectional system is adaptable. It is as useful in offices as it is convenient in libraries. The sections may be used effectively as small show-cases. They serve admirably for the keeping of catalogues. They may be put to almost any use that convenience may require or ingenuity devise. For libraries, the esecritoire section is compact and invaluable, and provision can be made among the sections for the keeping of the style of card-catalogue now adopted by every well-regulated library in the world. It is a sign indicative of these rapidly changing times that in the library of the Vatican at Rome there is an American card catalogue.

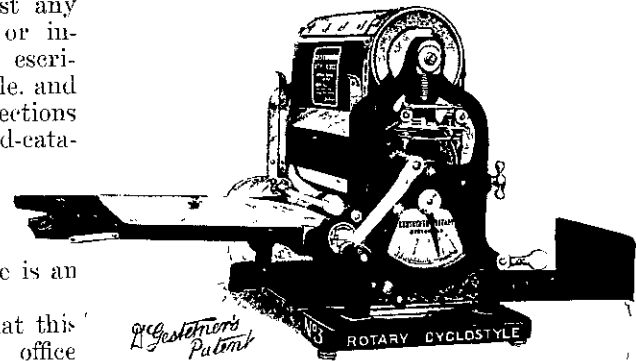
After all, it is to business men that this marvellous perfection of American office furniture chiefly appeals. Some facts are easily overlooked. Your business man in the average spends at least a third of his life in his office. His clerks, secretaries, accountants, typists, or other paid servants, spend a third of their lives in office also. In proportion as friction and irritation are reduced, in proportion as comfort is secured and convenience perfected, so is this big span of the business life lived well or ill. Millions of business men of the older type are fastidiously careful of comfort at home, and most extraordinarily careless of comfort in office. But if you take out of the reckoning the time spent in sleep, the average business man spends a very small part of his life at home. There is no reason why, having provided for the comfort of his women folk and progeny, he should not reasonably consider himself. That is why the new type of business man, having taken thought, is beginning to realise the virtue of making office comfortable.

Take chairs. The old, high, hard-seated, backless stools of English offices were abominably back-breaking and disheartening things to spend the day on. The new office chair of the Americans is as comfortable in its degree as a saddle-bag. The typists' chairs are wonderfully well adapted for their purpose. Typewriting from an ordinary chair is a wearisome business. As the typist necessarily leans forward, the ordinary chair-back gives no support. In the American typist's chair, the back is sensitive and adjustable. It moves with the typist, and gives excellent support. The



Y & E RAPID ROLLER COPIER

pressure or tension of the back support can be regulated to a nicety. The seat can be raised to any height required, and when that height is fixed the chair can be swung round to any extent without affecting it. The seats neither weary the body nor wear-out the clothing. Never before was such delicate complexity of invisible springs ap-

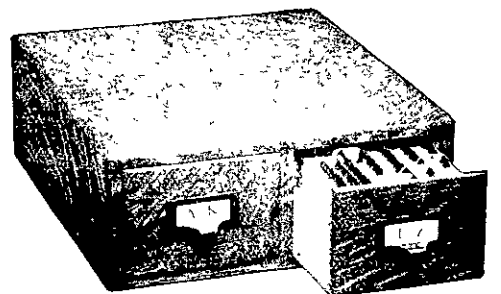


GESTETNER'S ROTARY CYCLOSTYLE.

plied to furniture building; and yet the simplicity of the mechanism is such that under fair treatment it can seldom or never get out of order.

Such details, concerning office furniture, may seem at a first glance trivial. They are not. Physical discomfort does not conduce to mental clarity; bad conditions of work do not make for good temper. The new type of business man realises that the better the conditions under which his employees work, the more fully and consistently will he profit by their skill.

It is really very difficult to say how far these benefits will go. Once this new



TWO DRAWER CARD CABINET

principle was adopted, it grew like a river, as tributary appliances were perfected. The improvement in filing devices has been especially remarkable. All of us have experienced the defects of the old system. There were files, roughly labelled, that