

have forgotten half the things she needed if Alice had not continually jogged her memory.

Yet it was with a delightful sense of elation that Enid made her preparations for the journey. As she bade her friends good-bye everyone congratulated her on the prospect before her. Some even expressed pity for Alice because she was not going too; but that contented young woman would have none of their commiseration. She had no desire to travel; but she knew that it was what Enid had always longed for, and she was very glad she should have the pleasure.

But in spite of the pleasure she anticipated it was hard for Enid when the eve of her departure came. A reaction set in then; her heart failed her at the thought of going so far from those she loved, and for a brief period she almost wished that the idea of her wintering in Rome had never been entertained.

"How tired you look, mother," she said, when they were about to separate for the night. "Do you know I begin to feel as if it were wrong of me to leave you. You will take care of yourself, won't you?"

Mrs. Mildmay smiled rather sadly. "My dear child," she said, "do you think it is necessary to say that to me? Does your father ever let me forget the need of care? It is you who should be warned to be careful. There will be no one to look after you abroad."

"Oh, I shall be all right," said Enid; "but I do wish I could take you all with me. I can't think what it will be like to spend Christmas away from home."

"It will seem strange, and you will miss us, no doubt. You cannot expect to have gold without alloy. I fear there must be some shadows in the days before you. You may not find your cousin all you could wish; unforeseen difficulties may arise; but I hope the experience will be altogether for your good. You will let me know everything that troubles you, Enid?"

"Of course, mother," answered Enid. She could not imagine that troubles might arise of which it would be impossible to write to her mother.

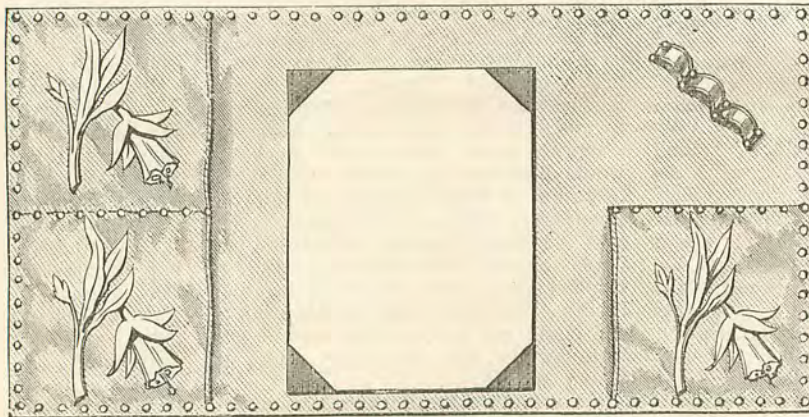
"I shall count on your letters. Good-night, my dear child."

Tears were not far from Enid's eyes as she bade her mother good-night. And

the parting the next morning was painful, but for Enid it was a pain which did not last long. Her father had decided to take her up to town himself. It was rarely he took a holiday; but he was not particularly busy at this time, and he felt it would be pleasant to renew his acquaintance with his cousin Marian, and see the girls start on their long journey two days later.

The express had not run far from Devonport ere Enid was chatting gaily with her father about Rome. As generally happens, it was those left behind who felt the parting most. Mrs. Mildmay shut herself into her room for an hour after Enid had gone, and when she reappeared her eyelids were suspiciously red. Even Alice, whose cheerfulness rarely fluctuated, was conscious of a blank, dreary feeling after her sister's departure, and had to set about the rearrangement of Enid's room, disordered by the exigences of packing, with the utmost energy in order to regain her usual equanimity. Enid Mildmay was not a girl who could leave her home without being missed.

(To be continued.)



HOW TO MAKE A WRITING-BOARD.

MANY girls can handle a hammer and gimlet as well as their brothers—perhaps better, in some cases. To those who can do so, the making of a writing-board will present no difficulties; and those who are not so skilled will be able to do so if they follow the advice given.

It is an article that will sell well at a bazaar, or is a nice present, because it is really useful, as well as pretty and artistic. For the foundation, a piece of smoothly-planed deal, thirty-six inches long, eighteen inches wide, and half an inch thick is required.

Seven dozen brass-headed nails, a packet of half-inch brass tacks, and a hammer and gimlet from your tool chest.

A yard of art serge, double width, and some embroidery silk completes the list—not a very expensive or long one.

The colour of the serge and the design of the embroidery is a matter of taste. The board sketched here is chestnut brown art serge; the daffodils are in the usual yellow tints, with the leaves of brownish green—very suitable colours to use, as they harmonise so well with the brass nails. Having obtained your board, lay it on the table on the serge, and cut it an inch larger all round, cutting out a little square piece of half an inch at each corner to prevent them looking bulky. The serge should be face

downwards on the table. Smooth out any creases, and lay the board on it exactly in the middle; pull the margin over to the side of the board uppermost, which we now call the wrong side; get it equal all round, and put a tack in at each corner to keep it in its place.

Knock the tacks in on the wrong side only an inch apart, to make your work tight and firm. Next cut a strip of serge nineteen inches long and ten inches broad for the pockets on the left side, and another piece ten inches square for the pocket on the right.

Work on them any design you like, but let it be a bold one.

The pockets are fastened to the board with brass nails; but remember to bore a hole with the gimlet for each one, or the heads will come off if you knock them in without doing so. You will see that there is an inch allowed to each strip for nailing on.

Cut two pieces two and a-half inches square, and cut each in two crossways; these are the blotting-paper holders, and are fastened on with brass tacks. For the pen and paper-knife holder, take a strip six inches long and one inch broad, and nail it on with brass nails at intervals of two inches, with either tacks or nails, as shown in sketch.

I should leave this until the last, and if I had any nails, should use them; if not, use tacks.

When making this board for a present, work the initials on this strip.

If you have cut your serge carefully, you should have a piece of serge, or pieces, large enough to cover the back, when you have finished the front, as shown in sketch.

The piece at the back must be slip-stitched on the wrong side all round, so as to cover the tacks; the board may then be used on a polished table without doing it an injury.

The white portion represents the blotting-paper. The pockets on the left side are stocked with stationery, while that on the right is intended for correspondence that requires answering.

If it is to be hung up out of the way, a couple of yards of cretonne will make a case to protect it from the dust.

If a shut-up travelling inkstand is used, this can also be put into the case, and then all the materials are ready to hand for writing a letter; and you are quite independent of an elaborate writing table, and, moreover, have a firm surface to write upon.

Cost, about four shillings and ninepence.

ANOTHER KNEE WRITING-BOARD, AND HOW TO MAKE IT.

By SOMERVILLE GIBNEY.

WHAT would our grandmothers have said if they had seen one of our present-day girls toasting her toes on the fender, and at the same time making use of one of these new and very useful inventions? She would probably have given vent to a diatribe against round shoulders and stooping; and having fully enlarged on the subject, would have ended up with a remark about there being a proper time for all things, meaning thereby a proper time for warming one's toes, and ditto for letter writing.

But we live in a busier age than our forefathers, and at a higher rate of speed; and any invention that serves to economise time is always acceptable to some people. And that is just what this simple arrangement does do—it provides a means of employing time which would otherwise be idle. During a severe winter it is absolutely necessary at times to sit in front of the fire and get warm; and many people have, since the knee writing-board came into fashion, employed this period in clearing off their correspondence, and, as it were, killed two birds with one stone. But it is not only in winter that they are useful; they are equally so in the summer, when sitting out in the shade of the garden, and when otherwise you would be some distance from pens, ink, and paper. Because they are so useful they have taken a firm hold on the public fancy; and if nicely made and of convenient size, always prove ready and remunerative sales at bazaars. And therefore, girls, if you have already provided yourself with one, there is no need for you to stop making them, for by their means you may benefit many a deserving object. It is to show you the best way to construct one that this paper is written, for with the exception of the board itself all the rest you can manage.

Of course they are made in many sizes; but for steadiness, support to the arm, and capability of holding all you may require, I think the size I give the most convenient. Get from the carpenter a piece of well-seasoned pine, thirty inches long by fifteen inches broad, and half an inch in thickness; and if it has pieces rabbited on at each end (but not to make the total length exceed thirty inches), it will be all the more secure from warping. Have a round hole two and one-eighth inches in diameter cut in one corner, one inch from the top side and end. The board should be planed up smooth on both sides. And now the remainder of the work you can do yourselves. To cover it, buy a yard of cheap cloth; what I use is maroon-coloured, forty inches wide, and costs one shilling and twopence three farthings. Then with small tacks fasten one edge of the cloth along the top edge of the board, leaving just half an inch extending beyond the right-hand end; bring the cloth down in front under the bottom edge, and up the back, fastening it temporarily with tacks not driven home. The front of the board will be that side which has the round hole in the top right-hand corner. You will find you have some cloth more than you require; leave it for the moment—do not cut it off yet. Next fasten one end of the front covering to the right-hand end of the

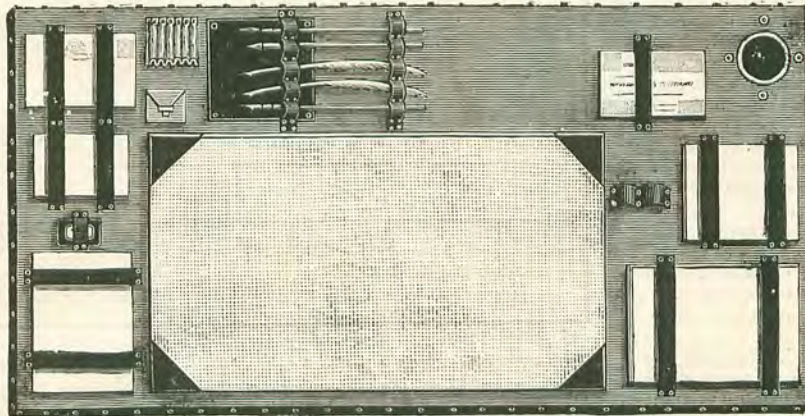
board firmly with tacks. You will, if you have gone by my measurements, have about five and a-half inches extending beyond the left-hand end. Cut this off except half an inch. Fasten down the front side covering firmly with tacks on the left-hand edge, stretching it (but not too tightly), and working out all wrinkles. You may now treat the bottom edge in the same manner, but use brass-headed nails in the place of tacks. The ones I use cost me threepence halfpenny per hundred, and have short shanks. Most fancy brass nails have five-eighths of an inch shanks; but these would be too long for the use they will afterwards have to serve, and would go right through your half-inch board. You can now cut off the remainder of your cloth from the top edge, leaving half an inch as before. Double this in, stretch it, working out all wrinkles, and fasten off with brass nails. But do not drive the nails right home. Treat both ends the same way, and be very careful about making neat corners. When you have got both sides of your board entirely free from wrinkles—and this may perhaps require a little patience and humouring here and there—then

You will of course observe it is not in the centre, and for this reason—you obtain more support for your writing hand and arm. When you have settled the position, fix your leather corners (taking care their sides are exactly parallel with the sides of the board) with small tacks. Three tacks each will be sufficient. The first two at each extremity of the mouth of the corner you will have no difficulty in driving home; the third, which must be as near the apex as you can get it, you will have more difficulty with. Press it from the inside through the leather into the board with your fingers as far as you can, and then lay a screw-driver on the head and strike the part of the steel outside the bag; you will be able to drive it home this way. Of course in fixing the corners you will have the folded side next the board out of sight. When all are fixed, try them with the blotting paper; and if they are all right, take the blotting-paper away, otherwise it would get soiled during the further operations.

The next thing you will require will be two yards of broad flat elastic. Mine is maroon-coloured, and cost me fivepence per yard. In the space between the left-hand edge of the blotter and of the board you will have room for a stock of note-paper, note-envelopes, and post cards, together with a piece of india-rubber. A glance at my sketch will show you how I arrange them; and I fancy you will find this the handiest way and most economical of space.

Now then, from the leather you have over, cut out a perfectly rectangular piece of sufficient width to nearly fill the space between the top of the pad and the edge of the board. You will see what I mean by a glance at the sketch; and with your elastic form a series of little arches, through which to thrust your pens, pencil, etc. I find I have room enough for five. Mind and make them small enough to hold the articles firmly. Repeat the process a little more to the right, and let the arches be exactly opposite each other, or your pens will not be parallel, and your board will look slovenly. The leather, as you will see, comes some little way under the first series of arches, and prevents the pens catching hairs in the splits when they are pushed through. One lady I knew, when she commenced using one of these boards without the leather, abused the ink roundly as being full of dirt and hairs, and poured it all away, only to find the new supply she purchased just as bad. That would doubtless have gone too had I not discovered the real offender in time. I would also suggest your nailing a little piece of leather below the loop to contain the india-rubber, otherwise in replacing it after use you will find the cloth covering rumple up in folds, and it will soon be torn; and it also gives a better finished appearance. There is one thing I see I have forgotten to mention in regard to the arches, and that is, use tacks in nailing down the elastic between them. There is not room for brass-headed nails, which you will employ at the corners of the leather and the ends of the elastic.

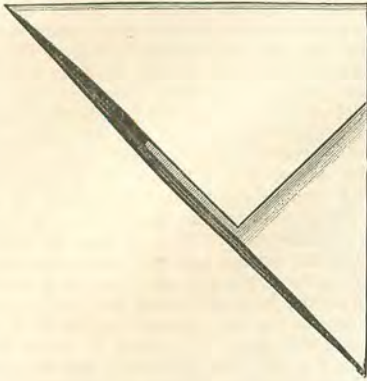
Between the space devoted to the pens and



drive home your nails firmly, taking care that they are all in an even line, and at equal distances from each other. This may sound a trifle, but on it, and in the other cases where the brass nails are used, depends whether your board has a workmanlike or untidy appearance.

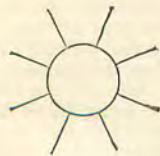
The next thing you will require will be some sheets of white blotting paper to form the writing-pad—say six; see that these are folded correctly and evenly. Then from a leather merchant or bookbinder get a piece or scraps of morocco leather—or pigskin, which wears far better—and any colour that suits your fancy. I use dark blue. Cut out four pieces two and three-quarter inches long by one and three-quarter inches broad. Fold the top right-hand corner over until the right-hand end is in a line with the bottom side. Treat the left-hand top corner in the same way, when you will find you have a right-angled triangular bag, the apex of which is neatly finished off. Stick down the overlapping parts with paste, or "fish glue," which dries quickly. These four leather corners serve to hold your blotting-pad in position; and what that position is to be you must now determine. I fix mine thus: The left-hand edge of the pad five inches from the left-hand side of the board—the blotting-paper being seventeen and a half inches long—brings the right-hand edge seven and a half inches from the right-hand side of the board.

the half-penny cards I place a penwiper made of washleather, pleated, nailing down the top edge of the pleats with tacks. When this gets too dirty, I can easily extract the tacks



and renew the leather. Below this I fix with small nails a small leather stamp case made in the form of an envelope. This I picked up in the Soho Bazaar; but any other convenient form and size would do equally well. The sketch will show you where I place my letter paper and envelopes, and by the side of the latter I have two arches for knife and scissors. Above this is another loop of elastic for letters and papers requiring answers, or any odds and ends you may wish to have at hand. You will observe there is an empty space between this and the ends of the pens. I have left this on purpose so that each person may fill it up according to their own taste. Some may like to have a match-box and sealing wax, others, another loop for odds and ends, and others again a quill-pen maker. In putting on the elastic in the various places, always turn in a bit at the ends; this prevents its fraying, and looks neat; and be very careful when you have two loops to have them parallel, and both parallel with the edge of the board; nothing looks worse than to have one askew—it spoils the whole appearance.

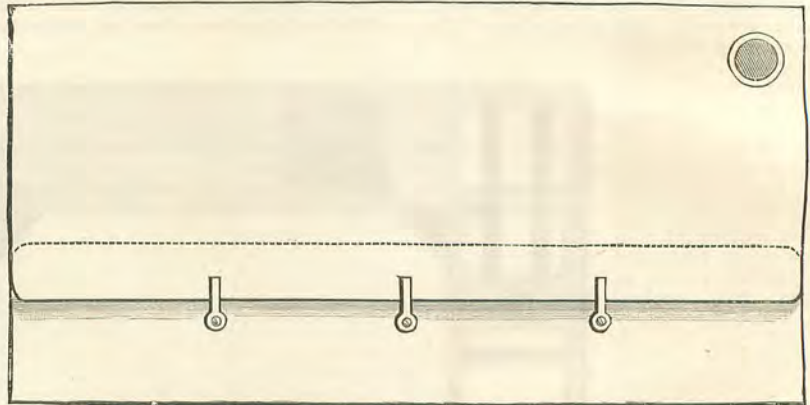
Now we come to the inkstand. You will remember that you have got a two and one-eighth of an inch hole cut in your board, but it has been covered up and out of sight since you fastened on the cloth. Ascertain its exact position by feeling, and then drive in four of the brass nails as in the sketch—these will keep the cloth in position. Now cut a round hole in the cloth in the centre of the hole in the board, and from it make some cuts but not too long; you can lengthen them afterwards if required, but you cannot shorten them. In



any case they should not reach further than the edge of the circular hole in the board. For the inkstand get one of the round spring ones with two lids, both of which shut

with a snap. It must be just two inches in diameter. They are very inexpensive, and can be bought for fourpence halfpenny; but I do not recommend these. Mine cost ninepence at the Stores, and it has never played me any tricks, though it has travelled to the heart of the Bernese Oberland with me. It is of white metal, and partly covered with leather. Now, when you double down the segments of cloth formed by the cuts this should fit pretty firmly, but not *too* tightly, in the hole; if it be too loose you can easily remedy this by glueing a piece of thick flannel or felt round the side of the hole, and then doubling the segment down over it.

If you hold your board up when the inkstand is in the hole, you will find that the cloth on the under side sags down there. Leave the inkstand in a little while, and place the corners of the board on books so as to allow the cloth to sag. Then take your inkstand out, turn the board over, and drive a few small tacks round the hole, keeping the fullness beneath the hole, and the rest of the covering stretched taut. By this means, when you are writing with your board on your knee your inkstand will sink down, and it will be impossible by any sudden movement to jerk it



out of the board and upset it; and yet, when you lay your board on the table after use, the inkpot will rise up and the board remain level. And it is for this reason that you should use tacks which have flat heads, and which consequently will lie flush with the board, instead of brass-headed nails, which stand up and prevent the board lying perfectly flat. Your board is now finished, and you can put in the blotting-paper, pens, pencil, writing paper, envelopes, cards, etc., and sit down and try it, or pack it off to the friend or bazaar it is intended for.

Should you, however, wish to still further increase its completeness, you can buy some American cloth or morocco leather, and make a kind of cover for it, which will keep the dust from it and the papers it holds when not in use. To do this you must cut out two pieces the full length of the board, and of such breadth as that they shall overlap as in the sketch—where the top edge of the under piece is indicated by a dotted line—leaving half an inch to turn in at the top and bottom edge, where it is fastened to the edge of the board with brass nails. Of course in this case no

brass nails are used on these two edges to fasten the cloth covering, only tacks. The other edges of the leather or American cloth should be bound with braid or galoon. In order that the covering may lie flat it will be necessary to cut a hole so that the inkpot may stick through; and to ascertain the exact position of this hole, remove the inkpot and press the leather down on to the hole, when, if sufficient weight be used, the edge will leave a mark on the covering, which will be a guide for you to cut by. It will only then remain for you to sew on tags to the upper piece, and corresponding buttons on the lower, and you will have finished. When in use the covering can be turned back, and that nearest to you tucked underneath, when they will not interfere in the least with your writing. Some people consider a sheet of blotting-paper makes too big a pad; but as far as I myself am concerned I don't think so. I hate a little piece—you have to be particular or half your sheet of note-paper is not on it at all. However, if any of my readers are not of my opinion, and would prefer a smaller board, they can make one by reducing the length of it by eight and three-quarter inches—half the length of the blotting paper—which you can

double in halves. The following is a list of the various sums I expended on mine, as a guide to future makers:—

	s.	d.
Pine board 30 inches by 15 inches	2	6
1 yard of maroon cloth	1	2 ³ / ₄
100 brass-headed nails	0	3 ¹ / ₂
2 yards of broad flat elastic at 5d.	0	10
1 piece of indiarubber	0	1
Inkstand	0	9
Stamp case	0	6
Scraps of pig-skin leather	0	6
Blotting-paper	0	6
	7	2 ¹ / ₄

The other things, such as pens, pencil, tacks, washleather, knife, scissors, etc., I had ready, but they would not have come to much. And now, in conclusion, let me once more urge you to be as neat as possible in your work, be exact in your measurements, and careful in the position of your elastic, nails, etc. If you are, your board, when finished, will present a pleasing and workmanlike aspect; if you are not, it will look amateurish and slovenly.

