

Taken from an issue of The Western Penman, January, 1905.

\*Please see image (CourtneyPS) posted in the next message as a reference to the story below.

### Courtneyism

Probably no other penman is so admired for his skill as is Mr. Francis B. Courtney. His versatility is remarkable and is peculiar to himself. Long ago he mastered all the ordinary styles, and being somewhat ingenious he has devoted many hours of recreation to inventing new styles, unique alphabets, oddities, and sometimes absurdities, in pen-wielding.

On the opposite page is what he considers his finest specimen of work in the "freak" alphabets he has invented.

The left column is a letter in imitation Japanese. The right column is the same letter in figure writing, and the middle column is the same letter, a fine specimen of the Courtney freak backhand. The imps and this style of signature have become almost a trademark, and one hard to forge. To read the middle letter, hold the paper on almost a level with the eye. TRANSLATION.

"You have my sanction to coin the new word, 'Courtneyism', as title for the paragraphs containing more or less good advice to students that I sent you. I am pleased to know the lessons you are now running in which the copies came from my pen, are finding such a warm reception among teachers and students.

Certainly no student can make a better investment than a subscription to the Penman: one number will bring back his money over and over.

With best wishes for your future success and prosperity. I am,

Yours figuratively,

Francis B. COURTNEY."

But, it must be remembered, Mr. Courtney and all other sensible penmen and teachers, recognize clearly two distinct fields—one of ornate, and the other of business writing with no flourishing nor foolishness.

For the professional writer there is much pleasure and some profit to be had in practicing highly ornamental, unusual twists and combinations, while we all admire it when well done. But to the average person the use of such work ends with admiration. Mr. Courtney has drawn a very clearly cut line dividing business writing from all other forms of pen work. The finest example of this is found in the lessons in business writing now running in this paper. In these copies he has given a most beautiful and at the same time practical style of writing that can be mastered and used by every boy or girl. There is speed, ease and accuracy such as have helped to make his reputation and that delight thousands of subscribers monthly.

For a short time the entire course, beginning with September, can be supplied. It is a rare opportunity for teachers to get something of a superior nature into the hands of students—something that will infuse new life and inspire more work.