

Taken from the book "CC Canan: Collection of Penmanship" from Zaner-Bloser (1921)

#### Publishers' Note

The pen work executed by the late C. C. Canan is of such a high order of skill that we deemed it our duty to reproduce his best efforts in book form so as to preserve them for the benefit of others who wish to master penmanship. Not to have perpetuated his work in a volume of this kind would have meant that only a very few would have had the opportunity of receiving his instruction and of deriving inspiration from his work. Is it not plainly the duty of each generation to preserve its best efforts in all fields of endeavor and thus hand them down to the next?

Many persons after engaging in their chosen work reach in a few years a standard beyond which they seem incapable of going, and then gradually recede. Many require frequent and strong urging by others in order that their best efforts may be produced. Not so with Canan. His intense love of the art and his passion to master it compelled him to improve each year almost to the very end, notwithstanding the fact that he was handicapped by a delicate physique. Indeed we could not help but marvel at the work he sent us after he could no longer leave his bed and which he executed while propped up with a chair.

The writer of this brief note saw Canan's star rise in the firmament, dim though it was at first, and grow brighter and brighter from year to year until it reached unusual brilliancy; and then, entirely too soon, drop to be seen no more.

Most persons are endeavoring to find the way that leads to knowledge or skill. Those who wish to follow the road leading to the mastery of penmanship will find it far easier now than it was before Canan traveled it, for he has left signboards containing suggestions, encouragement and, warnings of pitfalls all along the way.

Could any one strive more earnestly to help others in this work than he has in his instructions and suggestions in this book? He has endeavored to tell the exact truth so that all may know just what is necessary to do to reach success.

May the book assist many persons in mastering the useful, beautiful and fascinating art of penmanship, and thus accomplish all of the results that he hoped to accomplish before he learned that his young life was about to be ended, is the wish of the publishers.

The Zaner-Bloser Company.  
Columbus, Ohio.

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The following tribute to Mr. Canan's memory appeared in the November, 1904, number of THE BUSINESS EDUCATOR, published at Columbus, Ohio, and to which journal he was a frequent contributor:

#### C. C. CANAN

C. C. Canan has passed to the spirit life. Canan, the penman, is no more among us. His easily-recognized, welcome, precisely written letters have ceased dropping into our mail box. They have been frequent visitors the past year, and they will be greatly missed.

Thursday morning, September 29th, 1904, at the home of his parents in Bradford, Pa., the spirit of Clinton C. Canan freed itself from a frail body, and his pens are now idle. He was born at Pleasantville, Venango County, Pa., July 31, 1873. For more than fifteen years he suffered from an attack of appendicitis which at that time was little understood and consequently unsuccessfully treated. About three years ago his condition became critical and a surgical operation was performed but without avail. A second operation was resorted

to which did little good, if any, following which other complications, such as Bright's disease, dropsy, etc., developed and finally caused his death.

Last spring he wrote us regarding business and professional matters, and in his quiet, reserved manner, said his condition was becoming such he did not expect to live more than through the summer. How well he timed his departure! How heroically he wrote and wrought, none but his immediate friends can know. We who saw the strong lines become frail knew that strength was failing, but the end came as a shock, as his last missive came but a few days before the end, and with no intimation of his serious condition.

Mr. Canan entered, and graduated from, the Zanerian College of Penmanship, Columbus, Ohio, in 1893. He was then twenty years of age. We soon recognized in him special art talents, which, with his patient, persevering practice and moral tendencies, convinced us that his position and rank as a penman was destined to be something more than mediocre. We recognized that as a penman and artist combined he was unexcelled, and that he had few or no equals as an accurate, artistic penman. This is a distinction and deserved honor which falls to the lot of but few people, and no one could have been more worthy of credit for good work than he.

From the Zanerian he went to Cleary College, Ypsilanti, Mich., as a teacher of penmanship, where he remained about two years. He was then employed to teach penmanship and pen art in the penmanship department of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Business College. The work he did there reflected great credit upon him as a penman of extraordinary skill and as an artist of more than usual talent. He next taught penmanship in Shissler College, Norristown, Pa., where he became incapacitated for work and in which city the surgical operations were performed. Two years ago last spring we visited him after his first operation and found him optimistic as to his condition and uncomplaining, even when the physician and nurses had no hope of his recovery. His calm cordial, cheerful conversation at that time will never be forgotten.

As a penman he ranked with the famed A. D. Taylor. He was equaled by no living penman in delicate, accurate free-hand ornamental penmanship, and was an artist far above the penman's standard. His art was not confined to the pen, as he painted oil and water colors. The fact, however, that he did much of

beautiful and skillful work during the last two years of his life, and until within a few days of the end, is what appears most wonderful. How one so weakened and enervated by sickness and pain could accomplish what he did toward the end, is beyond our comprehension. It is strong evidence that spirit, not flesh, ruleth; and that a cheerful, firm, unwavering disposition can accomplish that which on the part of all else would fail.

But Canan was more than a penman and artist. He was poet of splendid ability, considering the fact that he was yet comparatively young man and had accomplished so much in other lines, leaving so little time to satisfy literary longings. But illness brought enforced absence from usual schoolroom duties, and, as idleness had no place in his untiring disposition, he turned to poetry and as a result developed such ability before he departed that he surprised his many friends when he published his modest, little, white-covered volume entitled "Thorns and Flowers." The introductory poem so well bespeaks his own mission in life that we give it here:

#### "THORNS AND FLOWERS"

"Thorns;  
Oh, not thorns,  
Just rambling, wayside flowers,  
Gathered in verdant bowers,  
With much pleasure,  
Far from strife.  
And may their fragrance brighten,  
Their goodness sweeten, lighten,  
In a measure,  
All of Life."

Another poem so well expressed his boundless energy that we cannot refrain from again letting him speak to you from the printed page:

"IDLENESS IN HUMANITY" "A drifting ship upon the wave, To idleness an abject slave, Content to be the one to lean With no desire for man's esteem. Ambitionless to all about, The stolid mein of stupid clout, A derelict on seas of fate, And lost to words that may berate. The world has need of active men, Who wield the shovel or the pen, But he who will not sow or reap Might just as well be fast asleep. Wake up and do; it is the day Of doing something in your way; It might be small at very best, But do it well with hearty zest."

Penman, Artist and Poet; these were his right of acquisition and of which any one might well be proud, but he possessed that which outshines them all and, lasting and living ever, outweighs them all-uncompromising morality and manhood. Never a word have we heard against his integrity and morality. His short, full, artistic life may well serve as a model for us to emulate.

#### MR. CANAN'S INSTRUCTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Having just read in a recent periodical that "the less you say, the more people will remember," I have been led to omit much that I had written on the subject of ornamental penmanship. It is hoped that what is said may at least be of interest to those who are already interested in penmanship.

Instructions for a course of lessons in ornamental penmanship are not easily written. Our best writers of this style do not write alike and it is my opinion that they do not use the same movements. Instruction for all will not always apply in individual cases, and especially is this true in regard to ornamental writing. Instead of much instruction in these lessons that might, after all, only confuse the student, criticisms will be given and also a few inside facts regarding the history and practice of art penmanship in this country.

Much credit for originating forms and popularizing shaded writing is given to "Father Spencer," who, in the early '50's, sent forth from the little log school house in Ashtabula County, Ohio, many young men who advocated the cause of good writing. The life and works of Platt R. Spencer are worthy the careful study of every penman. He is thought of by many writers as having lived the ideal life of true greatness. The following tribute is by James A. Garfield: "His mind was too large, his sympathy too quick and active to be limited to any one pursuit. To the thousands of young men and women who enjoyed the benefit of his brilliant instruction, to the still larger circle of his friends and acquaintances, and to all who love a gifted, noble and true-hearted man, the memory of his life will remain a perpetual benediction."

The New "Spencerian Compendium," published in 1879, is the first great work of art penmanship of which I have any knowledge and it is today a book of reference and delight to hundreds of penmen throughout the United States. Other publications along these lines have appeared from time to time, but the accurate forms and delicate engraving of the "Spencerian Compendium" have never been excelled.

#### BRIEF INSTRUCTIONS

In practicing the copies given herewith use a free movement. Sit facing the table with both arms resting thereon. Bend forward from the hips, so that you can get close to the work and yet sit in a healthful position. Use good materials. The Zanerian Fine Writer or Gillott's Principality No. 1 are the only pens that give satisfactory results in executing shaded, ornamental writing. A good quality of white paper and ink that will flow freely and give a clear line should be used. An oblique penholder is indispensable for good work.

Do not let the wrist drag on paper, but the third and fourth fingers and the muscle of the forearm should rest on the paper or desk. Use six or eight sheets of paper at a time, as this gives the proper surface to write upon.

Let the muscles of the forearm rest in one place on the desk, the wrist going in and out the sleeve as the movement is applied. Change the position of the arm after making words and exercises, if necessary. The movement should not be very slow nor yet very fast. One should write rapidly enough for firmness and slowly enough to avoid recklessness. A good shaded part of letter is seldom, if ever, made with a hesitating movement. Slow movement will not give a dashy appearance to the letter. Do not use finger movement in making the copies given in this lesson. Study to know the parts of a letter as a watch-maker knows the parts of a watch; be able to place the parts of a letter together in their proper Proportion.

In looking over the past in regard to art in writing it would be interesting to know just how many of our penmen have been encouraged by the wonderful work of John D. Williams, Fielding Schofield and others who gave much attention to flourishing. This art seems to grow less in favor year by year, while the practical side of penmanship is more in evidence than ever before.

Notwithstanding the criticisms and abuse given Gaskell's Compendium, it was a valued book to many young writers of that day. The writing is crude and rough, yet it is a book deserving of mention if only on account of its many friends and enemies. There are many who remember with pleasure the time spent in practicing the numerous styles of letters of that publication.

Then we have Williams and Packard's Gems, Ames' Compendium, The Real Pen Work Self Instructor, and many other books and journals which have given their influence to art in penmanship. The penman who possesses a library of penmanship publications is fortunate indeed, and any pupil who can secure any of these books at moderate cost is advised to do so. Most of the old penmanship publications are now out of print, and copies in good condition are increasing in value rapidly.

Much credit for the advancement of art in penmanship is due the business schools of the country who have used it for years as a means of aiding and advertising the cause of business education. Credit is also due the Zanerian College of Penmanship, Columbus, Ohio, established in 1888 by C. P. Zaner, E. W. Bloser and L. M. Kelchner. This school at one time (after being established) had the prosperous outlook of three teachers and one pupil. But merit has won, and we of the penmanship profession know where the Zanerian stands today.

Among the writers of ten and twenty years ago and of the present time, there is great diversity in the style of the leader's artistic writing. These styles can be divided into three classes, namely: the small, round, heavily shaded style as written by L. Madarasz, F. B. Courtney and others; the larger, accurate, finelined style of which the late A. D. Taylor was the unequalled advocate; the medium size, angular, accurate writing of E. W. Bloser, L. M. Kelchner and others. The first style has speed and dash, the second and third accuracy, and all have grace and beauty. The first shows to advantage in card writing, the others in page writing.

These classes of writing cannot be compared to advantage, and the writing that appears best to one person is sure to be another's second choice. These styles have their many admirers, but it is not generally conceded that any one style is best.

When I first became interested in penmanship the penman's papers contained but few specimens of writing and most of those published were wood-cuts, which showed the skill of the engraver instead of that of the penman. Hand engraved work is sometimes given at this time as facsimile engraving. It is safe to say that in most cases the writing has been improved by the engraver. Penmen should learn to discriminate between hand-engraved and photo-engraved work. The latter reproduces the writing as it was written, though unless there is a reduction in size in the engraving the quality of line is heavier than in the original. Our finest writers have never done much work for engraving, because they realized that their work did not show to advantage by the photo-engraving process. For this process, the writing should be in black ink. India ink is best. No penman can do his best work with India ink, as it is too thick, and a fine line is uncertain. To get the fine line the penman must dilute the ink. This makes it pale and sometimes a pale line is "lost" in engraving. The engraver must then build this line, which often prints rough or heavy. I have seen poor

writing engraved into a good appearance (this is usual when the writing is greatly reduced) and I have seen good writing engraved in a manner to disappoint the writer.

Artistic penmanship depends on curves and contrasts for its beauty. The firm and delicate line and graceful shade give this style of writing that pleasing appearance that delights the eye; not only of the beginner, but of the skilled penman, The profession of penmanship has grown from year to year and there are more good writers to-day than ever before. It is worthy of note that the writing master of olden times has disappeared. The writing teacher of to-day is usually competent to teach branches allied to writing, or the subjects taught in commercial colleges.

It should be the aim of every penman to use his good writing as a means to an end, and many writers of a few years ago are now with business colleges or in positions where their skill is of much benefit to them.

#### The Use And Value Of Shaded Writing

This is not meant as a defense of shaded writing. No defense is thought necessary. The skilled writer of this style has an accomplishment that will give him satisfaction and almost certain advancement. My advice is strongly against the display of poorly executed shaded writing. Do not put forth your writing until it has the unmistakable stamp of "good." Shaded writing poorly written is worse than plain writing. Good writing makes poor spelling prominent and will be of most use to the educated. The many writers who misspell words are a weight to the profession. We are all liable to mistakes, but these mistakes should be few. Every writer should realize that he must be able to do something besides make script forms. A young man recently made application to a New York business school for a position, stating that he would be willing to work full time for \$5.00 a week. This young man writes a better hand than some penmen who receive a salary of \$1,500 a year.

Artistic writing will serve advantageously those who are capable in other branches of education. It has been said: "There is a culture, a delicacy of refinement in the nicely written hand that is admired by all."

The student of this style of writing will find that the quality of determination will be of great value to him. To any one who is not prepared to give his undivided attention to the work, part of his time, the road will be long indeed. Concentration of mind and energy will do much for the student who has little talent to aid him. There are persons who would never reach a high degree of skill in this work, no matter how much attention they might give to the subject. However, the members of this class are few and the average student will find that his progress will depend entirely upon his application and industry.

Some time ago I read of a young man who, years ago, did his writing on bits of bark from trees, because he could not afford to buy paper. Paper is inexpensive in these days and for good shaded writing the writer must have a good quality of paper. This is important. The writer who uses poor material has no claim to the assistance of progressive penmen.

#### The Drawings of Youthful Genius In A Plough-Boy

Oft will he stoop, inquisitive to trace,  
The opening beauties of a daisy's face:  
Oft will he witness, with admiring eyes,  
The brook's sweet dimples o'er the pebbles rise.

Many of the best penmen of America have come from humble homes and the broad acres of the farm. Something in the stolid farm life seems conducive to the qualities that go to make the penman of today. One of the qualities required by the student of fine writing is the power to concentrate the energies to the acquirement of some one thing. No discouragement should be allowed to creep in. Usually that which is easily acquired is worth but little and almost invariably the difficult things to get are the things that are worth most. The student must learn to see the letter in his mind before it is made on paper. This power of perception is not always developed as fully as it should be. Many persons practice and know when they make a good letter, yet they do not know wherein the letter differs from the poorly made one. Sometimes

we find that the writer's perception is better developed than his power of execution. Then again, we find excellent shades and quality of line with poor perception of the correct form. All persons should be able to write a plain, rapid hand before attempting the ornamental style.

Practice is needed to give confidence and sureness. The young penman marvels at the confidence of the expert writer in making an intricate combination at the end of a well-written letter. He should realize that the penman is familiar with the work from long hours of practice, and that the signature is but ordinary to the writer.

Improvement is gradual. It grows steadily and surely. No one will be much surprised at his progress from day to day, but from month to month the change should be marked. A young man who, several years ago, wrote a wretched style, is now one of the leading penmen in the United States.

His ambition was encouraged by the kind advice of I.M. Thornburgh, and he is now an example of what a young man, who is not afraid of work, can do with but little talent to aid him. Few penmen play so prominent a part in penmanship matters of to-day as the young man referred to in the foregoing sentences.

The student who can afford to do so should keep a book containing specimens of the real work of the best writers. It is a difficult matter to get these specimens, but a liberal purse will get enough material for practice and study for weeks. The young penman should also begin a library of penmanship publications for reference and study. The subject of penmanship is uninteresting to the teacher who has not studied it deeply.

At the present time the writer has a book that contains the work of America's finest penmen. It is needless to say that a book containing such a collection is worth a great deal, because many of the writers are reluctant to send out their work at any price.

As in most other things, the man who makes the most improvement is he who looks on all sides of the matter and makes use of the many adjuncts certain to help him in his study of the subject.

Plain, clear and open writing is the model handwriting for business and general use. The ornamental writing now used was not evolved from plain writing, but the plain writing is the outcome of changes from the old artistic style of writing. The trend of advancement has been from the ornate to the plain, from slowness to the quickly executed style of modern writing.

We now have many styles of ornamental writing. The engrossing style being very much like the writing of our forefathers who used "a gray goose quill."

No two penmen write exactly alike, although some penmen are skilled in writing the different styles of ornamental writing. It is my opinion that drawing helps the writer of this style of writing, inasmuch as it teaches him to be observing, while on the other hand, from experience in business schools, I consider the practice of shorthand a detriment to good writing.

We have only to look at the penmanship journals now issued to see the great extent that shaded writing is used by penmen. The writing seems valuable to the penmen because it is often the means of giving him added interest in his work, and, to judge from the many beautiful specimens that are constantly appearing, he is taking advantage of this to a great extent.

We find that the penmen who have given the most to the profession and who have been of the most use to the world in general, have been followers of this style of writing, and from this alone we conclude that shaded penmanship has been of much use in the past, and we hope for greater things for it from the future.