

APPENDIX 4

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR FRANCIS B. COURTNEY'S LESSONS IN DASHY WRITING

Dashy writing is worth the attention of anyone who can appreciate the beautiful. . The graceful curves, the harmony of lines, the delicate touch, and the dashy shade combine to make forms both pleasing and fascinating, and those who have a few leisure moments each day can find rare pleasure in practicing from the copies. It has high commercial value, and the possessor of a dashy hand can always find a ready market for his skill.

Dashy writing occupies an important place in the history of the development of our commercial schools, and no small measure of the success of the pioneers in the commercial educational field is due to their ability to handle the pen skillfully. In the early days it was a conspicuous feature of the business school, and it is doubtful whether

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It is my aim in presenting this series of copies and suggestions to make it practical and of the greatest possible value. The copies represent the rapid style I use in my every day work. They contain grace, harmony, and dash, the three elements of beautiful writing.

PREPARATION.

Good materials are absolutely necessary. Without them you can accomplish nothing. What do you need? Not an elaborate equipment; just some good paper, several oblique penholders, a box of fine pointed flexible pens, some blotters and a good table of the right height. Any ordinary straight-back chair is good.

Now, having the equipment, position demands your attention.

The photographic illustrations tell the whole story much better than it could be told in words. Study them carefully. Observe in illustration No. 1 the position of the chair, the posture of the body, the manner in which the feet are placed on the floor, the position of the head, and the arms on the desk. In illustration No. 2 you will please note the relative positions of the arms. The elbows, as shown by the illustration, are equally distant from the body. Keep the shoulders square, the head level, and your work directly in front of you. Notice the position of the paper on the desk, and the manner of holding and adjusting the paper with the left hand. Stop right here until you thoroughly understand everything relating to position.

HOW TO HOLD THE PEN.

The manner of holding the pen comes next. Let us study illustrations 3, 4, and 5 very carefully. No. 3 shows how the penholder is held between the second finger and the thumb. No. 4 shows the under part of the hand as it is when ready for action. No. 5 shows the relative position of the fingers and how they are brought under the palm of the hand. There is but little difference between the appearance of the hand when holding the pen correctly, and when at rest with the fingers partly closed. Of course it is understood that no two hands are made alike, so you are not expected to make your hand look like those in the illustrations. But it is the general principles of correct pen holding that you should study and apply.

Illustration No. 6 shows both sides of the arm when in position for writing, and illustrates further the holding of the pen. Notice how the arm rests on the large muscle below the elbow, that the wrist and hand are absolutely free from the desk, and the third and fourth fingers serve as a vehicle on which the hand rides lightly over the paper in whatever way the mind directs. Study your hand carefully and then the illustration. When you have caught the idea you have already learned how to hold your pen, one of the first essentials of dashy writing.

MOVEMENT.

There is but one movement to which I have chained my life's work in the field of dashy and rapid writing. It is the muscular movement, the movement that has done more for penmanship than any other ever tried or even suggested. It is the foundation of all penmanship skill. You must acquire it or any amount of time and effort you may devote to this work will be lost. You must develop and store away a generous quantity. You must practice exercises until the action of the arm is light, absolutely free, and under perfect control. Such action can be acquired only through a complete relaxation of all the muscles of the hand, arm and shoulders. Gripping the penholder severely produces a rigid tension of the muscles, prevents freedom, lightness of touch, and grace of movement. Do not attempt any of the shaded strokes until you can make the light strokes with perfect ease on copy slip No. 4. The oval exercise is the best promoter of good results and the true secret to dashy writing.

THE SHADES.

The shaded strokes will doubtless cause you a great deal of trouble and discouragement, but by careful study and persistent effort you can accomplish the desired end. Your first tendency will be to make them slowly, and resultantly heavy and lifeless. You must overcome this at once. The shades require the same free action as the light lines. They are made with a lively, yet deliberate movement, a bold, springy pressure on the pen and a quick release without stopping or checking the motion. The principles for shade practice are on copy slip No. 4.

I would impress upon you the importance of the foregoing instructions, and ask you in your own interests to observe them carefully in all your practice. Applying the foundation principles as outlined above, is the only way that anyone has ever attained a high degree of skill in writing.

THE COPIES.

Take up the copies in their order and practice each one until you can make it with a fair degree of skill before proceeding to the next. Review the copies frequently but always practice systematically.

Copy slip No. 6 contains letters made from capital stem. They are important factors in the acquirement of a free dashy style of writing.

Copy slips No's. 7, 8 and 9 contain words commencing with every letter in the alphabet. You will observe that the oval exercise forms the basis of every good capital letter. Keep your ideal of writing in sight, and it will not be long before you will reach the summit on which you have fixed your vision.

Copy slips No's. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 contain sentences beginning with the capital alphabet. In speaking of these copies the American Penman says: "We believe the equal of this series of offhand copies

has never appeared in a penmanship paper. They should be studied minutely. They furnish material for almost an endless amount of practice."

Copy slips No a. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 contain signatures. The harmonious curves of the hair lines and the correct crossing of lines must be carefully observed. The shades must be properly distributed so as to balance the combination. The forms of the letters should be complete and the same as if standing alone. Study, practice, compare and criticize.

Copy slips No's. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and .10 contain 7 alphabet, in one. Here we have the light and shade portrayed. There must be the proper mingling of light and shade or we have no art. One brings out the fine points of the other and relieves the possibility of sameness.

The artist who produces face and form, the landscape painter, who gives us the dreamy moonlight and evening sunset with his brush, is indeed deserving of great praise. But the man who with his trusty pen, produces the flying birds of the air the swans of the lake, and the penmanship that none can detect from copper plate, deserves to be a recognized equal. For what grander art, what greater accomplishment than to be able to place upon paper a nation's writing that mystifies and charms, and creates much wonder among those who are less able to produce it. Let us then always select the best material, equip ourselves with the best copies that can be produced, and in every stroke that touches the paper change it into a work of art to be admired.

Believe in yourself, believe in your ability, believe me sincerely when I say that the accomplishment of a good handwriting is within the reach of every thoughtful, careful, and industrious student.

I assume that those who read these suggestions are interested to a certain degree in good handwriting. Practice for it now while the opportunity is ripe. For it may be like the shell on the shore that the traveler sought to reach with his stick, but he waited so long that old Neptune altered his mind and got back his pearl. The waters washed his opportunity from him at a single dash.