

Taken from Gaskell's Penman's HandBook, 1883, Pages 9-22.

## The History of Writing

It is thought by the best authorities, that the many ancient systems of writing had at least three different sources, the Egyptian, the Assyrian, and the Chinese. All of these systems were originally hieroglyphic.

Hieroglyphics, then, were the primeval invention of the art of -writing, and the first rude effort of expressing by pictures the images of the mind without the aid of speech. In time, characters were added, and this formed the second stage, or improvement of the art. - This curious attainment was confined to the priests and the nobility, and kept from the vulgar, who were deemed incapable of understanding the sublime truths of religion and state policy.

The progress of writing in England is well described in an old book published in London, some seventy years ago. The author says : "The invasion, or rather the assistance of the Saxons, taught England many arts. The Danes impressed her with the value of a navy, her natural bulwark. The Normans, the parents of our regular dynasty, enriched the conquered soil with luxuries and improvements she was previously unacquainted with. Literature, from this epoch, made hasty strides; trade made Britain acquainted with the whole world; and knowledge from a thousand sources enlightened the land. The dark, uncouth character of the Saxon letter soon yielded her empire to her fair sister, the Roman; which, for elegance and beauty, appears a perfect model of invention, and ever will prevail."

Not longer ago than during the reign of Henry IV., writing was so little known in England, that scarcely a bishop or archbishop could subscribe his name, and very few of the rest of the "learned men" of the day. Learning was at the lowest ebb. Among the clergy, the repeating of their breviary by rote constituted about the entire stock of their available knowledge. This midnight of ignorance continued until the reign of Henry VII., during which America was discovered; curiosity stimulated inquiry; the people began to think and to reason. This faint dawn of intelligence broke out into a glorious morning during the reign of Elizabeth. The arts flourished; literature was cultivated; and progress was made throughout the nation.

Since then, England has had some of the best and most famous writing masters the world has known, to whom we are indebted for the most of what we teach to-day.

The first authors of any note, says Ellsworth, are John Baildon and John de Beauchesne, who published a quarto volume, in London, in 1570, styled "A Book of Divers Sorts of Hands." It contained a set of copies of the various handwritings then in use, which, according to Mr. Astle, were the set hand, the common Chancery and the Court hands, partly Gothic and partly Norman, and were used in records and judicial proceedings. The Secretary hand, in use for other purposes, first began to be popular about this period. Beauchesne was a school master at Blackfriars, and his work was principally an illustration of the French and English hands, the Italian, Court and Chancery hands, with the just and true proportion of the capital Roman letters. This book opened lengthwise, and for that reason was considered very remarkable, and probably our modern copybooks have been constructed on a similar plan, without their authors' knowledge of the reason.

The next author of celebrity was Peter Bayles, born in 1547, who published, in 1590, a work called "Brachygraphy ; or, the Writing Schoolmaster, in three books, teaching Swift Writing, True Writing, and Fair Writing." At least two editions of this work were issued. Peter Bayles seems to have occupied a prominent place in the biography of his time. He presented to Queen Elizabeth, at Hampton Court, a remarkable piece of fine writing; the Lord's prayer, the creed, the ten commandments, two short prayers in Latin, his own name and motto, with some other things, written in a space within the circumference of a penny. It was Bayles who was employed by Secretary Walsingham. to counterfeit handwriting for political purposes by which means this statesman, acting on the axiom that " the end justifies the means," was enabled to baffle the designs of his own and his country's enemies. When his work on writing appeared, he received congratulatory addresses in poetry from a good many of the eminent personages of the time.

Immediately succeeding Bayles, in 1590, we have a work by William Kearney, entitled "A New Book Containing all Sorts of Hands Usually Written in Christendom, with the true proportions of the Roman Capitals," but this was thought to be a mere copy of Beauchesne.

At this same period, and in this same year ' a Neapolitan scholar gave to the world a book called " De Occultis Notis Literatim," which describes one hundred and eighty modes of secret writing.

Herman Hugo, a Jesuit, in 11617, published a work-Prima Origine-on the first origin of writing. This was translated into German in 1738, by a man named Trotz, and was again translated into French, and published in Paris in 1774. This must have been considered an important book, since it was given to the public in the three leading languages of Europe.

In 1662, David Brown, a Scotchman, published his "New Invention; or Calligraphy, the Art of

Fair Writing;" this was followed by another book which he styled " The Whole Art of Expedition in Writing." This latter appeared in 1668, in quarto form.

About this time, Sir William Petty published his work on double writing, which was on much the same principle, we presume, as the pentograph or our manifold writer-a mere plan for copying. But it led the way for the author's advancement in life.

The most industrious penman of this period, whose works had the greatest sale, and therefore the most influence, was Edward Cocker. The following carefully prepared sketch of Cocker is by an old writing master:

This ingenious and very industrious penman and engraver was born in the year 1631, which I compute thus: In his copy book entitled " Plumoe Triumphus," published 1657, is his picture, with this inscription beneath, "AEtatis suae 26," which being subtracted from 1657, gives the year of his birth as aforesaid.

I have not met with memoirs relating to his extraction, or where he was born, or from whom he received the rudiments of his education. We first find him in London, and it is probable he breathed his first air in that city.

He has been blamed for writing and engraving too much, and thereby debasing the art- be attempted to promote and illustrate, Mr. Robert More, in his short essay "On the first invention of writing," says that after Cocker commenced as author, the rolling press groaned under a superfetation of such books as has almost rendered the art contemptible," and Mr. Champion, in his historical account of penmanship, prefixed to his " Parallel," echoes the same complaint; adding, that led on by lucre, he let in an inundation of copy books. Now, whatever foundation there may be for this charge in general, he was certainly a great encourager of various kinds of learning, an indefatigable performer both- with the pen and burin, an ingenious artist in figures, and no contemptible proficient in poetry, as will manifestly appear, I think, to any one who thoroughly examines his numerous works that are still extant. His writing, I allow, is inferior to what we have from the hands of some of our late penmen, and there is not that freedom and liveliness in his pencilled knots and flourishes, that there are in pieces done by command of hand. But let us consider the time in which he lived, and what little in improvement there had been made in the modern way of penmanship, and we may justly make allowance or he many defects that now appear in his books, and say with the poet :

"Let the impartial judge, in every case, Weigh well the circumstances, time and place All these considered, the accused may With justice be discharged on such a plea."

In the year 1657, our author published his "Plumae Triumphus," (in some title pages it is " The Pen's Triumph "), invented, written and engraved by himself. He lived then on the southside of St. Paul's Church, where he taught the art of writing. This was probably -his first work from the rolling press. It contains six plates in a small quarto. His picture is in the front, with this inscription over it, "Etatis sugar 26." So that it seems as if he had a design in this, his first book, to write just as many leaves as he - was years old; but I

advance this only as a conjecture, for in a copy of verses prefixed to this book, by S. H., he mentions "The Pen's Experience," as Cocker's first work; "Art's Glory," the second; "The Pen's Transcendency," the third; and "The Pen's Triumph," the fourth. In the second page there is a dedication, "To the ingenious and able penman and arithmetician," his honest friend, Mr. Richard Noble, of Guilford, in Surrey.

In the same year (1657) he published his *Pen's Ascendancy; or, Fair Writing's Labyrinth*. It contains thirty-two in all oblong folio plates, besides his picture at the beginning, and a large plate at the end, informing the reader that he lived in St. Paul's Churchyard, where he kept school and taught writing and arithmetic. The writing is mostly Secretary and Italian, according to the custom of those times, with a great many labored knots

and languid pencil ornaments. There is another edition of this book in 1660, which was then augmented, containing forty-three leaves, including letterpress work.

In 1659, he set forth "*The Artist's Glory; or, The Penman's Treasury*," "with directions, theorems, and principles of art" in the letterpress work. It contains twenty-five plates, and at the end of the book is the following Latin anagram, by one Jer.

" EDOARDUS COCCERIUS.

O sic curras, Deo duce!  
Obstupeat, quisquis, Cocceri, scripta sagaci  
Lumine perlustrat marte peracte tuo.  
Igenium and genium, naturam mirer an artem?  
Ducta, Deo celebrem te tua dextra facit.  
Macta nove virtute, puer, monumenta prioris,  
Ut superes pennae, O sic duce curre Deo ! "

In the year 1661, he published his "*Penne Volans; or, Young Man's Accomplishment*," to which he prefixes this distich,

Whereby ingenious youth may soon be made,  
For clerkship fit, or management of trade,"

invented, written and engraved by him. It contains twenty-four plates, besides his picture at the beginning. In each leaf there are directions for the principal rules of arithmetic. The best performances in this book are the German Text Capitals, and the examples of the Court and Chancery hands.

In 1654, he published his "*Guide to Penmanship*," of which there is another edition in 1673. It contains twenty-two oblong folio plates, besides his picture at the beginning, where he is drawn in his own hand, with a laced band, and these lines underneath :

Behold rare Cocker's life, resembling shade, Whom Envy's clouds have more illustrious made  
Whose pen and graver have displayed his name With virtuosos in the book of fame."

This book abounds more with ornamental James Henry Lewis published in London, in 1816, "*A New Method of Rapid Writing*, whereby a proper business hand may be acquired with ease and certainty in a few short and interesting lessons, and its principles and practice are rendered familiar to the meanest capacity; clearly demonstrating the superiority of the NEW PRINCIPLES of Penmanship; by which any person, though but little acquainted with the subject, can detect and easily remove the various impediments which retard his progress in the Art of Writing." The book before us bears no date—a common fault of old books. This belongs to the "thirty-ninth edition," has nearly one hundred large quarto pages, substantially bound. It is dedicated to Sir Walter Scott, as follows :

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

Honored by your permission to dedicate to you this work on the "Art of Writing," I shall endeavor, in expressing my gratitude, to prove myself not unworthy of your patronage, by avoiding the fulsome panegyrics which are too frequently employed on similar occasions; satisfied, that if your reputation required the flimsy aid of flattery, I should not derive honor from this inscription, nor yourself credit from such eulogium. I feel proud in being allowed to offer this production to the public under the auspices of one whose honorable exertions in promoting the diffusion of useful knowledge are so well known throughout the empire.

With the hope that its utility may be appreciated by a patron I so much esteem, I subscribe myself, with great respect, Honored Sir,

Your most obliged and obedient servant,

James HENRY LEWIS.

Lewis' first book, " The Flying Pen; or, New and Universal Method of Teaching the Art of Writing, by a System of Lines and Angles," to which reference is made in this work, was issued in 1806. The author claims to be the inventor or discoverer of the principles which, from that time to the present, have been a part of every penman's stock in, trade, but which have been generally credited to Carstairs, one of his contemporaries. Much space is taken up in explanation and defense of the Lewisian System. We copy :

#### NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

As many vile stratagems have frequently been tried by an interested competitor to mislead the public, respecting the new system of writing"- an invention which has cost me many years of anxious study and experiment - I have determined to republish the following AFFIDAVITS, in order that the public may not be deceived by those IMITATORS, who endeavor to divert public patronage from the proper channel ; but, though, I feel the necessity of adopting this mode of securing my property from the rapacious grasp of an ungrateful impostor, I would rather invite direct and personal examination of the merits of my system; as I aim at no other preference than that which I may be really found to deserve. AFFIDAVIT.

(London to Wit.) I, James Henry LEWIS, of No. 104,

High Holborn, in the parish of St. Andrew, in the county of Middlesex, the inventor and first teacher of the "new method of writing," solemnly declare and affirm on my oath, as follows:

That the genuine system of improving writing, which practically and scientifically combines the various motions and operations of the hand and arm in perfect unison with each other, is wholly and altogether my own invention.

That I am thoroughly convinced there can be but two principles of penmanship-the OLD and the NEW -the one performed by the MANUAL movement only; the other by the united MANUAL and SCAPULARY operations, which is introduced into, and forms the basis of the LEWISIAN SYSTEM,-and that all the recent modifications of writing have arisen from these principles.

That I firmly believe, and can prove from undoubted authority, that all those persons who have taught, or who are teaching the " new system of writing, "have derived their knowledge of such invention, and the idea of regulating the various motions of the hand and arm in performing the same, either directly or indirectly, from me, and my original invention.

That I furthermore believe, and solemnly declare, that the person named Joseph Carstairs is not the inventor of any new principles of penmanship; but, that he first obtained his knowledge thereof by lessons which he received from a person named James Mowat, writing master, formerly of Edinburgh; as I have frequently heard the said James Mowat publicly declare that he taught the said Joseph Carstairs the aforesaid " new

system of writing " at Sunderland (where the said Joseph Carstairs was then carrying on the business of a tailor), and that he charged him the sum of two guineas for the course of lessons. And this the said James Mowat has solemnly affirmed by an AFFIDAVIT which he has made on the subject.

That I have frequently heard the said Joseph Carstairs acknowledge that he had taken lessons of the said James Mowat at Sunderland aforesaid. And that I can, moreover, produce those who are ready to attest this fact on oath. To confirm and corroborate which, I have, also, in my possession a certain document in the handwriting of the said Joseph Carstairs, unequivocally avowing and acknowledging that at the time of his writing the aforesaid document (March, 1812), he then taught the 94 new system of improving writing "precisely as it was communicated to him by his tutor, the said James Mowat ; which document has been for many months publicly exhibited in my window, and is at all times open to the inspection of the public.

That the said Joseph Carstairs afterwards became a PUPIL Of mine, under the fictitious name of ROBERT DRURY, and commenced a course of lessons with me in London, on the 28th of July, 1812, for which he paid me the SUM Of 2l. 15s. od. And that, at the time I discovered this trick (which was not till after he had taken his 5th lesson), I exposed his conduct to the public, although he offered me pounds to suppress that exposition adopted by the said Joseph Carstairs, forms no part whatever of my system, but is altogether useless and preposterous, tending to produce the, most vicious habits, cramped and unnatural motions, CROOKED writing, and other erroneous practices; all of which it is the chief object of the "Lewisian SYSTEM" to eradicate and correct.

Witness my hand,  
James HENRY Lewis.  
Sworn at the MANSION House, this 29th day of April, 1816,  
before me, MATTHEW WOOD, Mayor

Mr. HEWSON CLARKE'S AFFIDAVIT.

(London to Wit.) I, HEWSON CLARKE, late of Emanuel College, Cambridge; Author of "The Saunterer," "The History of the late War," "The continuation of Hume's History of England," and various other popular works ; declare and solemnly affirm on my OATH, as follows:

That I was employed by a person named Joseph Carstairs, a teacher of a new system of penmanship, to compose and write for him a work, which he first published under the title of "A new system of teaching the art of writing," and, subsequently, under that of " Lectures on the art of writing." And, that I am the REAL AUTHOR Of the aforesaid work, notwithstanding he, the said Joseph Carstairs, has falsely affixed his name thereunto, as the author thereof.

That when, at first, I permitted the said Joseph Carstairs to publish the aforesaid work under his name, it was with the express agreement (and this was the chief remuneration for my labour) that the following acknowledgement, which was printed on the back of the title-page of the first edition, should also appear, in the same position, in every subsequent edition of the aforesaid work:-" J. Carstairs feels it his duty to .acknowledge his obligations -for the remarks and assistance Of Mr. CLARKE."

That a "second edition" of the aforesaid work, under the title of "Lectures on the art of writing, "having been published without the said acknowledgement being at all inserted, I remonstrated with the said Joseph Carstairs on this unjust and foul breach of his contract. That I have not been able to obtain any redress for the injuries I have thereby sustained, and am, therefore induced to make this solemn declaration of the facts connected with the aforesaid work, published under the name of the said Joseph Carstairs, and of which I am the real author.

That I furthermore declare, that I composed and wrote, for the said Joseph Carstairs, those highly

colored advertisements and paragraphs which have frequently appeared in the daily and other papers, for the purpose of puffing him into notice. Also, that I was the author of that anonymous letter under the signature " TACHYGRAPHUS"~-which, in the "Lectures on the art of writing" aforesaid, is addressed to

the editor of the " Morning Chronicle " relative to the " Lancasterian system." And likewise, that I was the author of many commendatory notices, extracts, testimonials, letters and puffs, which have been given in the reviews, magazines, and other periodical publications, in favor of the aforesaid work, which I had written for the said Joseph Carstairs.

That I have frequently heard the said Joseph Carstairs acknowledge that he first became acquainted with the "new principles of writing"--or, free use of the fingers, hand and arm--from lessons which he had taken of a person named James Mowat, who was a teacher of the said new method. And, that I can, moreover, prove by other conclusive and incontrovertible evidence, that the said Joseph Carstairs did obtain his knowledge of the new principles of penmanship from the said James Mowat, and that he also taught those principles, according to the system he had obtained from his aforesaid teacher, until the year 1814.

That I have been very intimately acquainted with the said Joseph Carstairs for many years; and was, for a considerable time, in partnership with him as a teacher. That I always considered him very illiterate, and totally incapable of writing on any subject that required the least degree of talent. And, furthermore, I most solemnly declare and affirm that the said Joseph Carstairs has no pretensions whatever to the discovery of the new principles of penmanship.

Witness my hand,  
Hewson CLARKE.

Sworn at the MANSION HOUSE,  
the 18th day of June, 1816, before me,  
MATTHEW WOOD, Mayor.

Mr. James Mowat'S AFFIDAVIT.

(London to Wit.) I, James Mowat, of No. 104, High Holborn, in the parish of Saint Andrew, in the county of Middlesex, solemnly declare and affirm on my oath, as follows:

That I was formerly a writing-master in Edinburgh, and there became acquainted with a person named CHARLES LISTER, who was an itinerant teacher of a system of writing, which he professed to be entirely new, and superior to the common method, which method I was then in the habit of I teaching. That in consequence of his professions, I received a course of lessons in the said new system from the said CHARLES LISTER, and practiced those lessons under his immediate superintendence.

That I was informed by the said CHARLES LISTER, that he was a native of Birmingham, in the county of Warwick; and that he had obtained his knowledge of the aforesaid new principles of penmanship, by lessons which he had received from a person named James HENRY LEWIS, who had been teaching the said new method of writing in that town.

That I derived great benefit from the lessons I obtained from the said CHARLES LISTER, and from that circumstance I was induced to relinquish the old method of teaching. That since that period I have had much experience in teaching the said new system, in various places, especially in the northern counties of England; and that on every occasion I have found it decidedly superior to the old tedious mode.

That I taught the said new system for a considerable time in Newcastle and Sunderland; and many persons, including one Joseph Carstairs became my pupils, received and practiced the lessons I set them, and then and there, and by that means, obtained their first acquaintance with the new method of teaching writing.

That I believe the aforesaid Joseph Carstairs at the time he received his lessons from me, was engaged in the tailoring business ; and that I charged him the sum of two guineas for the said course of lessons. That he soon afterwards left the country, and, as I believe, repaired to London.

That within the last month I have seen and conversed with a person named Joseph Carstairs who is now professing to teach a new system of writing in London, and who has also published a work on that subject. And I most solemnly declare and affirm that this person is none other than that selfsame Joseph Carstairs who was a pupil of mine, as before stated, and to whom I first communicated the new system as aforesaid.

That the said Joseph Carstairs in the said conversation we had on this subject, acknowledged that he had taken the lessons as aforesaid, and, at the same time, he offered to give me the sum of twenty pounds to remain silent on the subject.

Witness my hand,  
James Mowat,  
Sworn at the MANSION HOUSE,  
the 11th day of March, 1816 before me,  
Matthew WOOD, Mayor.

An Exact Report Of The " Public Examination Of What Mr. Carstairs Calls His System Of Teaching The Art Of Writing.

Mr. Carstairs having been employed, in his professional capacity, by the late Mr. Joseph HUME, M.P. ; and having succeeded with those who had been placed under his care, to the entire satisfaction of that gentleman, MR, HUME was desirous of benefiting Mr. Carstairs by some public acknowledgement of the beneficial property of the new system, its great importance to society, and the meritorious claims of its founder; who, from the most gross misrepresentations, he had been led to believe was no other than the said Mr. Carstairs Under this delusion, therefore, Mr. Hume, with the best intentions, prevailed upon his friend the late DUKE OF KENT, with whom he was then in habits of the greatest intimacy, to preside at a meeting, on this subject, which it was proposed should be held on the 9th of July, r816; at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

There can be no doubt whatever, that both his ROYAL HIGHNESS and Mr. Hume expected that the meeting would have been made a fair, open, honest, appeal to the public ; and that, for that purpose, it would have been properly advertised, in order that it might attract the attention of those who were deeply interested in the subject, and who would naturally feel a desire to be present on such an occasion. But Mr. Carstairs never intended that such a meeting as this should take place; he knew, full well that one of those little snug congregations, which is generally termed a "hole and corner meeting "-with as few attendants as possible, would answer his. purpose best; and, accordingly, the means usually adopted for making such a circumstance generally known were entirely omitted, lest a knowledge thereof might have induced me to intrude myself on the meeting, and, in all probability, have materially disconcerted the schemes of that arch-impostor, Mr. Carstairs.

On the 9th of July, 1816, however, the meeting (Such a meeting as it was) did take place; and I have been informed that both the DUKE OF KENT and Mr. Hume were much astonished to perceive so meager an attendance; for there were not, at any time during the said meeting, above thirty persons in the room. No doubt they expected a very different affair; that hundreds, if not thousands, would have been present, as was always the case, on every other occasion, when his ROYAL HIGHNESS presided. But had they known the trick, they would have ceased to wonder at so singular a phenomenon! \*Yes, Mr. Carstairs knew full well that I had in my possession such documents --such damning evidence of his knavery and falsehood, with respect to his claims to the invention of the new principles of penmanship, as would have decided the point against him in one minute; and have overwhelmed him with shame and confusion and knowing this, he, with the serpent's cunning, contrived that I should not know that the said meeting was about to take place. And, so effectual did he manage the concern to his own advantage, that it was not until the 11th of July (two days after it had occurred) that I first heard anything about it ; and then, indeed, through the agency of the self-same Mr. Carstairs who, very kindly, sent his own ASSISTANT to inform me of the circumstance.

Supposing, however, I had been so fortunate as to have known of the intended meeting before it took place, what would it have availed me, when there was a determination (and this can be proved on oath) that I should not be admitted? for Mr. Carstairs had given the most positive orders to the doorkeeper, and to his assistant-who for that purpose was stationed with them on the top of the stairs, that if I came there they were "not on any account to admit me, but were to kick me down stairs." These -were Mr. Carstairs own words; and he further added--" if Lewis should come, -and he should be determined to get in, send for an officer, and give the fellow in charge, for here he shall not be admitted."

The reader will now see pretty clearly the why and the wherefore (as Mr. Cobbett has it) there are but fourteen names, besides that of the DUKE OF KENT, attached to the two resolutions "unanimously resolved," and " resolved unanimously," which were moved and carried at that " numerous meeting of ladies and gentlemen;" when indeed they were so miserably straightened for signatures, of approval, that even one of the prodigious number "resolutions" was his own ASSISTANT Heavens! what a laughable affair! Thirty persons present ! conjured by Mr. Carstairs into a " numerous meeting of ladies and gentlemen!" Fourteen persons only, and his assistant, could be found, in this great metropolis, to sign the certificate of the deceiver! Is there, I would ask, any such circumstance on record? anything so puerile and abortive? If this affair does not realize the tales of "the mountain -in labor," and "the three black crows," I know not what can! And then to see the " celebrated teacher as he calls himself, stand up and attempt to address that "numerous meeting," with the white of his eyes turned up in his peculiar manner, and with his usual egotism, tautology, and bombast, were surely a sufficient apology for those who thought of him as Apelles did of the ignoramus who ventured to criticize his paintings; and who, therefore, so impatiently coughed and sneezed the " celebrated teacher " into his seat !

As Mr. Hume could have no other motive in this affair than the public good, and must, therefore, be desirous that truth and justice should characterize his proceedings ; I must readily conclude that he will give me an opportunity of meeting Mr. Carstairs before a public assembly, in order that our claims to the discovery of " the new principles of penmanship," may be fairly investigated and decided. I, therefore, most respectfully call upon Mr. Hume to do me that justice which I think, from his well-known character, I may venture to anticipate 1, and I am satisfied that such an appeal cannot be made in vain to any honest and honorable man. I shall, indeed, feel grateful to him, if he will call a public meeting at my expense, on this subject, and will preside on that occasion ; when I most solemnly assure him that I will prove to his satisfaction, by the most incontrovertible evidence, that he has been entirely deceived and imposed upon by the false representations of Mr. Carstairs.

Carstairs published his lectures on the art of writing, " a new system, " in 1814, and his " Tachygraphy; or, Flying Penman," in 1815. Whether the ideas he promulgated were altogether original, or were borrowed from Lewis, can never be definitely known.

One of the finest works ever published on ornamental penmanship was prepared about this time by "William Jones, author of the Permanent Writing Book, or a new System of Writing, patronized by His Majesty," and published by W. Alexander, 50 Strand, price one pound one shilling. The words enclosed in quotation marks appear below the frontispiece portrait, which represents an intelligent looking Englishman, of thirty-five or thereabout. The book contains twenty-two different alphabets, and as fine specimens of pen drawing as have ever been published as such. We give copies of three of these pages among our plates. They are as good, in their way, as anything in the book.

America published its first penmanship in 1759, a work by Jenkins, who gave a correct analysis of letters, rules for their formation, and general directions for position of the body ; but he omitted to give the principles in combinations of words and sentences, except in coarse hand. He gave no rules for running hand., The work altogether was of small merit.

In 1805 Dean's Analytical Guide was printed. The country was first pretty thoroughly canvassed for subscribers to it, as it involved great expense for that time. Among the subscribers were James Madison, Esq., then Secretary of State ; Daniel D. Tompkins, Esq., Governor of the State of New York; Pr. Pedeson, Consul General from Denmark, and most of the best business men of New York City at that day, as well as the professors in the leading colleges-Yale, Harvard, Union, etc. The price of the book was ten dollars a

copy, and one thousand two hundred and fifteen subscribers were obtained. The first edition, then, brought in twelve thousand one hundred and fifty dollars. A second edition was issued, of which, no doubt, as many more copies were sold. From that time to the present America has led England in penmanship ; and the works which have appeared from time to time since have been more worthy of notice than the English, on account of their greater originality and perfection of style in the copy pages. Dean's work contained nearly two hundred pages ; the largest half of it was devoted to the origin and progress of the art of writing, which few at this day consider reliable, yet written in an attractive literary style. We give the following chapter as a sample from that book:

"Sid quid novisti rectius istis Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum." Hor.\*\*

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\* The art of writing, is called Chirography: fine Penmanship is sometimes termed Calligraphy ; Shorthand, Brachygraphy, or Stenography; Miniature Writing, Micography, and Secret Writing, Cryptography.

\*\*If you know any thing better than this, kindly impart it: if not, use the present system.  
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The remote antiquity, indispensable benefit, and when gracefully and correctly executed, justly admired beauties of the art of writing, cannot fail to recommend it to the particular attention of an enlightened public.

No one denies its importance in the busy spheres of life ; and so intimately is it connected with the attainment of polite and useful knowledge that wherever science is cultivated, it is necessarily considered an essential introductory acquisition. Professional and commercial characters, not only, but all ranks and conditions of men, derive from it incalculable advantages. It is to this inestimable art' that we are indebted, under Providence, for the regular transmission of the Holy Scriptures, and the learning of former ages, until the fifteenth century ; and although the extensive usefulness of it as a vehicle of public information, was then superseded in a measure by the invention of printing; still, as a safe and convenient medium of private communication, and a faithful remembrance of events, involving the interest either of individuals or communities; the blessings to which it gives rise, exceed all imagination. Nothing furnishes a surer safeguard to the banking and commercial interests of a state, against forgeries, than a finely engraved piece of penmanship, accompanied with elegant and graceful decorations, intricately wrought, and skillfully disposed. The reason is obvious, because few possess the skill and dexterity requisite to a complete imitation ; and the probability is, that numbers, from this circumstance alone, are deterred from an undertaking, fraught with such mischievous consequences to individual character and public prosperity. In fine, as a machine ceases to move when a necessary spring of motion is removed or destroyed, civilized society, without the art of writing, would exist only in name. Religion, literature, commerce, and mechanics, together with the refined and tender relations of polished life, would be speedily succeeded by the vagrancy, indolence, and barbarity, of the savage state.

Penmanship, however beneficial, is perhaps, of all other arts, the most neglected, beyond what is necessary for ordinary occasions ; notwithstanding, none is more susceptible of genuine ornament, and real perfection; or affords a more ample scope for the display of genius and correct taste.

A complete and finished piece is calculated to yield high pleasure to every mind, that has ability to discriminate between an ingenious cut and a casual dash of the pen; or can perceive the beauties of form and disposition, in a wild, but harmonious order of flourishes and decorations.

Regularity and variety are reckoned the chief sources of beauty in figure ; but it is certain, that in the exhibition of these two powerful principles, to the best advantages, penmanship may claim uncontested superiority.

The waving line of Hogarth may be disposed by a masterly penman, in such diversified and graceful forms, as to excite the admiration, even of the most careless observers ; and many objects of nature may also be represented to a degree of exactness, not to be surpassed by any other art.

When we consider the comparative ease with which due -excellence is attained in other arts ; the value of this will proportionally increase. In the kindred art of drawing, an exact resemblance of the original is produced by reiterated touches of the pencil, and frequent revision. In mechanics, there are the same advantages of a slow and gradual progress; nor is poesy behind hand in this respect. The poet may lay aside his composition for a month or longer time, without any inconvenience; and then, resuming the subject, transpose the words, supply deficiencies, and correct redundancies, until the whole meet his approbation. But, the penman enjoys no such liberty, or leisure for improvement. Perfection must be produced in the first attempt ; or not at all. Designed emendations seldom fail of issuing in contrary effects. In what are called the round hands, particularly, such accuracy of conception, and such command of the pen, at the same instant are required, as will enable him to delineate for a number of times, in uninterrupted succession, the most distinct and difficult strokes. The figure of the letter must be formed exactly according to his preconceived idea of it ; and precisely of the same size and shape, as often as it recurs. The whole piece, when thus finished, must not only be clean and neat, but display an air of freedom and ease, without the least mark of stiffness or restraint. Is it then a matter of surprise, that the art of drawing has hitherto borne away the palm of reputation ? So little nice precision, and dexterity of hand, are necessary therein, that a youth of but ordinary parts, will, after a trifling practice, appear to make great proficiency ; whereas, in writing, he must bestow considerable time and labor before he can attain to any tolerable degree of excellence. A juvenile production from a drawing school, if it wear the least semblance of real objects, naturally excites pleasure in the mind of a parent. He views, and reviews it; and with undissembled fondness, exhibits it to every friend, as a pleasing specimen of skill and improvement ; while, at the same time, he blushes to take up the copy book, lest he should betray the stupidity of his child, by a collection of clumsy and irregular scrawls.

The frequent mortification of parents on this account, is, no doubt, a principal cause of that contempt, in which penmanship, as a polite accomplishment, is too generally held. But the blame is ill charged, as well on the infertility of the art, as the dullness of children; for the true-source of failure is the mode of instruction.

In the present day, the art is acquired by imitation alone. The primordials, or grounds of it, are but imperfectly unfolded to the youthful mind. Letters are formed altogether independent of rules, or in a loose, untutored way, just as the eye happens to light upon the model. So that the want of intellectual aid can only be supplied by the long practice of the hand. Thus, the powers of genius are locked up, and the edge of infant ingenuity effectually blunted. Few excel, because few can imitate to perfection; and the knowledge acquired after this manner, is precisely the same as that of one pretending to an acquaintance with geometry, who knows not a single axiom or principle on which the science is founded; but only because he can delineate something like a triangle, or parallelogram.

The inconveniences of the current method of instruction, are completely obviated upon the analytical plan. This resolves the art into its pure and original principles-Principles founded on the nicest discriminations of taste, and calculated to restrain that arbitrary practice, and to prevent those deviations of caprice, so inimical to the elegance and utility of writing. The letters of the alphabet are thereby reduced to as few elements as possible, consistently with a practical application ; and the pupil is thence conducted by regular and steady advances, to the most complex and refined ornaments. That accuracy of conception and corresponding motion of the pen, that command of the hand, which is necessary to conduct it slowly and correctly, and to accompany it in its progress with different degrees of pressure, which but few have attained in the common way, are the certain and natural effects of a due attention to a few fundamental rules.

Habits of effeminacy, stiffness, and the like, however firmly fixed, are effectually conquered, and followed by a surprising manual facility at forming the most correct, masculine and beautiful strokes. There is another important advantage resulting from this plan, which deserves to be mentioned. The art is acquired in a very inconsiderable portion of time ; whereas, in ordinary cases, children spend years, which might be profitably devoted to the pursuit of other objects, before they can write a moderate, or even intelligible hand. Being pre-eminently calculated, therefore, to promote the public good, it deservedly merits public encouragement. The Analytical process, as a sure guide to first principles in subjects of speculation, is

abundantly sanctioned by successful experiment. The wild fancies of the Stagirite, would, in all probability, until now, have maintained a tranquil dominion over the minds of men, had not the illustrious Bacon, disregarding the false prejudices of the times, developed, by that means, the genuine principles of philosophy. A flood of light then burst in upon the world, which as increased to a perfect day. And, doubtless, under the auspices of learning and liberty, it may be fondly anticipated, that at no distant period, the art of writing, by a generous patronage of a system so obviously eligible, will arrive at a celebrity inferior to none of the polite accomplishments, and become the favorite pursuit of men of genius and taste.

A principal object of the present publication is, to simplify the art of writing, to elucidate its principles, and by laying down a compendious set of rules, to place it more within the reach of those, whose local situation, or other circumstances, preclude them from the advantages of the best masters ; to assist parents and teachers, who have not made writing a study, yet who, from motives of convenience and a regard to public utility, find it necessary to teach it along with other branches of education.

The specimens exhibited in the plates of this work, are not offered to the public, as faultless, or superior to all others; on the contrary, the author frankly acknowledges, that some inaccuracies are discernible, which may probably offend the eye of a nice critic ; but he hopes the rules, while they point them out, will at the same time instruct the learner how they may be avoided.

Ornamental writing is properly the province of adepts in the art. Indeed it is in this department, that the greatest latitude is given for the display of genius; for whoever has seen the best performances of this kind, must confess that they exhibit many pleasing pictures, and discover a very great share of ingenuity and dexterity; not only in the wild, yet beautiful order of flourishes, but also in the artful manner of arranging the different branches, and balancing the general effect. In fine; when we take into the penman's province the art of striking, and consider the eminent beauties which may be produced by a due intermixture of the various ornamental hands now in use, set off with scrawls (or flourishes) well formed, and judiciously placed, we shall find, as has frequently been the case of late, that a capital piece of writing deserves to appear among the productions of the other polite arts ; that the principles of penmanship are better founded on true taste, than may in common be imagined; the graceful and easy flow of its touches, will be often found superior to any thing produced in its imitation, by the engraver and the rolling press ; and that it has truly merited the golden and silver pens, which have sometimes been given by the public, for its encouragement.

" Sure in its flight, though swift as eagle's wings," The pen commands, and the bold figure springs " While the slow pencil's discontinued pace " Repeats the stroke, but cannot reach the grace."

We give on another page a-lithographed copy of one of the pages of Dean's book.

A book by Wrifford appeared in 1810, Guernsey's Angular Hand, in 1820; another book by Wrifford was issued in 1824, in which he advocates two methods for the hair stroke and shading. Following these were several copy book systems of little account, though giving a good style for imitation.

In 1845, A. Caulo, of Paris, published his book of Alphabets," comprising twenty full page alphabets, the best that had ever appeared in France. Thousands of copies were sold all over Europe; but today there is no book of that date more difficult to obtain. We give the entire contents of that volume in the twenty alphabets at the end of this chapter, each reproduced exactly as to size, and in every other respect.

Root published his analytical system in 1843, at Philadelphia; Foster's development of Carstairs' system appeared at Albany, 1830; Spencerian, by P. R. Spencer, 1848; Duntonian system, by A. R. Dunton, Boston, 1853; Payson, Dunton & Scribner, Boston, 1854; Potter & Hammond, Providence, 1855; Knapp & Rightmyer, New York, 1856; Beers, New York, 1857; John D. Williams, New York, 1860; A. Cowley, Pittsburgh, 1863; Isaiah Ryder, Cincinnati, 1863; Williams & Packard's Gems, New York, 1867; Comer's, Boston, 1869; Gaskell's Compendium, 1873, besides several other "systems" in various parts of the country, that are hardly deserving of mention in this connection.

The only successful systems appear to be founded upon the Lewis or Carstairs system, which Lewis claimed would mark a new departure in the history of writing, and rank as one of the greatest discoveries of modern times! His prophetic words must have looked bombastic enough to his contemporaries.

Handwriting is constantly undergoing modifications. The tendency is to drop all unnecessary and useless lines, to write as rapidly as is consistent with legibility, for in this day speed is the great desideratum. Yet there has never been a time in the history of the country when ornamental penmanship was better appreciated than it is today, and it is the object of this book to exhibit for the use, as well as the admiration, of self teaching learners, as well as professional penmen everywhere, the best work from the masters of England, France, Germany and America, both of the past and present. It will be seen that we are entering upon an era of good writing, though, in some respects, we cannot excel the old masters in lettering; that no such ornamental off-hand work and easy, practical writing has ever been done in the world as our penmen in the United States, with their improved writing implements, are now executing.