

Taken from 'Penmanship Made Easy'
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Machine- or Hand-Made

THIS is the age of machinery. To the amazing development of mechanical appliances, our own country owes chiefly its swift and stupendous development. Indeed, our whole modern civilization rests upon a multiplicity of mechanical devices.

Yet, vast as are the benefits conferred by that machinery on which we have now become dependent as a prime necessity of life, there remains the fact that the work of the hand retains its supremacy. While there is a general gain in the manufacture of goods by machinery, there is also a loss of that nicety which distinguishes the output of the skilled worker. Moreover, in certain directions, the use of machinery has entailed such lack of practice in hand-work as to lower, if not to destroy, skill in certain instances. Thus, the mowing-machine has left such little need for scythe-swinging that those corners of the meadow where the shuttle of blades cannot reach are ill-cut by hand, or not cut at all.

Certainly, no other invention has attained a vogue more quickly, more practically and more widely than has the typewriter. Today, the great bulk of our orderly writing is done by this machine. There is left for the hand little more than the hasty jotting down of memoranda and some few efforts in correspondence. It were useless to deny the tremendous value of the typewriter. Its advantages are so familiar that there is no need to dwell on them. But the use of this machine has developed one evil effect. Reliance on the typewriter has lessened the individual ambition for skill in penmanship. The virtue of the machine's product has been exalted until the matter of the personal handwriting has come to be regarded as something quite unimportant.

Here is an error of judgment, and that error demands correction.