

The following was taken from "The Zanerian Theory of Penmanship, by the Zanerian Authors of the Zanerian Art College 1892.

PENMANSHIP, as used in the art of writing, is only another form of speech; less silent, but quite as effective. It is the second in importance of the arts of expression. It has been wisely said that " the noblest acquisition of mankind is speech, and the most useful art is writing." It is the great agency of transportation between the mind and the physical world, the great vessel on which has been and must be carried the thoughts of the world's best and greatest minds.

We devise means of getting the whole curriculum of study into the head, but concern ourselves but little as to how to get it out, or its product after having been purified by the force of which the brain is the agency. We cultivate and grade all the highways and byways to the brain, but scarcely turn a hand to the smoothing and leveling of the outgoing roads. Writing is one of the great highways leading from this inward sphere to the outward world. Its importance can therefore be seen at a glance. Its usefulness can never be submerged until a machine can be invented by which thought can be materialized without muscular effort, until that high plane of development is attained we shall go on improving, evolving, and creating until a style shall be formulated whereby the pen may equal, in flight, the tongue in liberating the thoughts of men.

Herewith, we have diagram illustrating the TENDENCIES and TRUTHS as revealed by teaching penmanship. As will be seen, we have three main theories, which represent as many marked changes within a period of twenty years, past, present, and prospective. We have termed them the CONSERVATIVE, the RADICAL, and the RATIONAL.

The first was popular in the early eighties (1800's); the second has been popular since then to the present time (1890's); the third is now growing in favor, and will doubtless continue to increase in use for at least ten years. It is, to a great degree, a union of the Conservative and Radical methods, harmonizing, as it were, their extremities and rejecting their proven -deficiencies.

FINGER MOVEMENT is too limited in capacity, too weak in action, too tiring in execution, to produce the needed style and amount of work for modern business usage. Seeing these defects, an excuse was given for a change, and as there are always some who are ever ready to grasp " opportunity by the forelock," we find that their watchword (catchword) is ARM MOVEMENT (by some known as " muscular movement, ") but which also is proving too extended in capacity, too strong in action, and too unmanageable in execution, it being but the opposite of the Conservative or old plan.

As SLOW MOTIONS were productive of exhaustion, nervousness, and cramps in the hand, so do we find SPEED to be the generator of illegibility, paralysis, and general carelessness.

BEAUTY OF FORM while being pleasing to the eye when well executed, proved beautiful rather than useful, and encouraged, at the expense of speed, shading, which in business turned to be mere blotches. IMPERFECT FORMS on the other hand, lead to imperfect perceptions, peculiarities, and deformities. Thus, in these two extreme methods' we find the theories entirely antagonistic and conclusively poor.

In the RATIONAL method, instead of recognizing but one of the two extremities of motion, we have accepted both, to a limited extent, and the whole arm for our basis of action, thus securing the co-operation of the small muscles for the little motions, the medium or arm muscles, for the ordinary actions, and the shoulder muscles for the long and large movements; thereby lessening the action on each muscle and distributing it on all.

While SLOWNESS, at times, is essential, and since SPEED at other periods, is indispensable, we have taken for a central (NORMAL) ground, EASE, Of MOTION, which is the true basis for great speed or elegance.

Recognizing also that beauty should not be despised, and that deformity, while being unavoidable in many cases, is an undesirable quality, we have again chosen a happy medium in SIMPLICITY. We would be the

last to condemn ornament in writing, but as it impedes rather than stimulates thought, and as it is a quality intended only for artists to handle, we find that the masses only mar that which they are unskilled in and unequipped to handle.

Our TRUTHS are then, that we need union of action of the muscles of the whole arm in order that we may write with the greatest uniformity of motion and effort; I that we need an easy action, in order to perform the greatest amount of work, as a rapid spasmodic working of the muscles exhausts before an equal amount of work can be done in an easy manner; and that simplicity is essential, for by it, we omit all that is not necessary for legibility, or normalcy of effort in execution,

The diagrams to the right of the tendencies and truths are -for the purpose of illustrating POSITIONS advocated with the corresponding theories.

The OLD facilitates action up and down; the "NEW," from left to right; the TRUE, both.

DEVELOPMENT offers a rational scheme of progression from an exercise to a sentence. It recognizes no form or movement which does not tend toward actual forms and motions in writing.

The old way was to harp on form; the new to make a "hobby" of movement; the true to demand both in about equal quantities.

The old way made it easy for the reader, but tiring on the writer; the new is making it easy on the writer, but hard on the reader; the true makes it both "easy to read and easy to write."

We have experienced all these modifying conditions. We acquired the old, were taught, and in turn taught the new, but were forced by conviction (experiment) to abandon it and accept and evolve the true.

CONCLUSION.

The one great drawback to reform is extremity. We see a thing is wrong, we catch glimmering beams of light as to how we may right the wrong, we begin our work of reformation before considering well the wisdom of our acts, we become imbued with enthusiasm, we allow our prejudices to sway our better judgments, we ere long find ourselves, with a few followers beyond the common mass of humanity, we see that we are being isolated from the majority, we imagine we are right and they are wrong, they know we are cranky," we know they are "fogy."

Thus it is that reformations begin and go to extremes. But the minds of the people are quickened, the enthusiasm of the reformer is somewhat chilled by separation, and finally, when both extremes meet we have a medium or method by which one may pursue given courses with safety and normalcy.

Thus the tendencies are to extremes, but the tendency of all tendencies is for right, for progress, for truth.