

out vouchsafing him any assistance, is expecting too much, and giving the child labour which, in the circumstances, is needless. In order therefore to assist him in determining with precision the height, distance, and inclination of the letters, the writing-book should be ruled not only horizontally, but in a slanting direction; the distance between the horizontal and the slanting lines being the same, and fixed by the size of the hand which he is required to write. The horizontal lines enable the pupil to measure the exact height of each letter, while the oblique lines guide him in respect to the inclination of the letters and their distances from one another. In ordinary writing-books, it is exceedingly difficult to get beginners to give all the letters the same inclination, the reason being that the pupil, imitating his own work, departs further and further from the proper degree of inclination as he approaches the end of the line; and hence it is no unusual thing to find a letter at the end of a line turned exactly in the opposite direction from the letter at the beginning of the line. Now a copy-book, ruled after the manner we have described, presents to the pupil, when forming each letter, a rule which he can hardly fail to follow, and the writing, although at first it may not be elegant, will be symmetrical, and the pupil will thus learn almost instinctively to measure by the eye the proper height, inclination, and distance of the letters. After he has been familiarized with these three essentials of good writing, the oblique lines should be gradually withdrawn, and the pupil left to trust his eye alone. By degrees, the horizontal lines will be so far removed that the pupil will learn to give the letters their proper height, without any of the artificial helps we have suggested. And after sufficient expertness has been attained, unruled writing-books should be used, in order to accustom the child to write exactly as he will have to do in after life. Writing-books of the kind we have described are now to be had from any book-seller, and we would earnestly advise the young teacher to give them a trial. In each writing-book, of whatever kind it may be, there ought to be a piece of blotting-paper, and no pupil, whose book is not supplied with this indispensable requisite to neatness and cleanliness, ought to be allowed to commence his writing lesson. Indeed it would be well to have the writing-books interleaved with sheets of blotting-paper; for when it is detached, it is very apt to be torn or to be lost. On no account should any writing be allowed on the cover of the writing-book, or on the blotting-paper; for the practice of scribbling, frequently acquired in school, is utterly destructive of those habits of neatness which no lesson is so well fitted to teach as the writing one. After the pupils have all taken their seats, the pupil-teachers or the monitors, as the case may be, should hand round the writing-books. These should be arranged exactly in the same order as the pupils sit, so that in giving them out there may be no confusion. When the lesson is finished, all the books should be collected in the order in which they were given out, and carefully deposited in the case set apart for them. Attention to these apparently trivial matters is of consequence, inasmuch as the whole school machinery will move sweetly, and without any effort, in direct proportion to the care bestowed on such arrangements.

WRITING MODELS.

When the writing-books have been thus given out, the monitors should next give to the pupils the writing models. These should be given out and collected in the same order as the writing-books, and care taken that similar models be all kept in one place, so as to be ready whenever required. The practice of having head-lines on the writing-books is objectionable, and now that models are to be had so cheaply, and done up in a way that secures them from being obliterated for a long time, provided only they are handled with any moderate degree of care, we would advise the teacher to obtain a sufficient supply, and he will find them more suitable for his purpose than engraved head-lines, or even than setting the copy, as it is technically called. To set the copy of each child in the school is a labour which the master cannot by possibility overtake, and which he should not attempt. Neither should this work be entrusted to pupil-teachers, for, setting aside the temptation under which they lie to do it carelessly,

their own writing is too frequently not so good as to serve as a model for the scholars. In these circumstances, a set of good models, regularly graduated, will serve every useful purpose, and, if the writing-books are carefully inspected and errors pointed out, more progress will be made than where the master sets the copy and leaves the pupils to write as they please.

PENS.

Pens are the next requisite, and, while quills might be most useful in giving freedom to the hand, yet the trouble connected with them is so great that we do not counsel their use. Steel pens are now made with such care, and are so much employed in offices, and counting-houses, that they may be used in school with advantage. "They are cheaper; they require no mending. When they are employed the following regulation should be in force;—at the end of the writing lesson, the monitor is to move along the desks with a tin cup containing water, in which every pupil is to deposit his pen. The monitor, having collected all the pens, is to wipe each on a cloth, and to place it in a box. By this means one pen, if fairly used, will last two or three months, and the dirty habit of the children wiping their pens on their clothes will be avoided."* We need scarcely say that the equally dirty habit of wiping the pen in the mouth, or on the blotting paper, should be sternly interdicted; and the children should be often cautioned against the wanton destruction of pens. As already remarked, habits acquired in school frequently stick to a person through life, and we would scarcely seek higher evidence of a man's being an earnest and faithful teacher than to find him diligently watching over his little flock, and guarding them from the acquisition of any habits which are unbecoming or slovenly.

HOLDING THE PEN.

We have the pupils thus prepared for receiving instruction, and the first thing to be done now is to train them to hold their pen aright. The following hints, although to be found on the cover of almost every writing-book, may not be out of place here. The hints are inserted for the benefit of the teacher, and not for the purpose of being taught the pupils. Mere abstract rules are, in their own place, useful; but no pupil will learn to hold a pen correctly from having been taught a set of carefully digested rules; he must be *trained* as well as *taught* how to hold it. The remark holds good with regard to the position of the body. Our object is to lay down those things which the teacher should know who sets himself to teach writing; but these various rules he should work into the minds of his pupils by degrees, and as opportunity offers.

1. The pen is held between the first two fingers and the thumb.
2. The fingers should not be stretched out too far, nor be too much doubled up.
3. The pen, without being held too stiffly, ought not to move between the fingers.
4. The hand supports itself on, and is, as it were, suspended upon, the third and fourth fingers.
5. It is upon these two fingers that the hand glides along the paper from left to right.
6. The fingers which hold the pen should not pass below the open part of it.
7. The pen, in writing, is held so as to point to the shoulder.
8. It ought to be pressed lightly, and should make no noise.
9. Both sides of the nib of the pen should press equally on the paper, or the pen will leave a thicker mark on one side than on the other.
10. Those fingers only which hold the pen should move in the formation of the letters.
11. The forearm and wrist should not move at all.
12. In pushing forward the arm to the right, the hand does not change its direction.
13. The hand ought to be inclined in such a manner as to cause the nib of the pen to be seen.*

* Mulhauser's "Manual of Writing," p. 31.