

*natural method.* As the child learns to walk by walking, and to speak by speaking, so he should learn to write by writing. The first spoken words of the child are feeble and incoherent. As he practises his mother tongue his articulation improves, and although entirely unconscious of the many processes involved, he learns to speak—he can express his thoughts. The first written words of the child will be in like manner feeble and illegible, but as he practises the script character, he will learn by degrees to master it, until it will become as natural and easy to write his thoughts as to speak them. Let us look at the conditions and see if the same method can be employed in both cases. Speaking does not require the use of a foreign instrument, but only the play of natural organs, and is therefore an almost instinctive process, one that is begun with the first dawn of intelligence, before the child learns to walk, much less to handle tools. Writing on the other hand requires the use of a wholly foreign instrument and materials, and is, and must be, a second step in education. The child can very easily learn to speak the simple idioms of the language, but the elementary processes of writing are so many obvious difficulties, which the child cannot escape from. The pen is not a voluble and pliant instrument like the tongue, nor is the arbitrary action of the hand at all instinctive. It requires at the start, and for a long time thereafter, perfectly conscious effort to make these written signs. The pupil must consciously guide the pen for every part of every letter. It is only when these arbitrary processes have become naturalized by practice that writing becomes the intuitive messenger of thought. The natural method precludes all possibility of a graded and progressive system. The expression of the simplest idea in writing must involve many complicated forms, and the conse-

quence is, that the pupil is thrown into deep water before he learns to swim.

I know there is a prevailing idea among teachers and others, that certain persons are born to be naturally good penmen while others are doomed to be mere scribblers their whole lives. While I admit that some children can learn to write more readily than others, I contend that every child can be taught to write well, with the proper mode of explanation, and a little encouragement and enthusiasm on the part of the teacher. In fact I am perfectly satisfied as to this, for so far as my observation has extended, I have found that half an hour per day for the short period of from three to six months, under careful instruction, a pupil who has any energy at all, though he may be what we term a "bad writer," will acquire a good legible free hand. I have seldom known it to fail.

The analytic method is the true method of teaching writing. It best interprets the science of penmanship, and reduces all its forms to a beautiful symmetry, order and progressiveness. The Spencerian system, which is now being taught by all successful teachers of penmanship, can be explained by the teacher to be better understood by the class according to the analytic method than by any other. It does not elaborate a beautiful theory of the alphabet of no practical value, but it goes back to the muscular action in producing the letter to the mind, and asks—What is the conception there? Is every part clear and distinct to the mental vision? The first step in the analytic method is to know; the second to execute. Criticism has also an important function in applying knowledge to practice and in measuring results. Here are the three educating powers in this art; *Knowledge*, informing and guiding; *Execution*, doing the work; and *Criticism*, pointing backward to