

4. Occasionally draw on the board simple lessons dictated by the class.

5. If you have to repeat the description of any part of a drawing in giving a dictation lesson, use exactly the same language as the first time, unless you were wrong.

The following lesson taken from Walter Smith's Primary Manual will serve as a specimen dictation lesson :

"Draw two straight lines of any given length, one horizontal, one vertical, and bisecting each other. Divide each half of each line into two equal parts. Through the points of division, draw lines forming a square, having its sides parallel with the first lines drawn. Connect the same points of division by oblique lines, forming a second square within the first. Divide the sides of the first square into three equal parts. On the central parts draw isosceles triangles with their apexes at the end of the first two lines drawn."

The above is a simple exercise, but with practice elaborate subjects may be drawn from dictation.

MEMORY DRAWING.

It is a good plan to have the pupils draw from memory some of the subjects which they have been taught. If it did not take too much time it would be advisable to have them draw every exercise in this manner a few days after it had first been taught. A lesson of this kind may be given profitably in school about once in two weeks. The teacher should not let the pupils know what subject is to be repeated until the time for the memory lesson has arrived.

The benefits to be derived from drawing from memory are :

1. The teacher is enabled to find the result of his teaching, as this exercise shows how much of his lessons have been remembered by the pupils. Memory lessons in drawing correspond with reviews in other subjects.

2. The pupil is certain to attend more carefully to the instructions given by the teacher when he knows that he may be called upon to repeat from memory the lesson he is receiving. In order to compel attention the memory lesson should be marked more highly than an ordinary drawing lesson.

3. The memory of the pupil will be developed.

In addition to the lessons given in school as recommended above, it is well to give occasional drawing exercises to be done at home from memory. These should not be done in the regular drawing books, but in a special book or on separate sheets of paper. The regular books should, of course, be left at school, otherwise the drawing would not be done from memory.

PENMANSHIP IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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I.

One of the important ends of the vast means of our free educational system should be to teach every child in the land the art of writing. The success or failure of this undertaking is of vital consequence to the interests of society. It therefore becomes necessary, in view of this fact, to inquire not only into the agencies employed, but the method of instruction relied upon for the accomplishment of so vast a work, with a view of obtaining the greatest benefits with the least possible outlay of time, labor, and expense.

It was thought until within the past few years, that instruction could do little beyond directing imitation, and where this faculty was found deficient, little if any success attended the efforts of either teacher or pupil. General failure in such cases gave rise to the popular notion that all cannot be taught to write, and thus the universal acquisition of writing by imitation alone has proved, and must continue to prove, a failure in about

nine cases out of ten. The problem to be solved is how to impart a practical knowledge of this art to every individual in the land in the most effective and expeditious manner. That it can be done is no longer doubted by practical, intelligent, and experienced teachers of the subject; but some more reliable method than mere "imitation," it is evident, must be resorted to in order to secure the result.

A good handwriting is looked upon as equivalent to a good trade and, combined with other desirable qualities, introduces its possessor at once to an honorable and lucrative position. But says one, "some people seem to be born good writers, while it is not natural for others to learn." Men are not born good writers any more than they are born good carpenters, expert shoemakers or good mechanics of any kind. It is only by the aid of proper instruction and continued practice that a man becomes a good penman, painter, watchmaker, a good artist, or an expert in any branch of mechanism. There are no competent natural writers any more than there are competent natural mechanics. It is very true that one person may excel another without instruction; but there can be no approach to perfection by any person without understanding and applying the principles of an art, and the best so called "natural writer" will be improved as much as the poorest by a thorough training. Many are falsely captivated by the bold easy dash of a master who overlook the means by which that ease and freedom has been acquired. It is the result of careful study and labour, and to imitate the end, we should not shrink from the beginning.

While our school system is unsurpassed, in many respects, we are far behind our American cousins in this particular subject.

While on a tour through the United States last summer, I visited a number of public schools, and was struck with the uniformity and legibility of the penmanship of all grades of pupils. The same system is there adopted in almost every school and practiced in almost every business house. An examination of the miscellaneous autographs on hotel registers and other business writing that came under my observation, convinced me that the Americans are, as a nation, far better writers than the Canadians. The cause of this difference in the penmanship of two intelligent nations, living side by side, can easily be accounted for. The Americans have for the past thirty years adhered to a uniform standard system in their schools and colleges, while in this country no special attention has been given to the subject, and no particular system adopted in our schools. A number of different systems are presented, and each teacher adopts that which happens to suit his own fancy. Thus, with continual change of teachers, each, of course, preferring his own style, the system is continually changed and pupils asked from time to time to abandon what they have partially learned and commence in the new. The consequence is that, to-day, among the great mass of divines, doctors, lawyers and graduates of literary institutions, we find a large majority bad, illegible writers. At a competitive examination of the schools of one of the leading cities of Ontario, no less than thirteen different kinds of copy-books were presented, and among them nine different styles from the same school.

That a change is necessary, and that a national standard system should be adopted in Canada is obvious to every person giving thought to the subject.

HOW TO INSTRUCT PRIMARY CLASSES.

While I am decidedly in favor of teaching the more advanced pupils by *elements, principles, &c.*, I do not believe in introducing them at the outset. The formation of letters should be taught on slates before the pen and ink are introduced. The first lessons