

struction in penmanship. After the explanation is given on the board each pupil should be visited at his seat, and directed in position and movement, and be given free opportunity to watch the teacher's motions in writing an occasional word or copy. His attention should, moreover, be directed to the manner of taking and holding the pen, managing ink and paper, place of starting each letter and manner of forming and combining them in words, as well as arranging them in lines and columns.

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 first lesson in writing should be made as simple as possible; should be mere exercises to initiate while learning penholding, position and movement. I do not believe in parading principles, symbols, &c., before beginners, as is done in the elementary copy books of most systems of penmanship; in giving them exact science represented by the Quadrant, with its 90 degrees, enveloping and obscuring the copies with a cloud of sententious instructions, impossible for a child to understand.

Appeals to mature judgment, logical reason, cultivated taste, mathematical knowledge and accumulated skill and experience, are all right in their place, but should not be paraded before the timid youth just beginning penmanship.

The first lessons should be copies of simple letters to be practised on slates; and the plan I have seen successfully adopted is to have the slates all ruled on one side with light permanent lines, properly spaced. The time devoted to each exercise should be about half-an-hour, or not sufficiently long to weary the pupils. The pencils should be of sufficient length to be held like pens, and the manner of holding them should be very carefully taught.

On account of the liability of the pencils in common to break, it is a matter of economy and convenience to use those covered with wood, as they are both cheap and durable, or of the new patent pencil holder lately introduced in our schools.

The copy, as before intimated, should be as nearly perfect as possible in order that proper ideas of form may be impressed on the learner's mind from the beginning. The first lessons must proceed on the same plan as drawing, and indeed, can be termed nothing but pencil drawing of the letters and words used in the copy.

On account of the tendency of young pupils to break slates and lose pencils, it is much better for the teacher to take charge of them. Monitors should be appointed to pass the slates and pencils. Their duties should be arranged in accordance with the seating of the school room, and should be thoroughly understood by them. They may be appointed as a mark of favor for proficiency or good conduct, and taught to look upon the position as a very honorable one.

The plan of conducting the exercise may be something after the following order:—

1.—*Prepare for writing*: when all other work should be laid aside and desks cleared. A given signal should then bring up the monitors to pass slates and pencils.

2.—*Write the copy plainly on the board so that the entire class may see it.* Let it be a letter, a succession of letters, or a word, according to the proficiency of the class.

3.—*Explain how you require it copied, and point*

out the mistakes they are likely to run into and explain how they may be avoided.

4. Give the signal to commence writing. The teacher should then pass around among the pupils correcting position at desk, pencil holding, mistakes in formation, &c., until the exercise is about half over, when he should illustrate on the board the principal errors he has observed while passing around, and call on the pupils to name the different mistakes in formation, &c., and tell how they should be corrected. The last five minutes should be devoted to criticism of the writing by the pupils themselves, permitting them to erase and correct any letter with which they are not satisfied.

5.—The monitors should at the close bring up the slates and pencils and deposit them in their proper places, and when an opportunity is afforded they should be carefully examined and marked by the teacher.

A certain number of recognized errors in the exercise may be counted a failure; a less number, imperfect; and no failures in leading features, may constitute a perfect lesson.

A small record book should be kept, into which these marks should be entered; and in order that this may be readily done, the pupils should be numbered, and required to place their numbers conspicuously at the head of the slate, that they may be conveniently arranged with the highest number at the bottom of the pile, and so on up in regular order, for marking the standing, as the slates are examined.

These exercises, if properly carried on, will become very interesting to primary pupils, and they will look forward to the writing hour with pleasure.

The principal difficulty, at first, is drilling them in position, pencil-holding, preparing for the exercise, and closing. About one-half the time during the first week should be spent in drilling on these particulars.

Great care should be taken to explain all the errors for which they are to be held accountable beforehand, with ample illustrations upon the blackboard of correct and incorrect formation.

On the last school day of each week the pupils should be called upon to prepare a line of each copy, word, and figure practiced on the previous day, and from these copies and the merit marks of the week the monitors of the next week may be appointed.

This method may after a time be combined with the spelling exercise, and errors in both writing and orthography noted in the same exercise, using a distinct mark to indicate each.

As soon as they have been taught to form all the letters and combine them into words, short sentences should follow, and the child may thus be taught to write before the pen and ink is introduced at all.

The pupils should early learn to set value upon the neatness and graceful appearance of all the forms they write. Figures, being of equal importance with letters, should also be given special attention.

The objections made to the use of the pen and ink by small children is, that they are apt to blot and deface their books and injure clothing and furniture. I would, however, advise the introduction of the pen and paper as soon as the pupil has made sufficient progress to use them with any degree of proficiency.

To be continued.