

I. WRITING. Nothing but constant practice will make a person a good penman. The difference between a business hand and that of a school-boy, is readily recognized. It is not the choice of style but the perfection of maturity. And whether manhood in writing shall be attained early or late depends very much upon the judicious employment of written exercises at school. We say judicious, because the handwriting of many persons is spoiled by too rapid writing. Some teachers give 'copying' as a punishment. We consider this objectionable, as calculated to induce unnecessary speed, and to create a distaste for what ought to be a pleasure. No good can arise from undue hurrying. As every exercise should be examined by the teacher, the time and labor required depends entirely on whether the pupil is allowed to do the *first exercises* in a careless slovenly manner, or is required to do everything neatly and legibly. However hopeless the task, it is easier to form a good habit, than to correct a bad one. Once a pupil learns to do a thing neatly, he will never endure to do it otherwise. Do not say, 'this is an exercise in Grammar or Geography, we will teach Writing at another time.'

II. SPELLING. Many words will occur in these exercises that would seldom turn up in oral spelling, or ordinary dictation, such as names of places and persons, terms used in Grammar and other sciences. Either the words mis-spelt or the whole exercise should be re-written.

III. READING. Exercises in reading what is written, are valuable. Most persons have little difficulty in reading their own writing. By occasionally changing slates the scholars may learn to read the writing of their fellow pupils.

IV. COMPOSITION. This includes, "What to write," and "How to write it." Except in special composition exercises, the manner, rather than the matter of composition is taught in written exercises. It is not by

seeing things done that we learn, but by doing them. How many persons constantly see letters and read them, and yet make fearful work when they undertake to write one. Among the errors that require constant watching, are the misuse of capitals, wrong punctuation, undue crowding, too great spaces, omission of spaces, improper division of words, writing above at the end of a line, crooked writing, beginning at the wrong place. Some pupils only require to be told once how to do a thing, others, like the girl who piled the books with the small ones at the bottom, know it is one of the two ways, but they constantly forget which.

COMMENCING. Pupils should commence written exercises as soon as they are able to write well enough. The first exercises should be very short; only a few words. The value is in the quality of what is done, not in the quantity of work set. Let each exercise be done as well as the capacity of the pupil will permit, then proceed to something more advanced. Some teachers allow pupils to transcribe from their Reading Books, in some cases imitating the shape of the printed letters, in others using ordinary writing. The objection that imitating printing spoils the handwriting, we consider groundless, and would be as applicable to drawing. The more variety the better, provided the pupils are not burdened with too much at a time. When pupils can write readily and correctly to dictation, and copy well from their Reading Books, they may proceed to more complicated exercises such as Geography and Grammar.

Slates or Paper. Some teachers use paper entirely for writing and written exercises, because they consider that writing on slates spoils their hand-writing. Even if the slate were not a necessity for Arithmetic, we would prefer the slate to commence with. Beginners always make mistakes. Errors are more easily corrected on slate than on paper. Many children who write fairly on slates make miserable work on paper; and

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