

PENMANSHIP—ANECDOTES.

Penmanship is an important part of a Common School education; and though teachers traverse the country instructing the young in this art, still it is necessary that the teacher of the district school should give to it particular attention. Since writing schools have become so abundant, penmanship has been neglected in the public schools. This is an evil, for it is not probable that half the children ever receive any instruction in this art from a writing-master. If, then, it is neglected in the Common School, one half of the children will be less skilful in this part than they otherwise would have been.

It is my opinion that the instructions of writing-masters, by affording superior facilities to a few, have been the occasion of its being neglected by school-teachers; and consequently many of those children, who cannot afford the time or expense of having the services of a master, are poorly qualified for business.

This evil will be remedied at once, if the teachers of our schools will remember that the services of the writing-master, who teaches only private schools, for the benefit of those who can pay, do not supersede the necessity of teaching penmanship in the Common School.

The consequences of poor writing are sometimes serious, and at others ludicrous. An indictment was found, a few months since, by a grand jury in Kentucky, against a man for a criminal offence. It was quashed by the court, on the plea, by the defendant's counsel, that the scrawl which the foreman intended for his signature was not his name, and bore no resemblance to it.

I have seen a letter written to a lawyer which it was utterly impossible to decipher; he could not determine where it was written, the subject, nor the name of the writer.

An English gentleman applied to the East India Company for an office for a friend of his in India, and succeeded in obtaining an appointment. His friend, after a while, wrote him a letter of thanks, and signified his intention to send him an equivalent. The Englishman could make nothing of the word but *elephant*; and being pleased with the idea of receiving such a noble animal, he was at the expense of erecting a suitable building for his accommodation. In a few weeks the equivalent came, which was nothing more or less than a pot of sweetmeats.

A clergyman in Massachusetts, more than a century ago, addressed a letter to the General Court on some subject of interest that was under discussion. The clerk read the letter, in which there was this remarkable sentence: "I address you not as magistrates, but as *Indian devils*." The clerk hesitated, and looked carefully, and said, "Yes, he addresses you as *Indian devils*." The wrath of the honorable body was aroused, they passed a vote of censure, and wrote to the reverend gentleman for an explanation; from which it appeared, that he did not address them as magistrates, but as *individuals*.

A certain part of the day should be devoted to writing; the school-teacher must assign to it a part of his time, as faithfully as he does to reading or spelling. Generally the latter part of the forenoon is the best time for writing.