

Vertical or Slant Handwriting?

A Consideration of the Reasons For Adopting the Upright System—What Experience Has Shown to be the Result.

A few days ago the Hamilton Spectator in the course of some remarks on the vertical system of writing, against which it has been submitting as being a "fad," declared that vertical writing "has been dropped in most of the places in which it has been tried."

This statement is not only an exaggeration, with the object of discrediting the system, against which it can bring no valid charge that can be made good, but it is the very reverse of true.

Vertical writing is not a "fad." It is the original and scientifically correct method of writing, from which we for a time deviated, to our loss, and to which we return at the teachings of science and experience, after thorough consideration of the merits of the respective systems and their uses and effects. The slant writing fad has had its heyday, and educators have proved it wanting.

Look into the matter.

A Sixteenth Century Fad.
Slanting writing is a fad of the 16th century origin. The eminent educationist, Dr. Edward Brooks, superintendent of the Public School system of Philadelphia, says the vertical system was almost invariably practised by the ancient Romans and during the Middle Ages. In the earlier practice of the Romans of a rapid running style, the characters used were vertical and unconnected for easier legibility.

Italy, during the Middle Ages, was foremost in cultivating fine writing; but so specimens show a sloping style.

About the beginning of the 16th century, a Venetian printer, named Aldus Manutius, who was famous for his ingenuity in devising new designs of type, hit upon a sloping style which was called Aldine, and subsequently Italian. He obtained a patent for this kind of type, but copyists introduced it into their manuscripts and it soon became a fashionable style of writing and printing. It spread to France and from there to England, "where," it is said, "Queen Elizabeth changed her delicate vertical writing to the sprawling slant of the Italian style, and the sloping penmanship became a firmly established fad." "Queen Elizabeth," says a Boston writer, "that Nelson, who was taught the Italian method, after the loss of his right arm naturally acquired the vertical by writing with the left hand."

The use of vertical writing seems to have been extended and perpetuated by the fact that much of the literature of the time was printed in the Aldine press and bound in the best style. In Germany and later in American script, this sloping hand reached the most extreme development, and therein is an explanation of the fact that the change from the oblique to the vertical handwriting had its origin in Germany.

Best Early Writing Was Vertical.
A few examples of early MSS., in which the writing is almost entirely slant, are noted, but the aberration is hardly more than 10 degrees. Dante, Piers, Ploughman, Thackeray and many other writers of great celebrity wrote a vertical hand. "Tennyson wrote in a vertical hand; Longfellow a backward. In an inquiry into the subject, Dr. Gould, the well-known oculist, says: "Of course the best writers are penmen who are intelligent and wrote more nearly correctly; that is, vertically, while the writers of the lower and commercial classes illustrate the downward slant of the pen, and overcome the curvilinear style of writing." We might multiply evidence to prove that vertical writing is not a fad, but that the sloping style of writing—an unscientific and unhygienic innovation—is the real fad that educators and physicians who have given many years of careful study to the subject are trying to supersede with a system that is scientific and rational. But it is unnecessary to add to the conclusions of the eminent authorities quoted.

HYGIENIC REASONS

Why the Return to the Vertical Has Been so General.

The reform of vertical writing instead of the slant.

LENTEN DIET.

Food More Powerful Than Meat.

A devout Catholic lady, of a Washington, anxious to comply with the requirements of the Church as to diet during Lent, and not suffer from insufficient food, says:

"As Lent approached last year, I found myself in such a run-down condition that I seriously hesitated upon the advisability of abstaining from flesh food, attending early services, etc., during the penitential season.

"I was very nervous and suffering from a severe mental shock, and felt that I needed all the strengthening properties that my usual large meat breakfasts and hot lunches could give me. And yet I was anxious to keep an exemplary Lent, not only in a spiritual sense, but by also practicing self-denial.

"After thinking it over I concluded to try Grape-Nuts food in place of meat, determined, however, that at the first symptom of increased weakness or distress I would drop it and go back to my old diet. I began on Ash Wednesday to use Grape-Nuts instead of my pre-Lenten meat breakfasts. I ate the food dry, followed by a cup of cocoa or glass of milk. For lunches I again took Grape-Nuts, but this time in the shape of pudding, boiled or baked. My dinner was of the usual character.

"To my great joy, I found I had solved the problem. In three weeks I realized that I was not only holding my own, but gaining in the power of enduring fatigue and worry, and at the close of Lent I had gained 10 pounds in weight, had a clearer eye and color, a better appetite and digestion than for many months before.

"My vigor, both physical and mental, has been pronounced ever since. I feel the nervous strain much less, my duties no longer worry me, because I am able to systematize the dominant eye varying by about 15 degrees from 90 degrees, in producing a habitual canting or sideways inclination of the head.

"This habitual canting of the head is often followed by spinal curvature. Probably most spinal curvatures are produced

in this way, and the number of cases is much greater than is supposed.

Such a patient can see upright lines, which predominate over all others in civilized life, especially in those who read much, only by holding the head on one side. When the axis of astigmatism is about 75° the head must be canting to the right to see plainly. When it is 100° it must be canting to the left. Slanted writing is itself pathologic, or produces pathologic results of many kinds. The printed letters of the alphabet should be refashioned to avoid all lines except the vertical and horizontal. This would greatly conduce to lessening of ocular and neurologic labor, and would increase ease and celerity of reading. * * * Vertical handwriting, and printed letters made up of vertical and horizontal lines, should be encouraged."

The view expressed in that work are held by an eminent oculist who has devoted thought to the subject. One of the latest to warn the public as to the importance of this phase of the question is Dr. Murray, of New York, who in a recent magazine article says:

"In order to see when writing the old-fashioned slanting copy the child has to twist the body considerably, so much so that it is thought to be a factor in causing deformity. A better posture can be taken in the vertical or straight writing, and for this reason the old style of penmanship has been discarded in favor of the new."

Still Another Expert.
Says Joseph V. Witherbee in an able article on the subject: "If the pupil who slants his letters sits sideways to the desk (a very common position) not only is one shoulder usually higher than the other, but the head is commonly turned until a line connecting the pupils of the eyes is parallel to the line on which he is writing. Nature impels him to twist his neck so that one eye shall be the same distance from the letters as the other. The same twisting motion turns his head, the eyes are not equidistant from his work, which tends to shorten the sight of one eye and lengthen that of the other. This accounts in large measure for the need of two glasses of different power for the same person, so frequently met with at the present time. Grant that vertical writing is not more legible, more easily taught, and more rapidly written than sloping writing, all false as false can be, the simple fact that it puts the pupil in a perfect position in regard to the spine and the eyes is bound to win its way into popular favor. Vertical writing has come to stay."

Oculists Agree.

These conclusions of Dr. Ellinger were supported by exhaustive independent investigations by Doctors Berlin, Remboldt and Merkel, of Germany; Ernst Fuchs, Von Reuss and Lorenz, of Austria; Juval, of France; Noble Smith, of England, and others. This testimony of the physicians was corroborated by many eminent educators of Europe and America.

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An Eye Specialist's View.

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Dr. Gould argues that the written letters of the alphabet, for optical reasons, should be vertical. "All printed and type-written letters, and musical notes preserve the erect position. The handwritten letters should conform to the same rule. The slant method of writing is a result of the writers' personal difficulties, but the character of the writing is, or should be, dictated by the consideration of the reader's sake, not because of the writer's personal or pathologic trouble." The article from which we quote is elaborately illustrated and very technical, and goes to show that vertical writing, proper desks and proper posture tend to avert spinal curvature in the pupils.

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Here we have an average of 30 per cent. of the children who write a sloping style suffering from lateral spinal curvature, as against an average of 16 per cent. of vertical writers who are so afflicted. And it must be borne in mind that the vertical system had been only a few years in use, and the problems of desks and position had not been fully solved. And they are matters of great importance.

"The wrong to the child begun with the beginning of pedagogy," says Dr. Gould. "Prior to this handwriting was usually vertical, because without a powerfully dominating necessity no adults, much less the shrewd monks, would have bent themselves to the left and skewed their vellum, tablet or paper to the absurd angle now common to all writers. * * * Let an adult try to write at a flat table the height of the neck and he will realize the child's predicament. * * * Even the flat desk or table co-operated to produce the resultant bad posture and slanted chirography."

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Natural Gas Stoves

"FAVORITE"

Gas Stoves and Ranges

"FAVORITE" are the most durable, convenient and economical and everyone is guaranteed.

NO DUST, NO SMOKE, NO DIRT, NO DELAY

Ask to see our novel "FAVORITE" for cooking and our "RADIANT FAVORITE" for heating.

"FAVORITE" Gas Ranges are admittedly the best in the world.

Dealers in NATURAL GAS APPLIANCES of all kinds, such as Fittings, Valves, Regulators, Pipes from quarter inch to eight inch, Portable Lamps, Chandeliers, Incandescent Mantles, Globes, Chimneys, etc.

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MUSIC AND DRAMA.

Mrs. Corinne Ryder-Kelsey, who is a soprano soloist with the Hamilton Festival Choir, and the Pittsburgh Orchestra, at their forthcoming concert here, on Feb. 16, at the Grand Opera House, is one of the first sopranos in America to-day. Although a young artist, the critics and conductors are unanimous in conceding her undeniably great talent, and an extraordinarily beautiful voice. At the Mendelssohn Choir concert in Massey Hall, Toronto, last year, and at the Centenary choir concert in this city, she made a very great impression in Gounod's "Gloria." At the Boston festival she received the highest eulogies of any soprano who has ever appeared at these famous concerts. Speaking of her in this respect, one critic said, "Nothing but a soprano has ever been heard here to excel this solo, and the ethereal beauty of the singer's voice accorded most lovingly with the divine sweetness of the music."

Nine Acts Again.

Although the nine act bill at the Star this week is not better than the excellent performances of last week, the show is well up to the standard, and contains several features. The greatest of these is the eight Comellas, a celebrated troupe, and the best acrobats and tumblers ever seen at the local house. They have no trapeze, bars, rings, etc., but twist each other wonderfully. One little and clever young lady is tossed like a rubber ball without a slip. They have appeared here before, but their fearless feats of skill are certainly astonishing. The musical Bartlett's rank with the best. They feature mouth instruments, and with the bright comedy they throw in, made a double hit. The Hamblins, in a comedy dancing creation, repeat their success of last week. Their songs are new and their dance is better. This is a great vaudeville team. Tom Davies, the local song illustrator, makes his annual appearance, and he receives

an ovation as loud as any of the rest. Three new songs, especially "Starlight" are very pretty. The Maginley, aerial artists, on the flying trapeze, are noted for their feats of strength with teeth, jaws and neck. There is nothing sensational done, perhaps, with one exception, that of the lady swinging on a rope holding by her teeth. Tasker and Hall, colored singers; Jessie Clifton, another, and Stuart, ventriloquist, character impersonator, and mimic, with the kinetograph, showing the chase of orchard robbers, depicting fun down on the farm, are a few of the most popular acts. If My Man Could Do It for Me; No Peach Hangs Too High for Him Then; The Selfish Little Duckling; For a Widow Knows Exactly What to Do; The Dresden Shepherdess; Lizzie Was a Telephone Girl; There's One Sweetheart I'll Never Forget; Rosita. The sale of seats indicates there will be a large audience to greet Mr. Wills on his first appearance in Hamilton. He is one of the funniest comedians in the business, and his show will prove one of the best dollar attractions that has ever been at the Grand. Lovers of good musical fare will regret not seeing The Duke of Duluth.

To-morrow Night.

Peggy From Paris has achieved one of the most pronounced successes ever attained by a musical play. It has a record of a four months' run in New York, five months in Boston and three in Chicago. It was praised without stint, both critics and public uniting in sounding its merits. Naturally, wit, satire, humor and merriment are striking elements in the book and lyrics, for they are the work of George Ade, from whom no American humorist has been more widely read and more thoroughly enjoyed. It is said of Peggy From Paris that it possesses qualities distinct from the average musical play. First, there is a consistent and logical story. Again, the narrative is skilfully witty, and the action is carried out by droll and amusing characters. Indeed, the character portrayals in Peggy From Paris are especially notable. Peggy will be seen at the Grand to-morrow night.

Embassy Ball.

As a writer of clean-cut, refined and delightful comedy America has never produced a playwright more versatile and entertaining than Augustus Thomas. He is the author of The Embassy Ball, in which Daniel Frohman is presenting Mr. Lawrence O'Rourke, the well known and popular English actor. The Embassy Ball is reputed to be a most interesting comedy. It will be seen here at the Grand on Feb. 14.

Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Al. Martin's Uncle Tom's Cabin company, which will be seen at the Grand on Friday and Saturday of this week, is the largest and best on the road at present, producing this favorite play. Crowded houses have greeted it everywhere.

Robinson Testimonial.

To-night the Robinson testimonial will be held in the Armories. The hall has been heated by the furnaces for a couple of days, and will be warm and comfortable. Mr. Walters and Mrs. MacKenzie will delight the audience. The band's programme is a good one, arranged to suit lovers of all kinds of music. It is hoped the people will turn out in large numbers to pay respect to the old bandman.

\$10—Special Washington Excursion

Via Philadelphia, Friday, February 16, via Lehigh Valley R. R. Tickets only ten dollars from Suspension Bridge or Buffalo to Washington and return. Tickets good 10 days. Stop over allowed at Baltimore, and Philadelphia, on return trip. For tickets and further particulars call on or address Robt. S. Lewis, Passenger Agent, L. V. R., 10 King street east, Toronto.

Mr. Fielding at St. Kitz.

St. Catharines, Feb. 5.—Hon. W. S. Fielding, Minister of Finance, has been spending a few days at the Welland House in this city.

Mrs. and Miss Fielding have been at the Welland for the past week and Mr. Fielding arrived Saturday evening.

The visit is connected with neither public nor private business, as the Minister is but taking a slight rest.

PLACATING CHINA.

United States Likely to Modify Exclusion Laws.

Washington, D. C., Feb. 5.—Secretary McCallie, of the Department of Commerce and Labor, today took most important action, which is expected to considerably ameliorate the friction between the United States and China, and perhaps cause the abandonment of the anti-American boycott, when the approved report of the special committee providing for a radical revision of the existing conditions under which Chinese may enter and reside in the United States.

The commission's report touches by way of steps cause the abandonment of the changes being made in the direction of liberalization. Besides certain alterations that promise to avoid delay in handing Chinese who apply for admission other alterations have been made

London, Feb. 5.—Christopher Holland, the Toronto bookkeeper arrested at Bristol, and charged with stealing \$13,800, was brought before the extradition court at Bow Street to-day, and remanded to Hoxton Prison until Saturday next.

Chris. Holland Remanded.

DR. A. W. CHASE'S CATARRH CURE... 25c.

Is sent direct to the diseased parts by the Improved Joliver. Heals the ulcer, cures the discharges, stops droppings in the throat, and permanently cures Catarrh and Hay Fever. Blower free. All dealers, or Dr. A. W. Chase Medicine Co., Toronto and London.

First showing of new embroideries for spring. New baby books, ready for easy and quick choosing.

Big Sale of Good Towels. One Quarter to One Third Off Regular Price. We are clearing our entire stock of Linen Towels at from one quarter to one-third off our regular prices, and the largest stock of good qualities anywhere in Hamilton to choose from. Don't miss the bargains going and come early. They are selling quickly. Prices 4c to 50c.

Comfort in Flannelette Sheetting. One piece each only, extra fine and soft quality, white English Flannelette Sheetting, 2 1/2 and 3 1/2 yards wide, being extra in size, special reduced price per yard, 45c and 50c.

White or Grey Canadian Flannelette Blankets in the 1 1/2 size at per pair \$1.25. And in grey only in the 1 1/2 size, at \$1.25.

Early Buyers, New Dress Goods are Showing Here. Make Your Selections Now. If you are an early buyer of Dress Goods here are some of the new styles that should interest you. All wool homespun Suitings in light greys for early spring wear in the clouded mixtures and shadow checks. 54 inches wide at per yard \$1 and \$1.25. All wool light grey Chiffon Worsteds, 52 inches wide, special for shirt-waist suits at per yard \$1. Fine English Mohair Alpaca in new greens, browns, navy and black, 56 inches wide, in plain and fancy effect at per yard \$1.25. Black Watch All Wool Tartans and other Scotch Clans at per yard 75c.

Low Prices for Good Blankets. Sharp reduction to make quick selling in good Blankets. English White Wool Unshrinkable Blankets in medium sizes and fast colors, borders, regular \$3.25, at \$2.39. English pure wool unshrinkable Blankets finished same on both sides and to be used singly, pale blue borders and in large sizes, the best Blankets you can buy, regular \$6.00, at \$4.95. Pure Wool Silver Grey Canadian Blankets, extra size and heavy, regular \$5 at \$3.69. Study your comfort and health and buy good Blankets and buy them here. Good Hosiery at Reduced Prices. This store has been