

Unlock the art of beautiful, legible handwriting

*Bays yield no smell as they grow, rosemary
little, nor sweet marjoram; that which, above
all others, yields the sweetest in the air, is
the violet, especially the white double violet, wh.
comes twice a year, about the middle of May,
& about Bartholomew-tide. Next to that
is the musk rose; then the strawberry leaves,
dying, with a most excellent cordial smell;
then the lily of the valley, it is a fine
dust like the lily of the valley, which grows
upon the cluster in the first coming forth; then
sweetbriar, then wall-flowers*

*A New
Handwriting
for
Teachers*

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A NEW
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M. M. BRIDGES

THE Accompanying plates are intended chiefly for those who teach Writing: a few words, both of apology & explanation, are needed to introduce them.

I was always interested in handwriting, & after making acquaintance with the Italianized Gothic of the sixteenth century, I consciously altered my hand towards some likeness with its forms & general character. This script happening to please, I was often asked to make alphabets & copies, & begged by professional teachers to have such a book as this printed, that they might use it in their schools. One can never quite satisfy oneself in the making of models for others to copy, but these plates are very much what I intended, though, owing to my inexperience, some of them have suffered in the reproduction.

The best facsimiles are the first two pages—the capitals—which were cut in wood by James D. Cooper, from a reduced photograph. The copperplate alphabet of small letters & the copperplate sentence, 'All the ways,' plates 3 & 6, were unfortunately not photographed, with the

result that the engraver's curves are too mechanically rounded, & some of the forms have lost their character & have approached the uniformity of the common copybook hand: this is specially the case with the letters b, c, g, h, m, n, o, as will be seen on comparison with the three pages of free writing at the end of the book. These last—plates 7, 8 & 9—are true facsimiles, except that they had to be printed faint, to disguise an apparent shakiness of the downstrokes, due to my having unfortunately written on a finely-ribbed paper.

Plates 4 & 5, which are collotypes, are also exact facsimiles.

No. 10 is from a MS. in the Record Office, of the date of Edw. VI: the method of reproduction does not do justice to its forms, but it has only to be copied with a free quill for its beauty to reappear.

No. 11 is a reproduction of the facsimile of Michael Angelo's careful handwriting in Guasti's edition of his works. There can scarcely be a better example of Italianized Gothic. It shows individual forms, which are well worth studying.

Following the preface will be found instructions how to use the copies; it will be seen that for young beginners I give simplified forms & the order in which it is convenient to learn them. A child must first learn to control his hand & constrain it to obey his eye: at this earliest stage,

any simple forms will serve the purpose; & hence it might be further argued that the forms are always indifferent & that full mastery of the hand can be as well attained by copying bad models as good; but this can hardly be: the ordinary copybook, the aim of which seems to be to economize the component parts of the letters, cannot train the hand as more varied shapes will: nor does this uniformity, exclusive of beauty, offer as good training to the eye: moreover I should say that variety & beauty of form are attractive, even to little children, & that the attempt to create something which interests them, cheers & crowns their stupendous efforts with a pleasure that cannot be looked for in the task of copying monotonous shapes.

But whether such a hand as that here shown lends itself as easily as the more uniform model to the development of a quick, useful cursive, I cannot say; & it is possible that the degradations, inevitable in the habit of quick writing, might produce a mere untidiness, almost the worst reproach of penmanship. Some of the best English hands of to-day are as good a quick cursive as one can desire, & show points of real beauty; but such hands are rare & are only those which have, as we say, character; which probably means that the writer would have done well for himself under any system: whereas the average hands, which

are the natural outcome of the old copybook writing, degraded by haste, seem to owe their common ugliness to the mean type from which they sprang: & the writers, when they have occasion to write well, find they can do but little better & only prove that haste was not the real cause of their bad writing.

It is certainly desirable that there should be more good models for slow writing, as there is abundant occasion for its use; & in providing models it seems to me better to offer modern scripts, the product of to-day, rather than to attempt to resuscitate an ancient one however beautiful: & this is really the only excuse for my attempt, for there are of course plenty of beautiful models of various dates: it would be a good thing if reproductions of these, such as have been published by the Palaeographical Society, were hung in our schools, not only to give to children the history of their own Alphabet, but also to show them how lovely a thing handwriting can be.

M. M. BRIDGES.

A B C D E

F G H I J K

L M N O

P Q R S T