

THE FUTURE OF WRITING.

[This paper was written by C. P. Zaner and read before the Public School Writing and Drawing Association held in Chicago, Dec. 27-28-29-30, '97. Begun in the preceding number and concluded in this.]

SINCE, however, every invention thus far has failed to lessen the daily amount of work done with the pen, it seems perfectly safe to predict that no invention or inventions of immediate future will replace the office of the pen, or even lessen it. This, then, leads to the question, to what extent shall writing be improved, or to what extent will it be modified?

I know that many eminent men predict that typewriting or the graphophone will soon supersede the pen, but as yet they have not even lessened it. I only hope they will, no one will welcome them with wider open arms than I. There are other reforms along the political, religious, social, industrial, charitable, educational, and economic lines that I fondly anticipate (reforms that we need now and here), but I fear my years (long as they now seem to be), will not be numerous enough to see half what we should realize in a decade.

Progress comes slowly, and writing is no exception to the rule. I am therefore content with a little real improvement here and now each day, rather than to idle the present and anticipate it all in the sweet bye and bye. I am inclined to believe that we owe it to ourselves and to our fellows to keep up the good work of improving what we now have, that which has served so long and so faithfully, and to anticipate whatever the future may have in store for us by doing our duty now. We ought to bear in mind that the present alone is ours, that to-day's results serve as to-morrow's beginning, that the morrow begins where to-day ends.

The future of writing, so far as we are now concerned, as I conceive it, depends upon improvement of the forms, movements, and methods we now possess rather than vague dreaming. Dreamers we need but workers as well. For one dreamer can dream more in a lifetime than millions can accomplish in a century.

The writing of the future will, I believe, be more legible, more simple, more individual, and consequently more easy and rapid. It will be taught more rationally and less dogmatically. Less theory of form and movement will be indulged in. The theory that all shall be taught some one movement or that all shall write with some one set of muscles, or without the co-operation of the fingers and hand will soon be a thing of the past. The idea that all shall employ the same slant or that all shall start their writing to the right of the perpendicular is now well exploded. The idea that accuracy and beauty are prime essentials in a business hand writ-

ing, or that accuracy and legibility are synonymous terms will soon be shelved in the past. The hitherto requisites of uniformity and similarity will be superseded by neatness and individuality. That is, the tendency will be to make letters more unlike instead of more similar. The c's and e's will be well curved instead of well-nigh straight-backed. Loops will be short and full, and used but in three or four extended letters, capitals will be small and simple, and pens will be coarse and smooth.

Unmistakableness in reading, simplicity in form, and ease of execution will be the watchwords for some years to come. To them will be added individuality of style, neatness of writing, and sureness of execution. That is, the movements and forms will be of such character as to reduce the risk attending the execution of capitals, and thereby enable penmen to appear to better advantage on the hotel registers. The fact is movement as generally taught is too skillful for the average citizen, and consequently too risky and unreliable. The fact that we are "rarely in trim," reveals that we have been overtraining and shooting too high.

The handwriting of the future will be largely of two kinds; purely business and nonprofessional, or purely ornamental and professional. The ornamental will drift toward the employment of the copperplate or round style so generally employed in engraving, and for decorative purposes. The demands along these lines have been constantly on the increase.

The past decade has witnessed many changes in writing and in teaching, and much improvement has been made. And as I face the coming decade it seems to me that there remains much to be done, and that much more will be done than during the past period. I am intensely interested in the present reforms in writing before the people, and endeavor to welcome without prejudice the various opinions expressed.

It is my opinion that writing has been taught too much by and for itself, and that in the future it will be more closely associated with other co-related subjects. It has been looked upon as a thing of beauty as well as a thing of service, but in the future it will be considered as a serviceable rather than a fine art. The fine art phase of the work will be considered purely professional, and therefore delegated to those who shall make that their profession.

Thus I have endeavored to express to you in my usual blunt way the convictions of my head regarding writing of the future. As you now no doubt know, I am not one who deals much on futures. The present is my field of action and enjoyment. And I know no better way of proving it than by saying, finally, that the future of writing is what we make it.

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