

WHO IS THE BEST PENMAN?



AM. That's the answer we would have received from about every penman in the land a few years ago. Many did not hesitate to say so without being asked. Each one, big and little, seemed to feel it way down in his boots

that he could beat every other penman, living or dead, and don't you forget it! What a day of champions, self-styled, it was. But how the cruel hand of Father Time has slain them; and none there are now poor enough to mourn over their championship ashes.

But that day is gone, and it is to be hoped, gone forever. While to-day there are far more and better penmen than ever before, one now seldom runs across a swelled-head of the old type. Still there are a few left, and they are occasionally heard from. Some few still persist in using "Prof." before their names and manifest much of the same old egotism; but then they're few, and are mostly relegated far into the backwoods; back where the light of civilization has scarcely yet penetrated; back where Bogs lives, who, while standing before his door one evening, was accosted by a traveler, when the following conversation took place:

- "Whose house?"
- "Bogs'."
- "Of what's it built?"
- "Logs."
- "Any neighbors?"
- "Frogs."
- "What's your diet?"
- "Hogs."
- "How do you catch them?"
- "Dogs."

Now Bogs and the backwoods are all right, and so the champion penman may think he is as long as he remains back there, but he dare not come out.

While the old type of the braggadocio is about extinct, still much of the same spirit is ever present and appears in other forms. Human nature changes very slowly, and but little, if at all. To illustrate: When a dog's head was gently patted fifteen hundred years ago he gladly wagged his tail just as he does to-day, which is proof positive that human nature was the same then as now. Smile if you will, but there's a point close by.

Instead of the champions we now have "the onleys." They do not hesitate to tell us that theirs is the only style of practical business writing, that theirs is the only correct slant, that theirs is the only true movement, and inferentially we must conclude that they are the only successful teachers. Right here we shall mention no names; it isn't necessary. Pause just a moment and "the onleys" will come to your mind faster than you can name them. Good folks, but they overestimate themselves.

Now the question, "Who is the best pen-

man?" has been asked in all seriousness, and seriously shall it be answered.

L. Madarasz executes a style of penmanship that has never been equaled by any other penman. F. B. Courtney is probably his closest second. A. D. Taylor writes a hand that, so far as we know, no other penman ever got within ten feet of it; it's Taylor's individual style. Madarasz can't equal it; neither can Taylor equal the style written by Madarasz. Which one is the better penman? It's a matter of taste.

Some penmen excel in one thing and some in another. No one penman is better at all kinds of pen work than all the rest of them. Zaner is unquestionably one of the best all-round penmen, touching almost every conceivable kind of penwork with about equal ability, and yet he would not for one moment claim to equal the greatest efforts of the specialist in the specialist's own line. Bloser sometimes puts up a page in his own way that many think unequalled, but then Bloser says "that's all bosh."

Glick — E. L. Glick, the athlete, penman, and all-round good boy — we recently heard that he has a baby, too — sometimes does some things that are certainly hard to equal, if ever they are equaled.

H. P. Behrensmeyer gets effects with his dainty light lines and bold shades that are his own.

C. V. Howe, the modest Chicago gentleman, executes a style of the roundhand that stands alone.

Kelchner, Doner, Bartow, Mills, Tamblyn, Canan, are other stars — and still there are others — and those whose names we do not mention must not feel that we have a grudge against them, for we haven't. We have no grudge against any penman, but will confess that we do not feel altogether friendly toward some ideas and methods of teaching in which we do not believe.

In the contest of jumping, sprinting, high kicking, eating quail or hard-boiled eggs, it's easy enough to tell who is best or biggest, but in penmanship we have no such standards to aid us in our decision.

The penmen mentioned are undoubtedly some of the best in the profession — the real cream of it — and you can take your choice without paying any money.

Who is the best penman?
No one.

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