

## AN ANATOMY OF HANDWRITING.

BY AN EXPERT. IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.



It is, perhaps, by reason of the almost universal prevalence of the art of Handwriting—one of the most simple and useful modes of human expression ever devised—that so little regard is paid to the importance of the subject of its physiology. Yet few subjects whose scope of inquiry includes the consideration of some of those subtler phenomena of individual life and character which are supposed to be indicative of conditions of moral and physical well-being or otherwise, have so personal and, at the same time, so general an interest. Even apart from its physiological significance, the subject of Handwriting has essentially an obvious value that will well repay investigation. For instance, the process of its gradual development from the rude and primitive signs and symbols which sufficed for the wants of the early races of mankind to the highly finished, characteristic calligraphy of the present day, necessarily suggests a theme of uncommon historical importance. But it is proposed in these papers to regard the subject chiefly from the point of view of the specialist, or expert, as he is popularly termed, in the science of chirography, and to submit some observations—with illustrative data—

on the results obtained from a considerable experience in the anatomy of specimens of handwriting of almost every conceivable kind.

It may at once be admitted that in any system of anatomising the physiological features of handwriting,

*I send you today  
four additional chapters of  
the book - leaving only one more  
to come which is at present in  
the hands of the typesetter - the  
book is now finished and I should  
be very glad to get it entirely out of  
hands - I had hoped to have the  
previous chapters back before now -*

MRS. OLIPHANT. (Reduced to  $\frac{2}{3}$  scale.)

*Holly Lodge, North Fildes  
Dec 20. 59*

*My dear Sir*

*I think we have fairly  
described the Nightman of the  
Serial. by dint of much talking  
So we may consider the publica-  
tion of the paper settled according  
to the terms of my letter of  
the 14<sup>th</sup> Dec., understanding  
(I presume?) that the sums  
specified are to be paid at the*

GEORGE ELIOT.

attempted with the view, for instance, of determining from written data the identity of the writer, and, if possible, of ascertaining what are his or her prevailing moral or physical qualities, many obvious difficulties confront the expert. Of course, his initial inquiry as to the sex of the writer, so far as that can be identified by means of handwriting, may be readily enough disposed of. For it is, generally speaking, as easy to tell—it certainly needs no specialist's diagnosis to detect—the ordinary handwriting of a male from that of a female, as to distinguish between any of the outstanding physical features that differentiate the sexes. Even when the attempt is made by a female hand to disguise its customary style of penmanship, it is usually as apparent as when a woman, dressed in male attire, tries to pass muster as a man. Her trick is too palpable by far to be successful. In the matter of gait, gesture, bearing, and such-like outward evidences of sex that denote the male from the female, her deficiencies are conspicuously apparent; or, when these are assumed, the copy is much overdone. The "swashing and the martial outside" which the benighted Rosalind and Celia heroically endeavoured to don with their male garments of disguise becomes, as a rule, too great an assumption for the female trickster when trying for the nonce to enlist in the rank and file of the rougher sex; and so her fraud becomes only too easily exposed. So in the matter of female handwriting, marked as it commonly is with that uniform angularity or sharp-edgedness which is its predominant characteristic—any attempt to imitate

*a go that are all doing  
well I hope that your  
little James is keeping better  
and the rest of the family  
are keeping well Give  
them all my best love*

HANDWRITING OF A MAN ACCUSTOMED TO THE USE OF PICK  
AND SHOVEL. ( $\frac{2}{3}$  scale.)

those sinewy chirographic strokes and flourishes, those energetic and muscular flights and somersaults of the male penman are certain to end in total failure, just because it is against nature, or to show, at best, such clumsy results that he who runs may read. Still, there are many females whose handwriting it is almost impossible to define as betraying, in that feature common to it just referred to, the sex of the writers, and which, when placed side by side promiscuously with that by the other sex, appears to be as masculine in its general form and sweep as the boldest and strongest male caligraphy ever penned. The handwriting, for instance, of the late "George Eliot" may be quoted as a case in point, and is highly indicative of—in addition to other uncommon characteristics—the mental robustness of that remarkable lady.

In the same category may be placed the striking penmanship of Mrs. Oliphant, that most versatile and indefatigable, of writers. No woman of the present day plies a busier pen than she, and to more excellent purpose. In her time she must have covered an immense quantity of manuscript with her pen, though probably the type-writer may, latterly, have rendered her invaluable assistance in the process of preparing her articles and books for the press. The specimen of Mrs. Oliphant's caligraphy which is produced here is invaluable, therefore, in so far as it shows how the mental characteristics of the writer may yet be well pronounced in spite of the abnormal wear and tear to which the handwriting has for long been subjected.

*I am afraid to promise a series  
straight off the reel having a good  
many engagements, but possibly some  
-what later I might do so. At all  
events I will do my best,  
Yours  
Fruitfully yours  
Richard Jefferies*

RICHARD JEFFERIES. ( $\frac{2}{3}$  scale.)

Like that of "George Eliot," the penmanship of Mrs. Oliphant is essentially masculine in its predominant features. Not so bold and rounded, perhaps, as that of the author of "Adam Bede," it is more deft and nervous; but unless it be in its general appearance of neatness—a feature that at once arrests attention, and which is of course eminently suggestive of a highly refined organisation—there is not in any specimens we have seen of the caligraphy of the author of the "Makers of Venice" any indication of the sex of which she is so distinguished an ornament.

Many other more or less notable examples of strong masculine-featured female penmanship might be quoted, as demonstrating how very difficult it sometimes is to identify the sex by means of such evidence *per se*, or to show how, even when the caligraphy seems decidedly symptomatic of those robust mental and physical traits appertaining to the sterner sex, the writer of it may, nevertheless, be one of the gentlest and tenderest of women.

*Dear Sir,*

*I can hardly doubt that  
a judicious & representative selection  
of extracts from the works of Carlyle  
would find acceptance with the  
public*

PROFESSOR MASSON. ( $\frac{2}{3}$  scale.)

Another and comparatively new element affecting the long-prevalent characteristics of female handwriting has, however, to be considered in defining the distinctions existing in the handwriting of the sexes, and constituting so far the difference between them. Many young ladies are now being trained to write according to certain departmental standards of penmanship. To reach the desired maximum of caligraphic efficiency in order to secure appointments—in the service of the Post Office, for instance—the acquisition of a rounded clerky hand is the one thing needful. The old angularities, "the sharps and darts and pointed arrow-heads," which the fair Juliets used, time out of mind, to employ when writing their love-epistles, are thus surely, if slowly, giving way to a style of penmanship which, perhaps, may have enough of business "go" and work-a-day dash about it, but which, it is to be feared, has little of that keen passionateness to recommend it in the eyes of their romantic and, haply, disconsolate Romeos!

But, apart from the question of the handwriting of the sexes, the expert will, if he should find it necessary to do so, generally classify all kinds of handwriting under some such technical division as—broadly—that of the educated and of the uneducated

styles. For under one or other of these two main divisions all sorts and conditions of writers will naturally fall, although it is often difficult enough to say to which of the two certain specimens should properly belong.

Usually, however, unless there is disguise attempted, it is as easy to distinguish between the literate and the illiterate styles of penmanship, as between an intelligent cast of countenance and a face that looks foolish and simple. Thus, take the handwriting, such as it is, of a man accustomed to the use of the pick and shovel, or that of a woman who earns her livelihood by plying the needle or sewing-machine; these persons and others of such-like manual employments cannot be supposed—they probably were never trained—to use the pen with the same fluency and skill as a clerk or governess, to whom the pen is a constantly familiar instrument. As a matter of fact, they cannot do so, though there will be some exceptions to this rule. For many persons, otherwise illiterate, have a natural knack of using a fluent and clerkly style of penmanship; while, on the other hand, there are many individuals who, having had all the advantages of education, adopt such a style that one would almost suppose a wretched, slovenly, undecipherable “hand” was, in their view, the very token of their superiority. Such slovenliness may, perhaps, be accounted for by the haste of the penman, or because of his having become a slave to his pen: hence, many persons—authors, journalists, clergymen, physicians, and others—show but indifferent specimens of caligraphy. Or perhaps it may be caused by sheer nervousness and physical inaptitude to write in that clear, bold, legible hand which gener-

ally betokens strength of nerve, openness and bravery of character. But even in such exceptions to this prevalent rule, there is little difficulty in noting the characteristics which distinguish the caligraphy of the educated from that of illiterate persons.

Keeping in view, therefore, these two main divisions of the kinds or styles of penmanship, the question now suggests itself: How far, if at all, may the various classes of people be differentiated from each other by means of their caligraphy? It would be absurd to lay down any hard and fast principle bearing on this aspect of the subject. For there is really no class-caligraphy: *i.e.*, a person's handwriting does not, cannot possibly, indicate *per se* the particular class to which he and others belong. A classification of this kind is sometimes attempted by those professing to read character from the handwriting; but, at best, it can only be a very haphazard, conjectural science that declares it can distinguish between, say, a military man and a clergyman merely by a few strokes of the pen.

At the same time, there are certain well-defined traits in the handwriting of some men and women indicative in a general way of the profession or class to which they belong. Thus, it is easy to account for the general disregard of caligraphic distinctness that the handwriting of physicians frequently presents. With medical men generally, a hurried anxiety may be said to be the pre-disposing cause of their indistinct penmanship. And yet, having to write prescriptions for patients—where thought and deliberation are most requisite—ought in a measure to check hurried penmanship, and, as some people might think, be a strong reason why that should be unusually clear and legible. We have, however, seen not a few specimens of the caligraphy of well-known busy medical men, which go far to modify this theory. So, too, is it with the handwriting of clergymen. Never judge a man by the cut of his coat or by the fashion in which he wears his necktie. It would be as absurd to judge of a clergyman by his penmanship. To do so, as a class, would be to subject them to a severe black-balling. For, probably, no class of men have a greater contempt for the rules—such as they are—teaching how to acquire a fairly legible style of chirography. An interesting chapter might be written on this branch of the subject to prove our assertion; but perhaps it might best be explained by the following, among other reasons:—

1st. Clergymen have not the same especial need, in writing the MS. of their sermons, &c., to write any more distinctly than is necessary for their own convenience—hence their pens “go as they please.”

2nd. A more frequent use of the

Dear Sir,

I used to fish for poodleys on North Benwick pier; and I have, <sup>from</sup> ~~in~~ various hours in the course of a life already too long for any service it has rendered to the world, elicited perhaps thirty singularly small and feeble minded trout. The line was I employed was the common worm; and I remark, <sup>(the worms)</sup> as perhaps a providential circumstance, that they usually became one with my luncheon. In angling for stables, feelings, birch trees and the tails of my own waterproof, I have been more uniformly successful.

pen than that required, as a rule, by other professional men, inclines them to negligence of style.

3rd. Writing—let it be in fairness assumed—under the influence of strong mental excitement and emotion, style of penmanship is necessarily the last consideration with them.

To most clergymen who desire to excuse their caligraphy, the foregoing considerations might aptly apply; but there may, nevertheless, be other reasons urged, such as physical inaptitude to write in a characteristic hand, or sheer indifference with respect thereto, and so on (for a score of reasons might be given).

The handwriting of authors and literary persons is often subjected to adverse criticism because of its slovenly style and general indistinctness. Much writing, of course, corrupts the style; and the constant writing of books and articles subjects the caligraphy of authors and journalists to those "wear and tear" traits which are its common features. With the majority of such persons the penmanship is usually the last element in their work requiring consideration. *Hinc illa lacrima* of the poor compositor, who—after the editor, of course—is the greatest sufferer from the hasty penmanship of autocratic authors. But, as every rule has its exceptions, so in the present instance also there are many even eminent authors of the present day whose caligraphy is excellently clear and distinct, and a pleasure to read. Mr. William Black, for instance, writes a notably neat hand: a fact all the more surprising when one considers not only the large amount of MS. his published works have covered, but also the rough-and-ready experience acquired previously as a busy journalist. The late Richard Jefferies wrote in a characteristically careful style; the specimen of his handwriting here shown exhibits some of that attention to the minutæ of detail by which his literary

workmanship was so well known. A conspicuously fine literary hand is that of Professor David Masson, which affords real pleasure to peruse. The preparation of his voluminous "Life of Milton," completed before the type-writer was available, in addition to much official chirographic work for his students, has probably helped to bring about that occasional desire to "compound" his letters—a symptom of haste and anxiety—noticeable in some of his MSS. But, when a young man, the author of "Drummond of Hawthornden," &c., must have been the possessor of an uncommonly bold, open, and massive style of caligraphy, as rare as it is pleasing.

Many thousands of readers are more or less familiar with the exquisite literary workmanship of Robert Louis Stevenson. Few have, however, had an opportunity of seeing his penmanship, of which a specimen is here produced. To be the caligraphy of a comparatively young man, although his extensive literary experience might hardly warrant his being so described, it would seem already to indicate considerable wear and tear, bespeaking bad times in store for the "comps." As a matter of fact, it is by no means a robust hand, physically speaking—the abnormal slope or slant of the lines being a common indication of lack of "fistiness," so to speak, which, in other words, simply denotes a limited amount of muscular grip or *verve* in the owner. In not a few examples we have seen of this "backward slope" style of penmanship, inquiry has brought out the fact that the writers were invariably persons of weak physique. In some cases it may be due to a habit formed in youth, in others to a structural defect of the wrist, which does not permit the pen to move in the ordinary way; but in the majority of instances the foregoing explanation will be found the correct one.

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## UNDER SUSPICION: A MARKET-DAY STORY.



IN the towns of the Midland Counties, to which my experience had been mainly confined, an unwonted number of carts and gigs driving in between eleven and one, and out between five and seven; an unusual number of farmers and farmers' wives and daughters in the streets, and increased activity in the tradesmen's shops, with, perhaps, an occasional sample bag produced at some corner, where two or three men are critically examining a handful of corn which one of them holds, while each in turn takes a few grains, that, after careful scrutiny, he proceeds to munch: these are to the casual observer the only outward signs that it is market-day.

In the North of England it is far otherwise. There the market-square is still in reality what it is in name.

Once a week, and sometimes even twice a week, the open space is filled with stalls, on which articles of all descriptions are exposed for sale. Vegetables, fish, meat, butter, bacon, cheese, farm produce of all sorts, clothes, drapers' stuffs, lace, gloves, feathers, buttons, china on the stall and on the ground, fragments of brass and iron fittings, sweets, cheap jewellery, and many things besides are there in great profusion; and the proprietors lose no opportunity of convincing the passers-by of the excellence of the commodities of which they are anxious to dispose. Nor is this all. Often in the midst of the stalls themselves, more often on some vacant spot close by, energetic salesmen, and sometimes saleswomen, carry on a brisk sale by auction, or by the inverse process peculiar to those representatives of commerce who are commonly known as Cheap Jacks.

"Now understand me," says one, who would have

from preceding speeches, his memory seemed to supply all that he needed as aids to arrangement, and though his speeches will never rank among great efforts, he was a type of the south-countryman trained by local duties to express his thoughts, and to endeavour to bring his hearers to his way of thought. Lord Randolph Churchill differs widely; his orations are more often attacks, generally prepared with greater skill, are aided by the method of reception, have more literary polish, and have also a much more stirring effect. The writer never heard Lord Beaconsfield (to whom Lord Randolph Churchill has been often compared), but reading the speeches of the former, for the contrast, one great difference at once strikes those who hear the scion of the house of Marlborough—his words are simpler and better chosen than the sesquipedalian sentences delighted in, in the later speeches of Mr. Disraeli. But there are some resemblances, and there is especially the wonder aroused at the daring of both, and the amazement from time to time at the unexpected turns of thought. Referring now to Sir Wilfrid Lawson, whose name has wide-spread if sectional interest, preparation is found more largely evidenced. His notes are extensive, his quotations frequent, and always readily arranged. He aims much more at illustration, he has a desire to avail himself of “apt alliteration’s artful aid,” and his humorous sallies are well known. He quotes much from the poets of progress, but there

is greater inequality in his platform efforts than there is with most of those whose names are well known.

Other orators’ names rise in the memory: silver-tongued Earl Granville, whose sentences trip pleasantly along, but none the less do they now and then show the sword in a silken sheath; Mr. Joseph Cowen, whose ornate thoughts gave dignity to even a rough Northumbrian burr, and whose Parliamentary speeches were for a few sessions among the literary treats “the House” afforded; Mr. Sexton, with that eloquence which faintly recalls some of Sheil’s; and many another. And from the observation of scores of such speakers, these general deductions may be drawn: that the first duty of the orator is to master the subject of which he is to speak; to arrange loosely the order in which he purposes to speak; and to leave the turn of the sentences more to the inspiration of the moment, to the needs of the audience, and to the suggestions which experience makes even in the midst of a speech when the speaker has learnt the art of “thinking on his legs.”

Possibly our public oratory is not so grand as it was; it is true that, with a few exceptions, public speakers are nearer on one level than they were; but though the average speaker soars less above his audience, he may be more effective in utterance if less eloquent in the expression of his thoughts.

## AN ANATOMY OF HANDWRITING.

BY AN EXPERT. IN TWO PARTS.—PART II.



IN any diagnosis of handwriting, a very important consideration is that of the evidence which may be held to be indicative of the character of the physique of the writer. That handwriting can supply a clue thereto, there can be no question, though there must naturally be a variety of opinion on this part of the subject. The following general principles may, however, be accepted as commonly applicable to handwriting, especially that of the male sex:—

1. When the “down” strokes of certain letters—for example, “y” or “g” or “p” or “f”—are strongly or

‘y’ or ‘g’ : or ‘p’ or ‘f’

heavily formed, it indicates the writer to be a large-handed, strong-wristed person, especially the latter. That being so, the physique will usually be strong and powerful. The “up” or “return” strokes need not have the same feature, for here the thumb is largely the regulating motor.

2. A scrawling hand, of one uniform “lightness”

of stroke, invariably indicates the writer to be of enfeebled or aged physique.

Two specimens are produced by way of illustrating these fundamental principles in the anatomy of handwriting. As to the former specimen, the writer of it happens to be a gentleman in the best vigour of manhood, strikingly robust and well built; a noted sportsman, and, generally, a man of great strength of nerve and perfect physical frame. His handwriting decidedly endorses this certificate of his character. In regard to the other, the writer is almost an octogenarian: in fair, but by no means robust, health. He never was a strong man, in the accepted term: never handled a rod or gun in his life, though, from having been a teacher by profession, he had many a time, no doubt, handled the rod! But in each case the different characteristics of physique are markedly pronounced, the nerve and muscular strength of the one man showing in contrast to the nervelessness and general feebleness of the other. Of course there are many exceptions to the principles here set down, and many circumstances may favour or disfavour their *raison d’être*, such as the kind or quality of pen or quill employed, the conditions of writing, the state of health at the time, &c. But in nine instances out of ten, by the application of the foregoing simple test-principles, it is perfectly

possible to correctly classify or differentiate the handwriting of persons physically robust and capable, from that of persons who are not so fortunate. In a long experience in the testing or reading of handwriting, and in forming thereby some adequate idea of the degree of physical capacity supposed to be attached

Ya ah, I am  
Sure, understand  
that I wish the  
Periodical all  
good speed, though  
I do not see

HANDWRITING OF A ROBUST MAN. ( $\frac{3}{4}$  scale.)

thereto (oftentimes a very important clue to the identity of individuals), the foregoing simple principles have, almost without exception, proved to be sound and trustworthy.

The question has occasionally been asked: Does handwriting ever exhibit hereditary characteristics? This is also an interesting branch of the subject, and although a great deal might be said *pro* and *con.*, the question may, generally speaking, be answered in the affirmative. Indeed, there is to be found in the subject of the heredity of handwriting a significance of ascertained fact in favour of the general prevalence of such a law transmitting its effects from one generation to another, which is well worthy of the consideration of physiologists. Nothing, however, can be more certain than that, in the matter of handwriting, family resemblances are as common to almost every representative as, for instance, the family nose, the family gait or habit of speech, or other peculiarity by which one particular family is distinguished from another. It may, of course, be said that a large proportion of this supposed *vraisemblance* in family handwriting is attributable as much to obvious facilities for imitation, thus producing a general unity of likeness, as to any pre-disposing natural cause subject to the operation of the law of heredity. With such facilities a son's handwriting—let it be supposed—may happen to

resemble in some respects that of his father, or a daughter's that of her mother or of an aunt, or other female relative, or one brother's that of another brother, and so on, the styles or characteristics of family handwriting being variously duplicated or reproduced. Still, while that is the case in many instances, there will doubtless be numerous exceptions to this pretty general rule. For, as in human physiology it is a well-accredited fact that no two faces are alike in every feature, so with chirography, no two penmen will be found precisely to resemble each other in all points, however nearly they may seem to do so. Sometimes, indeed, the difference is so great—just as in the human face or features—that it is quite impossible to detect any link of the relationship existing. Furthermore, the peculiarities of family handwriting may, like other more common hereditary symptoms and dispositions, entirely pass over a generation, and then once more re-appear, bearing evidence, in not a few points of similarity, of their kin to the original copy. This fact, however, applies more especially to families with whom the use of the quill or pen has ever been one of its strong points. It can obviously have no reference to persons whose opportunities in the practice of handwriting have been few and inconsiderable. But why it should be possible for this trait of chirography sometimes to skip one or two generations, and then again unmistakably to re-assert itself, is perhaps only another and—it may be reckoned—a trivial example of that erratic course which Nature oftentimes pursues, baffling all human comprehension. A clue to this singular fact of transmuted chirographic likeness skipping one or more generations, and then re-appearing, may, of course, be found not so much in the moral as in the physical disposition inherited. And so the heredity of handwriting may be, perhaps, best explained according to that invariable process of Nature by which a man inherits something of the ligaments as well as the lineaments of his progenitor—something of the manipulative power and grasp of the fingers, as well as of the form and expression of the face. Instances of this family likeness as exhibited by means of the handwriting will probably be within the knowledge of many readers, the evidence of kinship being apparent sometimes in certain caligraphic tricks common to several members of the same family, or sometimes in

I have a reading  
ough. Would expectation would  
fewer and a good day trying  
I had made average much in my  
own choice to ensure writing with  
you on the 14<sup>th</sup> Post. Mom. papers, and  
to be disposed. It would be right, it  
will be done.

HANDWRITING OF AN AGED MAN. ( $\frac{3}{4}$  scale.)

the general style and character of the penmanship. This likeness is, however, to be observed with greater frequency in female than in male handwriting, probably because of the larger scope for similarity in the sharp, angular style peculiar to the former; but there

*and reverence*

was the best they could  
 me - the health happiness  
 and health, and love, and  
 the most above all things  
 in the first place - and the  
 little then the greatest  
 value, and the most for  
 found evidence on  
 which basis.

PROFESSOR BLACKIE. ( $\frac{1}{2}$  scale.)

are also very numerous cases of almost *facsimile* penmanship of different members of the same family belonging to the other sex, even where the degree of relationship is sometimes that of cousinship. A case in point within the knowledge of the writer may be quoted. Two brothers, whose penmanship was almost identical, quarrelled on the death of their father over certain properties, and separated, the younger going to a far country, while the elder remained at home. All correspondence between them ceased for some years. One day the elder brother received a letter which, from the style and character of the penmanship of the address, he thought to be from the younger, and, without opening it (such was the feeling of estrangement between them!), returned it to the care of a cousin, with a note to that relative that he desired to receive no communication from his brother until certain legal unpleasantnesses were removed, and begged him, therefore, to re-forward his letter. Imagine his chagrin when he learned that the epistle was not indeed from his younger brother, but from the cousin himself, whose handwriting had so striking a likeness to his.

One of the most interesting cases of family likeness in handwriting ever submitted is that of a brother and a sister, the former being one of the best-known public men of the time, and a man highly esteemed by all classes—to wit, Professor John Stuart Blackie. Many of his correspondents will at once recognise the very characteristic “hand” of the genial professor in the specimen shown; but were the fact not mentioned, it would be difficult to distinguish his from that of his amiable sister, Miss Blackie, who has not only her

brother's style of penmanship, but shares with him many other mental gifts and graces. Perhaps it is because Professor Blackie has for many years written so much in Greek characters that his penmanship is not so clear and distinct as it might be. Allowing for its angularity of style which that experience has probably occasioned, it is nevertheless eloquent of his well-known emphasis, force, and fluency. And yet in many respects it would be difficult to distinguish between his calligraphy and that of his sister.

An interesting personal experience bearing on the family likeness in handwriting may bring our subject at present to a close. A year or two ago the writer of this paper was consulted by certain criminal authorities in a case of forgery, by means of which—the forged document being a letter—a firm of merchants were defrauded of a large sum of money, as represented in goods obtained from them by the perpetrator of the forgery. A “suspect” was soon found and “shadowed” in the person of a “lady,” who had “done a term” before for a similar crime. A former letter of hers (extracted, presumably, from the police-office album) was submitted along with the letter that had been the means of defrauding the merchants in the present instance, and the question was asked: “Were the two documents written by the same hand?” On examination the reply was equivocal, both “Yes” and “No.” There were differences, certainly, but there were also many singular points or features of resemblance; in fact, a “family” likeness common to both. The authorities had expected the decision that both letters were written by the same hand, any differences being accounted for partly from want of practice (the “lady” had just done five years, during which the pen must have been largely in abeyance!) and partly from an attempt, or supposed attempt, at disguise. But on the evidence supplied the writer could make no such decision, suggesting, however, another member of the “suspect's” family—a sister or daughter—as the probable forger of the second letter. As a matter of fact, this turned out to be the case, for on arrest, the elder criminal confessed she had, for obvious reasons, induced her daughter to forge the document by which she herself was made at length to suffer a further period of obscure retirement from a world abounding in temptation.

The experience of the expert in handwriting is, of

in your office - the only place  
 where I stopped in going or  
 coming to or from Bank Street  
 if you should <sup>never</sup> find such an  
 article being found - either  
 on the train or in your house -

MISS BLACKIE. ( $\frac{1}{2}$  scale.)

course, likely to be a difficult, if it be an interesting one. When specimens of penmanship are submitted to his diagnosis, he is oftentimes expected to play a sort of desk-detective's part, and to supply from the evidence of a few mere pen-strokes or manœuvres, as exhibited, for instance, within the narrow limit of a signature, a clue to the identity of the writer, which—let it be supposed—that individual has endeavoured

to disguise. In this respect too much is sometimes required of the expert. His judgment is apt, like that of other specialists, to be at fault; and he is a bold expert who will, in the face of many obvious difficulties surrounding this deeply interesting branch of inquiry, determine—especially in criminal cases—as to how much is due to accident and how much to design.

## MISS ROXENDALE'S SUITORS.

(THE CHRONICLES OF CARDEWE MANOR.)

BY LUCY FARMER.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.  
THE RIVALS.

"HAT do you think of Scotland, Lucy?" said Mrs. Cardewe to me the morning after our arrival at Glenkillie Castle in the late summer time.

"Well, ma'am," was my reply, "it seems bare in many respects; and I haven't had time to get accustomed to the kilts yet. But it's a fine place, indeed. The mountains are lovely, and the lakes remind me of the Continent."

They certainly did, and I considered myself fortunate in having come up, or down, whichever it is, to Scotland. I wish these things could be settled. Mr. Cardewe goes "up to London," and "runs down to see his nephew at Oxford," but his nephew always "goes up to Oxford"; it's worse than the weather puzzles which are in the papers. At any rate, there we were, and it was a grand place. Mr. MacSomebody said it was "braw!" Perhaps he meant "raw," for the air *was* chilly!

Glenkillie Castle was inhabited by a Mr. Roxendale, his daughter, and several people he had invited, with servants in numbers. There were ladies and gentlemen who fished, and rode, and drove, and made excursions in boats; and besides the river, on horseback and in carriages with "jellies"—they call them—and other attendants: bare-kneed and tartaned, with knives sticking in their stockings—a dangerous practice when dancing round-a-bouts, or reels and flings, as they do—or did then; perhaps the Queen has stopped them since!

Miss Roxendale, who was (and is) the most charming young lady I ever met, was the belle of the whole district. Everyone, "jellies" and all, were for admiring her. She was tall and proud-looking, put her feet well down when walking, as straight as an arrow, fine dark eyes and a square forehead, an out-of-door

complexion, no pink and white, like those foreign ices, but a good healthy brown, with a soft skin; a figure which did her dresses justice, and as nice and pleasant a young lady as ever I dressed for dinner. No wonder her papa was proud of her; and no wonder Mr. Brydges, the young engineer, was as sweet on her as honey and treacle.

Mr. Brydges (a good name) was a man, I should say, not easily crossed. He was very firm and determined, yet when talking to the opposite sex he had a kind of an arch way about him very becoming to him; and they tell me in the housekeeper's room that he was well connected in two counties, with peers and other grandees for his supporters. But there is so much joking in the Castle that I can't say for certain!

Mr. Brydges comes of an old family which has somehow fallen into decay. So he took to engineering work, and can do all kinds of things with water and steam, which he told Miss Helen Roxendale are the same thing—as if they *could* be! But some gentlemen like to puzzle young ladies. At any rate, she took a great interest in steam and water, and in the water-works which Mr. Brydges was making for Mr. Roxendale, with fountains and a dripping tree which rained on me when I stood under it, and nearly ruined my shot silk. My husband called it a "watered silk," but men don't know the difference!

As Charley says I can see into a mile-stone as far as most people, you may think I could see under that Brydges' plans. Of course I could! But his love-making was not plain sailing, for if ever I saw a little meddler in the business it was Mr. Drayton-West. Oh! I have no patience with him. He was an arrogant little man, whose father had bought up Stonekilt Abbey—a lovely place, which he closed up with gates and notice boards, and keepers and dogs. Once upon a time people could walk round the woods of Stonekilt; now the draper-man—for he is only a draper in Glasgow and London, with a big house in Kensington Gorey, as they call it—won't let anyone in. But our picnic *was* permitted—for the draper wanted a call on the Roxendales; and his son managed to leave the shop and come to Glenkillie Castle for a few days.

This little *Parvenoo*, as Miss Emily in my hearing

