

to the task, her tongue found unaccustomed eloquence.

She had never seen Wirt Dean's head bowed before, and it sent a pang to her heart to have shamed him, but it was only just and right, she argued with herself.

He made no denial, as indeed he could not, in truth; he made no excuse. His tongue seemed tied, and he scowled as if in pain and anger.

"You will go back to her, Wirt."

"If you both wish it," he said. Not another word, and off he went. Amy thought that she had seen the last of him then, but on a near occasion he appeared with a great package of papers, enough to stock a good sized satchel or even a moderate trunk.

It was in the library—Amy's aunt and father at either side of the long table—but the young man made no secret of his errand.

"If you will do me the favor to read a few of these little notes, Miss Nelson," he said, "I think you will be able to forgive me for any little injustice I may have done that very amiable young lady, Miss Field."

Here he stopped to stack them into neat separate piles, his countenance very grave but for a twinkle in the deep gray eyes. "These are addressed to me, these to others; I don't think my obligations are any more imperative than theirs, yet I should be very happy to fulfill them if Miss Field had not put it out of my power about one year ago."

It transpired that the governess had married the widower in whose family she was engaged a fortnight or so after Amy's departure, and much to the indignation of the widower's aged parent who quarreled with her son, and henceforward spoke of his wife as an *intrigante* of the deepest dye.

For a time Amy could not be brought to read the letters, which she thought should have been immediately burnt, but they made it a matter of conscience, and she allowed Aunt Cynthia, who went through the whole of them with great gusto, to select a few for her perusal.

In the same church where their eyes first met, Amy Nelson and Wirt Dean were married in the Autumn of last year.

Mellow wedding bells chimed, the incense of rare flowers filled the air, friends thronged on every side, but even while her hand lay in her lover's there was a core of bitterness in Amy's joy. If it was to have been, why had they not let her have her happiness without alloy? Who was the better for all that had passed? She had been robbed of her ideal, that was all. Even the man she was promising to love, honor, and obey, was no longer an unmixed hero in her sight.

Though her husband cherished her never so tenderly in time to come, he must miss that girlish cloudlessness that he has helped to dim. It may be that in the hard conditions of this life, it is better that the bride should have learned her lesson early, but perceiving the shade of gloom in the blue heaven of her tender eyes, he at least must some time wish that such a heart as hers might live and grow untouched by the selfishness and bitterness of others, and wish in vain, for that can never be beneath the sun.

Writing in Autograph Albums.



ANY people have a theory that the personal character may be decided upon from the handwriting. But, if there is real foundation for this theory, it can only hold true when the pen, acting without restraint, becomes indicative of the natural disposition. The flexibility of the muscles differs with every individual, and the emotions and habits of writers certainly bear a direct influence upon their penmanship.

The phlegmatic hand, for instance, always expresses itself in solid characters and slowly, or, if with enforced rapidity, awkwardly and irregularly; while the letters traced by the volatile are scarcely sketched upon the paper. A slovenly person will blot and efface, while neatness and order are observable in the handwriting of the possessors of those qualities. The clerk does not write like the lawyer, nor the lawyer like the book-keeper, nor the book-keeper like the poet.

Nations, as well as professions, are characterized by their handwriting. We note the vivacity of the French, the grace of the Italian, the stolidity of the German, the strength and firmness of the English, and find each separate and distinct.

The emotions, also, under which we labor at different times may be remarked in our writing. In grief, haste, anxiety, or indifference, our penmanship alters and changes to suit these varied phases of feeling.

It is a curious fact that many distinguished men have a delicate, feminine chirography—artists in particular. That of Sir David Wilkie is peculiarly so, being fine and pointed, with a liberal supply of capitals in the wrong place.

Composers nearly all have small, indistinct handwriting, probably contracted by their constant habit of writing music. Beethoven wrote as if in a great hurry, forming his letters carelessly, and signing his name in such a confused way that it would be taken for any other rather than his; while Haydn's handwriting is tiny, but neat and clear, his autograph being firm, and as if each letter had been put down separately, to prevent all possibility of mistake.

J. S. Bach wrote evidently with difficulty, and apparently with the side of his pen, while Mozart's writing is more easy and graceful. His hand is feminine, and his punctuation very precise. Handel's writing is large and heavy.

The handwriting of poets is nearly always smaller or finer than that of statesmen and soldiers. Tasso's manuscript is like copper-plate—no erasures, no blots, or defacing of any kind; while Pope's is filled with scratched-out words and interlineations.

Tennyson's writing is small and delicate; Macaulay's small, but forcible. Richelieu wrote a flowing, pointed hand. Napoleon's is rather indistinct, his letters being hurriedly formed, but the hand that held the pen never trembled or faltered.

Sir Philip Sidney wrote a funny, stilted, old-fashioned hand; one that always looks as though the writer was constrained, like small boys in school, to thrust his tongue in his cheek, work his lips, and breathe very hard, in the process of forming the letters.

Shakespeare's handwriting is decidedly staggering and uncertain. How the printer's head must have ached while deciphering his manuscript!

Robert Burns wrote like the sturdy self-taught Scotchman he was, Thackeray like a man of keen intelligence and quick wit, while Dickens wrote with numerous flourishes, especially under his name, which he decorated with a series of erratic marks, for some unknown reason.

Distinguished women, and especially distinguished queens of history, often wrote large masculine hands. Catharine of Russia is a striking example of this fact. Her writing is massive; she crossed all her "t's," dotted her "i's," and made every letter with care and precision. Isabel of Spain wrote straight up and down, and half her letters are printed instead of written.

The handwriting of Queen Elizabeth is a specimen of beautiful antique penmanship, her tutor, Roger Ascham, having taught her all the elegances of the pen. The receipt of a letter from Catherine of Navarre, on the contrary, must have brought on the unhappy recipient a severe attack of nervous prostration, for her handwriting consists of a series of straight and crooked lines, only broken here and there by a pot-hook, or mysterious-looking flourish.

Rachel, queen of tragedy, wrote a clear, rapid hand, the lines being like hairs in fineness and delicacy.

Among novelists the writing of Charlotte Bronte is distinguished for its extreme minuteness. Her fingers were long and tapering, as was her pencil, consequently the letters thus formed are infinitesimal. The writing of George Eliot is neither masculine nor feminine, but it indicates power and individuality.

A great deal of time, and many otherwise useful postage stamps are wasted nowadays by autograph hunters. Albums are thrust in the stage-doors of theaters, in which busy, tired actors and actresses are requested to scratch their names. Men and women of letters are harassed daily by these importunate, and treated by each one to the edifying intelligence that they are collecting autographs of *distinguished persons*, and have chosen them among the first to send specimens of their handwriting down to posterity, by their means! The hastily-written scrawls, in answer to these requests, are not really representatives of these "lights" in the dramatic and literary world, and some eager collectors must be disappointed, for the tax is too great.

The most popular autograph albums are those owned by young people at school and college, and filled with the wit, wisdom, and folly of friends and classmates who, when separated, keep them as cherished souvenirs of many happy hours spent together.

I came across an old album of my own, the other day, that had been buried in the dust of ages, apparently, for it was torn, defaced, and

generally demoralized in appearance, and, as I glanced through it, how the old associations crowded around me! Here was the writing of my intimate friend and "chum" at boarding-school. It consisted of pages of allusions to our various scrapes, jokes and amusements. Here was a record of the memorable occasion when our bed broke down in the night, and we spent the remaining hours before day drearily upon the floor. Here, too, were vivid accounts of straw-rides and skating parties, surreptitious expeditions to the village candy store, and other escapades "too numerous to mention," and as I read I could almost see the bright eyes and laughing face of my wild little chum.

Farther on I came across the startlingly original lines,

*"If you love me
As I love you,
No knife can cut
Our love in two!"*

which I immediately recognized as belonging to my first sweetheart, a youth of some twelve summers, then the idol of my dreams.

His sentiments were generally expressed in gifts of over-ripe "Love" apples, warm and mellow from long contact with a boyish pocket, and cheap perfumery, which was highly prized as being a very elegant token of regard.

Many others had inscribed their names whose faces even I have now forgotten. There was the usual sprinkling of "In friendship's golden chain, oh keep one link for me," and various allusions to the "modest flower forget-me-not!"

But the most readable and interesting albums are those which contain the mature thoughts and sentiments of our greatest writers, Shakespeare, George Eliot, Mrs. Browning, Tennyson, Carlyle, and Emerson being the oftenest quoted.

We are all familiar with that famous couplet from "In Memoriam":

*"Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all."*

The following lines from Tennyson's "Two Voices" are not so widely known, but are equally grand in their stern beauty and truth:

*"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death."*

Mrs. Browning writes in "Aurora Leigh":

*"We are wrong always when we think too much
Of what we think or are: albeit our thoughts
Be verily bitter as self-sacrifice,
We're no less selfish."*

The following lines so full of thought and power are from "Lady Geraldine's Courtship":

*"If we trod the deeps of ocean, if we struck the stars in
rising,
If we wrapped the globe intensely with one hot, electric
breath,
'Twere but power within our tether,—no new spirit-
power comprising,
And in life we were not greater men, nor bolder men in
death."*

In a different vein, but with equal force, Lowell writes:

*"Life is a leaf of paper white,
On which each one of us may write
Our word or two, and then comes night!
* * * * *
Greatly begin! Though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime!
Not failure, but low aim, is crime."*

And again:

*"Bear a lily in thy hand,
Iron gates cannot withstand
One touch of that magic wand.
Bear through sorrow, wrong and ruth,
In thy heart the dew of youth,
On thy lips the smile of truth!"*

Quotations from Shakespeare are, indeed, "familiar in our mouths as household words," but here is one from his sonnet on revolutions, which will be new to many:

*"Like as the waves make toward the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end,
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil, all forward do contend."*

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*Time doth transfigure the flourish set on youth,
And delves the parallels on beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow."*

Coleridge, in his "Death of Wallenstein," says truly:

*"Greatness and goodness are not means but ends.
Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
The great, good man? three treasures, love, and light,
And calm thoughts regular as infant's breath,
And three firm friends as sure as day and night,
Himself, his Maker, and the angel death."*

Finally George Eliot in her large, comprehensive way, tells us that

*"Our lives make a moral tradition for our individual
selves, as the life of mankind at large makes a moral tra-
dition for the race; and to have once acted greatly seems
a reason why we should always be noble."*

The following inspiring verses will fitly conclude this list of "autographic sentiments":

*"Think truly, and thy thought shall the world's famine
feed.
Speak truly, and thy word shall be a fruitful seed,
Live truly, and thy life shall be a great and noble creed."*

MAY CROLY.

The Czar and Madame de Maintenon.

THE founder of the empire of modern Russia, so princely in his plans and so plebeian in his habits, was ever most desirous of procuring for his people all the benefits resulting from the various arts and inventions of the civilized countries of Europe.

In the early part of his reign he journeyed through Holland, England, and Germany, but some political reasons prevented his visiting France until in 1717, during the regency of the Duke of Orleans. He examined then, with eager curiosity, all the famous capital had to offer of interest, from the modest atelier in the sixth étage, where he worked and studied, to the Sorbonne where he dreamed of politics and statesmanship by the grave of Richelieu, and the Academy, where he corrected a map of Russia with his own hand.

He went to Versailles, where the memory of Louis XIVth is inseparably linked with every stone of the palace and every turn in the garden—he wandered over Marley and Trianon—but his curiosity demanded a sight of the woman whose strange story had made all Europe ring.

Madame de Maintenon was at this time scarcely more than a name. Too proud to live as a subject where she had once ruled as a queen, she had said "adieu" to the court,

and sought rest and shelter in the convent she had established years before at St. Cyr. No convent has ever had a more brilliant past. It had been a rendezvous for the most celebrated ladies of France; famous bishops had contended for the honor of preaching in its chapel; Racine had written one of his most finished plays (Esther) for the school-girls of the cloister.

But this glory had vanished, and survived only in the memories of those few who still loved it. The village of St. Cyr had become dull and lonely since the death of Louis XIVth, for the ladies of the court had forgotten the way thither.

Though Madame de Maintenon had entirely given up society, she finally agreed to receive the illustrious Prince of all the Russias. The noise of the state carriage which brought the Czar to St. Cyr threw the entire establishment into a whirl as great as in those far-away days when Louis-le-Grand had been wont to honor them with a visit.

Peter left no part of the house unvisited, from the *rez-de-chaussée* to the attic. The foundress was infirm and scarcely ever left her bed, and she had taken care to surround herself with mysterious darkness before her visitor's arrival. When the door of her chamber opened and Peter entered, she recognized him at once by his firm step, his haughty bearing, his piercing eyes, and the long fair hair which fell loosely over his shoulders. He went to the bed without a word, pulled back the curtains, and with arms folded over his breast, gazed long and steadily upon the reclining marquise. Disappointment was plainly pictured on his countenance, as he noted the faded face and whitened hair, adorned with only the most modest of lace caps. He evidently sought some trace of the beauty which had enthralled Louis XIVth, and made a Bourbon forget his pride of birth.

Madame de Maintenon felt keenly the discomfort of this silent, searching observation, and understood the philosophical and less than polite thoughts of her visitor. Her pale cheeks must have flushed, and she must have longed to revenge herself by the charm of her conversation and the brilliancy of her wit, which never lost its sparkle; but the Czar allowed no time for that. His curiosity satisfied, he turned without a syllable of apology or explanation—his spurs clanked on the stone flags of the stairs—the roll of carriage-wheels again disturbed the dull quiet of the silent streets, and Peter was gone.

Madame de Maintenon remained for a long time stunned with surprise. The most elegant lady of Europe had received the most imperial of European monarchs, and had been treated—how? She felt the insult as a woman, and yielded to a woman's solace of tears. But only for a moment. Why should she worry herself about the admiration of man—had she not long ago learned the emptiness of all earthly things?

Her soul soared into loftier regions as she repeated the words of Massillon over the coffin of Louis Quatorze, her king and her husband:

"God alone is great!"