on my shoes and stockings before that individual, I thought perhaps you might have objections to doing so."

"And so would you, ma'am," laughed Angela. "If not, why did you drop down in such a fine hurry when you remembered, just now, that you hadn't got them on?"

"Thought it looked graceful," was the cool answer. "But come along. Let's get back to the beach while we can. This neighbourhood is evidently not as desirable a dressing-room as I had hoped. Besides, I have for some time past been fascinated by that rocky point yonder, and I must see what view it hides from us on the other side."

"The very thing I also have been wishing immensely," exclaimed Dolly.

"Then, my dear, why did you not say so?"

"Because you seemed to be so in love——"

"So in what?" suddenly interrupted Miss Crofton.

"So in love with playing mermaid," continued Dorothy, quietly, but with her brown eyes very round with surprise at the unexpected interruption.

"O-oh, ye-es," slowly; then with a short laugh, "but I'm out of love with it now. Come along."

With that injunction to her companions, she sprang from her slippery perch on to an equally slippery stepping-stone with as much ease as though she were jumping from a spring-board on to a sanded floor, and had her feet once more clad in their obnoxious coverings before her more timid and less agile friends had even reached the shore. Very soon, however, they were all once more shod, and were running races towards that jutting-out portion of the cliff which had excited their curiosity.

Angela was the first to round the point. Kathleen had lingered to give Dorothy instruction in throwing stones so as to make them skim and bound on the water. But the lessons were quite wasted on poor Dolly. Making "ducks and drakes" was an art quite beyond her powers. Kathleen threw beauties. Three, four, and even five rebounds rewarded her skill.

"You really ought to have been a boy instead of a girl, Kathy," said Dorothy, half laughing, half surprised, at her friend's interest in her present amusement. "You really ought."

"Faix thin, isn't it meself that's always wishing I was that same!"

"And why? So that you might spend your days in throwing stones and whistling?" asked Angela.

"Ay, me darlint, an' it's you that have been the clever one to hit the right nail on the head. But come along. What did you find the other side of the corner? Biddy Malone's pig, or what?"

"Well, something like a pig in a poke, I believe you will say, when you see," was the answer that still further aroused her companions' curiosity. But as they could coax nothing more definite out of her, they did the next best thing by hurrying on to make discoveries for themselves.

"What a horrid shame!" cried Kathleen, as, pulling Dolly with her, she bounded round the point in eager anticipation of some hitherto unseen and romantic view.

There was no view at all!

There was a lofty cave, and that was all, the opposite side of which stood forward nearly into the water, even now at low tide.

"Never mind," said Dorothy, quickly recovering from the first shock of disappointment. "Let us go on, and see what the next turn will show us."

The next turn was as unsatisfying as the first, indeed more so, for the curve inwards was far shallower, and opened upwards almost perpendicularly to the top of the rocks. They went on, and

"WHAT WILL INTEREST HER MOST?"

then they could go no further, for they had advanced to within a few yards of a bold, rocky headland that was already washed by breakers. Meantime this third curve was beautiful enough in itself to make amends for their disappointments. It was a perfect seaside bower, with a floor of firm white sand, and curving walls and roof that shone as if they had been inlaid with silver. A literal treasure trove of shells lay like a *parqueterie* border round the sides, and soon all three girls were engaged in an eager collection of beauties or curiosities. Lunch followed.

"And it is not at all a bad lunch, either," exclaimed Kathleen, at the same time surreptitiously burying in the sand the greater part of a jam tart which she had insisted upon having, in spite of its uninviting appearance and Dolly's remonstrances, but of which she found the first mouthful a good deal more than enough.

Having disposed of the undesirable dainty, she repeated her remark, further adding, "that she did not mind accepting another egg and salted sandwich, if Dorothy had it to bestow."

"What! After the tartlet?" asked Angela, "I thought you said that was to be 'a topper.'"

"And I just did then. But I find it a topper and a half, me dear. And so—and so—well now I'll condescend to a downer to take the taste out!"

"And that," said Dorothy, handing her friend the desired eatables, and then shaking out her basket, "that finishes up our——"

"Victuals," interrupted Kathleen. "I know that's an English word, for I learned it of an Englishman on board the steamer the other day, coming over. He said he never had much of a turn for no victuals aboard a boat. There! have I not remembered that well?"

"Perfectly. I wonder whether you have such a memory for pretty things as you have for ugly ones."

"I am afraid not, Dolly asthore. Pretty things never seem to my mind to have any edges for one's memory to catch hold of. They are all polish and smoothness, and my brain slips off them like water off a duck's back. And, talking of water, do you see that it has actually begun to rain again. I did think we were going to have one fine day. Well, well, we must be trudging homewards, or we shall have you laid up with a cold, Molly, my darling."

"Oh, no, this little light rain won't hurt me," answered Dorothy, unfortunately. "I am quite strong again now, and I do want to try to find another shell like that greenish one of Angie's."

"Besides," said Angela, "the rain has only just begun, and it looks much more like a passing shower than anything else. If we go on amusing ourselves here a while longer, we shall most likely have our walk home in sunshine again."

Kathleen looked doubtful. She looked at the clouds and she looked at Dorothy and her sister. But they both wished to linger. Kathleen was not yet seventeen, and pleasure is pleasanter than prudence. They remained in the cave.

(*To be continued.*)

THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING.

On sitting down to write a letter the first thing you should do is to ask yourself—"How shall I best please the individual to whom I write? What will interest her most? How may I relieve her of any feeling of anxiety?" Put these questions to yourself, and use your common sense; and be sure your letter will gratify the receiver. The writing of one with such an end in view occupies time well-spent; and you will have carried out faithfully the second grand principle—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

First of all, you should never lay aside your dictionary till your spelling difficulties are all mastered. Our language is very arbitrary, and there is no absolute rule as regards the

dropping or retention of the middle "e" of words that end with "able," and those also that end with "ment"; and in the doubling of "t's," "r's," "l's," and "p's." If you have a letter to write, no matter to whom, look out every word rather than spell incorrectly; the trouble taken will impress it on your memory.

As regards the writing itself, remember that it is a vulgar, ill-bred thing to do to form your letters incorrectly; it is not only an evidence of bad taste and awkwardness, but it is an act of discourtesy to the person addressed. It seems as though you thought that any scrawl would be sufficiently good, and you put your friend to inconvenience when giving the trouble of deciphering your unsightly hieroglyphics. It cannot be polite to give needless trouble; and thus, in sending an ill-written and ill-spelt letter, you have broken that great "law of kindness," which is the very foundation of all "good breeding." Do not let a silly feeling of vanity induce you to make "pot hooks and hangers" after your own eccentric fancy, nor elaborate flourishes, which only occupy needless space and spoil the style of your writing. When you can copy the copper-plate pattern given in your copy-books with perfect facility, then take some good running hand that you admire, and imitate what you please in that, to modify a little the copy-book style which you have acquired.

Having accomplished the difficulties of spelling and of caligraphy, you should practise the writing of ordinary notes, such as those of invitation or acceptation of evening entertainments. Turn the sentences and say the same thing in every possible variety of way; but take care to complete your sentences, leave nothing elliptical nor equivocal. Avoid all abreviations, such as "I'm," "yr," "wd," and so forth, it is a kind of impertinent familiarity; a free-and-easy style that is by no means ladylike, nor even respectful.

You may very naturally ask why I pronounce abbreviations to be vulgar. I may explain the reason by comparing the off-hand style of representing a word of half-a-dozen letters by two, to the recognition of an acquaintance by a short nod of the head, instead of a polite bow. Suppose yourself ushered into a drawing-room, and instead of a graceful inclination, imagine yourself giving a short nod to the assembled guests, in return to their courteous salutations. How unseemly it would be, I scarcely need to say, and the same rule that forbids the one breach of politeness, forbids the others. Why? Because it is an impertinent familiarity which, uninvited, you force upon other. To be guilty of this, is to lower yourself, and detract from that respectful regard which you might all win; more than this—it is offensive to others.

But there are few rules that admit of no exceptions, and while abbreviations are ill-bred in a private letter, they are quite admissible in trade correspondence. "Time is money," and neither familiarity, nor discourtesy is understood by short signs and diminished words, written at the utmost speed; in these days when steam carriages cannot convey our business messages sufficiently fast, and telegraphs and telephones are brought into requisition.

Avoid slang expressions in writing as much as in speaking. Try to write sound grammatical English, if you cannot attain to a still higher and more elegant style. There is an evidence of a want of self-respect in writing or speaking in a careless, slip-slop, anyhow manner. Do not end your sentences with little pronouns, nor ever confound the imperfect tense with the past participle, and make no mistakes about the subjunctive mood.

I am not going to give you a lesson in grammar; you have one at home, and need only to study it with attention, to understand the allusions to it which I have made, and to know as much about it as I can tell you.

Having mastered the first three difficulties in the way of letter-writing—difficulties which you are disposed to weigh far too lightly—the subject matter of your letter, and the mode of address is next to be considered.

Punctuation is little understood by ordinary letter-writers, and it occasions much difficulty to the reader. Besides, the meaning of a sentence may be completely altered, or, at least, mystified, by placing a stop in the wrong place. Always place commas before and after a parenthesis, and never forget your full stops. If the "i" needed not a dot, and the "t" a cross, you would not have been taught to add them. In any case, your business is to make your writing as legible as possible, so as to save all trouble to the reader.

And now I will suppose that, prepared at all points so far, you are waiting, pen in hand, to commence an epistle. Collect your thoughts for a moment. If not a little note, the date must be written at the top of the page, and your present address in full, which latter must never be omitted in any letter, as former letters may be mislaid and the address forgotten, and so the omission on your part may give trouble and delay an answer. Should a journey or sickness be in question, you should give the hour, as well as the day—for good news at a certain time of the day might give hope of permanent recovery, and show some crisis to be past; and if you have just arrived from a journey, those you have left behind will like to know all such little particulars. Remember that nothing is insignificant to those who care for you, and nothing should be too troublesome for you to do to reward their interest and affection. Do not make your letter like a washerwoman's list, or a grocer's bill by writing the year with a long stroke, and the last two figures only, nor substitute a mere numeral for the name of the current month. This is a very vulgar style—write it in full.

The superscription being now completed, we begin with the first part of your letter. Consider to whom you are writing; if to one of your own immediate family—father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, or grand-parents, never omit the word "my," whether it be followed only with "dear" or any term of a more demonstrative character; it is due to the near tie of blood, and it would be in extremely bad taste to omit it. Consider, if you have just left home, what news will be most welcome, *i.e.*, that of your safe arrival, a little account of the journey, of your reception, of how your hosts are, and whom you have met, how you are lodged, and what plans, if any, have been formed for your business-arrangements or for your entertainment. Let your writing be clear, let the size of your hand be suited to the reader for whom it is designed. If an old person (as for a child), it should be larger than for anyone else; otherwise let it rather be small and round, than large and scrawled. I have seen many hands that would cover the whole length of a line with two words, they should be very significant and contain very good news indeed to be worth so much valuable space! It is so disappointing to those who care for the news you could send, to see an empty sheet of paper; which, had the writer been more thoughtfully kind, and willing to take a little trouble to please, might have given so much satisfaction to a whole family party.

The second part of your letter should be devoted to inquiries and expressions of interest about those you have left behind. Were any of them ailing in health? Were any otherwise in anxiety or distress? Had any one of them engaged in any work or enterprise? Is there anything which you might do for them in your absence? Make your inquiries, express your sympathy, offer your services, or give your advice, if seemly so to do. Let them see that you are not wholly absorbed with your own amusements and personal interests, that you do not send them any sort of an epistle, just because you had to write, and evidently grudged the miserable pittance of news, and of time you squeezed out of your ample leisure to write. Alas! how often has a letter of this sorry description given a pang, untold to any sympathizing ear, to one who perhaps provided the means of every pleasure which the thankless writer enjoyed!

Lastly, tell, so far as you may be able, when you hope to write next, where the answer is to be addressed, and give any messages that your hosts may wish to convey through you. Remember to send loves and kind remembrances to each and all, but do not "lump" either of your parents in the "all" to whom you may send them. They should always have a distinct and separate recognition, and, as a rule, personal mention is always more appreciated by every one, because more kind, than that made in mere general and collective terms. In signing your name, or pet name, if writing to any of the near relatives before enumerated, be careful never to omit the mention of your own relationship to the person you address; *i.e.*, "Your affectionate daughter—sister—niece." Never sign yourself "Yours affectionately," for this would be unseemly and a making light, as it were, of your ties of near and dear relationship to them. You will observe how, throughout the whole of the rules which I have prescribed for you, that every one of them, and the whole composition of the letter suggested, is based on that golden "law of kindness" which I told you was the very foundation of all good breeding.

And now, suppose that, instead of writing the first letter yourself, you have one to answer. Observe whether any questions have been asked, and begin by answering them all, at once. Never forget to do so. There is also another fault into which some letter-writers fall—instead of giving any news, they merely recapitulate the scraps of information received in the letter they are answering.

For example, they say, "It must be very pleasant to you to have your aunt with you; and what a surprise such and such an event must have been! No doubt you feel glad that so-and-so," &c., "and your plan of doing so-and-so will doubtless prove a good one," and so on, through a most uninteresting and truly aggravating letter, winding up with repetitions, just as it began. Some notice of news received and sympathy expressed, as the case may be, is a very good thing, but not to the exclusion of news.

In directing a letter, if to a visitor in the house of another person, never fail to add the owner's name to the address. Thus:—

Miss B——,
Care of John K——, Esq.,
Warrendale,
&c., &c.

And observe, also, do not abbreviate the words "Care of" to "c/o," for this is altogether in commercial style and very unladylike.

And now I leave my rules and illustrations for the earnest and kindly consideration of my readers, begging them never to fall into the grave error of imagining that anything is but a trifle, and beneath their consideration, for

"Grains of sand the mountains make,
And atomies infinity."

S. F. A. CAULFEILD.

THE ART OF PENMANSHIP.

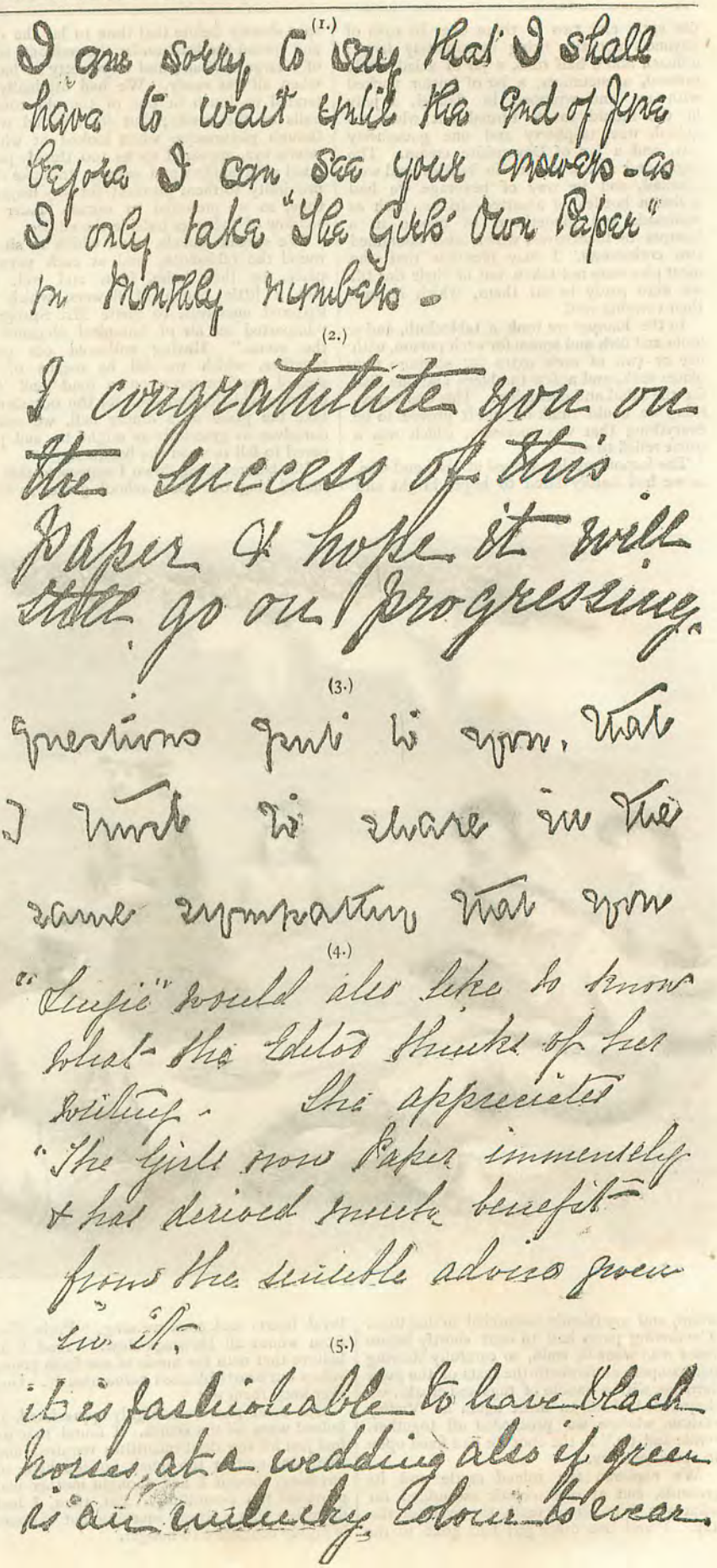
WE have already discussed the "Art of Letter Writing," but as it has a two-fold character—manual as well as intellectual—I now offer a few observations on the use of the pen, and the style of the letters it is designed to trace. The remarkable varieties exhibited in the handwritings of our countrywomen form an interesting subject for study; and these may all be traced to as many different causes.

It would be a matter of regret were all to write in one unvarying form, because we should thus be deprived of those little peculiarities which mark the individuality of those we love. Throughout all Nature we realise the charm of variety; in her there is no wearisome monotony to pall upon our senses; and thus we like to recognise the letter of a friend as we should distinguish her voice, her manner, or her person from those of all others.

The character of the writer is often very clearly portrayed in the penmanship alone; indeed, it could scarcely be uninfluenced by it; and the comparison of a dozen or more specimens of caligraphy one with another, even of persons of merely ordinary ability, would exhibit very remarkable distinguishing characteristics.

Look into some editor's waste-paper basket, and its contents will afford you a most interesting and curious study, both as regards writing as an art and as an index to character. Let us consider a few of them, such as from time to time I have myself inspected. There are the clear firm strokes that never change in the style of their formation, the deciphering of which could not raise a moment's hesitation. Again, we see the hurried and equally uniformly unfinished letters neither dotted nor crossed, at which we are compelled to guess; with the aid of certain up and down strokes as landmarks, in addition to having some clue to the subject in question. There is the weak, undecided style, the letters disunited and feebly formed, falling off the horizontal line at the termination of each sentence and even of each word. The would-be original and pretentious are manifold in their ugliness, and are equally unpleasing to the eye. Some of these reverse the orthodox rule, and make the up-strokes heavy and the down ones light, or slope the wrong way. With reference to the heavy up-strokes, I have observed that, in some cases, this contrariety is consequent, not on the fancy of the writer, but on the way of holding the pen. Instead of being held quite straight, it is turned round half way, the top being turned to the thumb, and the underneath part to the middle finger. Next I may notice the vulgarly flourished style of writing, the misshapen, without any regard to general uniformity, some big, some diminutive, one sloping to the right, another to the left, and others upright. Then there is the utterly careless—blotted and blurred; the huge and coarse, filling a whole line with a couple of words, a style which has come very much into fashion amongst young people, but quite as objectionable as the mean and diminutive, for while the latter can scarcely be read without spectacles, the former allows space for nothing to read! Turning over the specimens in the waste-basket, still further varieties may be seen, the pen-strokes traced straight up and down, and compressed closely together like a bundle of withes for basket-making.

Then the cramped and angular, with sharp corners everywhere, like the temper of the writer; and here and there charming specimens both of the small, delicately-formed, and carefully-finished, see Nos. 4, 5, and 11—dotted, crossed, and punctuated writing; and the larger type—free, flowing, and equally artistic, describing at each fine sweep of the pen the "lines of beauty and grace."


(1.)
I am sorry to say that I shall have to wait until the end of June before I can see your answers as I only take "The Girls' Own Paper" in monthly numbers.

(2.)
I congratulate you on the success of this paper & hope it will still go on progressing.

(3.)
Question put to you. That I wish to share in the same appreciation that you

(4.)
"Lizzie" would also like to know what the Editor thinks of her writing. She appreciates "The Girls own Paper immensely & has derived much benefit from the sensible advice given in it.

(5.)
It is fashionable to have black horses at a wedding also if green is an unlucky colour to wear

Suffice it to say that all these reveal in a greater or less degree the natural taste and temperament of their respective authors. Of course, we are very dependent on the appliances at our command, and a wrong choice may unwittingly be made in the description of the pen, paper, and ink which we select. For instance, it would be unwise for a person who wrote a feeble and uncertain hand to use a hard, sharply-pointed pen, or, should it suit the writer's style, to use it upon rough "antique" paper. Equally so for a heavy hand to use a broad and short-nibbed pen or very soft quill. Common-sense should direct your choice, for when a wrong pen has been adopted the natural style of the writing may be considerably changed, so as to be scarcely recognisable, and to falsify any deductions previously drawn of the writer's character. Bad, thick ink would destroy the best writing, and so would an ill-cut pen, or one left to dry of itself. Always make it a rule to wipe the pen thoroughly, and, even still better, to dip it in water to cleanse it before the drying. A hard steel pen may be made softer for use by holding the nib for a second or two in the flame of a candle.

Much has been written on the influence of the character on the hand. My object is merely to draw attention to the importance of writing a graceful and legible hand, and to give some suggestions as to how any perfection in the art may be attained. The loss of a lucrative situation has often resulted from the incompetency of the candidate in this most valuable accomplishment. Besides this, it is exceedingly ill-bred to give the reader a difficult task in deciphering a misshapen scrawl; equally so to send a careless and blotty epistle, as if it were a matter of no consequence. Some few examples of various descriptions of writing are subjoined to this article, in which certain peculiarities which I have named will be illustrated. No. 8 would be singularly good were it sloped the right way.

There is much character in No. 1, although not pretty, and of a masculine type. But little information would ever be given by such a hand as No. 7, except that the writer expresses her thoughts with fluency. No. 3 is decidedly peculiar, and the crossing of the t very careless, and in three or four cases a mere dot. The carelessness may be the result of quickness, an active busy life leaving less time for attention to details. It is best to watch lest this hurry grow into a habit of carelessness, as such writing denotes. Any form, however, provided it is legible, is preferable to stiff conventionality, where no character is indicated.

Nos. 6 and 9 are very nice handwritings. No. 12 is too upright, and not quite formed, while No. 10 is far from pretty and much too large.

A very marked alteration has taken place in the character of the writing of young Englishwomen within the last ten or fifteen years, and this change has apparently sprung up with a certain amount of "young England-ism," if I may so term that spirit of independence which is a leading feature of the day. I am very far from condemning a desire to earn a living by personal exertion, but this independence of feeling has been degraded into what is undutiful, sham-masculine, and altogether unlovely. If we could but

"See ourselves as others see us"

how many of my young sisters would "mend their ways" in these matters. Now, this "strong-minded," would-be manlike disposition has developed a fancy for that writing backwards, reversing the order for the light and heavy strokes, and those large ungainly upright letters that seem to demand a revival of the large square letter-paper, employed in the days of shilling postage. Even then not one quarter of the news, easily conveyed in the small compact writing of the last two generations, could be squeezed into the sheet which these modern monstrosities are to cover. There is, however, "no rule without an exception," and we must all admit that most unaffected and well-bred women are to be found who have fallen into a style common to the period.

I do not prescribe any particular form of writing; you will succeed well whatever variations you may graft on a really good copper-plate hand if they be but influenced by artistic taste, or only by natural temperament. But if you never succeeded in laying the foundation of that "copper-plate" hand, your hand can never be anything better than a "tumble-down" affair. Learn to write as straight as possible, to assist you in which, if you do not use "linear paper," you may lay a folded piece of blotting-paper or a sheet of note-paper across the page on which you are writing under your hand, moving it gradually downwards. This will be a guide to your eye

(6.)

I made a wreath of forget-me-nots last week & put it in a large book to press it, but when I went to look at it yesterday I hardly recognised it.

(7.)

I will feel greatly obliged if you will kindly tell

(8.)

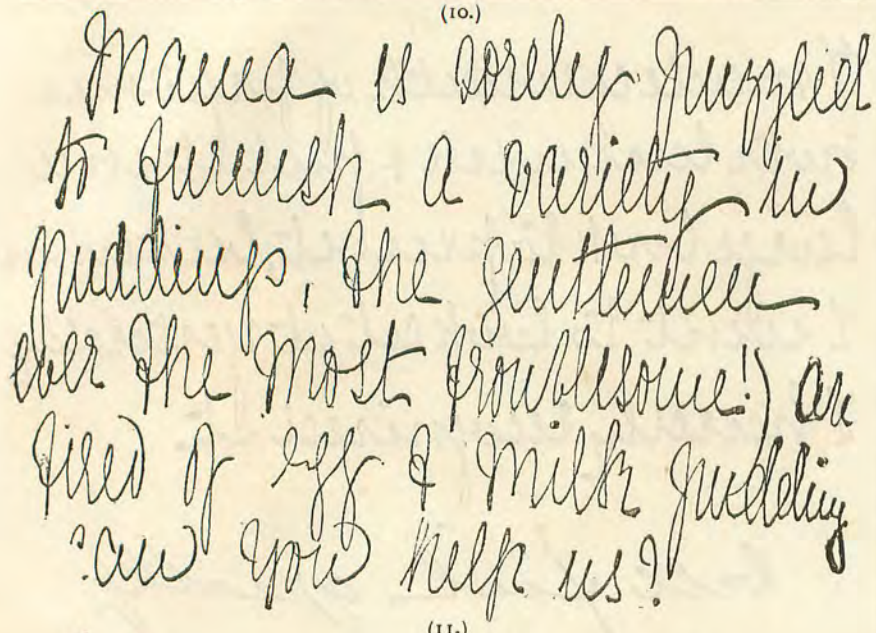
Dear Sir

Having attended the annual meeting of the China Inland Mission my desire, in some time or other, to become a missionary has been made far greater, though I have never mentioned it to anyone before.

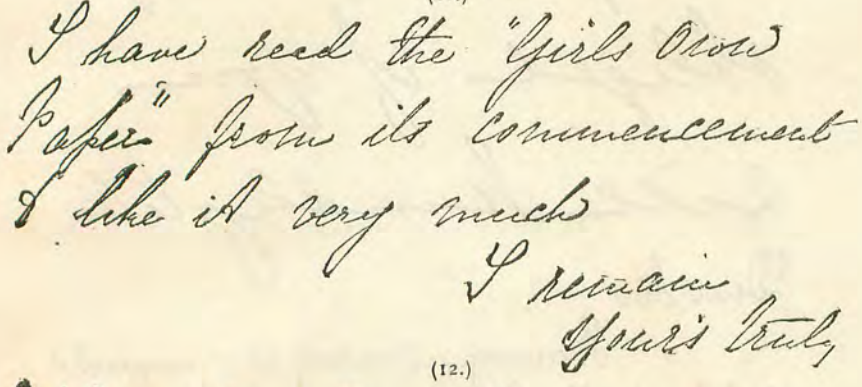
(9.)

warmest thanks for setting up such a charming paper, & just

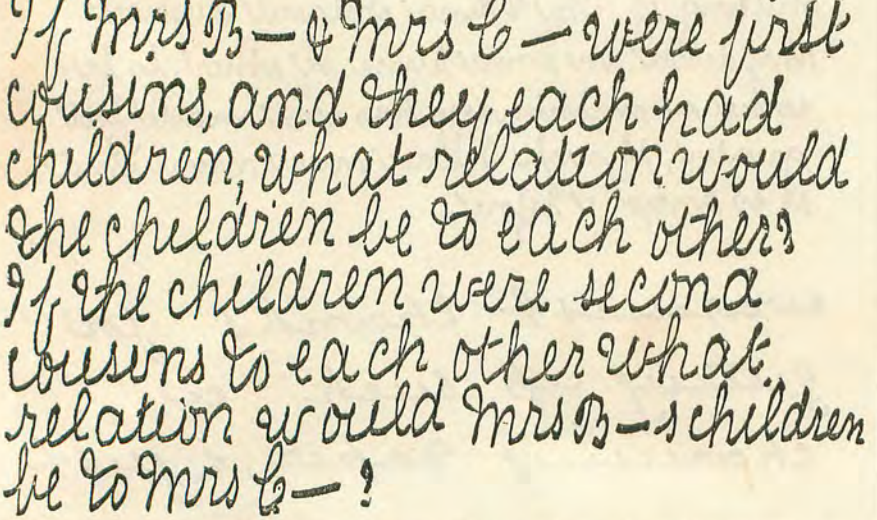
(10.)



(11.)



(12.)



as the line will be correct, and will keep your letter clean, if your hand be moist. Sit perfectly upright, and keep your elbow quite close to your side. To sprawl over the table—no other word would adequately express the awkwardness of the position—is very inelegant, injurious to the figure, and inconvenient to everyone else at the table.

Practise the formation of scroll patterns; make circles, wavy lines, ring linked within ring, without removing the pen from the paper until the design be completed. Hold the pen as far up the holder, or quill, as you can, so as to have free control over it, and after you have traced a page-full of flowing outlines, then begin with copying the copper-plate model and fill a page with careful facsimiles. This should be done daily, and when you can write exactly in accordance with it, freely and fast without looking at the original, then select some running hand or two that you admire, and adopt from these any little pretty variations in the form of certain letters; or adopt the general effect as far as you can, supposing that you find any difficulty in forming your own hand unaided.

Before closing, I must draw your attention to some of the defects in writing which appear to prevail the most. The m and the n must not be formed like the n. This is not to be regarded as an admissible peculiarity, to be reckoned amongst pleasing varieties of style, because it appears in hands widely differing in character, and is simply an evidence of great carelessness. To break yourself of a habit which sometimes greatly perplexes the reader, set yourself a copy entirely composed of these three letters, and make a marked distinction between them, joining the m and the n at the top of each letter, and the u at the bottom.

Another defect is the neglect of dotting the i and crossing the t, and it is likewise a bad style to make capital e's in the middle of a word or anywhere save when the word begins a sentence or a name. Very long tops and tails are likewise objectionable, because they mutually interfere with one another, and have not only an ugly effect, but may confuse the reader. Let there be a certain correspondence in size between every letter, all sloping exactly in one uniform degree and in the same direction, leaving equal distances between each letter and word. Avoid the necessity for making erasures, such as faults in spelling or blots. Never add a postscript asking your reader to "excuse bad writing" or "a bad pen." Mend your pen, or procure a suitable steel one before you begin to write. But in case of an accident involving the use of a penknife let it be a very sharp one, and lay the sheet on some hard surface—the harder the better. Make the erasure lightly, and polish the frayed spot on the paper by rubbing it carefully with a smooth, hard paper knife, or even with the back of your nail, so as to polish and fit it to receive a few light pen-strokes if a new word must be written over it.

Think of your writing as a work of art, a sort of picture which may awaken feelings of pleasure and satisfaction rather than those of repulsion and annoyance. Where we meet with a really peculiar hand in connection with undoubted genius, a certain amount of originality, or a character of remarkable force, we make due allowance for eccentricities in style, which may be traced to peculiarities of an exceptional character. But when a girl of ordinary abilities and acquirements attempts to write an extraordinary hand, people of more experience and better sense are not misled in their estimation of what such vagaries are worth. They only smile to see a ridiculous exhibition of vanity in the handwriting of an ordinary girl. It is a poor thing to be a mere sham — a "strong-minded" young lady. Were she a genuine example of so superior a person the intentional adoption of a grotesque style of hand would be a weakness of which she would scarcely be guilty.

We may give on another occasion some specimens of writing which we admire as being graceful and ladylike, as well as legible.

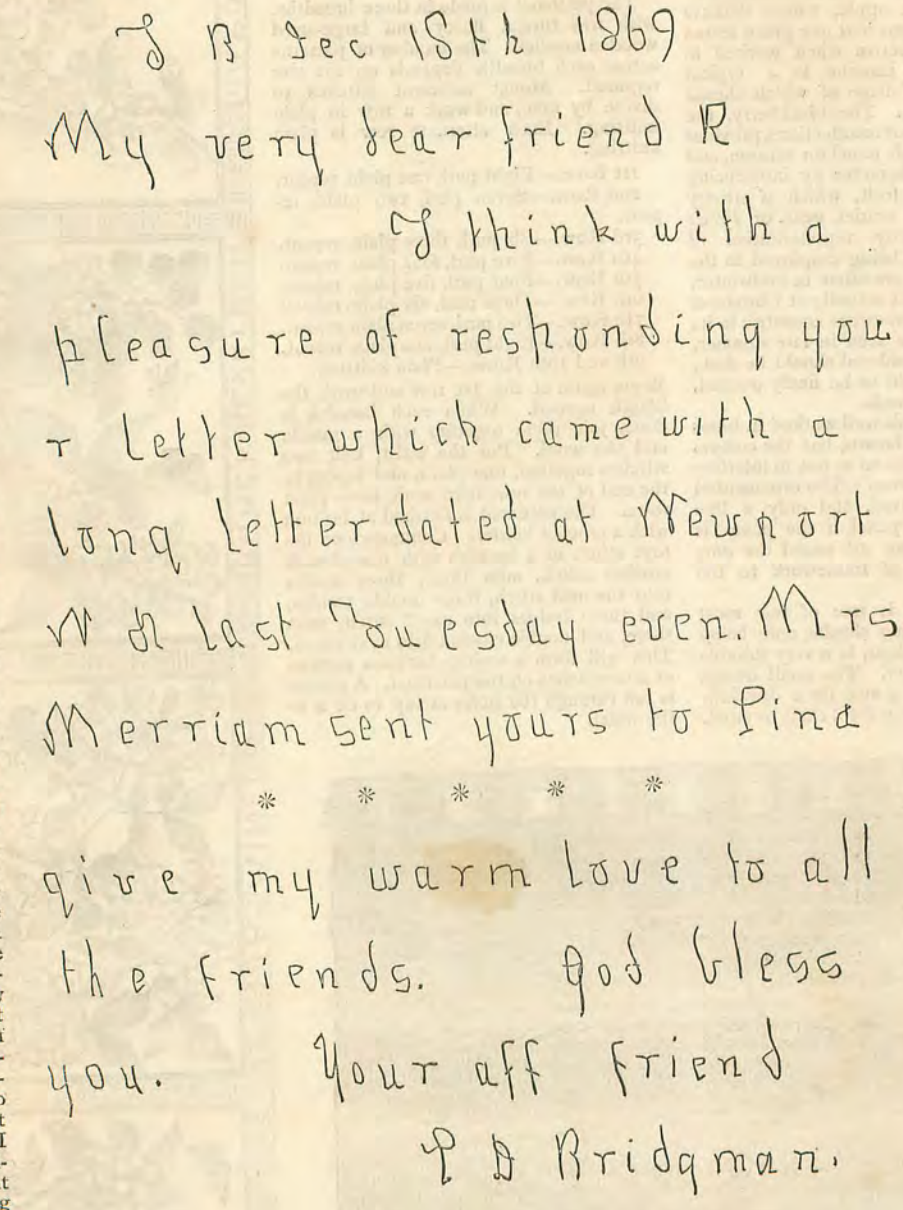
Sophia F. A. Caulfeild

THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING.

THE art of letter-writing is divided at least into two departments—the intellectual and the manual. I commenced my articles on this subject with a consideration of the first and superior department of the art—that which may be compared to its soul. I then discussed the second, representing, as it were, its body, or external form, by which its origin may be identified as proceeding from certain hands. This clothing of our thoughts should be rendered in every respect suitable and worthy of them, not equivocal in its outlines, not coarse, angular, nor slovenly. Nothing is too trifling to be well done; nothing unworthy of being rendered attractive, since "God so clothed the grass of the field," and "made everything beautiful in His time", for our enjoyment.

But it is necessary to direct your attention to the fact that a third accomplishment is intimately and indissolubly connected with the art of writing, without a thorough knowledge of which you could not possess what the Psalmist describes as "the pen of a ready writer." Yet multitudes in the present day, who can use the pen with the skill of an artist, and whose thoughts flow freely, too, are sadly deficient in this third acquirement. I refer to a thorough knowledge of orthography. In the various competitive examinations open to both sexes a large proportion of students fail solely through a neglect of this branch of merely ordinary education. It is a disgrace to any girl to send out an ill-spelt letter, although I admit that the arbitrary and inconsistent method of spelling which obtains in the English language necessitates a good deal of careful study. To those who feel themselves deficient in this branch of their education I have two suggestions to make. Impress on your memory all words about which you feel doubtful by invariably seeking for them in your dictionary yourself, instead of asking information from another person. Let your dictionary lie beside you, ready for reference, whenever you write a letter; and do not spare yourself any trouble in satisfying yourself that you have made no mistake.

I would also advise you to pay very particular attention to those peculiarities that present the greatest difficulty to the student—viz., to the doubling of letters, the dropping or retaining of the final "e" when followed by "ment" or "able," and the few exceptional cases in which it is retained in the active participle, terminating in "ing." Make yourself well acquainted with these, the most troublesome words in our language; and write them in long lists, over and over again, all those with and all without the "e," each list respectively by itself, and all doubled letters in the same way.



There is also another small matter to which it is necessary that you should pay attention. An error in the division of words, commenced at the end of one line and concluded at the beginning of the next, is a mark of an illiterate person. Divide them always at the syllables; and if there be not sufficient space to complete the second in a word of three syllables, do not begin it, but rather add the hyphen and leave the space.

It may, perhaps, be interesting to some to read a letter written by one of our nobility in the sixteenth century, which will give some idea of the great change that has taken place in the spelling of our language since then. It is from the Duchess of Norfolk to Cromwell, Earl of Essex:—

"My ffary gode lord,

"Her I sand you in tokyn hoff the neweyer, a glasse hoff setyl, set in sellfer gold. I pra you tak it in wort. An hy wer habel. Het shoulde be bater. I woll hit war wort A.M. (1,000) Crone."

Another specimen of orthography from the pen of Dr. Bayle, Bishop of Ossory, in reference to the destruction of valuable libraries at the time of the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII., 1536, may be worthy of quotation:—

"A greate nombre of them whyche purchased those superstychouse mansyons reserved of those librarye bookes some to serve theyr jokes, some to scoure thyr candlestyckes, and some to rubbe theyre bootes. Some they solde to the grossers, and sope-sellers, and some they sent over the see to the book bynders—not in small nombre—but at tymes whole shyppes full to the wonderynge of oren nacyons. Yea, ye universytes of thys realme are not all clere in this detestable fact. A prodygyouse example is thys" . . . .

In reference to the mechanical part of letter-writing, there is less excuse for any failure amongst the young people of the present day, than there is for defective orthography. For the latter there is, of course, but one invariable rule, and, certainly, all deviations from it are disgraceful in a scholar. In penmanship much license is permitted, much liberty of fancy; and for every style of writing there is a suitable pen. The hand may be accommodated with soft quills, broad or pointed metal pens, smooth or rough paper, and lines if required. How different from the state of the case in ancient times of the world! The Egyptians wrote on pieces of limestone, on leather, linen, wood, and papyrus leaves, using a brush or pen cut out of a reed, very unaccommodating to the hand. The Assyrians and Babylonians wrote on cylinders and hexagonal prisms of terra-cotta. The Romans used tablets of wood, ivory, metal, and wax; and their pen was of iron, called a *stylus*. Reference is made by the Prophet Jeremiah to this description of writing implement when he speaks, metaphorically, of "the sin of Judah written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a

diamond . . . graven on the table of their heart," and so rendered indelible. In the ages succeeding all these remote times horn-books, covered with wax, were chiefly employed, which also were scratched with a metal style.

After the Carlovingian era leaves of vellum were employed, and the writings and illuminations executed on these were indeed beautiful and artistic. But the art of writing in the western nations was confined for a long period to the literary monks, and our William the Conqueror, and Charlemagne himself, could only sign their names by a characteristic "mark."

But more curious, more wonderful by far than any other productions of the kind that I could possibly illustrate, are the letters of the celebrated Laura Bridgman, of Boston, Mass. This talented woman can neither see, hear, nor speak, and thus is beyond the reach of the teachers of "lip reading"; she has nearly lost also the senses of taste and smell, and it has been by the one sense of *feeling* alone that she has had any communication opened between her and the world around, or with the God in whom she has learned to believe. A *facsimile* of a part of one of her wonderful letters I here subjoin, kindly lent to me by a lady who has seen her, and devotes her life to the teaching of deaf mutes by means of the system called "lip reading." The following is a transcription of the whole of the letter:—

"L. B., Dec. 18, 1869.

"My very dear friend R.,

"I think with a pleasure of responding you the letter which came with a long letter, dated at Newport, on the last Tuesday even. Mrs. Merriam sent yours to Lina; it afforded much delight to hear from you and Lina at ——. My health failed fast early in Aug., and was the result of my being unable to do anything, even talking with my fingers. I was so sickly, tired all summer, and suffered from chills; that was essential for me to wear more clothing. I sat up but a little for many weeks, and wore a wrapper and a shawl. In late Sep. I became a convalescent. How good the Lord was to restore me to health. I had a good and tranquil time at home, excepting my ill health; the nights seemed to pass heavily, and bed too—because of breaking slumbers and rest. John went to Leb. (Lebanon) and called on the Dr. and consulting his advice, he sent a bottle of medicine to me, it lasted me as long as 3 weeks. I was happy to hear of many old friends through you. Grace is a holy name. I hope that Grace—may be graceful with I——and his Father, when in her growth. I rejoice at the return of Mrs. L. next year. I wish to see her and Mrs. B. and other friends much. Mr. B. called to see me with some gents a week ago. He said that Mrs. B. was well at present; but went away soon in haste. I came back the 1st of Nov. I am so happily engaged in pricking poems, &c., for blessed Christmas and new year. I am so weary. Please to give my warm love to all the friends. God bless you. Your aff. friend,

"L. D. BRIDGMAN."

Observe how much decision of character there is in the hand, how good the spelling is, how few omissions of small connecting words. How she tells all that was likely to interest her friend: particulars about herself, her employment, the friends who had seen her, the news received of others. Observe how the signification of the name "Grace" has not escaped her notice. Last, and certainly not least, how grateful she is to God for convalescence, and "weary" as she was, she found happiness in active work of a religious tendency.

All three essentials in good letter-writing—composition, writing, and spelling—are combined in a remarkable manner in this unique letter.

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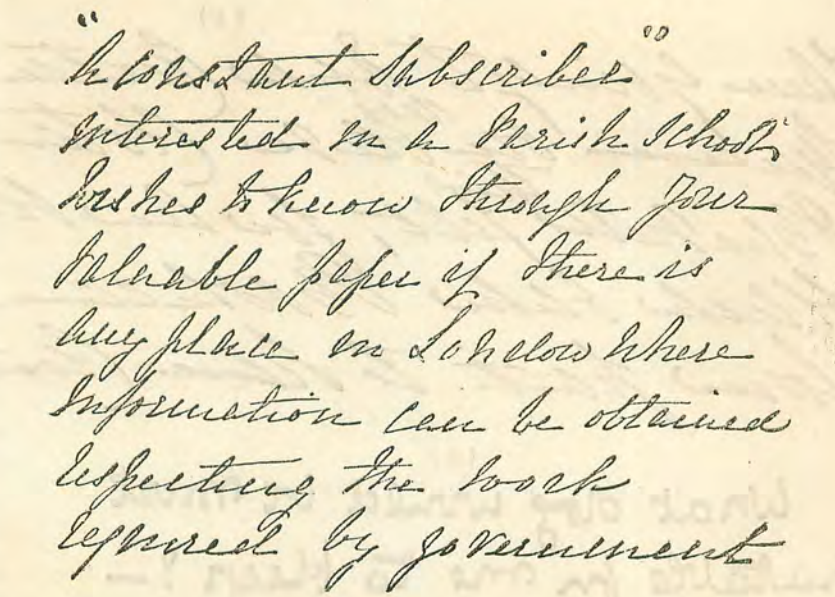

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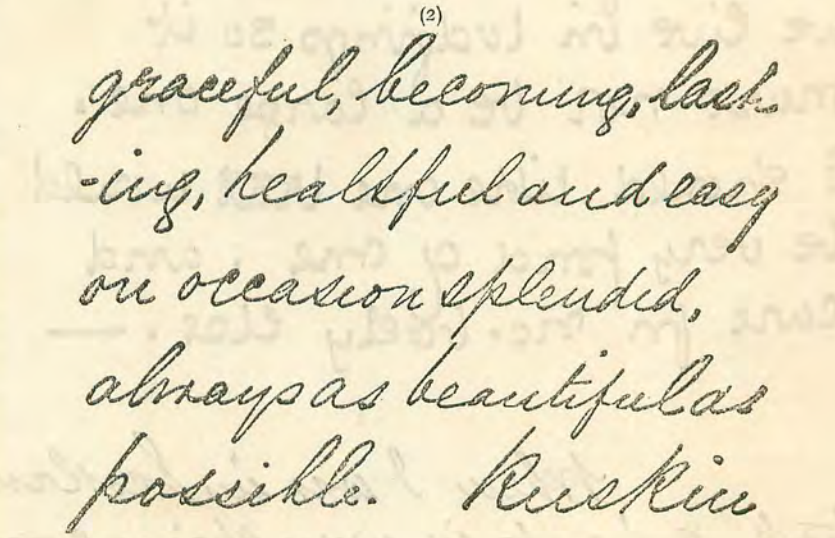

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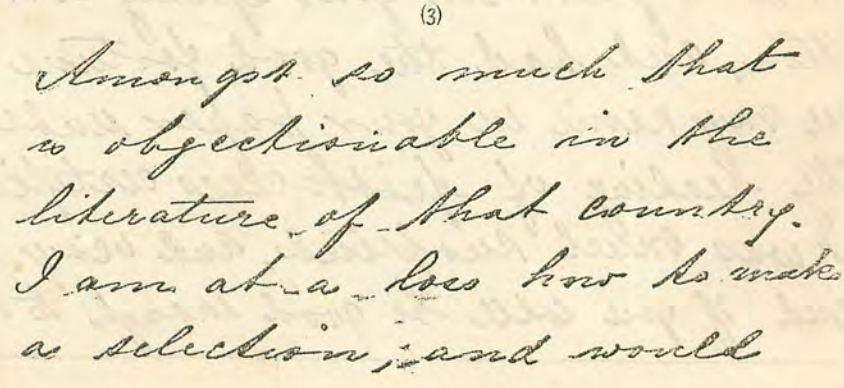

Curiosity has, very naturally, been felt by the young readers of this paper—whose handwriting is yet in a transition state—to see that of the correspondent who writes "a beautiful hand." This will be now supplied in No. 1. Another much to be commended also as a fine, bold hand is No. 2.

Nos. 3 and 6 are likewise pretty legible and well formed, and have no angularity nor untidiness about them. These four hands are by no means masculine, and I recommend them to the consideration of my readers. No. 5 is a very peculiar hand, with much character in it, and, although written backwards, I should not suggest that any change be made in it by the writer. No. 4 is a specimen of a very illegible hand. S. F. A. C.

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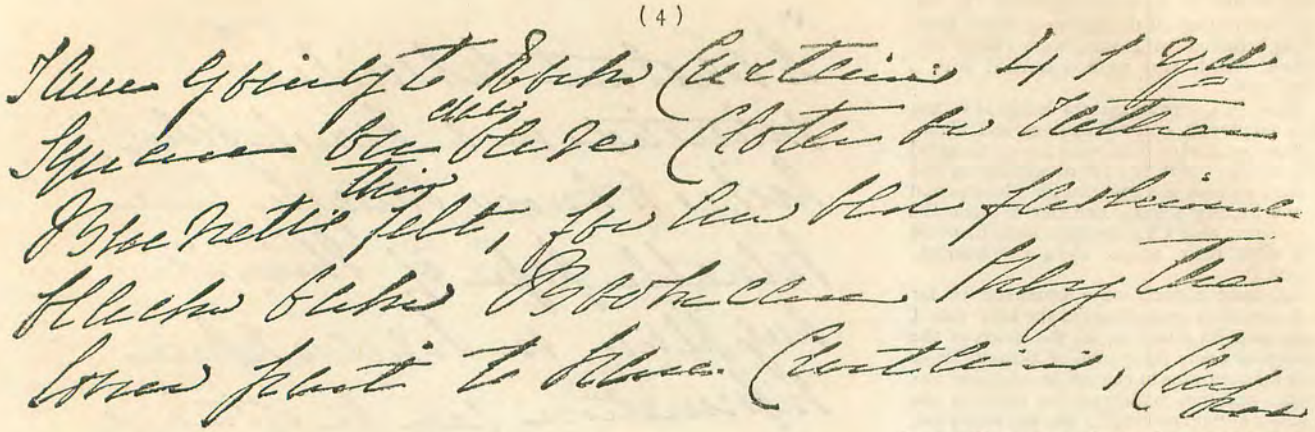

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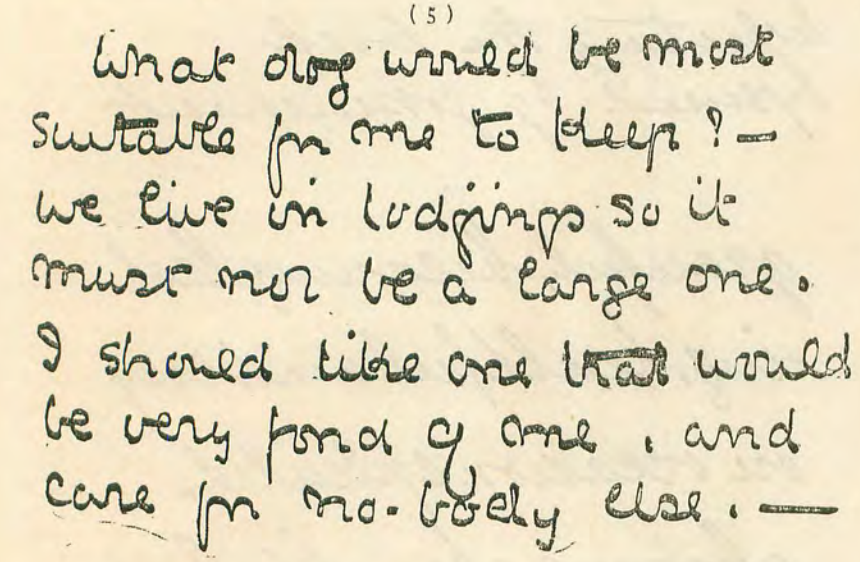

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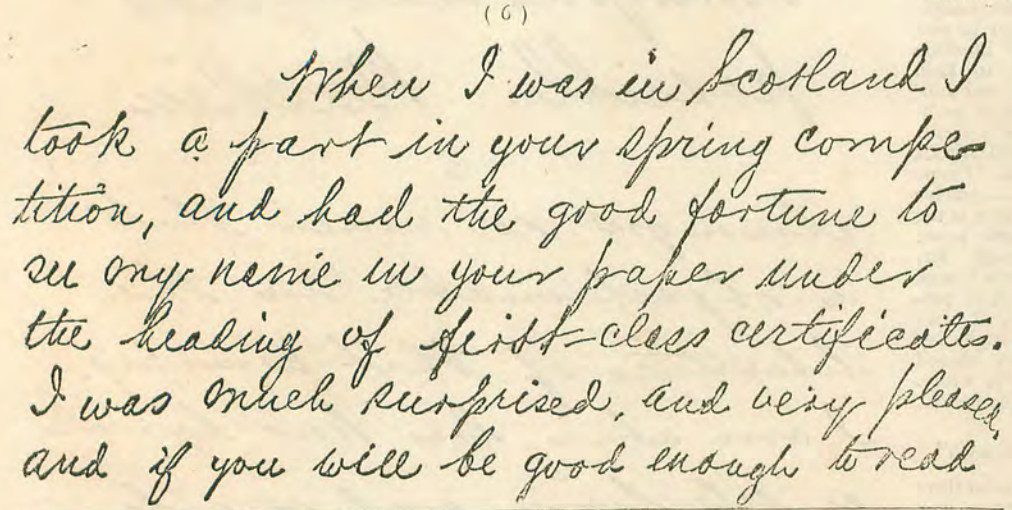

THAT AGGRAVATING SCHOOL GIRL.

By the Author of "Wild Kathleen."

CHAPTER V.

HER CHIEF ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

"YOUR education appears to me to have been hitherto most irregular, Miss Edison."

"Most irregular," assented Miss Edison, with a grave shake of her head. "Papa says it is only to be compared to a geological fault. Upheavals where you wouldn't——"

"Wou——?"

"Ah, of course, I had forgotten again, but I know what you are going to say. Would not look for them, and depressions where they ought not to be expected. Perhaps you won't mind my just telling you that when papa says that he always says wouldn't. I've noticed that particularly, whatever other changes he may make in the words."

Miss Rowe looked sharply at the new pupil. Could she be daring to make fun of her? But no. That was impossible, and the young lady's face bore the innocently grave expression of a child really wishing to give a curious piece of information.

"You are dreadfully stupid in some things," said the governess, shortly, while the pupil with an absent air tied two loose knots in her pocket-handkerchief corners, inserted her slender white forefinger and thumb in them, "parson and clerk" fashion, and began solemnly bobbing them at each other, the more important thumb wagging its pointed turban in a most impressive and imperative manner at "poor me," as Miss Helen murmuringly addressed her forefinger.

Helen Edison, the new pupil, was undergoing an examination by Miss Rowe as to her attainments, before having her place apportioned to her in the classes. In the ordinary course of events this examination would have been undertaken by the senior English governess, but, as has been already mentioned, she was absent through illness, and her energetic junior had to fulfil double duties, not only now but throughout nearly the whole of the term, with some help from the foreign governesses and the principal herself.

It was so highly satisfactory to the young governess's pride and love of dominion to be thus paramount in the schoolrooms that she cared very little for the extra work and responsibility thrown on her shoulders, and to do her justice it must be confessed that during the three weeks that passed between the commencement of the Easter term and the advent of Miss Edison, the principal, had been more than satisfied both with her teaching and discipline. The generally mild sway at Crofton House easily tempered any little extra sternness.