

**MAC LAURIN'S SELF-
INSTRUCTING WRITING BOOKS,
OR, EVERY MAN AND BOY
HIS OWN WRITING-MASTER**

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Mac Laurin's Self-instructing Writing Books, Or, Every Man and Boy His Own Writing-master
by W. S. Mac Laurin

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William S.

MAC LAURIN'S

SELF-INSTRUCTING WRITING BOOKS;

OR,

EVERY MAN AND BOY

HIS OWN WRITING-MASTER.

A SPECIAL ADAPTATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM
TO THE USE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO WISH TO ACQUIRE RAPIDITY AND ELEGANCE OF HANDWRITING, WITHOUT THE AID OF A TEACHER; AN
ENTIRELY NEW AND EMINENTLY SUCCESSFUL METHOD—ALSO,
INTENDED FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF TEACHERS WHO
WISH TO ACQUIRE THE ABILITY TO TEACH
THE SYSTEM THEMSELVES.

CIRCULAR TO LEARNERS AND TEACHERS.

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71 CHAMBERS-STREET.

1854.

MAC LAURIN'S
SELF-INSTRUCTING WRITING BOOKS.

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATIONS.

THE Publisher of MacLaurin's System of Writing has been led, by the immense popularity which this system is acquiring in the schools of the country, to consider the possibility and desirableness of adapting the same system to the wants of the thousands of young men and ladies who are no longer at school, and who have, nevertheless, not acquired by their previous instructions, that necessary accomplishment, a *good* and *rapid* handwriting, such as would qualify them for the counting-house, for business in its various departments, or for easy and elegant correspondence.

The design above stated is a new one—that of enabling persons *to learn to write entirely without the aid of the living teacher*, a thing never heretofore attempted, and one which nothing but the

peculiar excellence of *this new system* could have rendered possible. The advantages which this system offers are such, however, that self-instruction becomes just as practicable in this branch of education, as in others in which so many young men and women are daily and successfully applying it. The attempt, though a complete novelty in education, is entirely successful, as has been demonstrated triumphantly in instances sufficiently numerous to put it beyond all question.

The fact is now known, that ANY PERSON can, *without the aid of a writing-teacher*, LEARN TO WRITE A RAPID AND HANDSOME BUSINESS HAND. The discovery is one of sufficient importance to command the attention of Educationists, and especially of young men in the city and country, who are purposing to enter into business of any kind.

The importance to every one of being able to write a beautiful, and at the same time a rapid and easy hand, need not be argued. The want is universally felt; by none, perhaps, so stringently, as by that large class of young men who desire to become clerks in mercantile houses, lawyers' offices, and elsewhere. Many thousands of dollars are annually paid away, to writing-masters, for instruction, which, after all, for causes which will be mentioned hereafter, seldom proves at all satisfactory. Every school in the country is, like

wise, constantly employed in attempting to teach this indispensable art. Still, it is a remarkable fact, of which every teacher will be aware, the moment he reflects, and of which every merchant or employer of clerks is aware already, that *the art of writing RAPIDLY and WELL*—of writing *as he requires his clerks to write*, is absolutely *never acquired*, under any of the old methods of instruction, in the school-house, or by the teaching of a writing-master.

Nothing is better known, than that every clerk has to *learn to write over again*, when he goes into the counting-house or the office, no matter how much time he may have given to the study and practice in the school or under the writing-teacher. This has been, until the invention of Mr. MacLaurin's System, absolutely true of all systems, and of the results of teaching in all our schools, notwithstanding our boasts of the perfection of our school instruction. It is a fact which annoys both the employer and the employed, and deprives thousands of meritorious youth, otherwise every way qualified, of the opportunity of entering into profitable and useful employment. The fact is well known, and deplorably felt, on all hands, except, perhaps, among the teachers themselves, who, seeing their pupils acquiring a handsome style of writing under their instructions, and seldom coming in contact with them

after they begin to make a practical use of it, remain longer, perhaps, than any body else, ignorant of the real failure.

The cause of this remarkable and uniform failure, in a great and important branch of our whole educational system, has never been understood, and much less the efficient remedy applied, until the discoveries and inventions of Mr. MacLaurin. When pointed out, they become simple and obvious, and teachers are everywhere surprised that they had not long since made the same discoveries. No system of instruction, in any branch of science, ever seemed destined so rapidly and completely to take the place of all others. In the public schools of our large cities, its triumphs have been complete, and it is rapidly working its way into the country as well. In addition to this, the design of the Publisher is to introduce it into every family where there is an individual no longer at school, and who has failed to acquire this valuable accomplishment. For that purpose this little book of instructions is compiled, in addition to the Exercise and Writing Books.

The cause of this universal failure to make good writers, under the old systems of instruction, is the entire disconnection and divorce which has prevailed between the two elements of QUANTITY and QUALITY; that is to say, if the learner acquired the ability to write *well*, it was at an entire

sacrifice, or rather neglect of the ability to write *fast*, and *vice versa*. In the school-house, or under the writing-master, all that was required of him was to write *well*. No attention whatever was given to the degree of rapidity with which he moved his hand, *while writing well*; and *no instruction or exercises were given for training the muscles of the hand to A RAPID MOVEMENT, WHILE EXECUTING PERFECT FORMS.*

In the common school or high school, if the scholar writes *elegantly*, no note is taken of the time he occupies in forming his letters. In all the numerous specimens of "fine writing," and "wonderful improvement," hung in the show-windows of writing-masters, in every city and town, the old and ugly handwriting is compared with the new and elegant one. Not a word is *said*, because positively nothing is *thought*, of the number of SECONDS or MINUTES in which the new and elegant specimen of writing was executed. For the purpose of the writing-master, who does not exhibit *the pupil and his action while writing*, but only the *result*, in which the element of time does not appear, this element of time is of no importance whatever, and is not so much as thought of; but, in the Counting-House, and the Office, under the pressure of business, and when the time of the new practitioner has, every minute of it, a cash value, this element becomes either—

I. Of far more urgency and consequence than the *quality* or *beauty* of the writing. In this case, the rapidity having to be acquired, when there is no instruction, no time for thought, and no opportunity to study, or rather to accustom the hand to trace perfect forms while moving rapidly, the element of QUALITY, that is, of *beauty*, and even of *legibility*, is totally sacrificed in acquiring the other indispensable element of QUANTITY or *rapidity*. This is what happens especially with Authors, Editors, and Lawyers, who are, in consequence, proverbially the worst of penmen, while they have the greatest amount of writing to do. They run into a desperate scrawl, which remains, through life, the source of mortification to themselves, and of torment to all who have to read their manuscript; or,

II. The element of *quantity* being of *equal* importance with that of *quality*—both being indispensable—as in Book-Keeping, and the Mercantile Profession generally, a good style of writing, in all ways, has to be acquired; otherwise the party is, as it were, driven from his profession for the want of this essential qualification. Merchants are proverbial for having the best hand-writing of any class, but the hand-writing which they employ in business is *never* acquired in the school-house, nor under the writing teacher. It is solely and exclusively the product of the Counting-House,