FOSTER'S PENMANSHIP ILLUSTRATED

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CORRECT POSITION OF THE HAND AND PEN.

PENMANSHIP,

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL,

ILLUSTRATED AND EXPLAINED.

BY B. F. FOSTER,

AUTHOR OF "ELEMENTARY COPY-BOOKS;" "PRIZE ESSAY ON THE BEST METHOD OF TEACHING PENMANSHIP;" "THE MERCHANT'S MANUAL;" "THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF BOOK-KEEPING SIMPLIFIED," &C. &C.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE illustrations and examples at the end of this volume exhibit the nature and arrangement of the author's "Elementary Copy-books," the more prominent features of which are as follows:

1. The copies are printed upon each page throughout; thus saving the drudgery and often imperfectly performed task of setting them, the labor of ruling, and the expense of copy slips.

2. The written characters are carefully analysed, and presented in the order of their simplicity; and the slope, height, and width of the letters, are indicated with mathematical exactness.*

* The guidance alluded to is of two sorts: 1st, pencilled exercises for tracing; 2d, pencilled copies combined with horizontal and diagonal lines. The first indicates the precise shape and fulness of the letters; the second enables the child to determine, with ease, the slope, height, width, and junction of the several parts of the letters. Great care has been taken to render the initiatory process thorough and progressive, and also to avoid the evils which result from too much mechanical assistance. The diagonal lines, &c. are gradually omitted, from the first, so that as soon as the learner gains the requisite degree of muscular facility he is required to test his skill by forming the letters from *imitation* merely; thus bad habits are prevented, and the eye is disciplined as well as the fingers. It should be remembered that the difficulties of this art consist in *execution*, rather than in design.

3. The exercises are arranged progressively; advancing by easy and natural steps, from the simple to the complex, through all the gradations of large text, text, round, and small, to current hand.

The system developed in these Copy-books is simple, practical and perspicuous—easily applied and undoubted in its efficacy. It obviates the difficulties which impede the progress of learners, facilitates the labor of teachers, and leads with certainty, and in the shortest time possible, to the attainment of a hand writing in which the essential qualities of legibility, elegance and expedition are combined.

This improvement has been introduced into a large number of the most extensive public and private schools throughout England, Ireland, and Scotland, and the United States of America, with distinguished success.

"I know of no method of teaching writing," says the author of the Schoolmaster Vindicated, "more sound in principle, more strictly constructive, more simple and progressive, more saving in time and labor to both master and pupil, than that developed in 'Foster's Elementary Copy-books,' in which Locke's idea of tracing is judiciously carried out, and diagonal lines are employed so far only as they are useful; and in which the excellencies of the various systems hitherto devised are combined and their defects remedied. This opinion results from long experience in the use of them."

INTRODUCTION.

"Many seem to have persuaded themselves, or wish to persuade others, that in education whatever is old is wrong, and whatever is new is right; but as the reverse of the argument is more likely to lead us to the truth, one of the purposes I have in view is to caution my countrymen against those innovations which others have recommended; and instead of ostentatiously displaying some new and visionary project for instruction, to give vigor and efficacy to the system which we have so long and successfully pursued."—BARROW.

THE spirit of improvement which characterizes the present age has in nothing, perhaps, been more perceptible than in education throughout all its branches: on most it has had a beneficial and renovating effect. Many improved methods have been introduced; many new views opened; and many important changes taken place. But to innovate is not always to reform; and old truth is somewhat preferable to new error. We must not, therefore, let our zeal outrun our prudence, nor imagine that every change is necessarily for the better—every new idea an improvement.

The advocates of educational reform complain of the old and established method of teaching children to write, as being tedious in its application and imperfect in its results. They loudly censure the ancient plan of what

are commonly, though rather inelegantly, termed "pot-hooks and hangers," *et hoc genus omne.* They ridicule, as something preposterous, the custom which has hitherto prevailed in all well-conducted schools, of making children write large text, text, and round hand, for months and years; contending that it is worse than useless to waste so much valuable time in learning that which is of little or no practical utility.

These theorists would have the child inducted at once into the practice of current hand; asserting, with singular gravity, that, if such a plan were adopted, the art might be acquired in a few short and easy lessons! They would have the fledgling soar from the nest on tiny wing to the very summit of calligraphy!

"Much time," says a writer on this subject, "is spent in our schools in writing large hand, with the letters, in some instances, nearly half an inch long. Now, in full view of all the reasons which are urged in favor of this practice, I cannot help regarding it as grossly erroneous. After a few copies of the elements have been written, it appears to me that a plain, coarse running hand, is sufficiently large to answer every important purpose. If a pupil can write a good business hand with rapidity and a moderate share of elegance,* he will find no difficulty in forming a few letters or words on a larger scale, should occasion require it."

Can any thing be more preposterous and unsound than the innovation here recommended? It is not only contrary to the uniform practice of the most eminent and skilful teachers of the art, but contrary to reason and common sense. As well might we expect a person to paint a picture combining the force and energy of an

* True: but *how* is the ability to write a "good business hand with elegance and rapidity" to be acquired? What are the means to the end?

Angelo, with the graces of a Raphael, and the coloring of a Titian, without first going through the initiatory steps of the painter's art—as well attempt to rival a Paginini on the violin, without learning the notes of music; or a Taglioni in dancing, without exercising and disciplining the limbs,—as to expect to attain an elegant and masterly use of the pen without the preliminary practice of large text, text, and round hand.

Reader! have you ever watched the proceedings of a child when he first attempts to write? If not, do so; and you will find that he invariably seizes the pen—if one may be allowed the expression—with an iron grasp, as if he thought it was instinct with life, and that unless he held it fast with might and main, it would take to itself wings and fly away. His thumb and fingers are all compressed together with energetic force, their ends concentrated within the compass of a sixpence; and when required to make any change, he never, for a moment, ventures to relax the tenacity of his grasp, but, with the left hand, carefully and cautiously pushes the pen into the desired position. Now, unless this firm grasp—this straining of the muscles—this contraction of the fingers, is effectually conquered at the outset, and a habit of holding and conducting the pen in an easy, natural, unconstrained manner, firmly established, innumerable difficulties must ensue; the child's progress will be greatly impeded, and no one of the essentials of fine penmanship can be attained. The most certain, speedy, comprehensive, and above all, least tiresome, method of accomplishing these objects is to commence with characters and letters of such a size as will *compel* the learner to release his grasp and give free play to his fingers.

It is contended by the advocates of novelty, that large hand, when acquired, is of little or no use in the active

concerns of life. Be it so; but this is not the question. It is taught as a means to an end.

There are many things necessary to be learned in the course of education not for their own sakes merely, but as a means to train and discipline the mind or body in order to enable it to effect other things. "In drilling, for instance, firmness of muscle and an erect gait are the ends to be attained, not any particular posture which may be required as a means for attaining them. A boy is not taught dancing in order that he may dance a hornpipe in the public streets; but that he may acquire a supleness of limb and an ease of manner; the thing taught is the medium by which we reach the end." But it is replied that the art of writing is so simple as not to require all this discipline—this training of the hand and fingers! Simple indeed, theoretically:—it is one thing, however, to know how an operation is performed,—quite another to perform it. The mind may seize, with great ease and rapidity, the principles, and comprehend the whole *rationale* of any mechanical operation; and yet, when the undisciplined hand attempts to perform that which seemed so easy, it is found to be far beyond its powers of execution, simply from the want of practice. Of this so many instances are hourly falling under the notice of every one, that it would be a work of supererogation to attempt to exemplify them.

Amid the thousand arts of life there are few that we cannot comprehend, and see, and feel that the means of performing them are very simple and easy; but let any person attempt, for the first time, to practise one of these simple arts, be it the planing of a board, the threading of a needle, or, what is more to our purpose, the drawing of a circle, a square, or even a perpendicular line, and he will find it by no means so easy. He will find that practice is essential to the skilful performance of the simplest

manual art. If, then, to the hand of the adult, whose powers of movement—whose muscular action has, in some degree, been developed, this habitude or repeated doing is essential, how much more indispensably necessary must it be to the feeble and undisciplined hand of a child?

From the foregoing considerations it follows:

1. That the art of writing, though simple in its nature and easy of comprehension theoretically, requires careful and long continued practice to give that ease and freedom which constitute its essentials; and it is only by patient, persevering efforts, that any degree of elegance can be attained.

2. That as there exists in the undisciplined hand of childhood a tendency to contract the muscles and to restrain the movements of the fingers, it is necessary to employ some means to counteract this tendency, and to prevent it from settling into a habit which would inevitably prove fatal to the attainment of fine penmanship.

3. That this counteracting influence can only be found in a free use of the pen in forming the written characters on a very large scale, and the pupil should not be advanced too hastily, but proceed, by a natural and easy transition, from the simple elements of letters through all the gradations of large text, text, round, and small hand.

If we look to the every day practice of mankind we shall find that a similar plan is invariably pursued in the study of all other manual arts. The skilful and conscientious teacher of drawing, for example, will require his pupil to master, step by step, the simple rudiments of the art, namely, the straight line in all its positions—horizontal, perpendicular and oblique—and in all its

combinations of the square, the triangle, and the parallelogram, before he will suffer him to advance to curve lines. And when he is advanced to the curve line, he will then require him to master that in its simplest forms of the circle, the ellipse, &c., before he is permitted to commence with exercises which contain a complexity of form. He, too, will require the pupil to execute these preparatory exercises on a large scale, in order to establish, at the outset, a habit of drawing the simple elements with boldness and precision, and to impart a freedom and accuracy in the use of the pencil.

The skilful and conscientious teacher of music will, in like manner, require his pupil to obtain a correct habit of fingering each individual note before he proceeds to the practice of the scales; and it is only by slow and careful steps that he is allowed to advance from the simple to the more complex and difficult exercises. In short, when a pupil has once thoroughly mastered the elementary principles of any art or science, he will experience no difficulty in his subsequent progress.

I have said the *conscientious* teacher will do thus: that is, if he have name or wealth enough to afford to be conscientious—if he be sufficiently independent in circumstances not to heed the wishes, whims, and caprices, of ignorant and inconsiderate parents. For, if not, he will soon find himself thrust aside to give place to those railroad teachers, who, with unblushing effrontery, undertake to impart to the veriest blockhead a knowledge of music, painting, or drawing, in some dozen or half a dozen lessons!

Alas! for the parent that suffers himself to be the dupe of such impudent pretenders. Alas! for the child that is put into the hands of such monstrous empirics. He does, indeed, learn to produce what is called a picture,

"in red and yellow richly dight;" or to strum a tune, "God save the queen," or "Merrilly dance the quakers;" and delighted are mamma and papa, and grandmamma, and all the host of cousins, at this infant Titian or Mozart; but the child knows nothing,—nor will he, after this, ever be likely to know anything of the principles of drawing or music. For having, in his own estimation, gained the summit of the temple of knowledge, by a species of aeronautism, how can we expect that he will be content to descend again, and climb, step by step, the steep ascent of the hill of science? How can we expect a child who has been taught, by one of these wonder-working processes, to paint some particular picture, or to perform some particular piece of music, and thus fancies himself a finished artist or musician, to go back, without mortification and disappointment, to those training exercises of the hand, the eye, and the judgment—the correct lines, the regular forms and proportions, in the one case, and the notes and scales, and principles of harmony, in the other—by which alone excellence can be acquired?

If there be one quality of the mind more valuable than another, and more generally conducive to the advancement and well-being of man, it is the quality *of enduring perseverance, of untiring industry, and unflinching resolution in surmounting difficulties.* It is a quality which is necessary in every situation, from the meanest to the most exalted, and in every period of existence, from our first entrance into active life to its close. Now, a quality of such vast importance ought, if possible, to be rendered permanent by being inwoven, as it were, into our very nature, till, by early and long continued practice, it becomes a fixed and settled habit. Everything, therefore, in the process of education that can in any way conduce to the formation of a habit of strenuous, continued labor, ought to be made use of from the earliest age; and what-

ever tends to interrupt or prevent the formation of this necessary habit ought to be seduously avoided as a serious evil. On this ground, if on no other, all these wonder-working systems, that profess to impart knowledge with little or no labor on the part of the taught, are deeply injurious; by, in the first place, *ex professo*, giving the pupil no opportunity of conquering difficulties, and, in the second place, by nurturing habits of ease and self-conceit, and thus unfitting him for, and disgusting him with, those paths of labor and toil—part of the primeval lot of man—by which alone he can attain any object of worth or excellence. What injury, then, have they not done, who, without teaching a child anything of substantial value, have disgusted him with the only means,—patient attention and long-continued perseverance,—by which he can ever hope, effectually to acquire any branch of knowledge,—to master any art or science.

The task of "rearing the infant mind and teaching the young idea how to shoot," however delightful it may be in the eye of the poet, is found by every practical school-master to be by no means "a rose without its thorns." The various, ever-varying temperaments, capacities, and habits of children, call for a high degree of patience, good temper, and feeling, on the part of the master. To stimulate the idle, to rouse the dull, to subdue the stub-born, to restrain the impetuous, to encourage the back-ward, and to correct the vicious, is indeed a task requiring no ordinary powers of mind and heart—of patience and perseverance—a truth so strongly felt and so generally acknowledged, that it has passed into a proverb that Job was never a school-master!

The tailor may furnish us with clothes, the baker supply us with bread, and the butcher with meat, without any farther feeling than that of money getting; but the teacher of youth should be governed by motives of a higher order.

He should be imbued with a love of his profession; he should feel the intrinsic importance and dignity of it; and should possess a zeal and energy that the mere love of lucre never can furnish. The education of the rising generation should be intrusted to those and those only who possess well-regulated minds,—knowledge of a high and extensive range, and feelings of a refined and exalted nature. How painful and mortifying must it be to the feelings of the high-minded, conscientious teacher, to find —after all his patient toil—those who should be the first to make a return of gratitude and thankfulness, listening to upstart pretenders, and bestowing their patronage upon empirics who profess to accomplish that in a few hours, which he knows cannot be effected but by the study and labor of years*—to find that his endeavors are slighted, and his best intentions attributed to sordid motives.

But to return to the subject. In no branch of the diversified business of education has there been so many fruitless experimenters, or so much deception practised, as in this. The announcements put forth by "finishing writing-masters" are the *ne plus ultra* of audacious impudence. If you believe them they can accomplish impossibilities—they can reap where no seed has been sown —they can build where no foundation has been laid. That which was once considered the work of years, is, with them, the pleasant pastime of a few minutes. One of them states that "by his ingenious and unerring system," he can enable any and every person to write "a

* "These persons usually delude well-meaning but ignorant parents, by pretending, with an air of mystery and importance, to a new method of their own; according to which young gentlemen are qualified, 'in *a short time*,' for any profession or pursuit. When a hook is well baited, gudgeons will bite and be caught in abundance, and no bait is found so effectual as pretensions to a *new method*."—KNOX.

free, bold, elegant and expeditious hand, in twelve easy lessons of one hour each;" while another, determined to surpass his competitors, guarantees perfection in six hours! The first warrants his to be the only true system ever invented; the second claims equally exclusive merit; and a third, carrying his assumption, even to the moon, is willing to swear that the "Grand Lunar System" alone has any claim to public patronage.

However much these "professors" may differ in their plans, there is one point in which they all agree: that is, a determination to gull the public.

Penmanship is an art which requires much application. A learner thoroughly familiar with its elementary principles still needs diligent practice before he can attain a reasonable skill in execution. This is so obvious that we marvel how such empirics ever gained the attention which has been bestowed upon them. To change a bad hand writing, when it has become fixed and inveterate by habit, into a free, elegant, expeditious style, in the short space of six hours, is so evidently impossible, that we cannot but feel surprised that any intelligent, reflecting person, could be deceived by such extravagant and absurd pretensions.

"There is a great distinction to be made between educating the eye to judge of what is accurate and beautiful in writing, and exercising the hand to acquire freedom and expedition. We believe that to set a person to acquire the latter before his eye has been sufficiently exercised in the former, would be like setting a person down to an easel who was perfectly ignorant of the painter's art, and expect him to dash away with all that spirit and effect of touch which constitute artistic skill. But if the hand and eye have been previously educated as to what constitutes the accuracy of good writing, the scholar will need little aid when he comes to the practice

of a free commercial hand. This is why those unprincipled quacks, who profess to perfect a hand writing, however bad, in a few lessons, and comparatively in a few hours, sometimes receive the thanks of those they fleece, while the schoolmaster is condemned, merely because the former happens to have pointed out that which would have suggested itself to the pupil in his subsequent practice, while the latter, after having laid the foundation of a free mercantile hand, had not the opportunity, or did not embrace it, to work out the result of such a course of training."

PENMANSHIP,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

POSITION OF THE BODY.—MANNER OF HOLDING THE PEN. FORM AND PROPORTIONS OF THE LETTERS.—MOVEMENTS OF THE FINGERS, HAND, AND ARM.

PENMANSHIP is the art of forming letters with a pen, and joining them into words, by the separate or combined movements of the fingers, hand, and arm.

Two things are essential to skill in this art:

First, a knowledge of the forms and proportions of letters. Second, a mechanical dexterity in the use of the pen.

It must be apparent that both the above requisites are indispensable to a good penman. If a person is deficient in the first, his performance will displease, from its want of proportion and symmetry. If he is wanting in the second, there will be no freedom or grace in the general aspect of his writing.

It would be highly advantageous if children could be thoroughly instructed in the forms and proportions of the letters, before undertaking to execute them on paper. They would then have but one thing to learn at a time;

whereas, by the ordinary process, they are embarrassed with all the niceties of form and proportion, at the same moment when they find their whole power of attention little enough to encounter the difficulties of a correct posture, manner of holding the pen, and the other requisites for good execution. Yet with the very young, a theoretic knowledge is too often no knowledge at all; and it is therefore generally found expedient from the outset, to suffer the pupil to learn the form of each letter, by making it with a pen. Admitting this to be an unavoidable evil, the principal objects of attention arrange themselves in the following order:

I. The position of the body.
II. The manner of holding the pen.
III. The forms and proportions of the letters.
IV. The movements of the fingers, hand, and arm.

I. *The position of the body.*—I would earnestly press upon the consideration of every one who honors these pages with a perusal, that very much of the pupil's success depends upon attention to seemingly minute points, when *first* beginning to write. Deviations from a judicious course are apt to be followed by the worst consequences, and often, the evil done is without remedy, from the fixedness of the habit.

The position of the body, pen, and paper, cannot be too carefully attended to, as the neglect of either of them will retard the learner's progress, and, in the end, prove a serious obstacle to the attainment of a free current hand, which, of course, is the ultimate object. If he is suffered to begin with wrong habits, they will grow upon him, and he will not be able to shake them off without much trouble.

"An hour's instruction when first beginning to write

is worth a week's after the pupil has contracted a careless or improper habit. To teach is easy, but to unteach is difficult,—is of general application, but to writing it is particularly applicable."

Great attention should be paid to the position of the body. The pupil should sit in an easy, upright posture. The body should by no means press against the desk. The left side should incline towards the desk, the feet placed obliquely, in the same direction with the slant of the writing, and the weight of the body supported by the left arm, so far as necessary to be supported by either; thus he will escape all the evils consequent upon a distorted stooping position; which are, first, discomfort and constraint, then pain, and lastly disease; for when the body is thrown forward, the chest contracted, and this posture becomes habitual, it is, unquestionably, the origin of many pulmonary complaints which too often terminate fatally.

The injurious effect produced by leaning in the manner indicated by figs. 1 and 2, must be apparent. An upright, natural posture, would not only be more graceful, but give greater ease and freedom in the management of the pen.

The edge of the desk should be an inch or two above the bend of the elbow when the arm is drawn close to

the side. The seat must be placed near the desk, so that the pupil may not be obliged to reach forward. Let the right arm rest *lightly* on the desk, near the elbow, and be kept three or four inches from the body, and the left arm extend upon the desk, in a horizontal position.

It is a common fault with children to lean so heavily upon the right arm as to produce a violent tremor in the hand; and the irregular, imperfect writing, of many persons arises solely from this cause.

The copy book or paper should be placed directly in front of the right arm, parallel with the edge of the desk, and be kept steady with the fingers of the left hand, thus:

The pupil must move the arm at intervals, in a horizontal direction, so that his hand and elbow may always be in a line with the place where the word is to be written, and parallel with the sides of the paper. At each remove, he should again rest his arm, near the elbow, and write the next word or words, so far as convenient; and so on to the end of the line.

II. *The manner of holding the pen.*—The position of the hand and pen also demand special attention. The following directions should be strictly observed:

1. Hold the pen, loosely, between the thumb and first and second fingers, with the scoop downwards; so that both sides of the nib may press equally upon the paper.

2. The first and second fingers must be stretched to their full extent; the thumb, on the contrary, should bend outwards, and close on the pen at the lower joint of the fore-finger.

3. Keep the hand in an upright position,—the knuckles pointing to the ceiling,—and support it on the tip of the little finger; the third finger being inclined inwards, so as not to impede the motion of the pen.

4. Let the *nib* of the pen incline to the right, and be an inch from the end of the second finger.

5. Turn the hand well over to the *left*, so that the nail of the second finger may be in sight.

1 2. 3.

Many persons, from the want of proper instruction, hold the pen in the crabbed, ungraceful manner, shown in fig. 1; others place it between the first and second fingers as indicated by fig. 2.

The teacher of penmanship, who would be successful, must not suffer the least inaccuracy in any of the foregoing particulars to escape his notice and correction. For although it is very laborious and requires great patience, to regulate the position of the body, paper, pen, &c., as often as is necessary, yet the correct method in all these matters must be acquired before the pupil can attain to any degree of excellence in the art. If left to practice

by himself, he will be liable to continual error, and there is no limit to the mischief flowing from a wrong beginning.

III. *The forms and proportions of the letters.*—The general convenience which teachers find, or imagine, in beginning their instructions on this head, at the time when they first put a pen into the hand of the pupil, induced me in the foregoing remarks to concede that the use of the pen and the forms of the letters might be taught simultaneously. In my opinion, however, they should be learned separately. I am far from recommending that the forms of the letters should be taught by mere verbal instruction. But every person of observation must have remarked, that a child, long before he is taught to write, amuses himself with making pictures, or, more properly, scrawling figures with such materials as he can lay his hands on. This natural inclination requires only to be properly directed, and the shapeless figures may be made to assume proportion and symmetry.

"Writing, as well as drawing," says Pestalozzi, "ought to be first practised on the slate, for the child learns to handle the pencil neatly and correctly at a much earlier period than the pen. The use of the slate has, moreover, this advantage, that whatever may be wrong, can easily be effaced and corrected; whereas, on paper, where this is impossible, one ill-shaped letter generally leads to another. Hence it is, that in looking over the pages of a copy book, we find so frequently lines in which a regular progression of bad writing can be traced from the beginning to the end."

It may naturally be asked, since penmanship is to be taught, why not give the child a pen from the first? The answer is ready: it is desirable that his attention should

be confined to one thing only at a time, and if we put a pen into his hand at first, his attention is alternately occupied by two objects, each of which is new, and consequently difficult to him, viz. the manner of holding and conducting the pen, and the forms and proportions of the letters. The distraction of mind which follows this constrained attention to two things at once, is apt to produce the ill effect, that neither is learned well or easily; this is prevented by simply teaching one thing at a time.*

Let the child, therefore, continue to use the slate and pencil merely, until he attains a clear and distinct idea of the forms and proportions of the letters, and when this is accomplished, he will have nothing to do but to learn the use of the pen. These observations, it must be understood, apply only to young beginners.

* "Not only children, but any body else," says Locke, "that would do any thing well, should never be put upon too much of it at once, or be set to perfect themselves in two parts of an action at the same time, if they can possibly be separated."

ANALYSIS OF THE LETTERS.

These elementary principles should be made familiar to the pupil by means of oral instruction, practical exemplifications upon the black board, or otherwise, as may be found most convenient.

ANALYSIS OF THE LETTERS.

No. 1 is a simple right line, square at top and bottom, firm, full, and of uniform thickness throughout. It forms the first part of *h*, *k*, *p*, and the last part of *q*.

No. 2 is a right line, square at the top, of uniform thickness, and terminated with a curved hair stroke at the bottom. It forms *i*, *u*, *t*, *l*, the last part of *a* and *d;* and, with a slight additional curve, the letters *b* and *w*.

No. 3 is exactly the reverse of the second element; the curve being at the top, and the right line square at the bottom. It forms the first part of *n*, *w*, and *r;* and the first and second parts of the letter *m*.

No. 4 is a right line curved at top and bottom. It forms the first part of the letter *y*; the second part of *h* and *p;* the last part of *m* and *n;* and, with a slight addition, the letter *v*, and the last part of *w*.

No. 5 is simply an oval. It forms the letter *o*, and the first part of *a*, *d*, *q*, and *g*. The left side of the oval forms *c* and *e*; the former by adding an inverted comma at the top, and the latter by adding a small loop at the right.

No. 6 is a right line, square at the top; gradually lessened in thickness as it descends below the line, and looped at the bottom. It forms the letter *j*; the last part of *g* and *y*; the lower part of the long *s*; and, when inverted, the top part of the letter *f* and long *s*.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE LETTERS.

The small letters may be divided into three general classes.

The first class consists of such letters as are composed of the right line turned at the bottom only, as *i*, *u*, *t*, *l*, *b*; or at both top and bottom, as *m*, *n*, *h*, *p*, *y*, *v*, *w*, *r*.

The second class consists of such letters as are composed of the oval only, or the oval and right line united; as, *o*, *e*, *c*; *a*, *d*, *q*, *g*. The curved up stroke of *b*, *v*, and *w*, resembles the right side of the *o*, and so far these letters may be said to come under the second class.

The third class consists of the anomalous or irregular letters, *x*, *s*, *f*, *z*; to which may be added the last part of the *k*.

COMBINATION OF THE LETTERS.

Particular directions as to the formation and combination of letters can only be given, in practical lessons, by the teacher. The following rules may prove of some assistance, if properly exemplified upon the black board.

1. The proportions, &c., are regulated by the letter *n*; the width of which should be equal to half its perpendicular height, and is termed *a space*.

2. The simple right line, whether ascending or descending, must be twice the length of *n*; but, in all cases, the loop adds one quarter to the length of the letter. The exceptions are *t* and *p*.

3. The down strokes have their greatest thickness only in the direction of the general slope; for they neither acquire their fulness till they come to, nor retain it after they deviate from, the general slope.

4. When two or more right lined letters, or two parts of the same letter are united, by means of a single curve, as *it*, *ut*, *hit*, *hut*, *nut*, *mill*, *tulip*, the distance between them is equal to one space, or the width of an *n*.

5. When two or more right lined letters are united by means of a curve at top and bottom, as *in*, *un*, *inn*, *nn*, *mm*, *my*, *hy*, *py*, the distance between them is equal to a space and a half.

6. When two or more oval letters are united, as, *oo*, *oc*, *oe*, *od*; *bo*, *be*, *vo*, *ve*, *wo*, *we*, *wood*; or when an oval letter precedes and is joined to *i*, *u*, *t*, *l*, or *b*; as *oi*, *ot*, *ol*, *ob*, the distance between them is equal to three quarters of a space only. The last part of *b*, *v*, and *w*, is here considered as an oval.

7. When *c* or *e* come before right lined letters, and join in the middle, as *ci*, *cl*, *el*, *et*, *eb*, *ep*, the distance between them is equal to one space and a half; but when joined with a turn at the top, as *cn*, *en*, *cr*, *er*, *ex*, *cs*, the distance is equal to two spaces.

FORMATION OF THE CAPITALS.

The principal element in the capital letters resembles Hogarth's line of beauty. It forms the down stroke of *I*, *J*, *T*, *F*, *P*, *B*, *R*, *S*, *L*, *D*, and the first part of *H* and *K*.

The following rules should be carefully observed :

1. The height of the capitals is the same as that of the looped letters among which they stand.

2. The slope should correspond with that of the small letters, except *N* and *Z*. The down stroke of *N* should be nearly perpendicular.

3. The highest part of the top curve of *P*, *B*, *R*, and *D*, should be to the left of the body stroke. The indented turn in the last part of *B*, *R*, and *K*, takes place in the middle of the letter.

4. The upper and lower loop in the letter *H* are equal. The small horizontal loops at the bottom of *L*, *D*, and *Q* should be alike.

The capitals may be divided into six classes :

First Class.	Second Class.	Third Class.
A, M, N, W.	*C, G, E, O.*	*I, J, F, T, S, L, D.*

Fourth Class.	Fifth Class.	Sixth Class.
P, B, R.	*H, K.*	*U, V, Y, X, Q, Z.*

The letters *A*, *M*, *N*, and *W*, are formed from the right line pointed at top and bottom.

The letters *C*, *E*, *O*, and *G*, are formed from the ellipse or oval.

The first part of *U*, *V*, and *Y*, is a right line curved at top and bottom.

IV. *The movements of the fingers, hand, and arm.* The idea which the mind conceives of the forms of the letters, and the mechanical movements by which these forms are expressed upon paper, are two distinct things which ought never to be confounded; and it is respectfully submitted to the consideration of every candid and intelligent teacher, whether a more particular attention than has hitherto been devoted to the latter, would not be likely to produce better results than are generally obtained by the common routine of instruction.

The principal movements by which writing is executed are three:

1. That of the fingers and thumb, singly.
2. That of the fingers and hand combined.
3. That of the fingers, hand and arm, simultaneously.

The first and second movements are all that are requisite in the careful deliberate practice of large text, round, or formal small hand. The third and last movement is only applicable to free, off-hand, commercial writing.

The action of the pen should proceed from the *fingers* and *thumb, and not from the arm or fore-arm.* The free play of the fingers and thumb produces a slight motion of the hand, which moves in a horizontal direction from left to right across the paper.

The fore-finger serves to keep the pen steady, and exercises a considerable influence in the formation of the down strokes. The middle finger supports the pen, and its movements coincide with those of the thumb and fore-finger. The wrist must be elevated nearly an inch from the desk, in order that the hand may not be shackled in its movement from left to right. If the fingers are cramped and constrained the letters will be stiff, formal

and ungraceful. If the hand inclines too much over to the right, the pen is thrown out of its proper position—the nibs do not press equally upon the paper, and, consequently, the letters appear rough and unequal.

The exact proportions which some minute parts of the letters should bear to each other has been a subject of great, and, it is conceived, of unprofitable dispute. "We find one teacher advocating such a turn or slope, and another condemning it in toto, merely because it does not accord with what he conceives to be the beau ideal of penmanship; whilst neither party can give any substantial reason why one slope or turn is preferable to another."

The forms and proportions of the letters have their origin in the taste of individuals; and, from the nature of the case, can never be fixed with mathematical certainty. The forms which one generation admire, seem antiquated in the eyes of the next, and barbarous to a third. All that seems necessary in this particular is carefully to select the most simple and improved models for the pupil's imitation.

CHAPTER II.

PREPARATORY COURSE.—BLACK BOARD AND SLATE.—USE OF THE PEN.—LARGE TEXT, TEXT, ROUND, AND SMALL HAND.—CURRENT HAND.

THE pupil having been carefully instructed in regard to the position of the body, manner of holding the pen, analysis of the letters, and the movements by which they are executed, may now begin to practise what he has been taught.

At this stage of the process the copies are to be drawn upon a large black board, placed in full view of the class. Each pupil is then required to examine the model attentively, and to imitate it as nearly as possible upon his slate.* These preparatory exercises may, for order's sake, be conveniently divided into six lessons; but the child should be perfectly familiar with the first before he is advanced to the second, and so on throughout the whole course of instruction. He should be led by slow and almost imperceptible gradations from the simplest rudiments to the more difficult combinations of letters and words.

* The slates used for this purpose should be ruled, one half with horizontal and diagonal lines, at the distance of a quarter of an inch apart, and the other half with horizontal lines only. The diagonal lines are useful in the practice of *single letters*, and such combinations as occur in Lesson I.; but beyond this they tend to embarrass the child and impede his progress.

LESSON I.

The first lesson consists of the simple right lined letters, *i*, *u*, *t*, *l*, which are similar in form, and will present but little difficulty. Having drawn the letters upon the black board, the teacher first calls the attention of the class to the subject under consideration by pointing out the relative height, width, and proportion of the several letters, the resemblance of the constituent parts, the lines where the hair strokes commence and terminate; the uniformity of the turns, &c. &c. The pupil then writes a line of each letter, and continues this practice until *i*, *u*, *t*, *l* can be drawn with a tolerable degree of accuracy and facility. He should next combine the letters into syllables and easy words, as *it*, *ut*, *tit*, *tut*, *ill*, *till*, *tilt*, *lit*, *lull*, &c. See rule 4, page 31.

LESSON II.

The letters next in the order of simplicity and similarity are *m*, *n*, *h*, *p*. These are to be explained and illustrated as before, and when the pupil can draw them singly, they are to be united with the letters in the first lesson, so as to keep up a continual repetition of what has been previously taught. The same progressive arrangement in the words must be observed, thus: *mit*, *nit*, *nut*, *nil*, *null*, *mill*, *mull*; *hit*, *hut*, *hilt*, *hull*; *pit*, *put*, *pull*, *pip*, *pup*, *pulp*, *tulip*; *in*, *un*, *inn*, *nun*, *tin*, *tun*, *him*, *hum*, *pin*, *pun*, *plum*, *plump*, *pump*, *thump*, &c. See rules 4 and 5.

LESSON III.

In this lesson the pupil may be introduced to the oval letters, *o*, *c*, *e*. The construction of these letters should be clearly explained, and when the pupil can draw them

with accuracy they should be practised in combination with the letters of the two former lessons, thus: *on, ton, tom, lot, tool, hot, cot, not, cool, oil, toil, coil, pool; ten, hen, men, pen, nine, mine; ice, nice, mice, niece, piece,* &c. See rules 6 and 7.

LESSON IV.

The compound letters, *a, d, q,* and *g,* come next in order, to which are added *j* and *y*. The only new formation in this lesson is the *j*, which constitutes the last part of *g* and *y*. All the other parts of *a, d, q, g,* and *y,* having been previously taught, these letters will be comparatively easy to the pupil. They should be united into words as before, thus: *at, all, tall, ail, tail, nail, mail, ale; aid, laid, maid, paid, lad, had, pad, mad; oiled, toiled, coiled; quit, quilt, quoit; gilt, guilt, age, adage, gage; my, toy, joy, coy, cloy, alloy, you, young, youth, hymn, thy,* &c.

LESSON V.

Should consist of *b, v, w,* and *r*. There is nothing new in this lesson except the termination of the letters. The *w* may be formed in two ways, either from the *n* or *u*. The peculiarities of these letters should be carefully explained and exemplified, and the words selected for practice should be such as end, if possible, with the new letter, thus: *tib, tub, hub; how, tow, low, now, cow, mow; nor, poor, car, ear, near, pear, tear; our, pour, hour, tour; live, give, hive, love, dove, move, wove, oar, roar, mirror, involve, bewail,* &c.

LESSON VI.

The sixth lesson consists of the anomalous letters, *x, s, f, z,* and *k,* which require particular study and attention.

The words most suitable for practice are such as: *ax, tax, mix, coax, hoax; is, us, thus, this, list, must; if, of, lift, loft: fur, for, far, fear, fire; luck, milk, chalk, make, kill; maze, gaze, gauze; zero, zeal, zealot, zealous, indifferent, horizontal, possessions,* &c.

The arrangement of this preparatory course of instruction in writing is, with some slight modifications, similar to the method adopted and recommended by Pestalozzi, and, to use his own words, its advantages are :—

1. The child is kept a sufficient time to the drawing of the elementary lines of which the letters are composed.

2. These elements are put together according to a gradual progress, in which the most difficult letters are placed at the end, and their formation is moreover facilitated by the previous practice of less difficult formations.

3. The exercise of combining different letters with each other is introduced from the very moment when the child is able to draw one correctly, and is calculated upon the progress in the formation of single letters, so as never to include any but those which have become individually easy and familiar.*

"We have seen," says a writer in the Scholastic Journal, "the junior classes of a school instructed in the formation of letters with the aid of the black board and chalk in the following manner :—Each pupil of the class, having his slate properly ruled, proceeds to imitate a certain letter of which he has a copy containing a line of the same letter written on a card, the size corresponding with

* Biber's Memoir of Pestalozzi, page 241.

the ruling on his slate. There is a monitor appointed, who is employed for the first five minutes in seeing that all the pupils have pencils properly prepared. The teacher, while the class are in the act of writing, walks round and notices whatever imperfections characterize each of the pupil's attempts; and any line that exhibits careless or ill-formed letters he wipes out, in order to be better written. He is also careful to notice whatever general imperfections characterize the writing of the class, and then draws their attention to the proper formation of the letter, by chalking it in bold outline on the board; he next sketches, more faintly, the direction or inclination of the stroke in which the pupils have a tendency to err. A copy of a single letter, carefully written in this manner, constitutes a lesson; and thus the class proceeds through the alphabet. Of the success which attended these elementary writing lessons, we can speak with confidence."

In the Normal School at Barre, a somewhat different mode is adopted. "A large black board, ruled with horizontal lines at proper distances from each other, is placed in front of the writing class. A letter is then selected for the lesson. Suppose it be the letter *a*, the teacher draws eight or ten upon the black board. One of these he makes as perfect as possible, but each of the others is made to deviate from the pattern letter: one to extend above the upper line, another to fall below the lower line; one not to reach the lower line, another not to reach the upper line; in one the swell of the *o* part should be too full at the top, in another at the bottom; in one the curve should be too acute, in another too broad, &c. &c., until the infinite forms of wrong are sufficiently exhausted. The letters are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c. We will suppose the model letter to be the fifth in the series. The class being arranged in full view of the board, with their writing materials before them,

the teacher asks,—'Which of the letters upon the board is the most perfect?' and waiting till every pupil has had time to form an opinion, he then names the scholar who is to answer. The reply will probably be *the fifth;*' if not, the teacher inquires whether any member of the class is of a different opinion, and if so, it is signified by holding up the hand. After a unanimity of opinion is established as to the pattern or model letter, the teacher begins with No. 1, and inquires in what its defect consists? The pupil who is called upon to answer, describes what he supposes to be the error in the formation of the letter. If the answer be incorrect, the general question is put whether all agree in the opinion expressed; and the matter is discussed and settled as before. But if the answer should be correct, then the teacher proceeds to No. 2; and the same course is taken with all the remaining imperfect letters. After the whole series has been thus disposed of, the teacher, with more or less minuteness, as he may judge necessary, recapitulates what has been decided in regard to each letter. Thus, 'You say, No. 1 fails to be a correct letter on account of this excess; No. 2, on account of this defect; but that No. 5 comes near being perfect. Now, write a line of this letter in which all the faults specified shall be avoided, and all those beauties you have named copied.' This done, the teacher inspects their work. Wherever he finds that a pupil has deviated from the model letter, he calls attention especially and distinctly to that point; he shows the pupil how he has violated his own rules, gone contrary to his own decision, copied a letter (pointing to it) which he had declared to be incorrect, and failed to imitate what he had pronounced a model. Such lessons may be repeated, with any number of variations, until the pupils are exercised, not only on all the individual letters, but on their various combinations."—*Common School Journal.*

The plan of teaching writing adopted in the Irish National Schools, is thus described :—

"Before the children are permitted to use the pen or pencil, the writing master teaches them how it should be held; the proper movement of the hand, and the most approved position of the body. When thoroughly instructed in these preliminaries, they commence with the elementary forms of written characters,* and in classes. Each class occupies a desk, and over each a monitor is appointed, whose business it is to assist the writing master. All the children in the class write the *same element, letter, or copy.* They commence at the same moment, and at the word of command, and are expected to finish about the same time; and as soon as one line is written, an examination takes place. The pupils are directed to *compare* what they have written with the copy before them, and to find out the *defects* in their imitation of it. The master then takes up one of the slates or copy books, and calls upon its owner or any of the other pupils, to state what is defective in this or that letter; and the answer will probably be, that it is either 'too long,' or 'too short,' or 'too wide,' or 'too close,' or 'too much,' or 'too little sloped.' The master will then very likely, observe, 'I am glad to find that you know how the letter should be shaped; by comparing what you write with the copy before you, and by endeavoring to make every line and every letter better than the preceding one, you will soon become good writers. Always bear in mind, that it is *quality*, not *quantity*, that is required; — careless writing is not merely a waste of time and paper; it is laying the foundation of a bad method, which, if once confirmed, it will be impossible to remedy.'"—*Outline of the Methods of Instruction.*

* See analysis, page 28.

The method of teaching writing, devised by M. Mulhaüser, of Geneva, which has recently been introduced to the notice of English teachers, "depends for its success," we are told, "upon a very careful analysis of the written characters; presenting to the child, first, the simplest, and afterwards, in series, the more difficult forms; combining the elements into letters, in the order of their comparative simplicity, and writing words at each step, containing only the letters which have entered into the previous lessons." This, however, is precisely the plan adopted by Pestalozzi; and it does not differ essentially from that generally pursued by teachers in England.

The distinguishing and *only* novel feature in Mulhaüser's method, is his analysis, by means of which the child is taught to form the letters from a dictation of the elements. The elementary forms or component parts of the letters are reduced to four, which are: 1. The right line. 2. The curve line. 3. The loop. 4. The crotchet.

The advantages claimed for this novelty, are, that it "calls into action the intelligence of the pupil," and enables him to obtain with ease an exact idea of the forms of the letters. How far such is likely to be the case, every practical teacher can judge. One trial will be abundantly sufficient.

The length of the letter *i* is termed a "height." The right line varies in length according as it passes above or below the space occupied by an *i;* thus, the *t* is one height and a half; *l, d, h, k, b,* two heights. When the right line goes below the short letters it is indicated by the word *down,* as in *q, p, j, g, y, f*..

MULHAÜSER'S ANALYSIS OF THE LETTERS.

1. 2. 3. 4.

1. The right line. 2. The curve line. 3. The loop. 4. The crotchet.

The bottom turn is called a link; the top turn, a hook; and the *o* a double curve. The other modifications of these elements are termed half curves, half links, and half crotchets.

"The points or dots over the *i* and *j* are understood, without indicating their place. It is enough also to say *bar* for the *t*, and *link* for the *s*, since the places of these lines respectively are determined. The elements should be dictated in the order in which they are to be written, emphatically, and without repetition. If, during the dictation, an element be needlessly repeated, or spoken out of its proper order, the error of the master is transferred to the writing-book." ! !

The dictation of the alphabet from the elements is as follows:—

"Double curve; right line, link; *a:* right line, two heights; link; crotchet; *b:* curve, link; *c:* double curve; right line, two heights; link; *d:* loop, curve, link; *e:* loop, one height above; right line three heights, one height *down;* crotchet; *f:* double curve; right line, two heights *down;* loop, half link; *g:* right line, two heights; hook, right line, link; *h:* right line, link; *i:* right line, two heights *down;* loop; half link; *j:* right line, two heights; hook, half curve; half curve, link; *k:* right line, two heights; link; *l:* hook, right line; hook, right line; hook, right line, link; *m:* hook, right line; hook, right line, link; *n:* double curve, half crotchet; *o:* right line, two heights and a half, one height *down;* hook, right line, link; *p:* double curve; right line, two heights *down;* half crotchet; *q:* hook, right line; crotchet; *r:* link to the height; two half curves; *s:* right line, height and a half; link, bar; *t:* right line, link; right line, link; *u:* hook, right line; link, crotchet; *v:* right line, link; right line, link, crotchet; *w:* hook, two opposite curves; link; *x:* hook, right line, link; right line, two heights *down;* loop, half link; *y:* crotchet,

right line, hook; curve, one height *down;* loop, half link; *z*." ! !*

The observations contained in the present chapter have, thus far, kept mainly in view the best means of attaining a knowledge of the forms and proportions of the letters; but the most difficult task in teaching this art is to develope, invigorate, and discipline the muscular powers of the hand; in other words, to establish a habit of holding and managing the pen properly. This is no easy matter; and, in this respect, the ordinary modes of *initiation* are radically defective.

The construction of the hand is such as to incline it to follow the direction in which it has been previously moved, rather than any other. This disposition may be called its bias. It is thus we account for the mannerism which distinguishes one person's style of writing from another—even of persons equally skilled in penmanship. Now, if a learner contract an improper habit of using the pen, his progress will be impeded; because he has to oppose a counteracting tendency of the hand to move in a wrong direction; and any attempt to effect a change, will cause him to write, for a time, even worse than before—hence the necessity of establishing correct habits at the outset is obvious.

To expect a child, during his first and feeble efforts with the pen, to act with any beneficial effect without guidance or assistance, is in vain; and to hold and guide his hand would be difficult indeed. But suppose it were possible to direct the hand so that it would be left free

* M. Lebrun, the director of the Normal School at Versailles, speaking of this method, says, "These *enigmas* both amuse the children and accustom them to reflect." ! ! They are somewhat puzzling, I must confess; the dictation of *k*, *x*, *s*, and *z*, more particularly.

and pliable, and that the child could not err, except through carelessness or inadvertency; is it not clear that he would speedily acquire that easy, regular, habitual motion, by which writing is unconsciously and inevitably executed? Is it not clear, if the pen be held and managed improperly, that every repeated effort will tend to confirm a bad habit, and to unfit the learner more and more for attaining that ease and command which are essential to the penman? Is it not also clear, that if the hand can be made to move, from the commencement, in the right direction, it will, by the strong force of habit, be predisposed ever after to form the letters correctly?

Now, the means by which these important ends may be attained consists in tracing over pencilled characters in the first instance, and when a tolerable degree of ease and facility in the use of the pen is acquired, the pencilling* should be gradually omitted, and the guidance confined chiefly to the slope, height, and width of the letters, by means of horizontal and diagonal lines; proceeding, in this manner, from the simple formations to the more complex combinations.

"The way to teach a child to write," says Locke, "without much trouble, is to get a plate engraved in large characters, and let several pages be printed off in red, which he is to go over with a pen and black ink; this will quickly enable him to form those characters, and when he can do that well he must exercise on fair paper, and so

* It will be objected, perhaps, that in teaching drawing, this principle of tracing would not prove effectual, and therefore it will not answer in writing. But the cases are not analogous. In drawing, the forms are infinitely varied; but in writing there are only six elements from which the letters of the alphabet are composed; and when these six elements can be properly executed, the art is, in a great degree, mastered. We do not, however, follow the method of tracing farther than is necessary to establish a correct habit of holding and managing the pen.

may easily be brought to write." Again; "the method of teaching anything to children is by repeated practice, and the same action done over and over again, until they have got the habit of doing it well; a method that has so many advantages, whichever way we come to consider it, that I cannot but wonder (if ill customs could be wondered at in anything) how it could possibly be so much neglected."

In no art is precipitation less necessary than in writing; for when once the child can be brought to form the elementary characters neatly and correctly, he will experience very little difficulty in combining them into letters and words. Let him, therefore, be kept, one, two, or even three months, at the practice of what is usually termed "pot-hooks and hangers," till he can hold his pen rightly, and make the down strokes straight, of uniform thickness, with the proper slope, and at equal distances.

The initiatory exercises should be at least one inch in height,* so as not to cramp and restrain the movements of the thumb and fingers.

I am convinced, from the most decisive experiments, that nothing has so great a tendency to promote the speedy attainment of this art, as the practice of large text. It strengthens the muscles, prevents all cramped and effeminate habits, gives great facility of execution, and prepares the pupil to write a current hand with freedom and ease. It serves also to fix in the mind a just idea of the proportions of the several parts of the letters, at the same time

* It is a mistake to suppose that such exercises are "too large" for the young beginner. We have only to take hold of a child's hand in the act of writing, and endeavor to alter the position of his pen, wrist, or arm, and we shall find that, so far from a want of muscular power, there is an excess of it. The difficulty, if any, arises from *not holding and managing the pen properly.* "To correct any awkward habit in the form or inclination of the letters," says Barrow, "one of the most useful expedients is to make the pupil write a much LARGER hand than he has ever before attempted."

that the pupil is habituated to a steady and continued movement of the fingers and hand.

The pupil should write slowly, carefully, and with the most pointed attention to the forms, proportions, and slanting position of the letters, as well as to the manner of holding the pen. Indifference and want of correctness, once permitted to pass with impunity, is sure to lay a foundation for much future trouble.

The custom that prevails, in too many schools, of giving the pupil a copy, and allowing him to write page after page without examination, and, indeed, without superintendence, except, perhaps, an occasional recommendation to "mind his writing," is highly pernicious.

The teacher who wishes to be successful, must, during the writing lesson, lay aside all other thoughts and cares, and give his undivided attention to the subject before him. It is not the quantity but the quality of the instruction that eventually benefits, and it is easier to teach three pupils who began properly, than to correct the confirmed bad habits of one.

Each pupil in the class should be visited in rotation, and his writing carefully examined, before he is allowed to proceed with a second line; otherwise he will go on heaping error upon error, till his faults become habitual, perhaps beyond remedy.

Above all, every line should be corrected by the teacher, before the next is written, so that the errors of one may be amended in the next. If a stroke is crooked, a line should be drawn through it with a pencil, that the pupil may more plainly *see* the deformity. If the tops or tails of his letters are unequal in length, let a horizontal line be drawn through them, to show that inequality. If one letter is wider than another, or any letters are unequal in distance from each other, let them be measured, that he may observe the disproportion. In the next line

he writes, let him be requested to correct these and similar errors.

When the pupil has acquired the ability to write large text with ease and correctness, he should commence with the capital letters. Practice upon these will give additional freedom, improve his taste, and accelerate his general proficiency in the art. He should next write an alphabetical set of copies in text hand, beginning each word with a capital letter; and let this practice be continued, till he can make the turns similar to each other, the joinings at their proper places, and the letters of a uniform slope.

Both master and pupil will do well to recollect, that he who aims at writing a free mercantile hand, must *first* perfect himself in large text.

Let not the pupil, therefore, think of attempting current hand till he can write handsome copies of text. This accomplished, he may proceed to the practice of round hand, which he will soon be able to execute neatly and correctly. He may then write, alternately, a page of text, round, and small hand; but should his writing become feeble and irregular by reducing it, let him return to large text, which will speedily correct it. The large text, text, round, and small hand, are written by the movement of the fingers and thumb. The capitals, however, and letters of an inch or more in height, should be written by the combined movement of the fingers and hand.

CURRENT HAND WRITING.

There are three qualities essential to fine penmanship—legibility, elegance, and expedition. The first two are all that can be acquired in learning to write text, round, or small hand; the last, which is no less indispensable,

must be the object of separate and particular instruction. It has generally been considered that nothing but practice was necessary to the attainment of a rapid current hand, and that all instruction in this respect was superfluous. But Mr. Carstairs contends that this view is erroneous, and that expeditious and uniform writing is the sure result of certain mechanical movements, which can be taught by the master, and imitated, and perfectly acquired by the pupil.

It will be found that every elegant and ready penman, often without being conscious of the fact, uses the hand and arm as much, and as readily, as the fingers, and the more so in proportion to the rapidity of his execution. The reason is obvious: as the words proceed from left to right, it is evident that any one who depends on the use of the fingers alone will be unable to write a word extending an inch or more upon the line, without having his hand thrown over from left to right, in order to allow for the action of the pen upon the paper. The third and fourth fingers remaining fixed, while the other two are carrying the pen to the end of a word, the hand is cramped and strained. On finishing a word the hand is jerked along, and the under fingers made to take up a new position. This they retain till the hand is turned nearly over, and the fingers that hold the pen are again stretched as far in advance of the others as they can bear, when a new jerk is given, and so on till the writing is finished.

Let any bad writer observe his own mode of execution, and, in nine cases out of ten, he will find that he bears the weight of his arm upon the wrist, and uses the two last fingers as a fixed prop. Thus his writing is uneven and crooked, and how can it be otherwise? The radius of the circle of motion is very short, reaching only from the end of the middle finger, which is fixed, to the point

of the pen. The centre of motion is changed every time he lifts his wrist, and his writing continually tends to take the form of successive segments of small circles; to prevent which, he is obliged to make constant efforts to keep a straight line, and thus wearies and pains his fingers. The root of the principal faults in the common methods of teaching penmanship, seems, therefore, to be this: *that the pupil is directed, or permitted, to rest the wrist, and generally also the third and fourth fingers, and to execute the writing with the fingers alone.*

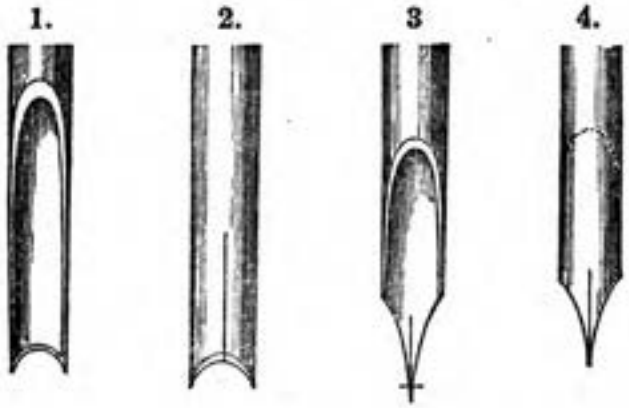
The only means of avoiding the difficulties above mentioned is to acquire a mastery of the movements of the hand and arm by which free writing is executed. To accomplish this object the learner should practice exercises composed of single letters and words, widely separated by means of horizontal lines running from letter to letter or from word to word. Each line should extend across the page and be written off hand without lifting the pen.

The object next in importance to a free movement of the hand and arm is a dexterity in the use of the fingers, the latter being as essential in the formation of the looped letters as the former is in promoting uniformity and despatch. To accomplish this, the learner should practise the short letters in combination with the long *s*; and also such words as *thy, phthisic, philosophy, philosophically*, &c., to be written in a free off-hand manner, without lifting the pen. See examples, pages 33 to 36.

DIRECTIONS FOR PEN-MAKING.

"Cut from the back and front of the quill about a quarter of an inch, then scrape off the thin rind to clear a passage for the slit, enter the edge of the knife even,

in the back of it, and slit it up by a sudden twitch, keeping your thumb tight on the back, to prevent its going too far. Then enter the knife sloping half an inch above the upper end of the slit, and cut away the cradle piece (fig. 1); turn the quill, and cut away one shoulder;



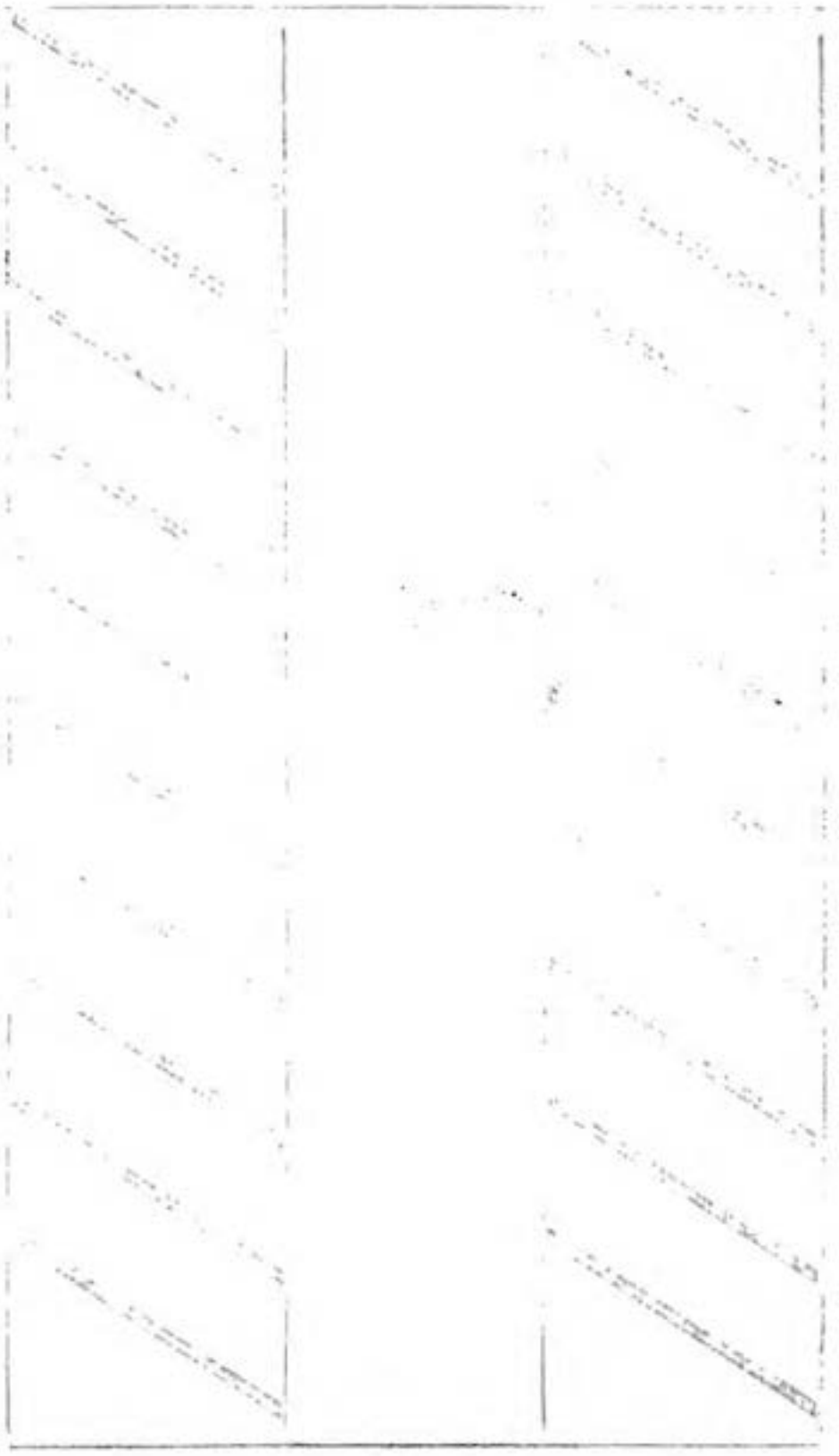
then turn it again, and cut away the other shoulder, making each side of the slit equal, and bringing both sides down to a point (fig. 3); then place the nib on the nail of the left thumb, holding the quill fast between the fore and middle finger, place the edge of the knife across the point, slanting it towards the back of the quill, cut off the point, then hold the knife upright, and cut off the point a second time, though very little of it indeed." (fig. 4.)

ILLUSTRATIONS

AND

EXAMPLES.


BRITISH MUSEUM



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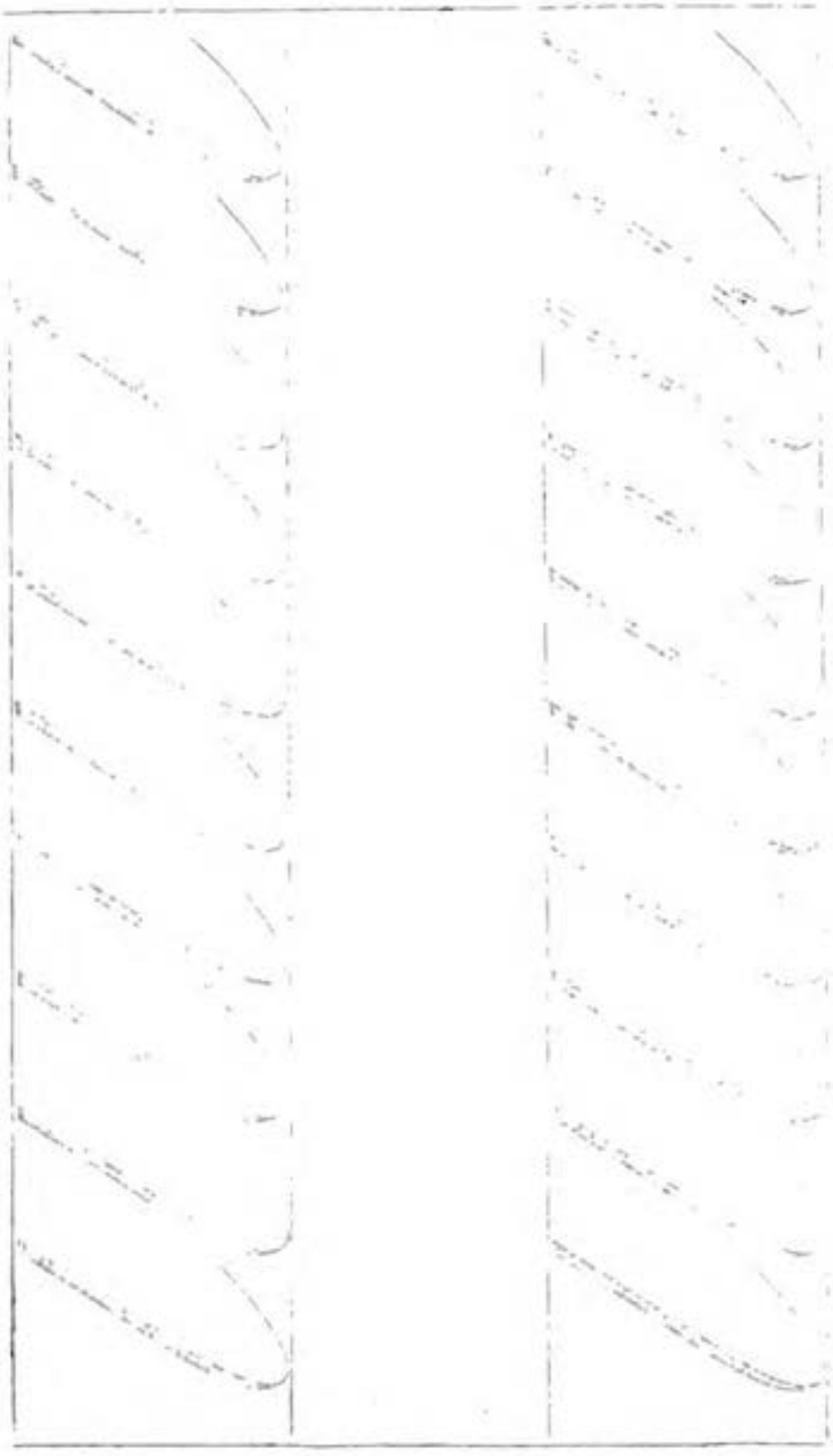

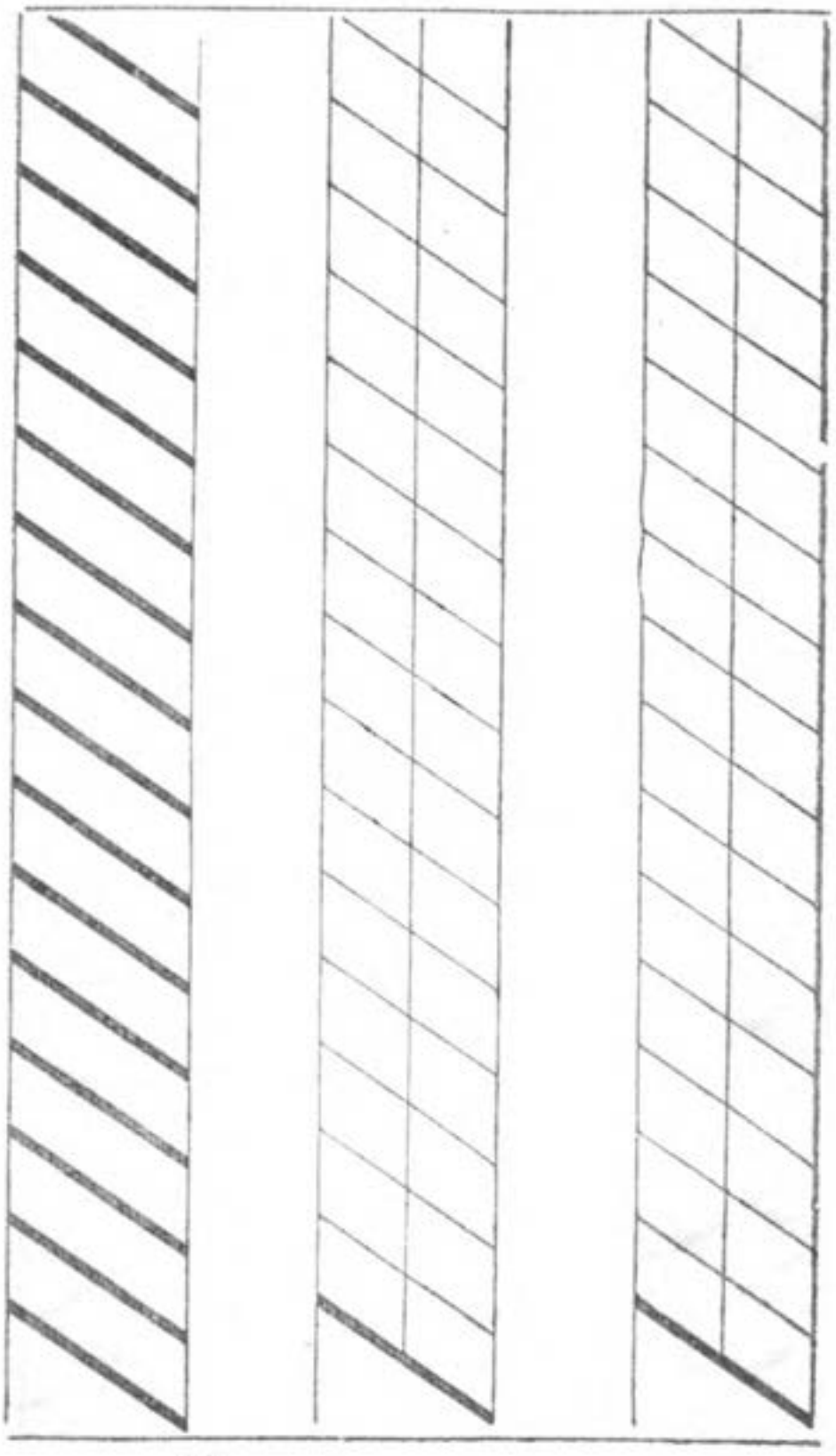

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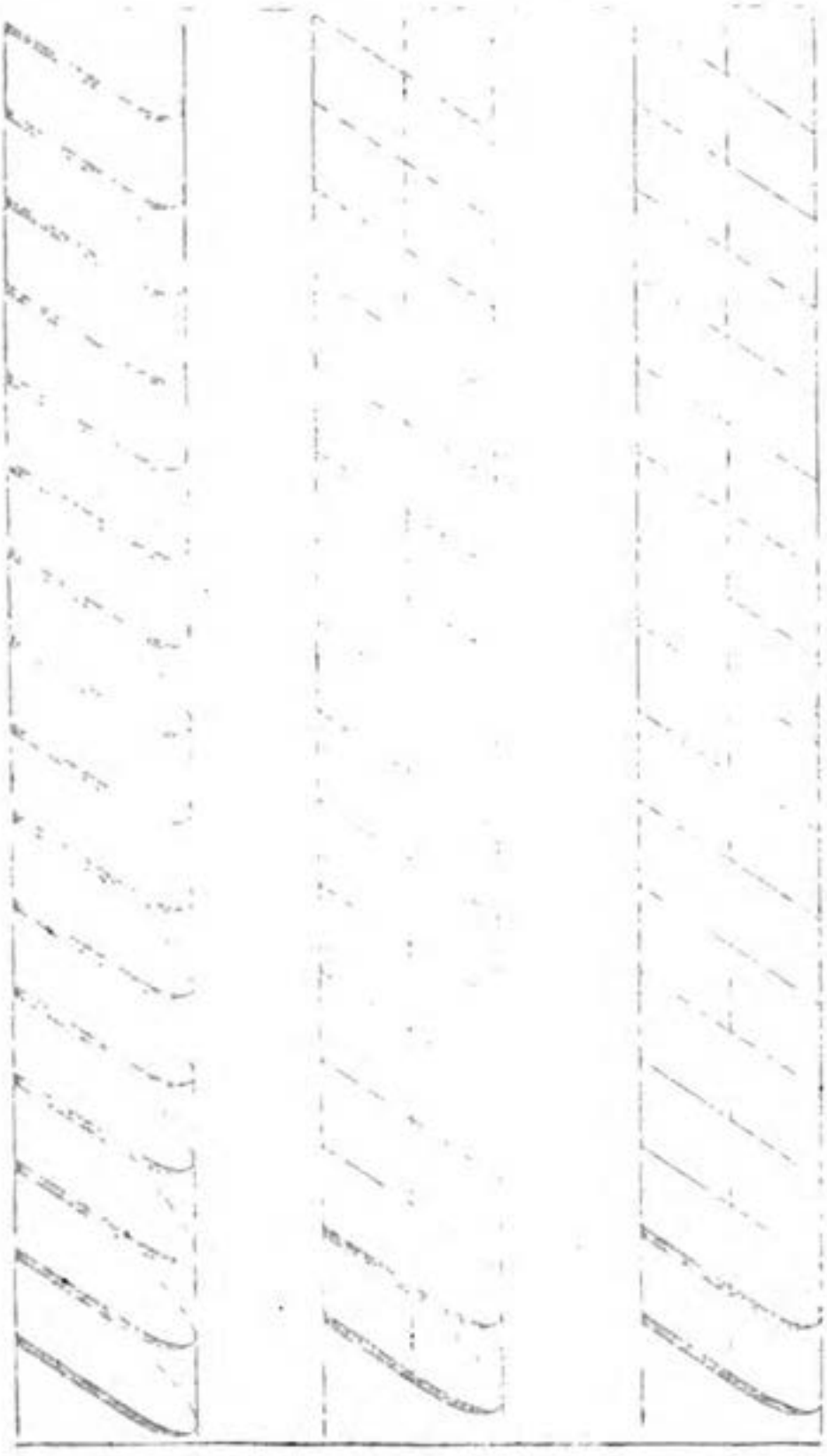

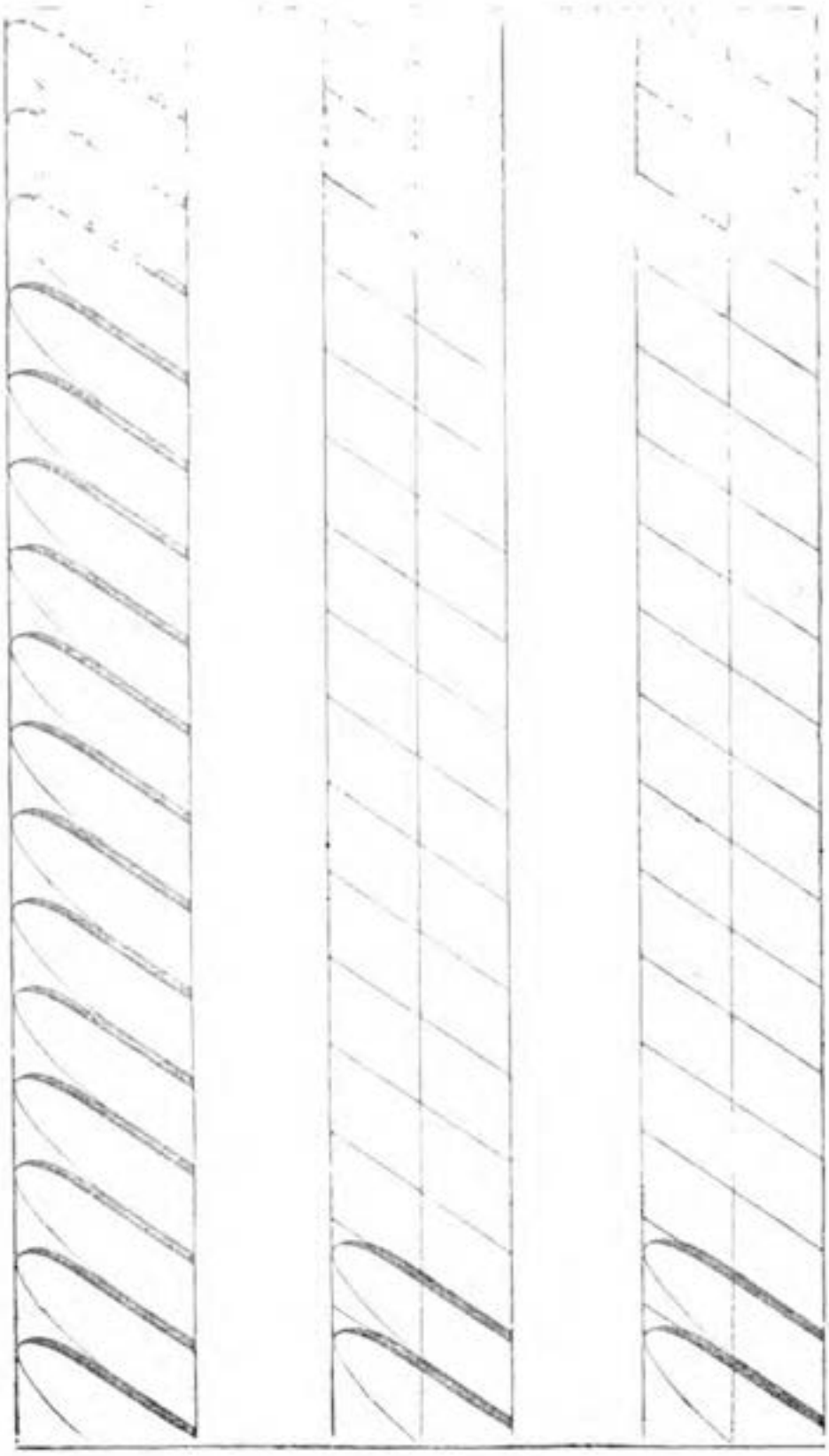

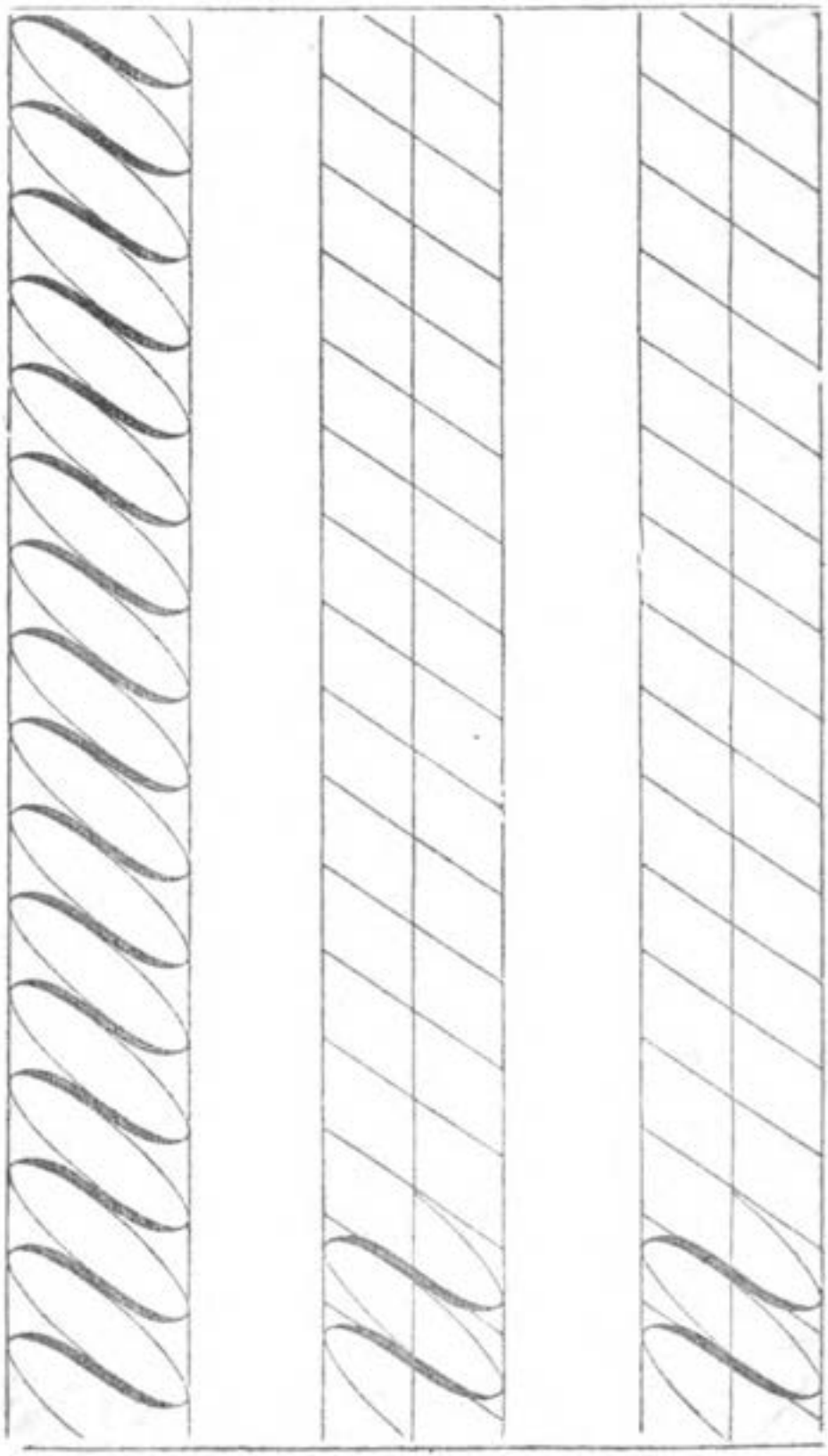

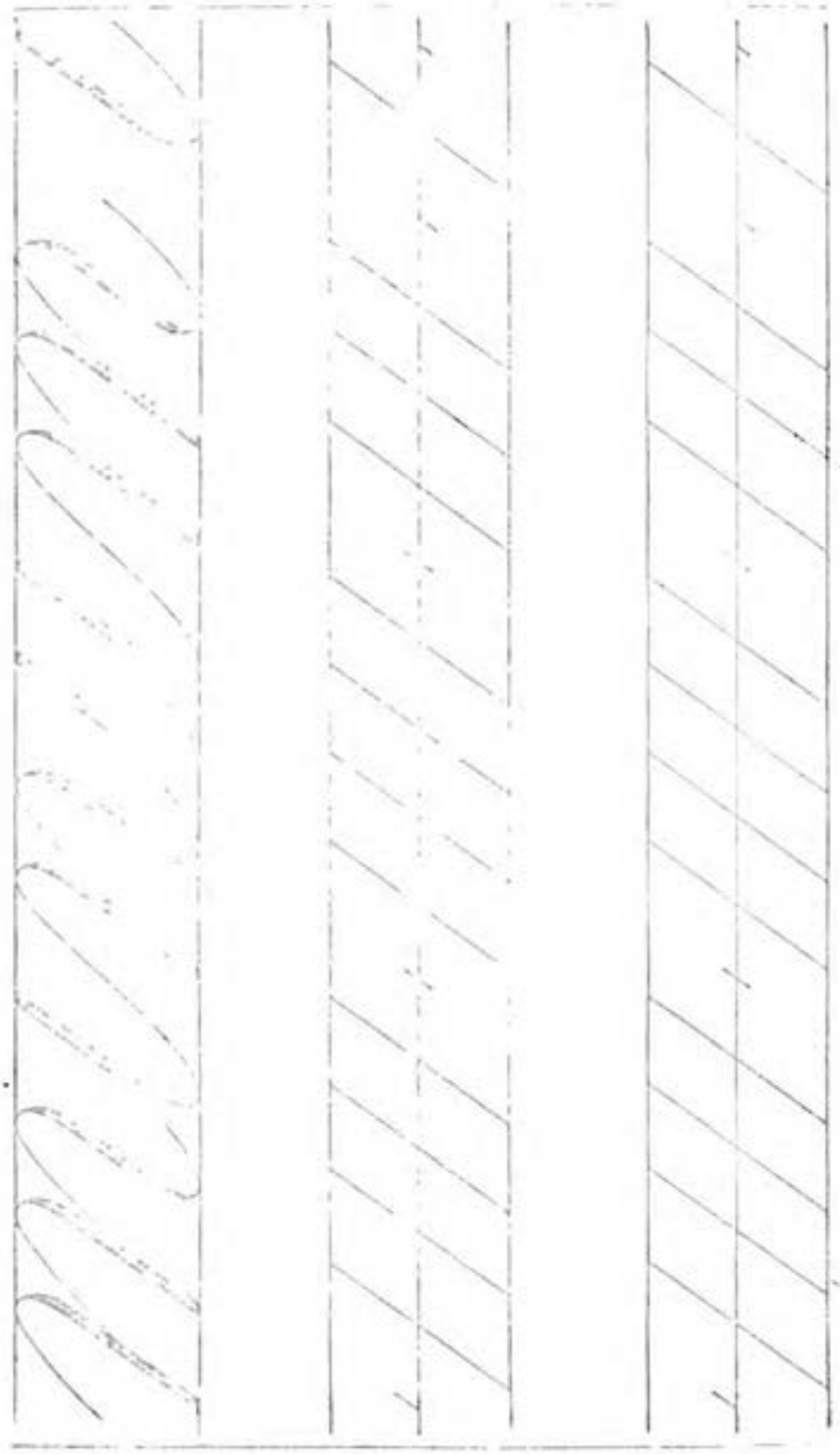

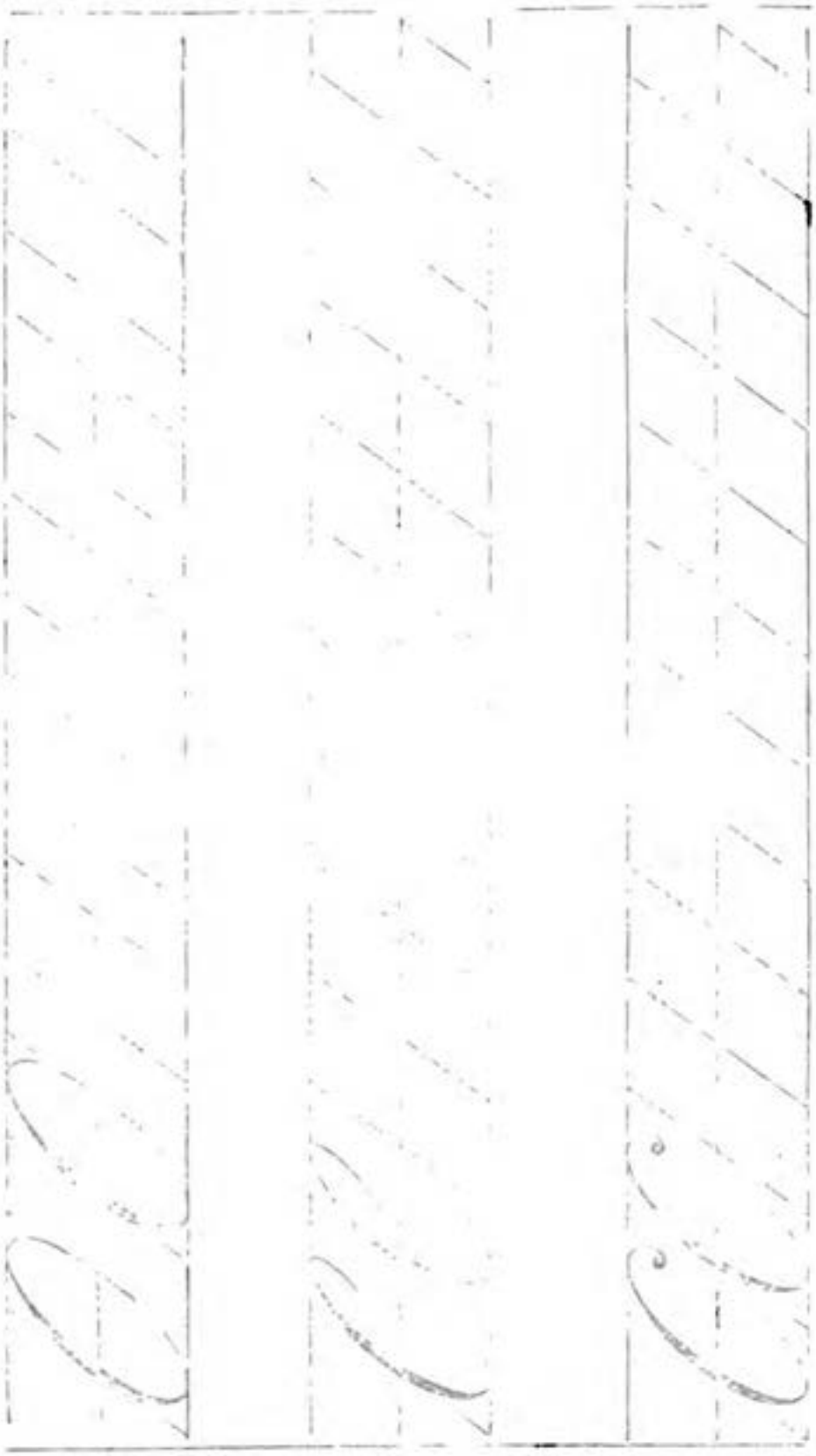


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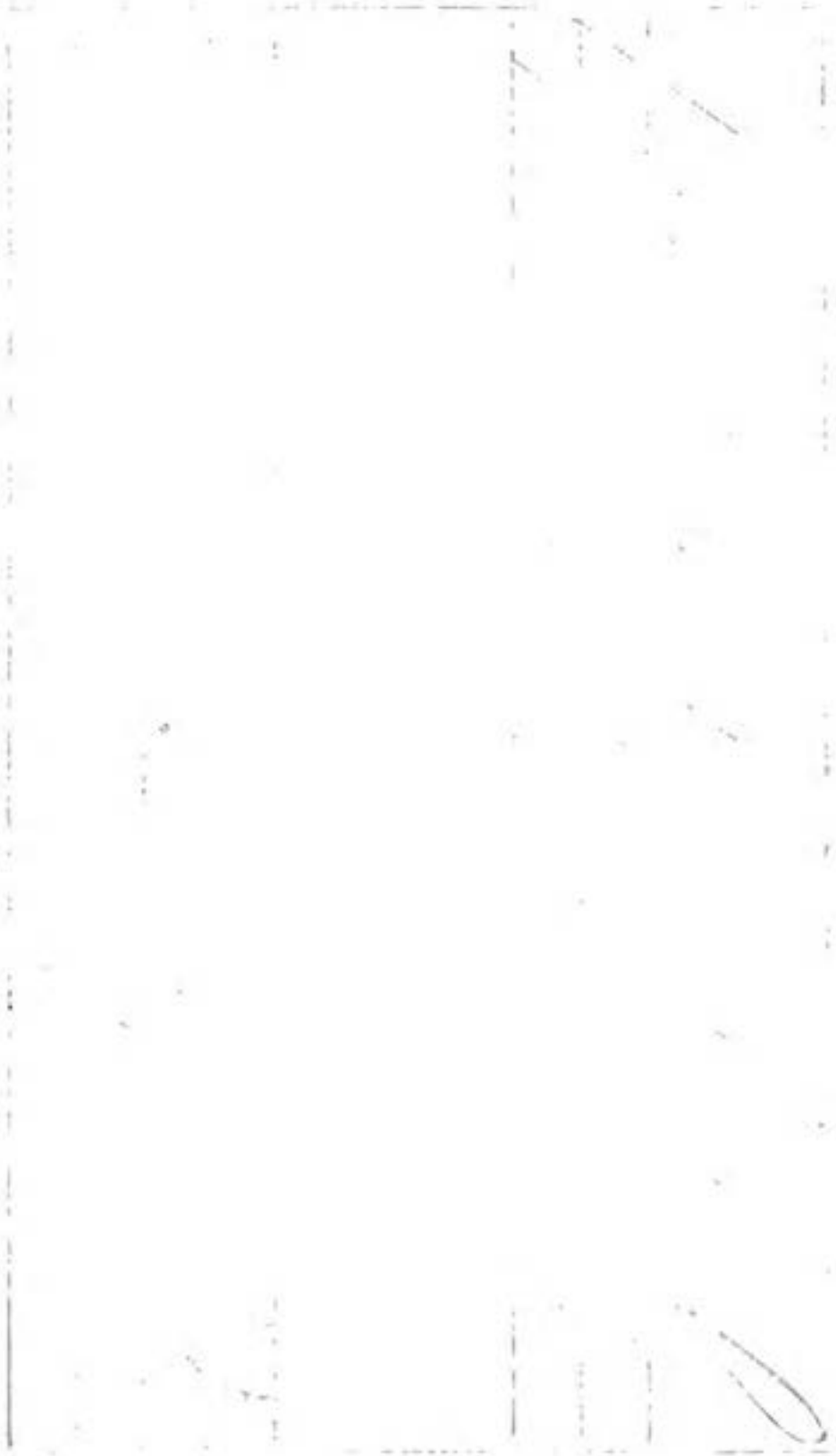

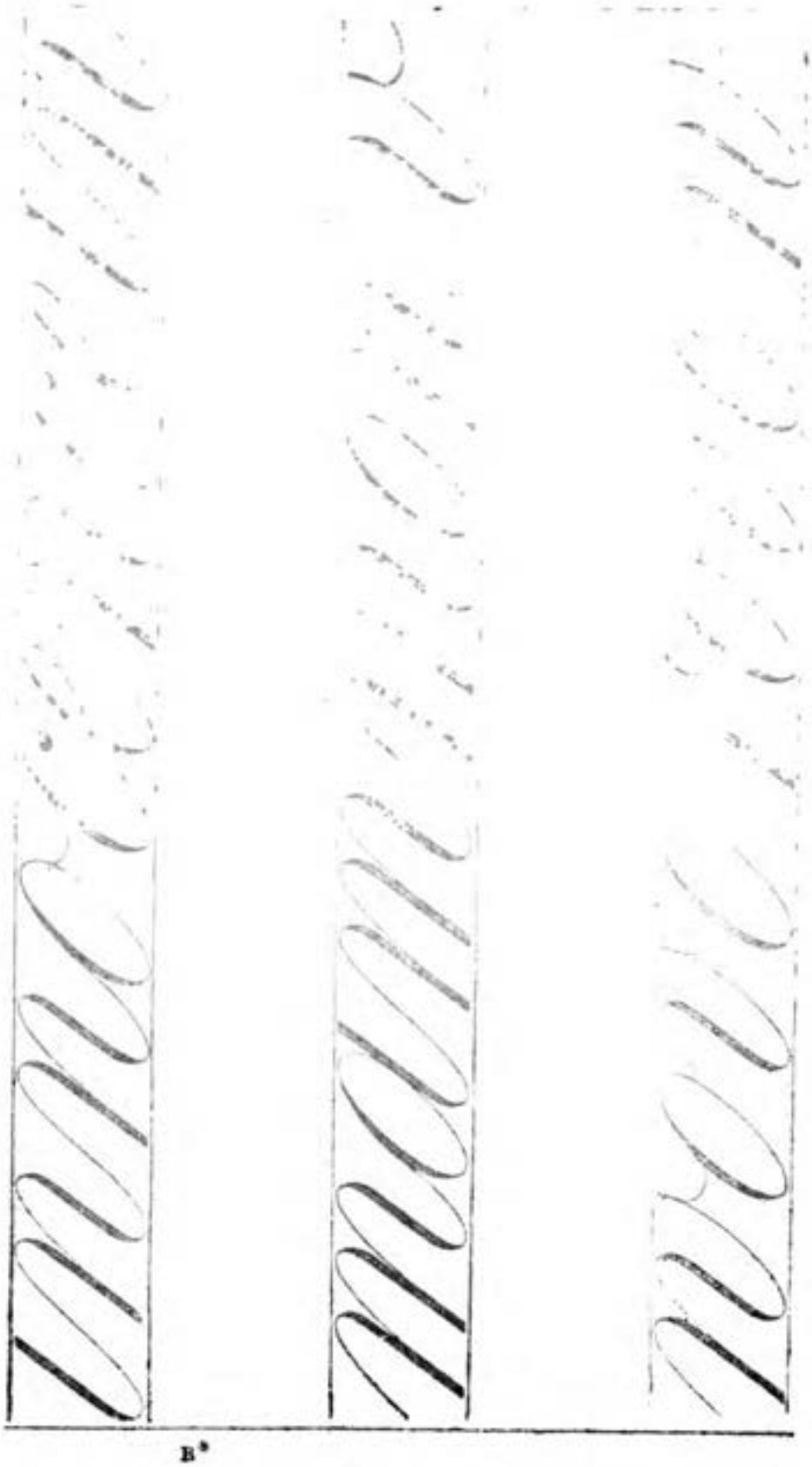

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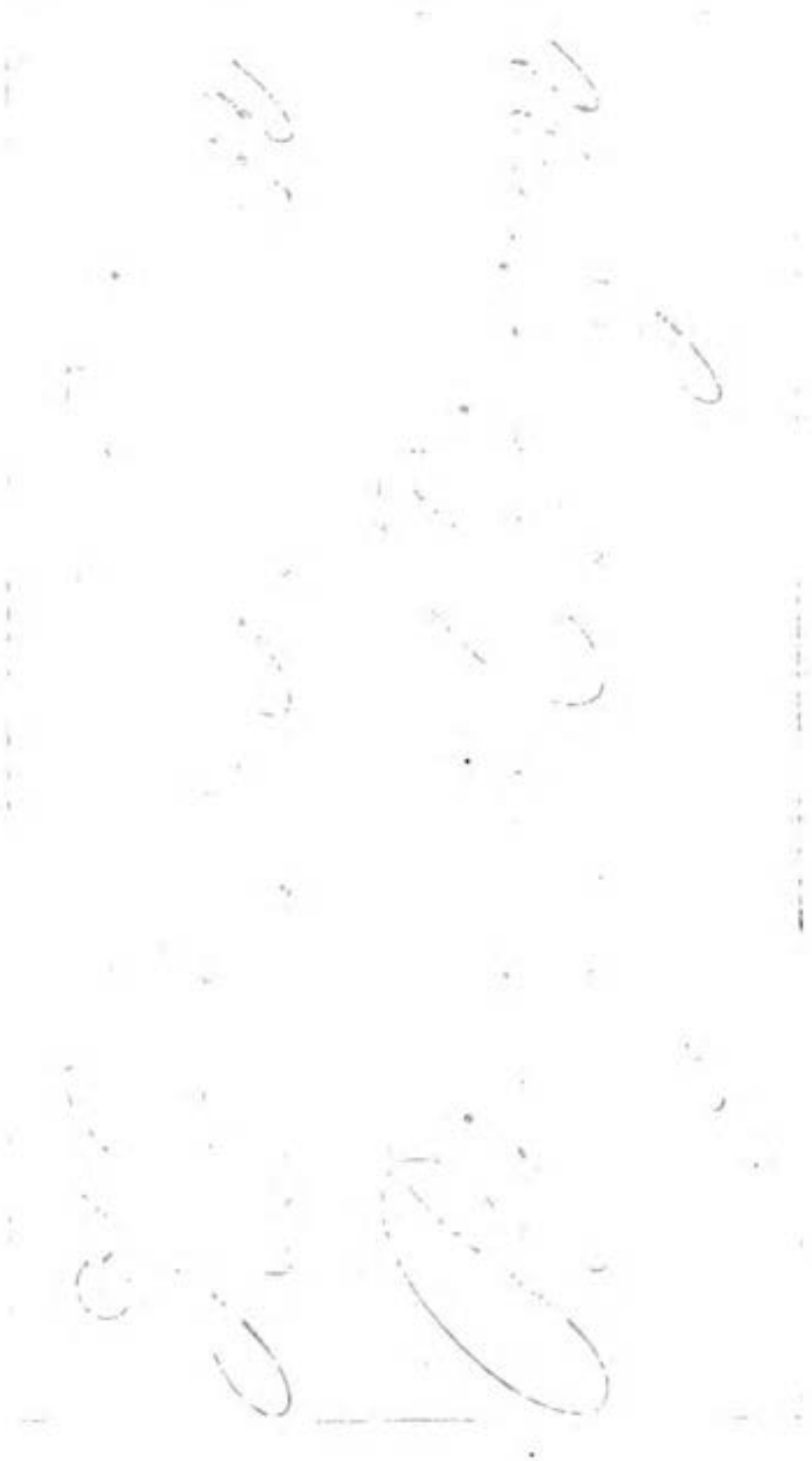

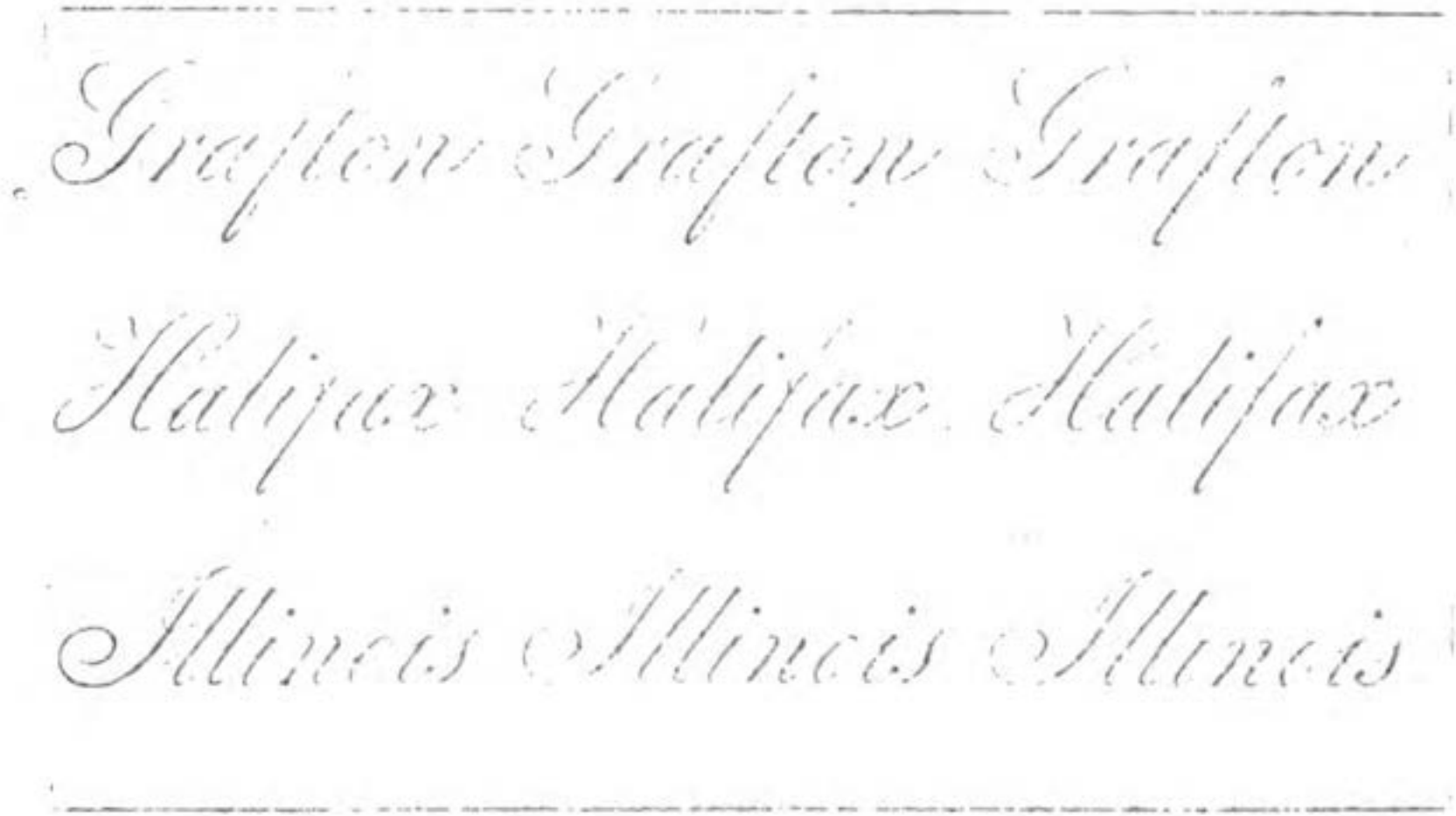
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Penmanship Science Art

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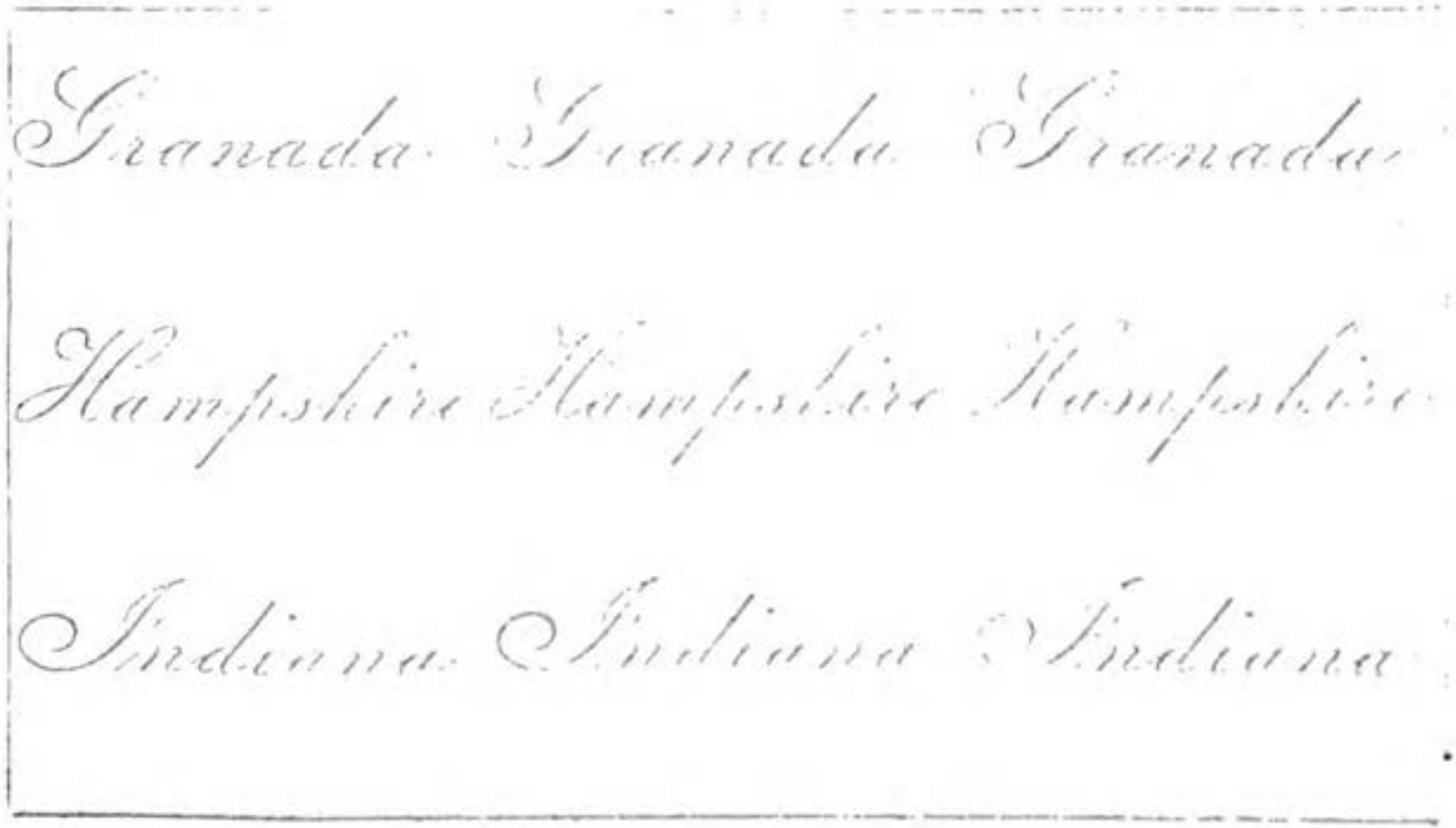
Movement Position Rules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