

ECLECTIC EDUCATION SERIES

Manual of Methods

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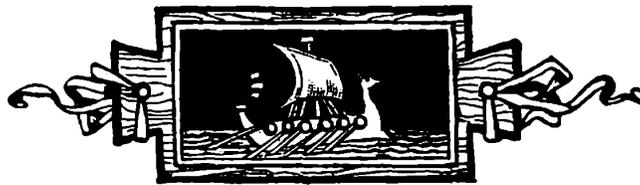
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THE
ECLECTIC MANUAL
OF
METHODS

FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF TEACHERS



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THE
ECLECTIC MANUAL.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Manual is the outgrowth of numerous requests from young and inexperienced teachers of country district schools in nearly every part of the United States for assistance in their work. While it is therefore addressed particularly to this class, it is hoped that it contains many suggestions which will prove useful, also, to teachers generally.

During the past few years, there has been a strenuous effort made in many states to evolve some degree of symmetry and order out of the chaos in which the ungraded schools have heretofore existed. Superintendents have held meetings and discussed methods and the proper use of text-books; they have also, in many cases, issued manuals to their teachers, setting forth the results of the conferences, and making many valuable suggestions as to the future conduct of the schools. These manuals, although frequently differing in unessential details, agree in recommending a definite and uniform

course of study, and, as far as may be possible, a uniformity of text-books in classes.

Wherever these suggestions of the superintendents have been followed, the schools without exception have been improved in character. But many difficulties confront the inexperienced teacher, regarding which he receives no aid from the superintendent's manual. Not the least of these, perhaps, is owing to the fact that he does not understand how to use his text-books to the best advantage. In order to use a book properly, a teacher must know what the aim of the book is; on what plan it has been constructed; and in conformity with what method; how far its text is merely suggestive, etc. As the Eclectic Educational Series is used very generally in the district schools throughout the country, the Publishers feel themselves called upon to aid in supplying such information in regard to these books and their use as will assist the teacher in securing the best possible results. With this object in view, the following books of the Eclectic Educational Series have received full and careful treatment: McGuffey's Revised Eclectic Primer, Readers, and Spelling-Book; the New Eclectic Penmanship; Ray's New Primary, Intellectual, and Practical Arithmetics; the New Eclectic Elementary and Complete Geographies; Harvey's Revised Elementary Grammar and Composition, Harvey's Revised English Grammar; the Eclectic History of the United States; the Eclectic Physiology and Hygiene.

The several books mentioned have been prepared in conformity with those modern methods of teaching which are recognized by the most advanced instructors as the best. It has been the endeavor to show in this Manual what the method is for each subject, and how it should be applied. Suggestions as to details have been given wherever it is felt they will be of service, but they must be viewed in the proper light, as mere suggestions. For example, it is by no means desired to convey the impression that in our opinion the plan suggested for conducting the opening lesson in McGuffey's Revised Eclectic First Reader is the *only* proper plan for conducting that lesson. The same is true of all similar suggestions: it is not intended that they shall be followed servilely, but simply be accepted as hints. Each teacher must necessarily originate his own plan of conducting a lesson. Originality in this respect is indeed a necessary element of success; for the teacher must be able to recognize the particular needs of his own school, and must adapt his teaching to those demands. No amount of suggestions will give this power, nor can any one teach the knack of imparting information to others. It is a well known fact that many a wise man is a very poor teacher owing to deficiency in this respect.

A teacher's success, then, depends very largely upon natural gifts, but it also depends upon a thorough knowledge, not only of the subjects he teaches, but also of the methods and books that he uses. With this

knowledge added to the necessary natural gifts, a teacher, no matter how inexperienced, may look confidently for good results from his teaching. Without it, even the most experienced teacher can not attain the best results. To supply this necessary information in regard to the books of the Eclectic Educational Series is the aim of this Manual, and it is issued in the hope that it will prove of valuable assistance to all teachers who are using those books in their schools.

The Publishers take this opportunity of expressing their obligations to Superintendent R. W. Stevenson, Hon. Thomas W. Harvey, Miss M. E. Thalheimer, Dr. Eli F. Brown, and J. T. Stewart for their valuable assistance in the preparation of this Manual.

READING

I.

AUXILIARY STUDIES.

THERE are certain studies intimately connected with reading which should be taught in connection with it from the first. It will therefore be well to consider these briefly, and their relations one to another, as well as to the reading lesson itself, before taking up the details of the reading lesson proper.

The four important auxiliary studies to be considered are: Language Lessons, Writing, Object Lessons and Composition, and Spelling.

Language Lessons.—When the child first comes to school, he knows how to talk. He learned this art by associating certain spoken words with certain objects, attributes, and actions. He *imitated* the words that he heard, and thus in time learned to speak. If he has always heard correct language, his own language will for the most part be correct, and the errors he makes through inexperience or imperfect reasoning can be easily rectified. But the case is different where the child *hears* the same grammatical blunders and inelegant expressions day after day, at home or on the playground, and naturally imitates them. These errors can be overcome only by patient persistence on the part of the child's instructors. A child of well educated and refined parents, and one whose associates are cultivated persons, will probably have but little use for a grammar at any time; but such children are the rare exceptions, and the

teacher must prepare to battle against great odds. He has only the short time that the child is in school to weigh against the many hours spent by that child under adverse influences, therefore there is all the more reason why work in this direction should receive the most watchful attention. Never allow a grammatical blunder to pass uncorrected either in a child's speech or in his written exercises. Above all, the teacher should be careful about his own language, both as to the choice of words and the form of expression.

Do not make the mistake of writing wrong forms on the board, or elsewhere, for correction by young children. This may be done with profit in advanced classes, but it is best that a beginner should never see a wrong form of word or expression in the school-room. Correct all bad English instantly and quietly, but teach only the best, and bear in mind that the best is nearly always the simplest.

This instruction in language is of the greatest importance to the child. "Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined," and a man frequently bears unconsciously through life the marks of his early training. Habits of incorrect speech acquired in childhood become a part of a man's nature, and cling to him in his old age in spite of the cultivation of later years.

But language lessons should not stop with the correction of language; they should teach, also, the proper use of the different parts of speech and the meaning of words. We do not mean the formal rules of grammar, nor the formal definitions of the dictionary; but, by skillfully prepared and carefully graded oral exercises, practically illustrated, the child's vocabulary may be extended, and he may be taught to understand and to use

English correctly,—when to use *is* and when to use *are*; to distinguish between *this* and *that*, and *these* and *those*, *I* and *me*, *who* and *which*, *slow* and *slowly*, *strong*, *stronger*, and *strongest*, etc., etc.

Writing.—The reading and the writing of script should be begun with the first reading lesson. Children in the primary classes are occupied but a small portion of the time in reciting, and it is absolutely necessary to employ the remainder of their time in school in some way that will interest as well as instruct them. In no other way can this time be employed to better advantage than by having the scholars copy on their slates, or on the blackboard, both the printed and written forms of the letters and words learned in their reading lesson, for in no other way will the characters be so indelibly stamped upon the minds of the children.

To facilitate instruction in these writing lessons, we present, on the four pages following, the “Slate Exercises” to be found on pages 61–64 of McGuffey’s Revised Eclectic Primer. They will be found invaluable in this connection, and are repeated here for the benefit of those teachers who for any reason do not wish to use the Primer, and think it best to begin with the First Reader. In these Exercises, the small script letters are given in the order of their simplicity. They should be practiced as given in the copy, first separately, and then in combination, forming a word. It is not intended that the class should be confined to the exercises presented in the book. As rapidly as new letters are introduced, the teacher should form new words, and the exercises may then be multiplied at discretion.

By the time a child has completed pages 14, 15, and 16, he should be familiar with all the small script

SLATE EXERCISES.

W W W WWW

w w w www

S S S SSS

s s s sss

N N N NNN

r u w w

e a t eat

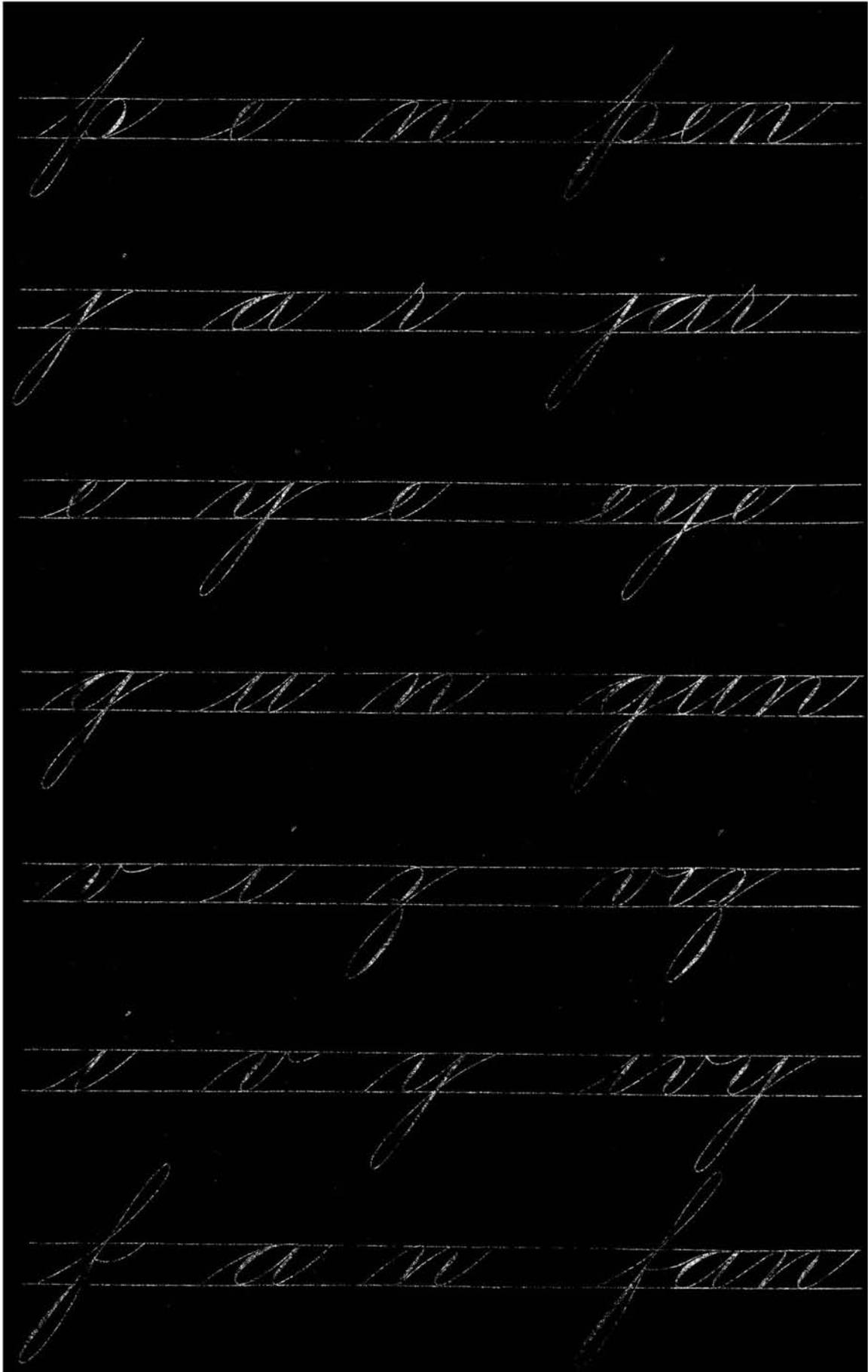
b a d bad

b o w box

h e n hen

k i d kid

y w o yo



SCRIPT ALPHABETS.

A B C D E F G

H I J K L M

N O P Q R S T

U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i

j k l m n o p q

r s t u v w x y z

SCRIPT FIGURES.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

letters. The capitals, given alphabetically on page 17, and the script figures should be taught gradually, according to the daily requirements of the reading lessons. The copies presented on these four pages may be used apart, if so desired, simply as writing lessons, and to employ the unoccupied time of the children, but this work should by no means be allowed to interfere with the writing to be taught in connection with the reading lessons, which should be conducted as follows:

Before beginning work, see that each child is provided with a slate properly ruled.* It is important, too, that each child should have a long and neatly sharpened slate pencil, for it must be borne in mind that this slate work is preparatory to work in the copy-books; and it is very necessary that the first steps should be taken properly, and that no bad habits be formed. The child must be taught to hold a pencil in exactly the same way as he will be taught in future to hold a pen. (See Hand-book to the New Eclectic Penmanship, page 24.) This is an impossibility with a short pencil. Moreover, a short

* It is necessary that this ruling be done very carefully, and, to secure the necessary accuracy and uniformity, the teacher himself should rule all the slates. The proper form of ruling is shown on pages 14, 15, and 16. The lines should be scratched on the slate with some sharp instrument, and care must be taken to make all lines exactly parallel and at right angles to the side of the slate, also to make the corresponding spaces precisely equal. A steel pen from which the points have been broken, leaving two stubs about one eighth of an inch apart, will be found of much assistance in scratching the lines properly. It is a good plan to rule the lines first with a slate pencil, and, when you have thus located them just as they should be, go over the pencil lines with a scratcher.

see that this is thoroughly clear to the pupils. Lest there should be confusion on this point, many teachers prefer to teach the writing of script only. With a little care, however, there need be no confusion, and practice on the printed forms certainly aids to fix them in the child's memory. Care must be taken, however, to advance very slowly at first. Do not introduce the second word until the first is fairly learned. When all the words are learned, they should be combined, and a part of the reading lesson for each day should be written on the slates, and then read aloud.

The script exercises throughout the Primer and Readers are made up of only such words as have preceded them in print. They present no difficulties, therefore, except as exercises in writing and reading script. Let them be used as copies for slate work.

Object Lessons and Composition.—As soon as the children have learned a sufficient number of words to make it practicable, have them compose sentences differing from those found in the book. The review lessons in the Primer and Readers are constructed entirely from words learned in preceding lessons, and the teacher can readily make others of a similar nature. At first it will be necessary to dictate sentences for the children to write, or to put sentences on the board for them to copy, but in a short time the children will be able to compose their own sentences, and they should be encouraged to do this as early as possible, for children should be led to think for themselves, and not merely to imitate.

The illustrations of the Readers should be used as the basis of object lessons, and short compositions should be written about them. Before giving a lesson of this kind