EDWARD COCKER
1651 - 1696

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LES FIGURES CALLIGRAPHIQUES

FORTY years ago Edward Johnston, the eminent English authority on penmanship, made the suggestion that every student of calligraphy should exercise himself in drawing "from hedgerows and from country gardens". In this way he emphasized the need for something to counterbalance a considered study based on a knowledge of the structure of types. He was appealing to the imagination that keeps a work alive and to the spirit that is continually rejuvenated by contact with nature.

Edward Cocker lived in the seventeenth century. In the early days the running Italic hand had been slow in replacing Gothic characters, which were the legacy of the clergy and were protected by them, and which were also to be re-

ved later by the English Romantics. But the royal court spoke in favour of the Roman, and the first known English book of penmanship in the Italian forms, that of Bauchoise and Baldon published in London in 1771, had already had its forerunners on the continent. It shows sober unemotional strokes that already stand in strong contrast to the signature of the Queen, who was quite given over to the new fashion of writing. Elizabeth seems to have looked into gardens. A luxuriant network of tendrils play round the letters of her name, a decorative form-language which her councillors soon learned to imitate. England's eyes were turned towards France. The English models of the seventeenth century are partly copied from the elegant French school, as are those of Gehrting,