CHESTERFIELD'S

ART OF

LETTER-WRITING

SIMPLIFIED.

BEING A GUIDE TO FRIENDLY, AFFECTIONATE, POLITE AND BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE, CONTAINING A LARGE COLLECTION OF THE MOST VALUABLE INFORMATION RELATIVE TO THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING, WITH CLEAR AND COMPLETE INSTRUCTIONS HOW TO BEGIN AND END CORRESPONDENCE, RULES FOR PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING, &c.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED THE

COMPLETE RULES OF ETIQUETTE,

AND

THE USAGES OF SOCIETY:

CONTAINING THE MOST APPROVED RULES FOR CORRECT DEPORTMENT IN FASHIONABLE LIFE, TOGETHER WITH HINTS TO GENTLEMEN AND LADIES ON IRREGULAR AND VULGAR HABITS, ALSO, THE ETIQUETTE OF LOVE AND COURTSHIP, MARRIAGE ETIQUETTE, &c.

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CHESTERFIELD'S

LETTER-WRITING SIMPLIFIED.

Good letter-writing is one of the mainsprings of business, and one of the strongest connecting links of common life. To write a business letter, and to write a familiar one, require as different qualifications as to enter a drawing-room and to knock at one's own street-door. Let us try to point out what these qualifications are.

Tact is equally necessary in both, but tact of a different character. In writing to a man of business, *brevity* becomes literally "the soul of wit," and true tact will teach us three things; first, never to waste time in more compliments than are demanded by the common courtesy due from one man to another; secondly, never to say anything that has nothing to do with the subject: and thirdly, always to say all that the subject really requires, and to say that clearly. A letter of ten lines will often fulfill all these conditions, when a lengthy epistle will bring back an impatient wish to "know the meaning of your communication of the —th." In writing letters, we ought to consider that we may be wasting another person's time more precious than our own, in the mere operation of reading, to say nothing of understanding and replying to them. But let us always remember, that it is possible to be brief and to the purpose, without being bearish or uncourteous.

Tact in familiar writing, and in some half-business-half-familiar correspondence (which enters constantly into our every-day life) consists in a clear and ready interpretation of our thoughts and wishes, as well as in a prompt and graceful understanding of those of another. Here we are less fettered by the pressing calls of time already over-employed; we are enabled to *speak on paper* (which is the great and true perfection of letter-writing,) and we mingle the

gentler feelings of home associations with the sterner calls of duty. But tact is no less wanting under these circumstances. Who would write to a child at school, to a friend just married, or to a dignitary of the church, all in the same terms? One may be familiar with all three.

And even on the most familiar occasions, and in addressing the most familiar friends, this tact will aid us in not a few material points. It will prevent us mistaking boisterous familiarity (and, too often, slang and vulgarity) for heartiness—carelessness in grammar for freedom of style (a mistake, unhappily, not confined to letter-writers only), and will give a refinement and gracefulness which enhance even the most tender passages of love and friendship.

Now it is candidly to be confessed that the art of acquiring this tact, (which is little else than the whole art of letter-writing,) is one of time, trouble, and difficulty. The earlier it be commenced, the better; but there are many, whose acquaintance with the world at large begins late in life—perhaps never begins at all, and from such persons much cannot be expected. A regular correspondence with those who themselves write well is unquestionably the surest means of attaining this end, and, next to it, the frequent perusal of such letters as form a part—and a charming part—of the writings of our best authors. To those who possess the opportunity of cultivating both or either of those resources, the examples contained in the following pages can teach little, excepting, perhaps, the art of saying plain things in plain words, and being able to say no more than is necessary upon a trifling subject—a matter which a great many very clever people find more difficult than they are willing to confess.

As to letters on courtship, matrimony, and such like matters, the editor candidly confesses that he should feel little sympathy with any gentleman who received a *printed circular* in answer to an address taken from a printed letter. Had he consulted his own inclinations, he would probably have excluded any attempts to deal with such matters (where befitting writing can only spring from the deepest recesses of the human heart); but, in deference to custom, he has prepared some specimens, and selected a few others, which he trusts will, at all events, not lead his readers to any of the displays of folly or misplaced romance, which too frequently form painfully-ludicrous episodes in the earlier acquaintance of the two sexes. A manly and honorable feeling towards the objects of our affections will, it is to be hoped, always suffice to prompt its honest expression, without running into bombast, extravagant adulation, or unreasonable and absurd protestations.

Howsoever humble, or elevated, there is no situation of life in which the "art of letter-writing" must not occasionally be found of vast importance. To the poor, it is a comfort, a solace, a blessing; with the middle and higher classes of society, it is an indispensable acquirement—an exhaustless source of enjoyment and pleasure. It ought to be regarded as an essential part of education. But, like other arts, it must be taught, or studied; for, whatever may be the scholastic advantages of the individual, it can rarely, if ever, be possessed by intuition.

Do you feel puzzled when you sit down to write a letter? Are you in a fix how to begin? Would you rather walk a mile to tell your friend what you have to say, than spend half a day in writing to him or her? Do you postpone the writing of a letter because it is "such a bother" until the occasion for writing has gone by, or the patience of your friend is exhausted, or you yourself "ashamed of having put it off so long?" Attend a while, and you shall endure these pains no more—you shall no longer suffer headache or cramp in the wrist, nor the loss of a day in accomplishing what may be done in a quarter of an hour, nor the worry and vexation of not knowing how to begin, or, having begun, how to go on, or how to leave off; nor the danger of breaking faith with the best of friends because, although you would if you could, yet you cannot, cannot write a letter.

Can you write a letter without hesitation, demur, or difficulty? Can you seize the pen, and, at once, commit your thoughts to paper as freely as you could speak them, stating your business proposals, your friendly assurances, your gratulations, your condolence, your love; or, in the formal language of reserved politeness, convey your acceptance or refusal of an invitation or a present, or your simple notification or acknowledgement of a fact? If you can do this you want none of our advices, and we assure you at starting that we do not believe we have a single hint to offer you—therefore, if you read on it is at your own peril, not ours.

But we do offer help to those who really want it—and their name is legion. Persons who are not accustomed to the use

of the pen find it a tough task to write a letter, and the difficulty is the greater in proportion to the insufficiency of their education. Many, even among sensible and well-informed people, are but poor hands at letter-writing, or even in the diction of a simple note, and they wonder how in the world it is that others of no better education than themselves are so ready in the use of the pen, so little embarrassed in the composition of sensible and even long letters. so happy in their expressions, so clear in their statements, their sentences so brief, so well arranged, and the whole tone of their correspondence characterized by good sense, good feeling, and true politeness. It seems as if there were a mystery about it which only a gifted few can understand ; whereas there is no mystery whatever ; comparatively speaking, nothing to be learnt; for whosoever can manage to scrawl with a pen, and spell the words in common use, might, with the exercise of a little patient perseverance, write down their thoughts as easily as they can speak them.

But, says the reader, " This is not exactly true ; for I have persevered for years, my hand-writing is really respectable, I can spell correctly, and I know something of grammar, and yet it costs me much labor to write a letter, and, after all, I seldom write one that pleases me, and (in confidence) I assure you, I frequently write half a dozen, and say the same thing in half a dozen different ways, and then destroy them all because there is not one that I consider fit for the occasion." What of that? The most accomplished scholar that ever lived, the most finished inditer of a model letter, found a little difficulty at first, and no literary man ever acquired the free and ready use of the pen without some stumblings at starting, and you have only to persevere in the *right direction*, to attain excellence in this necessary, useful, and ornamental accomplishment.

A well-written letter has opened the way to prosperity for many a one, has led to many a happy marriage and constant friendship, and has secured many a good service in time of need ; for it is in some measure a photograph of the writer, and may inspire love or hatred, regard or aversion, in the reader, just as the glimpse of a portrait often determines us in our estimate of the worth of the person represented. Therefore, one of the roads to fortune runs through the ink-bottle, and if we want to attain a certain end in love, friendship, or business, we must trace out the route correctly with the pen in our own hand.

Let us take the general case of letter-writing as practised by uneducated persons. Whatever be the subject of the letter on the occasion of writing, it is pretty sure to begin thus :

" This comes hopping to find you all well, as it leaves us at present, thank God for it."

In the next letter the writer varies the commencement for the sake of change, and begins :

" I take up my pen to write you these few lines."

By-and-by the writer begins to suspect that such a mode of beginning a letter is not very elegant, and eighteen cents are expended on that very remarkable work, " The Lady's and Gentleman's Complete Letter Writer, 90th edition." The time comes for another letter ; the " Complete Letter Writer" is dragged out from the darkness of the drawer in which it had hoped to conceal itself for ever, and an hour is spent in the search for a model letter that will just express the writer's feelings and ideas. But, alas! among the three hundred and forty-seven specimens of every style of correspondence, there is not one in which James is politely requested not to forget the boots, or Eliza is reminded that Walter still hopes to meet her, with sentiments unchanged, when next she visits New York ; there is nothing in the " domestic letters" to meet the case of baby's teeth, or Susan's blistering, or Jeremiah's illness and recovery, or the death of Mrs. Jones. The " business letters" say not a word about the administration of Jones's will, they do not even mention the apprenticeship of young Waggles. As to the " love letters," the writer thereof has made no provision for Jemima's acceptance of Joseph on condition that he will at once shave off his moustache, and take to all-round collars, and give up punning at the dinner-table. The " complimentary letters" are certainly very pretty, but they don't help one to present compliments to Mrs. Popejohn, and thank her for her kind present of a green cat, and a pair of turtle doves. No ; nor when the general form of any letter or note does happen to suit, can the copyist determine how or where to work in a little special request, or remark, or question, or, in fact, to make a respectable statement of any kind, save and except

what is actually printed; and for this good reason—that a printed letter saves the writer the trouble of thinking; and self-dependence, confidence, easy expression of ideas, are, of course, in any such case impossible.

The fact is, a complete letter writer is a complete sham, an absurdity. People want to write letters "out of their own heads," and it is impossible to give them "ready made" letters, which, like ready made shirts, shall fit every subject that may require clothing. We know a case of a gentleman —at least, a person—who offered his hand to a lady with the help of a letter writer. The letter began, "Reverend Miss;" how it finished the reader need not be told, but, of course the lover was rejected, and his "billy dux" went into the lady's museum of *curious* autographs. Perhaps he should have copied it "Revered Miss," but he should not have copied at all. Had he written what he really felt, in the best language he could command, he might have gained a hearing, and, perhaps, a bride; but he went to a dead sepulchre of words instead of speaking from his living heart, and deserved the snubbing for his pains. The first step, then, towards attaining the art of letter-writing is, to tear up the "Complete Letter Writer" into pipe-lights, or curl-papers; at all events, it must be got out of sight, and you must begin *de novo*, that is, out of your own head.

You want to write a letter, then, and you are puzzled how to begin. Will you write sentences on bits of paper, and accumulate them till you have a heap, then sort and arrange them, copy them out at length, and then correct and copy the whole? Nothing of the sort; yet this is the way *some* people write letters. We know a case of a lady who broke off an engagement with a gentleman, and who had occasion to return him a book which she had borrowed. She wrote an indignant letter, composed bit by bit till she had about half a peck of little sentences. When she came to copy them out the greater part were of a most objectionable kind; some, she remembered afterwards, were very bold, nay, insulting, in tone. But she managed to make up what she thought a very proper letter, and, by some strange muddle, gave him both book and letter with her own hands. But, alas! she had no sooner parted from him than she remembered she had tucked the half-peck of disjointed sentences inside the book, so that he not only had the letter, but

the corrupt pieces out of which it had been made. She hoped never to meet him again—let us hope she never did though he might have found her a sadder but a wiser woman.

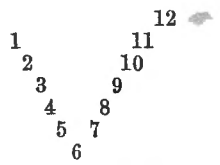
When you sit down to write a letter, think of your subject—of the circumstances you wish to state. On a spare piece of paper put down your loose ideas, your various points promiscuously as they occur. For instance, I will suppose that you have a dozen different heads, more or less, on which you desire to expatiate. Put them all down, (leaving a little margin on the left hand side of your paper,) no matter in what order, one after another, as they occur; a single word will in most cases suffice to lead your memory. Having proceeded so far, consider in what manner, in what order, the different heads of your letter may be arranged, so as to produce a harmonious and effective whole, and number them in the margin accordingly, 1, 2, 3, &c. There are three modes by which your task may be successfully accomplished; the mode to be determined by circumstances, and by your own taste and judgement.

First.—Suppose that you have numbered your subjects according to their intrinsic importance, 1, 2, 3, &c., and that you wish to treat of them in that order, commencing with No. 1. By this means you will first state your most important point, and then gradually descend, numerically, and close with No. 12, the least significant in the series. To this mode, unless for short letters, there is an objection; your letter incurs the risk of becoming tame, feeble and unimpressive at the close.

Second.—Number your subjects inversely; that is, let your first head, No. 1, be of the slightest consideration in the series; No. 2 will possess an interest somewhat higher; No. 3 will become still more interesting; your letter will thus grow upon the attention of the reader as he proceeds; and, by reserving the most important point till the last, it will terminate with a strong and impressive climax.

Third.—For long letters, or for letters embracing a great variety of subjects, this will generally be found the most preferable; but still as I have said, the mode must be determined by circumstances, and by the taste and judgement of the writer. Adopt, first the *descending*, and then the

ascending scale; from *superior* to *inferior*, and then from *inferior* to *superior;* something like this:



That is, commence with No. 1, as an important point, though of less importance than No. 12; thus descend in the importance of the respective points till you reach the bottom of the scale, No. 6; after which you may ascend from the comparatively insignificant point, No. 6, till you gradually reach the most important point of all, No. 12. Or you may number your subjects in a double series, according to the modes, *First* and *Second*, thus:

Superior	1	1	Inferior
	2	2	
	3	3	
	4	4	
	5	5	
Inferior	6	6	Superior.

By these means the *commencement* of your letter will be *good*, and its *termination* will be *better;* and calculated to leave a clear and strong impression on the mind of the reader.

You want to begin your letter, and it is to be a letter to a friend. Now just consider for a moment what you would say to that friend if he or she were present. The moment you have abstracted yourself, the first words of greeting will pass through your mind, then the inquiries, and your friend's responses. Quietly take a pen and write down those imagined words. But the moment you take a pen the words are gone, and your mind is as barren as ever; that is because you are trying to say something grand, to "write like a book," or like somebody else whose letters you like. Never mind how sentences are made in books, or how somebody else begins such pretty letters. Write *as you would speak*, write on till

you have written all you would speak, as far as the compass of a letter will enable you, and you will be surprised to find that you have explained yourself in a straightforward way, and with a feeling of grace that does you credit.

We beg you to depend wholly upon yourself, to write down your simple thoughts as they occur to you, and to state your requests, your replies, your sympathies and suggestions, just as if your friend were beside you, and you were talking as friends do talk. For instance, a young man is about to write to his absent brother, and he begins, "Dear Thomas." Then he is stuck fast, and he thinks of sending his letter "hopping to find brother Thomas well." Then the great event which he is to relate thoroughly puzzles him, and, at last, he writes "mother and father send their loves, and mother has been confined, and the baby is a girl, and its to be named Eliza."

But if he would imagine himself talking to brother Thomas, he would write in this wise:

"Dear Tom—

"As we have not received any unpleasant news from you, we feel assured that you are hearty and prospering. But if you are at all pinched in pocket, or out of health, don't hesitate to let us know, for we are anxiously concerned about your progress, and father would remit you a few dollars rather than that you should suffer inconvenience from scarcity of cash.

"You know what a quiet life we live, and can well imagine how excited the village has been lately, when I tell you that there is an addition to the family here—a thumping sister for you, Tom, born at twelve, on Tuesday night last, and 'mother and child doing well.' The nurse, old Hatchet—you remember her—says she is the finest baby she ever saw. She certainly is a fine child; but, upon my soul, she makes a horrid noise all night. I'm glad that my bed-room is at the top of the house, and I can patiently bear with the moaning of the pigeons when I reflect on the sort of serenades I should have if I slept in the room you had."

Of course, we might go on and compose a very long letter to brother Tom; but as it is impossible to *invent* a letter of any kind, suitable to more than one case in ten thousand; so it is absurd to invent incidents or imagine feelings, in the expectation that some lucky chance will make them suitable to any one about to write a letter. Our object is to impress

upon the beginner the necessity of writing what he or she may really think and feel, and to abandon all intention of producing an effect by fine writing, or hard words. That which you say directly from yourself will most forcibly appeal to the reader of your letter; and whatever the object of the letter—a mere interchange of friendship, a declaration of love, or a business proposition—it will be more readily attained by a letter written off-hand, than by one which may cost you a whole night of study, even if you nibble the pen into pulp, and spoil a quire of paper.

But if your letter, when so written, has an awkward look, go over it carefully, and strike out every word that seems superfluous. In this suicidal sort of task you will have to slaughter adjectives wholesale. Adjectives, my dear reader, are those words which express the qualities of things, and inexperienced writers are generally addicted to an excessive use of them. An extraordinary incident, a remarkable fact, a very strange and wonderful occurrence, a magnificent and splendid appearance, and so on, are to be regarded as excrescences which you must prune off, however fine they look for the moment. Run your pen through every word that can be spared, no matter how small the word may be; erase whole sentences if they are not strictly essential to convey your meaning; and when you have reduced the compass of your letter, you will remember something which you ought to have said, but which escaped you while writing; add any such omitted matters, and copy the whole out as clearly as you can, and you will be pleased with the new form of your letter, though you may have endured many pangs in erasing some portions of the original.

Let us have an example to help us. You write in the first instance, thus:

"I did not receive yours of the 18th till this morning, so that it has been six days detained by the post, which is very inconvenient, as the letter might have been of much more importance; and in that case you might have thought me negligent in not replying earlier, which I could not do of course, because I had not received the letter. I am glad to hear that your health continues so good, and I hope it will do so, and I dare say it will, for the air is good and the situation high where you are now living, and, by this time, I should think, very pleasant. It gave me very great pain, and much sorrow to hear of the sad news of your niece's continued illness, especially as I

have so much regard for her, and remember, as I shall always do, the very pleasant and agreeable mornings we used to spend together in walking over those remarkable ruins, where there are so many extraordinary beauties of scenery, and so much to interest the mind, in the contemplation of magnificent scenery and wonderful prospects at the Abbey. I am sure you will believe me very thankful for your kind offer which you state in your letter; but as I am so much engaged at home, and have to see to Harry's business when he is away on market-days, I cannot accept it, though I can assure you that I should be most happy to do so if circumstances permitted, and I could see clearly that I should be able to stay; because such an engagement is not of much use unless one can keep it for some time at least, and if I took it I should like to stay a year or two."

Perhaps, when you have got so far you may halt to take breath, and find your space exhausted; and then some important matter, which you had nearly forgotten, will have to be scribbled round the edges of the letter, as a sort of framework, being, perhaps, of more importance than the picture. Just write out this additional matter in a paragraph, and then go over the whole and see what you can cut out. You will find that you have wasted a great space in apologizing for not having replied earlier, in consequence of the delay of the post. You have been very diffuse about your correspondent's health, and still more so on the few matters that follow, but yet you cannot see where to spare a portion; but if you imagine that you were called upon to relate in a few words the contents of your letter, you would soon find that it might be condensed into a neat shape thus:

"Yours of the 18th did not arrive here till this morning, and the delay will excuse any apparent negligence on my part, in not replying earlier. I hear with much pleasure of your continued good health, which I sincerely hope will continue; the purity of the air and elevation of the position are, I think, very much in your favor. It gives me much sorrow to hear of the continued illness of your niece, the more so that I remember with pleasure the agreeable mornings we used to spend together among the interesting ruins and charming scenery of the Abbey.

"The proposal you make me I highly appreciate, and would at once accept, were I not very much engaged at home. Let me, therefore, decline, with sincere thanks, the engagement you so kindly offer."

When you have thus reduced the bulk and improved the style of your letter, you will find room for the additional matters that you were at first compelled to thrust into an ugly postscript.

In all cases you must guard against diffuseness, you must be plain and brief, and you will soon find that half a dozen words will usually convey your meaning more clearly and more elegantly than half a dozen sentences. But brevity must never be cultivated to such an extent as to merge into abruptness, for abruptness and rudeness are near neighbors, and a moderate freedom of expression is always preferable to immoderate condensation. There is a story told of a gallant, who wrote to a noted general the following brief epistle:

"To General ——,

"Sally has accepted me; can I have her?

"Yours, ——"

To which the General replied:

"Go ahead,

"Yours, ——."

Another important matter to be borne in mind is, to go as straight to your subject as possible. Do not circumvent, or play a game of round-about, but plainly say what you mean, as if you were expressing yourself in the simplest conversation. Here is a bit of circumventing fearful to behold:

"Sir,

"I am very sorry that I should have to trouble you so often; but in consequence of the very great dullness of trade, and the difficulty of getting moneys in at this dead season of the year, and the few orders that I get, and most of them from customers who expect credit, and that for a long period, when ready money trade is that which I most want; together with the late failure of the Messrs. Brassey, which occurred on the 10th of last month, and in consequence of which the Branch Bank stopped payment on the following day, and a small balance which I had there is lost, or at least I shall only get a small dividend, and that not at present; and some orders which I had from the Messrs. Brassey were countermanded; and if they had not been countermanded I could not have gone on with them; besides which, I had a small account against them which they had promised to settle immediately, and in consequence of their failure I shall have to take my chance with the other creditors, and shall get, I fear, but a very small dividend; so that all my transactions with that firm have been a loss to me. If you could advance me another hundred dollars, on my bond, for three months, I should esteem it a great favor, and would make such good use of the money, in completing orders which I have in hand, and which I cannot go on with for want of cash, but which if completed, will be very profitable, and enable me to discharge my obligations to you, and to inscribe myself, your very obedient and humble servant,

"JONAS SLOWCOACH."

Now, this request of our friend might be compressed into a few modest words, and a respectful appeal made, which would be more likely to secure him the loan he wants than the long-winded statement he herein inflicts upon his patron. No sensible man would care to lend any one so much money after reading such a letter; it is worth all the money to wade through it. But if Jonas would "re-word the matter," and give the whole a decent shape, he might stand a good chance of having his request granted. Let him go straight to the point, and his patron will see at once that he is dealing with a man of decision, who preserves a proper self-respect and independence even when asking a favor.

"Sir,

"I regret that I should have again to tax your kindness, but I am under the necessity of requesting you to advance me another hundred dollars to enable me to complete some orders of a profitable kind, for which ready money is indispensable. I should not have had to trouble you had not the recent failure of Messrs. Brassey entailed upon me some heavy losses, which the orders I have in hand will enable me to some extent to repair. Messrs. Brassey's failure was announced on the 10th of last month, and on the following day the Branch Bank stopped payment, and a balance of cash which I had there was rendered unavailable, and will possibly be lost. Besides this misfortune, the Messrs. Brassey owed me an account at the moment of their failure, and I shall now have to take my chance of a dividend with the other creditors. Trade is very dull," &c. &c.

One great cause of tediousness in letters is, the practice adopted by writers of interlarding their sentences with parentheses, so that the thread of sense pursues a tortuous course, and we are engulfed in the serpentine most completely.

"John says (and I dare say he is right) that (had he known it before) he would (had not the weather prevented him, and an illness from which he was then suffering, and from which he is only just recovering, though Dr. Emetic told him he could not be about for six weeks) have gone over to the marshes (only that the frost was so severe, and his pony was laid up at the farrier's with a tooth-ache, and besides he could not face the east wind), and he would have bought the sheep at once."

Just imagine that your pen is an arrow or javelin, and that it is to be hurled directly to some chosen mark, and you will soon acquire the art of plain speaking, without parenthesis, or twaddle, much to your own rejoicing and your reader's relief.

Some ludicrous effects are sometimes produced in letters, by the neglect of the writer to pay attention to the antecedent. That is to say, you must write the present line in accordance with what has gone before, and not mix your sentences together, so that it shall be difficult to understand to what any particular remark is intended to apply. Thus we read an advertisement in a New-York paper, announcing that a blue gentleman's cloak was lost at the railroad dépôt, and any person giving information of it, or if stolen, the convicted person, shall receive five dollars reward. But to make it intelligible, regard must be paid to the antecedents, namely, *blue* is the antecedent of gentleman, but applies to the cloak, not to the gentleman, and we must therefore say, "gentleman's blue cloak." And again, as to the reward, it is not to be paid to the thief, but to the informer, and we must say, "a reward of five dollars shall be paid to any person who shall give such information as shall lead to its recovery, or if stolen, to the conviction of the thief."

Yet blunders of this kind are very common in the letters of uneducated persons. Mr. Bonsor will write to a wholesale house requesting "another parcel of the patent hooks and eyes, and a few razor cases, sixty to the ounce." "Sixty to the ounce," occurred to him after he had written "razor cases," and applies to the "parcel of hooks and eyes," not, certainly, to the "razor cases."

By avoiding long sentences, and summing up every statement or remark in one or two short ones, you will soon attain to elegance of composition, and from the first you will be sure to make yourself understood, and that is the first ne

cessity of any communication whatever. Depend upon it, as soon as you begin wire-drawing, you are getting cloudy and ungrammatical; and if your letter wants remodeling or copying, the long sentences will puzzle you into a low fever, and if an error occurs anywhere, even if you detect it, it will be very difficult to remedy it in any sentence that runs on to an immoderate length. But you must not make your sentences so short that they express only parts of ideas or facts; as for instance:

"It rained. So I rode. But it soon cleared up. And remained bright. So I got out at Broadway. And walked the remainder of the way."

Though such a statement may be cut up into many short sentences, it really consists of but two, because there are but *two incidents to relate.*

"It rained, so I rode. But as it cleared up, and remained fine, I got out at Broadway, and walked the remainder of the way."

In composition of every kind, a grammatical construction of sentences is essential, not merely for the sake of accuracy, but for elegance and clearness. The writer of an ungrammatical letter must risk being pitied, or laughed at, or sneered at, according as the reader may be influenced in the perusal of the letter. Yet, though grammatical accuracy is so desirable, it does not follow that a person cannot write a respectable letter without first going through a course of grammar. As we can only here advise you to make yourself as competent as possible in that useful department of knowledge, it remains with yourself to pursue it or not, according to your inclinations; but the plain confession must be made, that, without a sound knowledge of grammar, the writer of a letter can never rise above mediocrity.

In the absence of such knowledge, we beg to impress upon you the necessity of paying attention to the members and genders of nouns and pronouns, and to the persons of verbs. Be careful to avoid confounding the singular with the plural; as, "These was mine, and they was his, but we changed, and that's how I come to have them."

If you are in doubt in writing such a sentence, just reflect how you make the same statement with the tongue, then adopt the same for the pen, and your sentence will read,

"Those were mine, and these were his, but we made an exchange, and hence I came into possession of these."

A little quiet reflection will often serve you well, even if you are unacquainted with the rules of grammar.* You might write, or in conversation say, "I was going along the street, and who should I see but the fellow himself, and I whispered to Jenkins, 'That's him.'" Now, a little use of the reasoning facultics will enable any one to detect the inaccuracy of this much-used phrase, "That's him;" for it is evident at first sight that *that* is an impersonal pronoun, but *him* is a personal pronoun, and hence they cannot be used in conjunction. To say "That is the man," would be correct, because we do not then use a personal noun or pronoun at all. In the same way it would be incorrect to say, "I that tell you this," because *that*, as already stated, cannot apply to the pronoun *I*, and we say, "I *who* tell you this."

What are called demonstrative and relative pronouns most frequently occasion difficulty to the uninitiated. *This* refers to an object *near* the speaker, *that* to an object *distant* from the speaker. *These* is the plural of *this*, and *those* is the plural of *that*. They remain the same in every variation of *person*, *gender*, or *case*. Hence we say, "*This* man and *these* boys *whom* you see here."

In reference to time, *this* is applied to the present, and *that* to the past and future; as, "*This* is an age of wonders, *that* age was distinguished for its feats of arms—*that* time is not yet come."

Who, *which*, and *that*, are employed in relation to some person or thing in a sentence, and the person or thing so referred to is called the *antecedent;* as "The man *who* spoke to you produced the letters to *which* I refer, and amongst them the one *that* I wrote." A difficulty is sometimes experienced as to the respective uses of *that* and *which*.

Who and *that* may be employed with reference to the three persons *I*, *thou*, and *he*, in both singular and plural; but *which* should be used only in reference to a noun in the third person, singular or plural.

But perhaps the words *was* and *were*, which are parts of the verb *to be*, are the least understood of any in our language. An uneducated person will write or say, "If I *was* going, and *you* was coming;" and sometimes those who have noticed that educated persons use these words, somewhat peculiarly fly to another extreme, and say, "I *were* about to say." When such an utterance is made before a grammarian, who has a slight love of the ludicrous, it has a tendency to make him explode, so very comical is that *were* when so placed.

Was belongs always to the singular number, and *were* to the plural; as, I was, thou wast, he was, we were, you were, they were.

The verb also takes the form of *were* in any conditional case, so that whenever it is preceeded by *if* you will bear in mind that *was* is a sign of vulgarity and ignorance. If I were, if thou were, if he were, if we were, if you were, if they were.

* See "Live and Learn," or 1000 mistakes in speaking and writing corrected. Published by DICK AND FITZGERALD. Price 50 cents.

SPELLING.

Rules for spelling words cannot be given here, and the dictionary must be your guide whenever you are in doubt. To spell a word incorrectly is not always a proof of the writer's incapacity; for, in the manuscripts of eminent scholars, instances of the kind frequently occur—the result of hurry and inadvertence. But there are some kinds of bad spelling that enable us to distinguish between the carelessness of the scholar and the blundering of an ignorant writer; for instance, the confounding of the comparative *as* for the past tense of the verb to *have*. Yet there is nothing more easy of comprehension than the difference between "He *has* the book, and it is bound in the same way *as* yours." The first implies action—the action of possession; the second, comparison. How distinct and unmistakeable; and yet how often we see a neatly written letter, in which the writer asks, "*as* he told you so?" or, "*as* it happened?"

Words which have the double l, or m, or n, are very common, and are frequently misspelt. Fortunately a very good rule can be given for the guidance of the letter writer. When you are in doubt just pronounce the word aloud, and notice where the accent falls, and place the double consonant instead of the single one, if the accent falls on the syllable preceding it. For instance; if the word befallen were pronounced bef'alen it would be spelt with one l; but as the

accent falls on the second syllable—befallen—the double l is correctly used.

We might fill a page with examples, but prefer to state the rule only, and leave the reader to note the instances in the dictionary, or call them to mind by the aid of the memory. The rule is but little known, but is none the less valuable on that account.

Words in which the compounds ie and ei occur, afford a further instance of the necessity for a rule, and fortunately we can give one: but its value will depend on the person's accuracy of pronunciation.

In order to impress this rule on the reader's mind, we must beg him or her to remember that whenever ei or ie occurs in German, the second vowel has its full vowel sound; for instance, Liebig is pronounced *Leebig*, and Bleiter, *Bli'ter;* in each case the *second* of the two vowels has its full sound, and the first remains mute. Now, apply this to English words in ie and ei, and you have the key at once to the mode of spelling them. The word fiend is pronounced feend, and hence you put the i first because it is mute. But neither and either are pronounced ni-ther and i-ther; and the proper way to spell them, therefore, is to put the e first, the e being mute. We believe that both these rules will prove useful to many who are a little bit learned in literary matters, and as far as we know, they have not been given before. Our reading has not been limited, but we have never seen such rules laid down for spelling in the case of double consonants, and the digraphs ei and ie.

CAPITALS should be cautiously used in letter-writing. We should certainly not confine the writer of a letter to the rigid rule observed in printed literature, because an important word may sometimes be graced with a capital which, in a printed form, would begin with a small letter. But an indiscriminate or even frequent use of capitals, is a proof of the plebian origin and ignorance of the writer. The name of a person or a place should always be commenced with a capital, and every fresh paragraph should commence with a capital; beyond this, there is little need for their use—strictly speaking none.

Italic letters are employed to distinguish the words of a *foreign* language that may be introduced into a sentence, or to denote that those of our *own*, thus distinguished, are particularly *emphatic* and expressive. The Italic character was invented and introduced by Aldus Manutius, a celebrated Venetian printer, in 1501. The Italic words in the Sacred Scriptures are such as have no corresponding words in the original Hebrew or Greek, but were added by the translators, to complete the sense, &c. In *writing*, it is customary to underline such words as would be Italicised in printing.

PARAGRAPHS.—A letter which runs on like a stream, without stops, and with no division into paragraphs, is as ridiculous a thing as one in which every other word commences with a capital letter. But you may find a difficulty in breaking your matter into separate paragraphs, and, in your anxiety to do the thing properly, may break into two or more portions, that which should not be broken at all. But if you bear in mind that paragraphs bear the same relation to written compositions that heads do to a sermon, and acts and scenes to a play, you will perceive at once that every paragraph should contain within it the complete relation of an incident, or an important part or division of a relation of an incident, or a distinct statement of some kind, having no relation to the statement which follows, and which latter will properly form another paragraph. Pay a little attention to the manner in which paragraphs of books are arranged—this, for instance—and you will see that there is no rule as to the length of a paragraph; it may consist of one or two lines only, or of a hundred, but it must have a distinctness, and to some extent a completeness of its own. Lady writers are very much at fault in this particular; they hurry on from one thing to another, from James's cold to Betsey's fever; then to the fashion of bonnets, or the prevalence of hats; thence to weddings that have happened, and to weddings that are about to happen; and then to inquiries of all kinds, and replies to inquiries that have been addressed to them; and the whole of such separate and distinct matters are strung together, sometimes without stops, but very often indeed with no division into paragraphs. Yet nothing can be more simple, for the matter readily separates itself into portions, if it be carefully scanned, and it will soon be discovered that this necessary and proper division may be accomplished without the help of a professor, or a consultation of blue stockings.

PUNCTUATION.

"PUNCTUATION is the art of dividing a written composition, by certain marks, to denote the different pauses which the sense and construction require.

"The marks used in punctuation are, the *comma* (,) the *semicolon* (;), the *colon* (:), the *period* or *full point* (.), the *note of admiration* (!), and the *note of interrogation* (?).

"A *comma*, which is the shortest pause, is used to separate those parts of a sentence, which, though very closely connected in sense, require a pause between them. Two or more substantives, adjectives, &c., immediately succeeding each other, require a comma after each; as, *She is young, handsome, and agreeable;* but, if connected by a conjunction, the comma is not required; as, *He is a wise and learned man.* When an address is made to a person, the noun requires a comma before and after it; as, *Attend, child, to what I say.* Many adverbs require a comma before and after them, as *perhaps, however, indeed, besides, &c.*

"A *semicolon* is used for separating those members of a sentence which require a longer pause than a comma, and need some other member to render the sense complete; as, *A clownish air is but a slight defect; yet, trifling as it is, it is sufficient to render a man disagreeable.* Or it is used to distinguish those members of a sentence, which, though less closely connected than those separated by commas, are not so independent as those distinguished by a colon; as, *The path of truth is a plain and safe path; that of falsehood is a perplexing maze.*

"A *colon* is used when a member of a sentence is complete in itself but is followed by some additional remark or illustration; as, *There is no mortal truly wise and restless at the same time: wisdom is the repose of minds.* When several members of a sentence have been distinguished by semicolons, they require to be separated from the last clause by a colon; as, *Education is necessary to enlighten the mind; it is of great importance in the business of life; but it is indispensable for rising in the world: therefore improve in it with the utmost assiduity.* When an example or quotation is introduced, it generally preceded by a colon; as, 'The Scripture says: *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.*' The colon is also adopted for the purpose of marking or dividing such portions of the service of the Protestant Episcopal Church as are chanted, separating each of them into two parts; as, *With his own right hand, and with his holy arm: hath he gotten himself the victory.*

"The *period*, or *full point*, denotes that a sentence is complete; as, *Honor the king.* It is also placed after all abbreviations; as, P.S. *Postscript.* A.D. *Anno Domini.*

"A *note of admiration* is used when some violent emotion of the mind is expressed; as, *O, virtue! how amiable thou art!*

"A *note of interrogation* is placed at the end of every question; as, *Whither shall we go? Shall we go home?*

"There are several other marks used in writing and printing which require illustration. The *dash* (—) is used when the sentence is broken off abruptly; as, *To die—to sleep.* The *parenthesis* ( ) is used to enclose some part of a sentence which may be omitted without injuring the sense; as, *We all (including Mr. A.) went to Boston.* The *apostrophe* ['] is used either as a sign of the possessive case, or to shorten a word: as, *Mary's frock, tho'* for *though, ne'er* for *never.* The *caret* [ʌ] is used, *tall*
to show that some word or words are omitted; as, *I am a man.* The
ʌ
hyphen is used to connect compound words; as, *self-love.* The *dieresis* ["] is placed over one of two vowels, to show that they are to be separately pronounced; as, *aërial.* The *index* [☞] points out a remarkable passage. The *asterisk* [*], the *single* or *double dagger* [† ‡], *parallelisms*, [‖], the *section* [§], the *paragraph* [¶]; as also small letters, as a, b; and figures, 1, 2, 3, are used as references to notes in the margin, or at the bottom of the page."

Lawyers disdain punctuation in their documents, and scholars will never cease to pity them so long as they continue the practice of constructing documents without stops. Are law clerks endowed with any greater power of lungs than other people, or are they so clever in extemporaneous punctuation, that they can always mark the pauses correctly in the perusal of documents? No, it is the practice, or rather the habit, of the profession; the worse then for the profession. Let no aspirant to elegance in epistolary correspondence disdain the services of those valuable little dots, the comma, the semicolon, the colon, and the period. The comma and the period will do nearly all you want; the dash may sometimes be useful; but the other two require more experience to use them well. Wherever a proper pause occurs, wherever the sentence seems naturally to halt, stick in a comma; and when that head, or division, or sentence, is really completed, put down your full-stop, and begin again with a capital letter. Observe how this is managed in books, and you will gain more instruction in punctuation in ten minutes than we could teach you were we to devote several pages to the subject. Correct punctuation not only gives elegance to a composition, but it makes its meaning clear, enforces attention to those words or passages which most require it, and to a great extent prevents a misunderstanding, or wilful misconstruction of the writer's meaning.*

TO THOSE WHO WRITE FOR THE PRESS.

It would be a great favor to editors and printers, should those who write for the press observe the following rules. They are reasonable, and correspondents will regard them as such: 1. Write with black ink, on white paper, wide ruled. 2. Make the pages small, one fourth that of a foolscap sheet. 3. Leave the second page of each leaf blank. 4. Give to the written page an ample margin *all round.* 5. Number the papers in the order of their succession 6. Write in a plain bold hand, with less respect to beauty 7. Use no abbreviations which are not to appear in print. 8. Punctuate the manuscript as it should be printed. 9.

* See an excellent little work entitled "MIND YOUR STOPS," or "Punctuation made plain." Published by Garrett, Dick and Fitzgerald, price 12½ cents.

For italics underscore one line, for small capitals, two; capitals three. 10. Never interline without the caret to show its place. 11. Take special pains with every letter in proper names. 12. Review every word, to be sure that none is illegible. 13. Put directions to the printer, at the head of the first page. 14. Never write a private letter to the editor on the printer's copy, but always on a separate sheet.

THE COMPLIMENTARY NOTE

Has a distinct character, and can never be confounded with the familiar epistle. The note style is to be adopted by persons who are strangers to each other, or not sufficiently known to allow of a familiar style of correspondence. But the subject has also much to do in determining whether the letter or note form shall be adopted. Invitations of all kinds may be conveyed in the form of the note; so may congratulations, short requests, and compliments. But where positive business of any kind is to be dealt with, the formal business letter is preferable, except when a gentleman writes to a lady who is a stranger to him, or a lady in writing to a gentleman stranger; and even then the letter commencing "Sir," or "Madam," may frequently be the best.

It is a necessary character of a note that it should be short, plain, and polite, but distant; as for instance:

"Mr. Brown presents his compliments to Miss Quaver, and desires to know if Miss Q. still continues to give lessons on the guitar.

"Harmony House, June 10, 1856."

"Mrs. Sociable presents her compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Gay, and will be happy to have their company for a friendly dance, on the evening of Tuesday next, Dec. 18, at nine precisely.

"The Snuggery, Dec. 12, 1856."

Etiquette must be strictly observed in all such correspondence; the reply must be prompt, decisive, and as polite as the inquiry or invitation:

"Miss Quaver presents her compliments to Mr. Brown, and has the pleasure to inform him, that the guitar classes are now

continued at 27 Music Street: terms, twenty dollars for the course of twelve lessons.

"Tonic Parade, June 11, 1856."

"Mrs. Gay presents her compliments to Mrs. Sociable, and has much pleasure in accepting for herself and Mr. Gay, Mrs. Sociable's kind invitation for the evening of Tuesday next, the 18th instant.

"Makepeace Place, Dec. 13, 1856."

Now, why does Miss Quaver give more information than is sought of her? Simply because she is a shrewd woman, anxious to extend her professional engagements, and so she states her terms at once, and saves Mr. Brown the trouble of writing again, and herself the trouble of a second answer.

This form of correspondence does not admit of remarks by the way, or even of prolix explanations, or rambling statements and questions. Neither is it advisable as a form of communication between very intimate friends; for after a close friendship has been sealed by social communion, and many acts of mutual regard, it would be in danger of sudden destruction by the appearance on the scene of so cold a document. We must then adopt a warmer medium, and say thus:

"Hart Street, Nov. 9, 1856.

"My Dear Miss Pink,

"We shall have a few friends here to dinner at five on Friday next; will you kindly join us? If little Arabella comes to town in time, bring her with you, and gladden the heart of yours devotedly, GEORGIANA PLUM."

One point we should scarcely have thought it necessary to mention, had we not, while writing this, had a document handed to us for inspection. We should call it a note "with a vengeance," for it runs thus:

"Mr. Hawkins presents his compliments to Mr. Henry Whittle, and I want to know if I can proceed with the drawings as you get the models ready. If Mr. Hawkins can make progress with the scrolls first, perhaps you will oblige by introducing, as occasion serves, a few of the new floral borders, and oblige, yours obediently, J. S. HAWKINS."

Now, whatever may be Mr. Hawkins's capabilities in using the pencil, he certainly cuts a ludicrous figure when he seizes the pen. But for this document, we should have thought it unnecessary to inform the reader, that whatever tone is assumed at starting, whether in a formal note, a friendly gossipy epistle, or a plain business letter, that same tone should be sustained throughout, and more especially so its grammatical form.

If we write, "Dear Sir, I have had occasion," &c., we write in the *first* person singular; but when we say, "The editor begs to inform Mr.——," &c., we write in the *third* person singular. In the first case we say, *I am*, in the latter, *he is*; and it is impossible to shift from one form to another without at once violating the very fundamentals of English syntax.

When you write a note you stand, as it were, behind the scenes; you speak from a distance, and refer to yourself as if you were a distinct personage, having no claim to *I* or *we*. From that position you must not budge an inch, nor must you attach a signature at the end of your note, but state, after the fashion of the forms given above, and as briefly and politely as possible, the object of your communication.

Hence the uses of the note are restricted. It forbids you to give a full account of any transaction, or to enter minutely into any details of trade or business, and more especially friendly inquiries, and chit-chat of any kind; it is complimentary, and may be friendly; but it must be formal, elegant, brief, and so plain in its statement as to require no explanation, or any further correspondence, beyond an equally plain, polite, and elegant reply; and the reply must be in the note form. To reply by means of a note in the first person, would evince a sad want of propriety, and a proof of very ill breeding. As a rule, invitations of all kinds should come from the mistress of the house.

THE FRIENDLY LETTER.

But though a correspondence may commence in this way, and may even be so continued for complimentary purposes, yet, as acquaintance ripens into friendship, the time will some day come when such formal modes of correspondence may be exchanged for others of a more familiar kind.

Among men formalities are soon got rid of, and especially among men of literary culture, who yield to the genialities of their own warm temperaments much sooner than those who cultivate politeness only; for men of letters, and cultivators of the liberal and fine arts, have a happy way of regarding each other as friends, even before personal acquaintance begins. In literary circles it is common enough for a person to write to another a friendly and confidential epistle, before the parties have ever seen each other; but even then the value of the note in the third person would not be overlooked, and such a letter would never be made to do duty for it, and complimentary matters would still have their proper formal mode of expression.

But, supposing an acquaintance to be commenced through the cold medium of an invitation, a congratulation, or a barren compliment, when may the parties abandon such a form, and adopt one more congenial to their mutual regards for each other, and the expression of the more enlarged communion of feeling which may have sprung up between them? Plainly, when they feel that they really understand each other, and are on terms of real acquaintance, if not of confidential friendship. Herein they must judge for themselves but without haste, and cautiously.

Individual judgement, based on circumstances, is the only guide in such a case, but is a guide which can never fail, if there be a small amount of common sense to support it. When your heart yearns towards your friend, when you feel that you have been too long separated by the demarkating line of cold conventionality, sit you down and write to him—not from the head, but from the heart; but keep a rein gently tightened on your enthusiasm, for fear he should think you are over-doing it. But you must still be a little complimentary till you know each other well; give him credit for his good judgement, good taste, good feeling, or whatever of his qualities strike you as forming a prominent part of his character; and you may do this without being servile, without bespattering him with sickly flattery, without licking the soles of his feet. Should you stoop to the latter, you may expect to get kicked in return; and yet a little gentlemanly adulation, neatly done, and implied rather than said, is a great charm in friendly correspondence, and will be pretty sure to bind your correspondent to you by very enduring ties.

But you have opened your heart, and have said "My dear Mr. Wilkins," instead of "Mr. Bumps presents his compliments to Mr. Wilkins."

Will he reply in a kindred tone? *He must.* He dare not send you back a cold note of six lines, written in the center of an odoriferous sheet of the purest cream-laid. If you get back a very polite note, distant as usual, the third person responding to your assuring first, give it up, you are not wanted; remain as an acquaintance if you please, but be sure that in that quarter you have no friend.

Reverse the case, and all that applies to Wilkins applies to yourself; and if you want to elbow aside an obsequious flatterer, who thrusts his unwelcome eulogies, or his hollow cordiality—perhaps with a future view to borrow—upon you in an excessively pleasant way, settle him with an awfully polite, short, and distant note, and he must be a fool, indeed, if he does not understand at once that "it won't do."

A friendly correspondence once established must not relapse into mere formalities, unless a decided quarrel and separation have taken place. Small differences or disagreements are never to make any change in your modes of address and expression, for there is nothing meaner than the severing of the obvious ties of friendship for trifles, though such things do take place every day. It should be remembered that neither friendship, nor cordial acquaintanceship, interfere in any way with a person's opinions or conduct, so long as the universally recognised principles of honor and morality are not violated. You may some day have to oppose your friend at a caucus meeting, or in a warm discussion on religion or politics; yet his aversion to your views, and your impetuous opposition to his, are not to prevent you writing, "My dear Harry," or "My dear Tomkins," or "My dear Sir," as you did before the difference broke out. Depend upon it, there is nothing more contemptible than to taint the amenities of social life with exhibitions of temper or vexation, or to suffer the pen to express unfriendly sentiments or greetings of a suddenly cool character, because some trifling difference has arisen between yourself and your friend.

Here it should be hinted that whatever mode you adopt in addressing a person, is to be preserved in future correspondence, if not in exactly the same words, at least the same in purport; you must not go back except for a special reason,

but you may go forward with a proper grace as intimacy ripens, and increase the warmth of your congratulations.

We remember an incident which may be mentioned in illustration of this. A gentleman had been for many years on terms of intimate friendship with his tailor, and the correspondence between them, whether of a friendly or a business nature, had always a cordial tone pervading it, until on one occasion the friendship was slightly interrupted. In fact, the gentleman was a little in arrear as to the settlement of his friend's account, and the latter sent a short and brusque letter, as follows:

"Sir,

"I am disappointed in not having received the amount of my bill as promised by you in your last: may I beg the favor of a speedy settlement? Yours obediently,

"SIMON SLOWSTICH."

To this an answer was returned as follows:

"My dear Slowstitch,

"Last time you wrote I owed you nothing, and you addressed me as your 'Dear Nonplus;' but since I have unfortunately failed to meet your demand, according to my own promise, you reduce me to a mere 'Sir,' upon your list of patrons. Do you intend to terminate a friendship of ten years in this way, or do you purpose resuming the 'Dear Nonplus,' with a view to be mine 'faithfully,' when the account is settled (as it will be to-morrow) remaining in the meanwhile mine 'obediently,' only? Will you allow me to suggest that expressions of friendship are open to question, both as to their value and their sincerity, when they are made to depend on business relations for their respective amounts of warmth or coldness which shall be infused into them. To be consistent, I shall have to adopt a cringing tone when I owe you money, and a tone of pompous patronage the moment I have paid it; that is, if any correspondence should continue between yourself and yours very truly, STEPHEN NONPLUS."

Among the forms of address for friendly, complimentary and semi-business letters, we have the formal "Dear Sir" for use on all occasions. The solicitor so addresses his client, the client his solicitor, the patient his physician, the editor his contributor, and, indeed, any man of gentlemanly pretentions, addressing another to whom he has already been introduced, or with whom he has already corresponded. In

correspondence of a professional nature, where both parties are strangers, it would always be well to commence with the simple "Sir," or "Madam," and in the second or third letter adopt the more agreeable "Dear Sir," or "Dear Madam." A little enhancement of the gentlemanly or lady-like feeling is to be found in "My dear Sir," or "My dear Madam," which may by degrees, as the parties know and respect each other more sincerely, take the very friendly and now fashionable form of "My dear Mr. Swallowwing," "My dear Mrs. Pettitoe," or "My dear Miss Nightingale." The latter form is that most in use at the present day in polite society, between persons who have met at least once, and who are on terms of acquaintance, in which business has no part whatever.

When folks begin to say "My dear Higginbottom," "My dear old boy," and "My dear fellow," all strict rules of etiquette are at an end, and good sense gives a proper form to the free expression of mutual friendship.

But friendship, like all other moral and material adornments of life, is subject to blight occasionally, and the strongest union may be dissolved by a fiercer heat arising from the combustion of the very dregs and lees of amity. Your friend annoys you, disappoints you, breaks his word, or lets off a bit of scandal that reaches your ears. Then you will "write him *such* a letter," you'll tell him plainly what you think of him, and put him to shame by the evidence of black and white.

Now, if you are wise you will do nothing of the sort; you will never write a single word that may cause shame or pain in the reader's mind, or that the writer may have cause hereafter to regret. A letter is a document that may be preserved for ever; and should you be mistaken. or only partially informed, or the victim of your own too hasty or incompetent judgement, your own hand and seal may remain as a witness of your rashness, perhaps of your meanness, to the end of your days, ay, and long after that, to the end of the world even.

Therefore, if you want to tell your friend your mind, do not *write*, but *speak* it; a spoken bitterness may be forgotten and forgiven, but a written one cannot be so readily forgiven, and it can never be forgotten; no, not even if burnt; for when we are stung in the perusal of something, the effect goes deep, and becomes lasting, and can scarcely ever be

thoroughly erased, even by all-corroding time. A fierce letter, a sharply written reproof, or a disparaging communication to a friend has been the cause of embittering many a couple of lives; and it may be safely said that that should never be written which we may, within possibility, wish hereafter to recall. We are all fallible, and may, therefore, be very much in error when we feel very sure that we are in the right; and that consideration should be sufficient to make any sensible man or woman pause before giving vent to anger, with the pen in the hand.

But exceptions to such a rule may occur; an admonition, a reproof, nay, even an accusation, may sometimes be necessary, and a letter be the only possible mode of conveying it. Let good sense and good feeling determine how the case shall be, and let it at be the same time borne in mind, that what is once written cannot be unwritten, and that greater caution is necessary in using the pen, than in using the tongue.

THE BUSINESS LETTER

Must be pithy, short, and go straight to the point. Pleasantry is not advisable, except between persons who are very intimate, and even then it is best to keep friendship and business as much apart as possible.

"The first thing necessary," says Lord Chesterfield, "in writing letters of business, is extreme clearness and perspicuity; every paragraph should be so clear and unambiguous that the dullest fellow in the world may not be able to mistake it, nor be obliged to read it twice in order to understand it. This necessary clearness implies a correctness, without excluding an elegance of style. In business, an elegant simplicity, the result of care, not of labor, is required; nor does it exclude the usual terms of politeness and good breeding, but, on the contrary it strictly requires them." A writer, after iterating Lord Chesterfield's remarks, continues: "The one principal and pervading object of all communications on matters of business is to convey the thought which the writer is wishing to impart; *that* is understood to be so important, that it alone is to be attended to, and all interfering purposes rejected. And, if this intention be closely and freely followed, a beauty will spring up in the very plainness that will thereby be reached; for were

is a rare and essential elegance abiding in the barrenness of mere and perfect perspicuity."

In writing, be particular, and clear, in arranging the subjects of your letter. Some directions relating to this and appicable to epistolary correspondence in every variety, will be found in the immediately succeeding Section. Commence with the most important subject of your letter. To every distinct subject, or point, allot a distict paragraph. Long and involved sentences, or sentences composed of several members, must be avoided. For the sake of perspicuity, a careful attention to punctuation is necessary. At the close of your letter, a short recapitulation of its leading contents will be found useful: to your correspondent, in the first instance; to yourself, in the second, as matter of reference in your copy.

Be prompt and punctual in your replies. A recapitulation, at the close of a reply, is yet more desirable than in a first direct communication. "In this, however," observes Anderson, in his Practical Mercantile Correspondence, "merchants have also another object, which is to render their letter-books, as far as possible, *a history of their transactions*, for the advantage of ready reference after a lapse of years, and for production in court, with the better effect in case of litigation. Accordingly, every letter should speak, as it were, for itself, and give all the necessary particulars of the transaction to which it refers."

All Letters should be dated; that is, they should present, at either the head or conclusion, the year, the day of the month, and the name of the place whence written. The *date* of a letter is often of great importance in reference—especially in affairs of business. For the same purpose, it is a good plan also to place the date on the upper left hand corner of the letter when folded, preceding the superscription.

Letters on *business* should be dated at the *head*—that is, on the first page; together with the name and address of the parties written to, thus:

"New York, April 30th, 1857

"Messrs. James M. Harris & Co., Philadelphia.

"Gentlemen—

"We beg to inform you," &c.

The object of adopting this mode of address is, to

provide against accident, or an attempt at fraud, by tearing off the superscription of the letter, or destroying the envelope in which it might have been placed. In such a case, it would be difficult to prove to whom the letter might have been written; consequently, in a court of justice, its production would be defective as evidence.

All letters, received in a manufacturing, mercantile, or trading establishment, should, when read, be carefully folded and endorsed, with the name of the correspondent, the date of writing, and the date of receipt; with a blank left for the date of the answer. For example:

"New York, March 10th, 1857.

"Williamson, Thompson, & Co.

"Received, March the 12th.
"Answered, ."

Many persons, not much accustomed to use the pen, have a notion that if any occasion happens to call for a letter on any business matter, that they must at once compose a tedious rigmarole of statements and explanations; and, finding it difficult to make up what they consider a "capital letter," they defer writing until the occasion is perhaps gone, or at least until the business in hand has suffered considerable injury by the delay. But if they would divest their minds of all ideas of literary composition, and just write down what they would *say*, and in the fewest possible words, such persons would find business correspondence agreeable rather than irksome. Thus a manufacturer of wooden bowls writes to his wholesale house, to ask for an advance of cash, and commences thus:

"Sir,

"I am sorry to inform you that in consequence of not being able to complete an order, which was sent me from some parties at Albany, and which ought, and which I, indeed, promised to have completed and forwarded by the freight train, on Wednesday last, but which I have not sent on account of being so short. I could not go into the market for wood, and therefore could not complete the order, and am obliged reluctantly to request of you to be so kind as to oblige me with an advance by cash of one hundred dollars, on account of the orders I have in hand for you, and which I shall be able, if you can do me the favor of obliging me with one hundred dollars,

f forwarding without fail on Tuesday next, and shall remain
y our humble and obedient servant.

TURNER WOODENHEAD.'

When his employer receives this he will look hard at it through his spectacles, read a few lines, then put it down and take it up again, growing testy as he proceeds, and at last toss it across the desk to his clerk, saying, "Here, Crampton, I can't read Woodenhead's letter; just make it out and answer it; it's as bad as having to read the supplement to a newspaper to have a letter of his come in."

Would not our friend tremble to see his request for one hundred dollars on account handed over to a junior clerk, perhaps to be forgotten for a day or two, or explained to the principal in such a careless way as to insure for it either no reply at all or one in the negative? Let him, therefore, write a short, plain letter, thus:

"9 Ann Street, New York, July 27, 1856.

"SIR,—I find myself much pressed for cash, and have some orders from a house at Albany, which should have been completed by Wednesday last, besides the goods which are in progress for you. As I have not ready money sufficient for the purchase of wood, will you kindly advance me one hundred dollars on account? That would enable me to complete and deliver the goods I have in hand for you, by Tuesday next, as well as those referred to for the house at Albany. As the case is an urgent one, I have no doubt you will confer such a favor on yours obediently,

TURNER WOODENHEAD.

"To Mr. Longpurse, Pearl Street."

When friendly matters are mixed up with business, such as an invitation to tea, and an order for soap; or a proposal for a drive, and a request for payment of an account; the several matters should be stated in distinct paragraphs, not jumbled together, as if the ideas were first shaken up in a hat, and then turned out in a heap, according to the caprices of chance. State your business proposals plainly, and your friendly greetings kindly, and let friendship always take precedence, else it will appear that your invitation or compliment is a mere make-weight or an afterthought intended to preserve a profitable connection; though, as a rule, the less business and friendship are mixed together, the better for all parties.

The following are some capital examples of Business Letters:

To a Merchant proposing to open an Account.

Cincinnati, Feb. 7th, 18—.

SIR,—My friend, Mr. —— of B—— street, has spoken of you in terms of high recommendation; so much so, indeed, that having found reason to withdraw my orders from my late ——. I am disposed to open an account with your firm. You will therefore much oblige me by forwarding a list of prices, together with other necessary particulars as to your manner of doing business.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

To Mr. ——. (——).

Do. to a Publisher's Firm.

Chicago, May 3d, 18—.

GENTLEMEN,—As our business is rapidly on the increase, we are desirous of opening an account with your house, and shall feel obliged by your transmitting us a trade list of your publications, as well as some of your general catalogues. Our usual terms of settlement are as follows (*here state them*). Should they be agreeable to your house, the favor of an early attention to our request will oblige,

Gentlemen,
Your obedient servants,
(—— & ——

To Messrs. —— & Co.

To a Firm, seeking a Clerkship.

Broadway, April 4th, 18—.

GENTLEMEN,—Perceiving by your advertisement in the —— of ——, that you are in want of a clerk, I beg to enclose testimonials, and venture to hope that from my previous experience in the line of business you pursue, I should be of some use in your establishment. My habits of life are such as to insure regularity in the discharge of my duties, and I can only assure you that, should you honor me with your confidence, I shall spare no pains to acquit myself to your satisfaction.

I remain, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

To Messrs. ——. (——).

A Testimonial on behalf of a similar applicant.

Albany, April 3d, 18—.

GENTLEMEN,—Finding that Mr. —— is an applicant for a situation as clerk, I beg to say a few words on his behalf. During the —— years he was in my employ, I found him diligent and conscientious in the discharge of his duties, remarkably clever in correspondence, and correct in the management of my books. Indeed, nothing but my retiring from business would have induced me to part with him, and I firmly believe that both his personal character, and his thorough knowledge of business, will render him a valuable acquisition to your firm.

I remain, Gentlemen,
Yours most obediently,

To Messrs. ——. (———).

To a Correspondent, requesting the payment of a sum of Money

New York, April 12th, 18—.

SIR,—Although the balance of the account between us has been of long standing in my favor, yet I would not have applied to you at present, had not a very unexpected demand been made upon me for a considerable sum, which, without your assistance, it will not be in my power to answer. When I have an opportunity of seeing you, I shall then inform you of the nature of this demand, and the necessity of my discharging it. I hope you will excuse me this freedom, which nothing but a regard to my credit and family could oblige me to take If it does not suit you to remit the whole, part will be thankfully received by

Yours very respectfully,

To —— (———)

Delaying the Payment of a Debt.

Charleston, June 15th, 18—.

GENTLEMEN,—I much regret that circumstances prevent my being as punctual as is my wont, and hope you will kindly renew the acceptance you hold of mine for another three months. The failure of a person largely indebted to me, and some other losses in business, have caused me severe inconvenience, and I really must depend upon your leniency as one means to enable me to recover myself.

I remain, Gentlemen,
Your obedient and faithful servant,

To Messrs. —— (———)

Another on the same subject.

Memphis, Jan. 14th, 18—.

SIR,—I must really beg of you to defer the settlement of your account till after the middle of next month, when I shall be in a condition to meet your demand. Regretting that circumstances prevent my being more prompt in attending to your wishes,

I remain, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

To Mr. ——. (———).

Another on the same subject.

Louisville, August 7th, 18—.

SIR,—Your account, amounting to ——, has indeed remained some time unsettled, but disappointments of a pecuniary nature, to which I need not more particularly allude, will prevent my liquidating it for some time to come, perhaps three months, but the payment will not exceed that period. From the pressing language of your application, I am disposed to think that a promissory note for that time may be of service to you, in being negotiable; if so, I have no objection to give it, and will be prepared to honor it when duly presented.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

To Mr. ——. (———)

A Gentleman desiring the Renewal of a Note of Hand.

Milwaukie, August 3d, 18—.

SIR,—My note of hand, (or acceptance,) will be due on the 28th instant, but I regret to say that, owing to circumstances beyond my control, I fear that I shall not be able to meet it. May I therefore request that you will grant me the indulgence of a short renewal of (six weeks), when I doubt not of my means to take it up. Your compliance with this wish will confer an obligation upon,

Sir,
Your very obedient servant,

To Mr. ——. (———).

Proposing to open an Account.

San Francisco, Nov. 30th, 18—.

GENTLEMEN,—Having succeeded to the business formerly carried on by Messrs. ——, we are desirous of entering into a

negotiation with your house for the supply of ——. We may mention that business is happily very brisk at present, and that, having materially increased our connection in Sacramento, Oregon, &c., we flatter ourselves that we could be very instrumental in increasing the sale of ——, We are encouraged to make this application from knowing that you were formerly in the practice of transacting business with Messrs. —— in this way.

We have, in the mean time, forwarded through Messrs. —— a pretty extensive order for your ——, by which you will perceive the nature of the articles most in demand. We would suggest, in the event of your acceding to our application, that a supply of your —— be sent to us, say every six weeks or two months, to the extent of about $500. We mention this sum at present, but hope, when the trial has been made, and we find ourselves in a position regularly to supply our country agents, to have it extended to twice or three times that amount. Mr. ——, who returns to your city in the course of a month or two, will give you every satisfaction as to our name and position, but in the meantime we beg to refer you to Messrs. ——, or to Messrs. —— & ——.

We trust the order we have now sent will be executed with all speed, and on presentation of the invoice to Messrs. ——, they will give you a cheque for the amount, as well as advice by what vessel to ship the goods.

We are, Gentlemen,
Yours obediently,
(—— & ——).

To Messrs. —— & Co., New York.

FAMILY EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

All intercourse between parents and children, whether colloquial or epistolary, should be free and confidential. The heart, more especially of the child to the parent, should be laid open without reserve. There ought to be no half confidences. No friend can feel so deeply interested for another's welfare as fathers and mothers for that of their own offspring. Few are so well qualified to advise—to make allowance for the errors of youth—to judge with candor—to censure with mildness—to point out the right path, or to reclaim from the wrong one. There is no subject upon which either son or daughter can have even a chance of consulting another with so much advantage as a parent. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, should

be the warm, ingenuous, peculiar friends of one another; blending the strongest ties of nature with the fondest affections of the heart—improving and strengthening, expanding, and heightening each. On present feelings and circumstances, on future prospects, whom can the son consult with so much propriety as his father—the daughter as her mother? In cases which admit of the combined consultation—and there are few that do not—the advantage is more than doubled to the child.

Next to the confidence between parents and children, ought to be that between brothers and sisters—the tenderest, holiest, most sympathetic affection.

If I may so express myself, I love to see fathers and sons, as brothers—mothers and daughters, as sisters; and this affection may exist in full force without in the slightest degree infringing the relative duties between parent and child. To create, however, where it may not exist naturally, the habit of ingenuousness and confidence in a child—to foster and to cherish it where beautiful promise is given from the birth—the parent should act with corresponding frankness and affection. Virtue elicits virtue as surely as its opposite engenders vice. To the neglect or unconsciousness of this great truth must be ascribed much of that coldness, reserve, and estrangement which too often subsist in even well-disposed families.

It is an old saying—and, like many other old sayings, it requires to be accepted with due qualification—that "familiarity breeds contempt." In my view, this does not hold good amongst well-regulated minds. On the contrary, I consider that perfect respect is compatible with much familiarity. Form, ceremony, and etiquette, unless held in wise subordination, are very chilling in the social and affectionate intercourse of life, especially amongst relations and intimate friends. Formerly, it was the practice for pupils to be taught, when adressing their parents in the epistolary form, to commence with the words, "Honored Sir," or "Madam," "Honored Parent," &c. Much better, I conceive, and without abating one iota of veneration or respect, to say, "My dear Father," or "Mother"—or, "My dear and honored Father"—"My dearly beloved Mother," &c., according to circumstance and feeling.

However, as, in the present Section, I am writing for the instruction and benefit of youth, upon their entrance into

[redacted] upon this head.

Forms are, indeed, of comparatively little importance.

"If you reside at a distance from your family—parents, brothers, sisters, dear and estimable friends—write to them frequently, and at stated periods; weekly, fortnightly, monthly, as circumstances may allow; but—be punctual. Under the new postage system, no excuse can be admitted on the plea of expense. By the establishment of periodical times for writing, you know when to write, and when to expect a letter; all fruitless expectation, anxiety, and expense, will thus be avoided. Correspondence between friends and relations is, in every respect, more valuable, interesting, useful, and pleasant to all parties, for being regular and punctual. In such cases you need not be parsimonious of words or sentences. Avoiding mere verbiage, express your feelings in the same easy, cheerful manner, that you would use, were you at home and entertaining the family circle with the incidental converse of the day. By this plan you will enjoy the additional advantage of cultivating some of the sweetest and noblest virtues of the human heart. But do not get into the worse than useless habit, of corresponding with those from whose communications you derive neither pleasure nor profit."

Examples, here, are hardly necessary; yet I have a few before me, which, for their intrinsic merits and characteristic propriety, are well entitled to perusal. The first is a penitential letter from a youth, who had unwisely abandoned his home, relinquishing higher prospects, and adopting the stage as a profession, to his uncle. The writer was Elliston, afterwards celebrated as a comedian; the gentleman addressed, Dr. Elliston, Master of Sidney College, Cambridge

SIR,—However dismayed I find myself in this undertaking, and however ashamed I feel at my conduct towards you, yet I know the attempt to gain your forgiveness is a duty. I have taken courage, therefore, to proceed Fearful as I have reason to be of your anger—how shall I address you—or what can I allege? I can see no middle state between that of the beloved nephew (as I have a thousand proofs to know I once was) and the discarded Robert Elliston. If but a faint ray of hope would break in to lead me to suppose I should ever regain your confidence and esteem, I should then indeed be happy. Of my transgressions, let me confess, I am truly, deeply sensible.

Unfortunately for me, the profession I have chosen by no means meets with the concurrence of even my general friends, and the world at large has hitherto held it in the light of contempt. What was the infatuation which first prompted me to swerve from the path of wisdom and rectitude which you had pointed out, I know not. Had I followed that, I might have made a more reputable stand in life; at any rate, moving in a circle more honored than that into which I have thrown myself. But it is not for me to aggravate my misfortunes; my task should rather be to reconcile them. If I succeed in removing any portion of your anger, I more than repay myself; if not, it is at least a trifling evidence of my affection, though repaying not a thousandth part of what I am indebted to you. Mitigate, I pray you, your resentment. My most sanguine hopes do not hint at sudden, or perhaps at any period, entire forgiveness. Suffer me to write to you now and then—to feel that I am addressing you—to relieve my aching heart, by assuring you how I love and honor you. May I entreat, too, you will not let my mother participate with me in your anger. I declare to you she is blameless in respect of this step I have taken.

Imperfectly as I may have written, I still venture to send you this sincere confession; but no attempt at extenuation of my conduct. Your justice I must ever fear; in your mercy I may have hope.

Your affectionate and contrite nephew,
R. W. ELLISTON.

York, April 6th, 1792.

My second example, of a character widely different, now for the first time meets the public eye. It is a letter written from a young man to his brother, after the loss of their sister; and, in allusion to a little difference which had unfortunately existed, it is distinguished by a naturalness, a pathos, a correctness and purity of affectionate sorrow and regret, which cannot but be deeply felt.

"My dear Brother,—I should earlier have acknowledged the receipt of your letter, but, at the time when due, I heard that you also were standing in the shadow of that cloud which had darkened our island home; and, in such cases, silence is often far more acceptable than any word-offering can be. For a reason akin to this, I will not here say much of that sorrow which we must *mutually* feel. I can grieve, and that deeply the sad necessity which crushed, in the very bloom of existence, the being of one so admirably natured, both for the adornment

and enjoyment of life. Yet, as death was the only escape from all the grief, and pain, and disease which haunted her later years, I must rejoice that it at last overtook her. She is now where no echo from this world can reach her; and rests well, I hope, after her most weary pilgrimage. The kindly mention you make of her is an earnest that she was *not forgotten*; and with you, I regret those circumstances which made you, for a season, comparative strangers. What they *were*, I never rightly understood, nor would it answer any purpose now to inquire. All I can say is, that I ever found the dear lost one a creature of most perfect disinterestedness, and can call to mind no action of her life which bore the impress of caprice or selfishness; I therefore conclude, that, whatever the facts were, a very strong impression must have existed in her mind, that slight *had been* intended; how generated, of course impossible for me to say. But you must be well aware, that the morbid fancies of invalids too frequently imagine offence where none might have been intended. A few words would probably have explained all. Be it, however, as it may, you are not one, I know, to think much of this *now*; and, if there *were* blame, it will be more charitable and humane to lay it to the account of the living than of the dead.

"It was her intention to acknowledge the receipt of your marriage cards. Therefore, *think* of her as if that intention had been really executed; as though the olive-branch had been actually extended. Inability and death *alone* prevented her peace-offering from reaching you."

* * * * * *

We give the following real letter as a very pleasing model and specimen of style:

"——— COLLEGE, *Tuesday Evening.*

"My dear Mother,

"Though I am now sitting with my back towards you, yet I love you none the less; and, what is quite as strange, I can see you just as plainly as if I stood peeping in upon you. I can see you all just as you sit round the family table. Tell me if I do not see you? There is mother, on the right of the table, with her knitting, and a book open before her; and anon she glances her eye from the work on paper to that on her needles; now counts the stitches, and then puts her eye on her book, and starts off for another round. There is Mary, looking wise, and sewing with all her might, now and then stopping to give Sarah and Louisa a lift in getting their lessons, and trying

to initiate them in the mysteries of geography. She is on the left side of the table. There, in the background, is silent Joseph, with his slate, now making a mark, and then biting his lip, or scratching his head, to see if algebraic expression may have hidden in either of those places. George is in the kitchen, tinkering his skates, or contriving a trap for that old offender, the rat, whose cunning has so long brought mortification upon all his boasting. I can now hear his hammer and his whistle—that peculiar sucking sort of whistle, which always indicates a puzzled state of brain. Little William and Henry are snug in bed, and, if you will just open their bedroom door, you will barely hear them breathe. And now mother has stopped, and is absent and thoughtful, and my heart tells me she is thinking of her only absent child. Who can he be? Will you doubt any more that I have studied magic, and can see with my back turned to you, and many a hill and valley between us?

"You have been even kinder than I expected, or you promised. I did not expect to hear from you till to-morrow, at the earliest. But, as I was walking to-day, one of my class-mates cried, 'A bundle for you at the stage-office!' and away I went, as fast as the dignity of a sophomore would allow me. The bundle I seized, and muffled it under my cloak, though it made my arm ache, and, with as much speed as my 'conditions' would permit me, I reached my room. Out came my knife, and forgetting all your good advice about 'strings and fragments,' the said bundle quickly owned me victor, and opened its very heart to me; and it proved a warm heart, too, for there were the stockings (they are now on my feet, *i. e.*, one pair), and there were the flannels, and the bosoms, and the gloves, and the pincushion from Louisa, and the needle-book from Sarah, and the paper from Mary, and the letters and love from all of you. I spread open my treasures, and both my heart and feet danced for joy, while my hands actually rubbed each other out of sympathy. Thanks to you all for a bundle, letters and love. One corner of my eye is now moistened, while, I say, 'Thank ye all, gude folks.' I must not forget to mention the apples—'the six apples, one from each'—and the beautiful little loaf of cake. I should not dare to call it, 'little,' if it had not brought the name from you. The apples I have smelled of and the cake I have just nibbled a little, and pronounced it to be 'in the finest taste.'

"Now, a word about your letters. I cannot say much, for I have only read mother's three times, and Mary's twice. Those parts which relate to my own acts and doings greatly edify me. Right glad am I to find that the spectacles fitted mother's eyes

so well. You wondered how I hit it. Why, have I not been told from my very babyhood, 'You have your mother's eyes?' And what is plainer than that, if I have her eyes, I can pick out glasses that will suit them? I am glad, too, that the new book is a favorite. I shall have to depend on you to read for me, for here I read nothing but my lexicon, and, peradventure, dip into mathematics. John's knife shall be forthcoming, and the orders of William and Henry shall be honored, if the apothecary has the pigments.

"I suppose the pond is all frozen over, and the skating good. I know it is foolish, yet, if mother and Mary had skated as many 'moony' nights as I have, they would sigh, not at the *thought*, but at the *fact*, that skating days are over. Never was a face more bright and beautiful than the face of that pond in a clear, cold night, under a full moon. Do the boys go down by my willow still? and do they still have the flag on the little island in the centre, where I used to rear the flag staff once a year? I was going to tell you all about college. But when I think I will begin, pop! my thoughts are all at home! What a place home is! I would not now exchange ours for wealth enough to make you all kings and queens.

"I am warm, well and comfortable; we all study, and dull fellows, like me have to confess that we study hard. We have no genius to help us. My chum is a good fellow; he now sits in yonder corner, his feet poised upon the stove in such a way that the dullness seems to have all run out of his heels into his head, for he is fast asleep.

"I have got it framed, and there it hangs—the picture of my father! I never look up without seeing it, and I never see it without thinking that my mother is a widow, and that I am her eldest son. What more I think I will not be fool enough to say: you will imagine better than I can say it.

"Your gentle hint, dear mother, about leaving my Bible at home, was kind; but it will relieve you to know that I left it designedly, and, in its place, took my dear father's from the upper shelf, in our little library room, and, what is more, I read it every day.

"I need not say, write! write! for I know that some of you will at the end of three weeks. But love to you all, and much, too. I shall tell you of my methods of economy in my next.

"Your affectionate son, &c."

Can any of my readers doubt that a letter like the above would do much to alleviate the anxiety of the mother, and add greatly to the comfort of the family? Every son can show such attention, and at the same time keep his own heart warm with the remembrances of home and kindred. It will add to your ease in letter-writing, and it will cultivate some of the noblest and sweetest virtues of which the heart is susceptible.

Our next specimen is a letter written by the elegant and accomplished Lord Chesterfield to his son.

"DEAR BOY;

"Your letters, except when upon a given subject, are exceedingly laconic, and neither answer my desires, nor the purpose of letters: which should be familiar conversations between absent friends. As I desire to live with you upon the footing of an intimate friend, and not of a parent, I could wish that your letters gave me more particular accounts of yourself, and of your lesser transactions. When you write to me, suppose yourself conversing freely with me, by the fireside. In that case, you would naturally mention the incidents of the day, as where you had been, whom you had seen, what you thought of them, etc. Do this in your letters: acquaint me sometimes with your studies, sometimes with your diversions; tell me of any new person and characters that you meet with in company, and add your own observations upon them; in short, let me see more of you in your letters. How do you go on with Lord Pulteney; and how does he go on at Leipzig? Has he learning, has he parts, has he application? Is he good or ill-natured? In short, what is he; at least, what do you think of him? You may tell me without reserve, for I promise secrecy. You are now of an age that I am desirous of beginning a confidential correspondence with you; and, as I shall on my part write you very freely my opinions upon men and things, which I should often be very unwilling that anybody but you or Mr. Harte should see: so on your part, if you write me without reserve, you may depend upon my inviolable secrecy. If you have ever looked into the letters of Madame de Sévigné to her daughter, Madame de Grignan, you must have observed the ease, freedom, and friendship of that correspondence; and yet I hope and believe, that they did not love one another better than we do. Tell me what books you are now reading, either by way of study or amusement; how you pass your evenings when at home, and where you pass them when abroad."

* * * * * * * *

John Randolph of Roanoke, to his Nephew.

"BIZARRE, Sept. 11, 1808.

"MY DEAR THEODORE:

"I thank you for your letter which I received post before last. Present my respects to Dr. Haller, and tell him I will be obliged to him to procure you shirts, handkerchiefs, and such other things as as you may stand in need of.

"We do not say 'scarcely *nothing*,' but *anything*. Give my love to Buona, and tell him that I shall forward his letter to his brother immediately; but tell him also that a '*tolerable* long letter is *intolerable* English. He should have used the adverb (*tolerably*) instead of the adjective. I wish that, instead of a fictitious correspondent, you would address your letters—I mean those which Dr. Haller requires you to write weekly—to some one of your friends and acquaintance. It would take off from them the air of stiffness which now characterizes them. If Buona had been describing Richmond to his mother or myself, he would never have introduced it with, 'I beg leave to wait upon you;' an awkward exordium, which even Mr. Expectation, of Norfolk, would not approve. You see, my sons, that I make very free with your performances: but do not let this discourage you. *Write* your letters just as you *think them*, and they will be easy; and any inaccuracy which creeps in may be afterwards corrected.

"The partridges are so forward that we have begun to shoot nearly a month earlier than usual. Carlo is an excellent dog for bringing birds after they are shot, but not so good for finding game. I wish you were with me, my sons, to enjoy the sport. Your skill, my dear Theodore, would make amends for my clumsiness, and dear Buona would hold Miniken, who now runs away from uncle whenever she has an opportunity. But thank God, my children, you are more profitably engaged. This alone reconciles me to the loss of your society. I hope to see you both about the last of this month.

"Mother has had an ague, and Sally very sore fingers.

"Your friend and kinsman,

"JOHN RANDOLPH.

"P. S. Do not make a flourish under my name in the superscription of your letters. It is not customary to do so.

"I got a letter to-night from Mr. Bryan; he and my little godson are well, but Mrs. B. has the fever.

"My dear Buona, this is your birthday; you are now entering on your 12th year. May you see many happy returns of this anniversary. The success of my wish will materially depend my child, on the use which you make of the present time."

Here is a charming letter from Hon. William Wirt to his Daughter.

"BALTIMORE, April 18, 1822.

"MY DEAR CHILD:

"You wrote me a dutiful letter, equally honorable to yo ir head and heart, for which I thank you: and when I grow to be a light-hearted, light-headed, happy, thoughtless young girl, I will give you a *quid pro quo*. As it is, you must take such a letter as a man of sense can write, although it has been remarked, that the more sensible the man, the more dull his letter. Don't ask me by whom remarked, or I shall refer you, with Jenkinson, in the Vicar of Wakefield, to Sanconiathon, Manetho, and Berosus.

"This puts me in mind of the card of impressions from the pencil seals, which I intended to inclose last mail, for you, to your mother, but forgot. Lo! here they are: these are the best I can find in Baltimore. I have marked them according to my taste; but exercise your own *exclusively*, and choose for yourself, if either of them please you.

"Shall I bring you a Spanish guitar of Giles' choosing? Can you be certain that you will stick to it? And some music for the Spanish guitar? What say you?

"There are three necklaces that tempt me—a beautiful mock emerald, a still *more* beautiful mock ruby with pearl, and a still *most* beautiful real topaz—what say you?

"Will you have either of the scarfs described to your mother, and which—the blue or black? They are very fashionable and beautiful. Any of those wreaths and flowers? Consult your dear mother; always consult her, always respect her. This is the only way to make yourself respectable and lovely. God bless you, and make you happy.

"Your affectionate father,

"WM. WIRT."

Hon. William Wirt to his Wife.

"BALTIMORE, December 27th, 1822.

* * * * * * * * * *

"The image of your pensive face is on my heart, and continually before my eyes. May the Father of Mercies support you, and pour into your bosom the rich consolations of his grace, and preserve and strengthen you for your family! What can we do, if you suffer yourself to sink under the sorrow that afflicts you? Let us bear up, and endeavor to fulfill our duty to our surviving children; Let us not overcast the morning of

their lives with unavailing gloom. by exhibiting to them continually, the picture of despair. Trouble comes soon enough whatever we do to avert it; and the somber side of life will early enough show itself to them without any haste on our part to draw aside the curtain. Let them be unusually gay and happy as long as they can; and let us rather promote than dissipate the pleasing illusions of hope and fancy. Let us endeavor to show religion to them in a cheering light; the hopes and promises it sets before us; the patience and resignation which it inspires under affliction; the peace and serenity which it spreads around us; the joyful assurance with which it gilds even the night of death.

* * * * * * * * *

"May God bless you, and breathe into your bosom peace and cheerful resignation.

"W. W"

Dr. Franklin to his Wife.

"EASTON, NOV. 13, 1756.

"MY DEAR CHILD;

"I wrote to you a few days since, by a special messenger, and inclosed letters for all our wives and sweethearts, expecting to hear from you by his return, and to have the northern newspapers and English letters per the packet; but he is just now returned without a scrap for poor us; so I had a good mind not to write to you by this opportunity; but I never can be ill-natured enough, even when there is the most occasion. The messenger says he left the letters at your house, and saw you afterwards at Mr. Duche's and told you when he would go, and that he lodged at Honey's, next door to you, and yet you did not write; so let Goody Smith give one more judgement, and say what should be done to you. I think I won't tell you that we are all well, now that we expect to return about the middle of the week, nor will I send you a word of news—that's poz.

"My duty to mother, love to children, and to Miss Betsy and Gracy, etc., etc.

"I am your loving husband.

"B. FRANKLIN.

"P. S. I have *scratched out the loving words*, being writ haste by mistake, when I *forgot I was angry.*"

LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE.

IN our epistolary correspondence, there are perhaps no letters so difficult to indite with due effect as those of condolence on the death of relations or near and dear friends. Yet no difficulty, no experience of painful sensations, must be allowed to deter the writer from the performance of one of the most sacred duties entailed on our sublunary state. Letters of condolence, from the sympathising pen of friendship, fall upon the heart of man like the gentle dews of evening in the parched earth. In the composition of such, there must be no high-flown words or expressions, no straining after effect. If heart speaks not to heart, in the simplest, most soothing language of nature, words will, to the sufferer, prove cold and unimpressive—worse than useless. Be it ever borne in mind, that, to the afflicted, to the mourner in spirit, "there is only one true source of consolation—that we shall meet those we love in another and a better world, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. This is the hope our blessed religion holds out to us, and its realization will amply repay our sorrows here, whilst the anticipated joy blunts the edge of present grief."

The subjoined epistle is from a lady—a young lady, but high in literary fame—to a father, after the loss of an only and much beloved daughter. It has not before been submitted to the public eye. To mention the writer's name would shed luster upon a work of infinitely more importance than this.

"MY DEAR MR. ——,

"I should have immediately replied to your melancholy note to the 11th inst., had I not been considerably indisposed since the period of its receipt. I pray you to believe how very sincerely I sympathise with you on the loss which you have just sustained; although I am perfectly aware that all verbal condolence is vain, under the circumstances. Nevertheless, even at *my* age, I have become so much worn and harassed by the trials of the world, that I cannot refrain from looking upon that *early rest*, which is at times granted to the young, as a blessing which the survivors are totally unable to appreciate. There is a purity and a holiness in the apotheosis of those who leave us in their brightness and their beauty, which instinctively lead us to a persuasion of their beatitude. How many tempta-

subject is too painful for me, and, in the confidence that he is in the enjoyment of an everlasting happiness, such as, my dear ——, even *you* could not have realised to him on earth, I hope that you will support your spirits, both for your own and your children's sake, and look forward to that brighter and happier world in which we shall go to those who cannot return to us.

"God comfort you,

"Dear ——

"Your affectionate and sorrowing friend,

"To Mrs. ——." "— ——.

The Same, on a Child's Death.

"BROOKLYN, July 5th, 18—.

"MY DEAR ——,—If anything could have caused me especial pain, it was the news of your sad bereavement. How I remember your dear child! Affectionate, lively, and intelligent, ever displaying a thoughtfulness beyond his years, and holding forth hopes of happiness in after times which will scarcely bear reflection.

"It has, indeed, been a heavy blow, and I scarcely know how to talk of consolation under so bitter an affliction. But think, my dear ——, of One who 'careth for all,' who loves little children beyond others, and think of the bright and never-ending future life of that dear child, whose spirit has passed away but for a brief period, whose soul only waits in heaven to hail the mother from whom he has been parted.

"I can say no more; human consolations are weak and poorly. May a higher power do that which I cannot!

"Ever sincerely yours,

"To Mrs. ——." "— ——.

The Same, on a Reverse of Fortune.

"BALTIMORE, Jan. 3d, 18—.

"DEAR ——,—I am truly pained to hear of the melancholy change in your circumstances. I had hoped that your husband's position and connections would have prevented the possibility of his embarking in any scheme where there seemed room for uncertainty. But, unhappily, the speculative spirit of the age is too seductive to be easily withstood, and we are every day hearing of families being reduced to absolute poverty, more from mischance than wilful error.

"But you must not only cheer up, but labor to cheer your husband likewise. Let him find that he possesses a wife who will not display her annoyance at the deprivation of many

(perhaps unnecessary) luxuries of life, and whose determination to economise will make poverty seem less poor, and whose affection will insure him that comfort which the wealthiest position, without undivided affection, would wholly fail to realize.

"Nor must you look at matters as hopeless. Although changed in your means, you have not lost in *character*. Your true friends look upon you with the same eyes as formerly, and for the shallow and insincere you ought not, cannot, care. Besides, a favorable change must result from your husband's persevering and consistent efforts; and, by the exercise of economy, and the patient submission to a few privations, you may ere long fully retrieve the position you have already adduced, and which legitimately belongs to you.

"That success and happiness may soon spring out of the present unfavorable condition of things, is the hearty and earnest wish of,

"Yours, ever affectionately,

"To Mrs. ——." "— ——.

LOVE, COURTSHIP, MARRIAGE, ETC.

IF friendship be capable of waking sensations so warm so strong, so elevated, in the human heart, what may not be expected from love—the liveliest, the noblest, the most soul-inspiring, soul-absorbing of passions!

"Who hath not owned, with rapture-smitten frame,
The charm of grace, the magic of a name?"

I speak not of that love by which common minds are too frequently influenced, and which is little more than mere animal instinct; but of that unselfish, hallowed, undying affection which regards its object as a being of a higher order, and for whose interests it is at all times ready and willing to sacrifice its own. Under the influence of such a passion, no creature, man or woman, can ever be guilty of a mean or a base action. Love, *true* love, is the inspirer, the creator of all our noblest virtues.

A gentleman is struck with the appearance of a lady, and is desirous of her acquaintance, but there are no means within his reach of obtaining an introduction, and he has no friends who are acquainted with herself or her family. In this dilemma there is no alternative but a letter.

There is, besides, a delicacy, a timidity, a nervousness in love, which makes men desire some mode of communication

rather than the speech, which, in such cases, too often fails them. In short, there are reasons enough for writing—but when the enamored youth sets about penning a letter to the object of his passions, how difficult does he find it! How many efforts does he make before he succeeds in writing one to suit him!

It may be doubted whether ever so many reams of paper have ever been used in writing letters upon all other subjects, as have been consumed upon epistles of love; and there is probably no man living who has not at some time written, or desired to write, some missive which might explain his passions to the amiable being of whom he was enamored; and it has been the same, so far as can be judged, in all the generations of the world.

Affairs of the heart—the delicate and interesting preliminaries of marriage, are oftener settled by the pen than in any other manner. To write the words legibly, to spell them correctly, to point them properly, to begin every sentence and every proper name with a capital letter, every one is supposed to learn at school; still we give such instructions in another part of this book.

For a love letter, good paper is indispensable. When it can be procured, that of costly quality, gold-edged, perfumed, or ornamented in the French style, may be properly used. The letter should be carefully enveloped, and nicely sealed with a fancy wafer—not a common one, of course, where any other can be had; or what is better, plain or fancy sealing-wax. As all persons are more or less governed by first impressions and externals, the whole affair should be as neat and elegant as possible.

Speaking of love letters generally, Moore, in his "Life of Lord Byron," observes, that "such effusions are but little suited to the public eye." Probably not; and therefore they ought not to be subjected to the gaze of the public. "It is the tendency of all strong feeling," he adds, "from dwelling constantly on the same idea, to be monotonous; and those often-repeated vows and verbal endearments, which make the charm of true love letters to the parties concerned in them, must for ever render even the best of them cloying to others." Without stopping to discuss the philosophy of this passage, I will hazard the assertion that it applies accurately only to such love letters as the writer is most likely best acquainted with; "things that are of the earth,

earthy." Have lovers nothing to talk or to write about but Cupids, and Venuses, and flowers, and hearts and darts! I would not ask for a better criterion by which to test the moral and intellectual powers of a man than his love letters, premising, always, that the party addressed be an object capable and worthy of inspiring a genuine passion. No subject can be too exalted for the pen of an intellectual lover.

How sweet and beatiful is the affection portrayed in the following passages of a letter from a gentleman to a lady with whom he was on the point of being united in marriage:

"TROMSOE, May 28, 184–.

"If you were but here, my Alette! I miss you every moment, while I am preparing my dwelling to receive you. I am continually wishing to ask you, 'How will you have this, Alette?' Ah, my ever beloved, that you were here at this moment! You would be enraptured with this 'land of ice and bears,' at the thought of which I know you inwardly shudder. * * * *

"'But the winter!' I hear you say, 'the summer may pass well enough, but the long, dark winter! Well, the winter, too, my Alette, passes happily away with people who love each other, when it is warm at home. Do you remember, last summer, how we read together at Christiansand, in the morning paper, this extract from the *Tromsoe Gazette*? 'We have had snow-storms for several days together, and at this moment the snow-plow is at work, opening a path to the churches. The death-like stillness of night and winter extends over meadow and valley; only a few cows wander about, like ghosts, over the snowy tracts, to pluck a scanty meal from the twigs of the trees that are not yet buried in the snow.' The little winter sketch pleased me, but you shuddered involuntarily at that expression, 'the death-like stillness of the night and winter, and bowed your sweet dear face, with closed eyes, upon my breast. Oh! my Alette, thus will it be when, in future, the terror of the cold and darkness seizes thee, and upon my breast, listening to the beatings of my heart, the words of my love, wilt thou forget these dark images of storm and gloom? * * * Close thine eyes, slumber, my beloved one, while I watch over thee. Thou shalt one day look upon night and winter, and own that their power is not so fearful. Love, that geyser of the soul, can melt the ice

and snow of the most frozen regions. Wherever its warm springs well up, there glows a southern climate."

The above comes before us in the form of fiction; yet every line bears the vivid impress of truth and nature. It is from "Strife and Peace," one of the charming novels of Frederika Bremer, a Swedish author of contemporary celebrity.

The subjoined passage, from another of that lady's works, "The H—— Family," presents an equally beautiful picture of affection in wedded life. It is from the letter of a newly-married lady, the wife of a clergyman, to her friend:

"Beata, do you know what I pray, morning and evening, ay, hourly, from the bottom of my heart? 'O God! make me worthy the love of my husband, grant me the power of making him happy.' And I have received such power, for he is (so he says and so he seems) very happy. If you knew how well he looks, how gay! This is because I take so much care of him; then he does not dare take so little care of himself as before; and then he works no more in the night; he has weaned himself of this; and so he thinks and writes (he acknowledges himself) more freely and powerfully than before. Then I am very careful not to interrupt or disturb him when he is in his studies, writing or reading. Oh! when I would just get a glimpse of him (he is so beautiful, Beata), I steal in gently and play him a little trick. I place a flower upon his book, kiss his brow, or do some such thing, and go quietly back again, and when I turn round to shut the door, I always get a glance from his eyes that follows me as though it were stolen."

One scrap more—the last letter of a lady, on her death-bed to her affianced husband:

'MY DEAREST, EVER-BELOVED CHARLES!

"Long has my spirit struggled, but in vain, against a threatened dissolution. The hope that I might yet be yours, that our fairy visions of bliss might be realized, has sometimes given a new and momentary impulse to the lagging current in my veins; but I feel that my heart is broken—nature will no longer perform her office—I am sinking daily and hourly into the grave. Charles, my beloved! when these lines shall meet your sight, this yet 'warm mass' will be 'a kneaded clod'—the hand that now writes will be cold forever! Oh, Charles my adored husband! look upwards to the throne of Bliss

eternal, in the heavens. There, 'where the weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling,' we shall meet again and be for ever happy!

"You will preserve the inclosed trifles, as memorials of her who loved you above all earthly beings. Bless you! Oh, for ever bless you! This will be the last aspiration of your dying

"MARY."

To a young Lady to whom one is engaged.

CHESTER, Oct. 15th, 18—.

"MY DEAREST FANNY,—If there is one thing that can console me for my unavoidable absence from your side, it is the pleasure of being able to pen a few lines to express, however feebly, my continued and increasing affection for you. It is, indeed, a painful and irksome change from our rambles about the fields, our evening duets, and our stolen conversations, to a dull routine of mercantile accounts and the never-ending confusion of business. Happily, however, my affairs are in a rapid state of settlement, and I shall hope once more soon to bask in the sunshine of my Fanny's sweet countenance, and to feed my imagination with thoughts of the happiness which her placid and sincere disposition will hereafter shed around a home! I need hardly say how eagerly I watch for the post, and how I cherish every line that bears the evidence of my dear girl's affection, and how gratefully every sentiment that flows from her pen is treasured in my memory.

"God bless you, dearest Fanny, and believe me, with most respectful and affectionate remembrances to your parents, and all friends.

"Your ever affectionate and devoted

"—— ——.

"To Miss ——."

On receiving a favorable answer.

"FLUSHING, October 16th, 18—.

"DEAREST MISS (*or use Christian name*).—Words cannot express my delight on finding your note on my table last night. The toils of the day were over, but how delightful was it to find a letter—and *such* a letter!—from one whom I may now hope to hail as the companion of my whole future life! The weight taken off my mind by the candid and gentle confession of one whose love seemed too great a happiness to hope for is

amusement. Be assured, therefore, my dear ——, that, with the exception of missing your cheering company, and that of our dear children, I am as happy and as lively as you, the fondest of all my well-wishers, could desire me to be.

"Having said this much of myself, let me now observe that I am most anxious to receive a letter from you; for I long to hear how you and the children still continue in regard to health, and what fresh occurrences have taken place since you wrote last. At present, I have no reason for supposing that my absence from home will be prolonged beyond the —th, on which day I hope again to be with you. Give my kindest love to the children, and

"Believe me,

"My dear ——,

"Your ever affectionate wife,

"To —— —, Esq." "——.

To a Lady, complaining of her coolness.

"MONROE PLACE, June 10th, 18—.

"DEAR ——,—How often have I passed my late conduct in review before me, endeavoring to discover by what word or act I could have given you offence. Vain, however, has been the attempt, for the offence which I have given must have been totally inadvertent, and could never have sprung from any intention to have given you even a moment's uneasiness. But that by some means I have had the misfortune to incur your displeasure, has been but too evidently indicated by the change of your behavior towards me—a change from the kindness of an attached friend, to the cool indifference of a distant acquaintance. Of late, when in your presence, I have been many times upon the point of asking you upon what occasion, and by what means I have displeased you? But as constantly have I needed the courage to do so, and my voice has failed me, whenever I have endeavored to make the attempt. In the hope of being eased from a painful state of anxiety, I write this letter, and trust that you will give me some explanation on the subject referred to, either by an answer in your hand-writing, or through your own lips, at our next meeting. But whatever that reply may be, of this be assured, that my esteem for you can never know a change, and that you will ever live as a cherished object in the breast of him who now subscribes himself,

"Yours most affectionately and sincerely,

"To Miss——." "— ——

*From a young Man, avowing a passion he had entertained for a length of time, and fearful of disclosing it.**

"NEW YORK, Feb. 13th, 18—.

"DEAR MISS ——,—It is with no small degree of apprehension, as to the manner in which you may receive the following avowal, that I take up my pen to address you; but I have so long struggled with my feelings, that they have now got the better of my irresolution; and throwing aside all hesitation, I have ventured, although alarmed at my own boldness in doing so, to lay open my whole heart before you. For months past I have been oppressed with a passion that has entirely superseded every other feeling of my heart—that passion is *love*—and *you—you alone* are the object of it. In vain have I endeavored to drive the idea from my mind, by every art that I could possibly think of: in vain have I sought out every amusement that might have a tendency to relieve my mind from the bias which it has taken, but love has taken that firm hold of my whole soul, that I am unable to entertain but one idea, one thought, one feeling, and that is always yourself. I neglect myself, my business, and can neither hear nor see any one thing, but you bear the chief part therein. Believe me, I am sincere, when I assert, that I feel it totally impossible to live apart from you; when near you, I am in paradise—when absent, I feel in torture. This, I solemnly assure you, is a true description of the feelings with which my breast is continually agitated, and it remains only for you to give a reality to those hopes, or at once to crush them, by a single word, say but that word, and I am the happiest or the most miserable of mankind.

"Yours, till death,

"To Miss ——." "— ——.

To a Lady.

"TUNBRIDGE, July 3d 18—.

"DEAR MADAM,—I have been so harassed with love doubt, distraction, and a thousand other wild and nameless feelings,

* On grounds of plain *common sense*, we should not recommend this letter for imitation; but people *will* send such letters

since I had the happiness of being in your company, that I have been unable to form one sane reflection, or to separate events from the feelings that accompanied them—in fact, I have been totally unable to bring my thoughts into anything like regularity, for they are so entirely mixed up with the idea of yourself, that the business of the world, and the pursuits of amusement and pleasure, have been entirely forgotten in the one passion that holds undivided empire over my soul. I have deferred from day to day penning this confession to you, in order that I might have been enabled to have done so with some degree of ease and calmness; but the hope has proved fruitless. I can resist no longer, for to keep silent on a subject which is interwoven with my very existence, would be death to me. No, I am unable to do so, and I have, therefore, determined to lay open to you the suffering of my heart, and to implore from you a restoration of that peace and happiness which once were mine. You, my dear Miss ——, are alone the cause of my unhappiness, and to you alone can I look for a relief from the wretchedness that has overwhelmed me. The fervent passion that devours my soul for your adorable self, can only be allayed by the declaration that I am loved as fervently in return. But dare I ask so much purity, so much sweetness, mildness and modesty, to make such a declaration?—I know not what I say—but O! my dear Miss ——, be merciful, and if you cannot *love* me—say, at least, that you do *not hate* me. Never could I survive the idea of being hateful to that angelic being, whose love I prize more than existence itself. Let me then cling to the idea that time may accomplish that which, I fain hope, a first impression has done resuming, unless a fatal pre-engagement exists (a thing I dare not trust myself to think of), that you will comply with my request, seeing that my designs are perfectly pure and honorable. I remain waiting with the utmost impatience for your favorable reply,

"Dear Miss ——,

"Your devoted servant till death,

"— ——."

From a young Lady, in answer to the proposal of a Gentleman who had met her the previous Evening.

"WESTCHESTER, July 6th, 18—.

"SIR,—Although it is the highest compliment that can be paid our sex, to receive offers calculated to ensure a lasting

acquaintance, I must still complain of the precipitate character of your address to one who, till last night, was a total stranger to you. Without wishing to say anything harsh, I must confess that I do not feel any motive to entertain so hasty a proposal, and have felt bound to lay your letter before my parents as I could not think of concealing from them any correspondence of such a description.

"Trusting that you will see this in its proper light,

"I remain,

"Sir,

"Yours respectfully,

"To ——, Esq." "— ——.

Another more favorable.

"PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 18th, 18—.

"SIR,—Although your letter of this morning comes upon me in a strangely unexpected manner, I feel that your intimate friendship with my kind hostess, Mrs. ——, perhaps excuses a precipitation which could scarcely be justified on ordinary grounds. At the same time, I cannot think of giving a sanction to further attention on your part, without consulting Mrs. —— on the subject, and I have, therefore, placed your letter in her hands. I cannot deny that I feel some pleasure in having elicited sentiments from you, which appear to be founded in honorable good feeling, but must for a time, beg of you to excuse me giving you any further sanction to your addresses.

"I remain,

"Sir,

"Your sincere well-wisher and friend,

"To ——, Esq." ——.

On receiving a second Letter, after frequent Interviews.

"BELMONT, Dec. 15th, 18—.

"DEAR SIR,—It is impossible for me to deny that your assiduous, but delicate, attentions to me of late have confirmed a favorable impression I had formed, but which the suddenness of your address rendered it impossible I could avow. Your

whole conduct has been that of a gentleman, and Mrs. ——'s representations are so strongly in your favor, that I feel it would be false modesty in me to disclaim a feeling of strong regard for yourself. Let us not, however, be too hasty in our conclusions—let us not mistake momentary impulse for permanent impression; let us seek rather to know more of each other, to study each other's tempers, and to establish that sincere esteem which should, which must be the foundation of every deeper feeling.

"I have written to my father on the subject, and, as I anticipated, he has laid me under no restraint, save of cautioning me not to be hasty in giving that promise or accepting it from another, which may involve the happiness of a whole life. Meanwhile, Mrs. —— begs that you will accept a general invitation to her tea-table, to which arrangement, I can assure you, no objection will be made by

"Dear Sir,

"Yours very truly,

"To ——, Esq." "— ——.

To an acquaintance of long standing.

"CHELSEA, October 15th, 18–.

"MY DEAR MISS ——,—I have so long enjoyed the happiness of being received as a welcome guest at your respected parent's house, that I write with the more confidence on a subject of most serious importance to my welfare.

"From constantly meeting with you, and observing the thousand acts of amiability and kindness which adorn your daily life, I have gradually associated my hopes of future happiness with the chance of possessing you as their sharer. Believe me, dear Miss ——, this is no outbreak of boyish passion, but the hearty and healthy result of a long and affectionate study of your disposition. It is love, founded on esteem; and I feel persuaded that your knowledge of my own character will lead you to trace my motives to their right source.

"May I, then, implore you to consult your own heart, and, should I not have been mistaken in the happy belief that my feelings are in some measure reciprocated, to grant me permission to mention the matter to your parents.

"Believe me, dear Miss——,

"Your ever sincere, but at present anxious friend,

"To Miss——." "—— ——.

To a young Lady from a young Tradesman.

"NEW YORK, Feb. 16th, 18—.

"DEAR MISS ——,—Since I met with you at ——, my mind has been constantly filled with the remembrance of the pleasant moments passed in your society. My business has been improving of late, and, in point of prosperity, I have much cause to be thankful. But I feel that there are higher duties in life than can be fulfilled by a man in his single state, and I am anxious to find a companion for my future life. Such a companion, dear Miss ——, I venture to believe I have found in you, and my earnest hope is that you may be willing to appreciate the affectionate regard of one, who, however humble in his present position, has every desire to elevate that position for your sake.

"Without attempting to use fine language, or make a parade of sentiment, I hope you will accept these lines as conveying the plain and honest sentiments of one, who, in anxious expectation of your reply,

"Remains,

"Dear Miss ——,

"Your most devoted servant,

"To Miss ——." "— ——.

Neither my plan nor my space admits of "instructions for the choice of a wife," or of a husband, or for forming or avoiding "prudential" marriages. What I have given, however, will suffice to show that lovers, whether single or married, are not under the necessity of writing nonsense—of inditing nothing but the sickly sentimentalism which Mr. Moore so philosophically regards as constituting the essence of amatory epistles.

CONCLUDING HINTS.

SOME few general remarks on very simple matters—which are, nevertheless, of much importance in the transactions of every-day life—may be advantageously appended to the specimens already laid before the reader.

There is great judgement required in using "Sir," or "Dear Sir," especially in addressing a person of superior wordly position to yourself. Always reflect whether you are on such terms with the person to whom you write as to

warrant your using "Dear," or "My dear," before the more retiring phrase of address.

At the same time, the use of "Dear Sir," even towards a stranger, is considered a graceful manner of addressing an inferior; but in responding to this, it would be preferable to avoid too much familiarity *at first*. A golden rule in such matters is, that nothing is lost by too much modesty, while nothing gives so much offence as officious familiarity.

"Reverend and dear Sir" is a frequent address from one clergyman to another, with whom he is supposed to have little acquaintance, beyond that of being in the same profession. "Dear Sir" is afterwards adopted, when one or two letters have passed between the parties.

"Dear Sir" is frequently used in transactions between gentlemen and their tradesmen; but such use must be guided by the good sense of both parties. It must also be considered that the position and character of tradesmen render them fully on a par with professional or independent persons. We are all equal in this free country.

"Honored Sir," though somewhat antiquated, is still frequently used, either in addressing a person in very advanced years, a parent, a person to whom we have been under great obligations, or in an appeal from a poor person to a rich and powerful one.

Nearly the same rules apply to letters addressed to persons of the other sex.

Never send a *note* to a person who is your superior, unless it be upon a very slight and indifferent matter. In asking a favor of an intimate friend, address him in the first person.

Do not take bad writing for freedom of style. Whatever pleasure your friends may derive from reading your letters, you have no right to suppose that they have time for the study of *hieroglyphics*.

Always put a stamp on your envelope at the top of the right hand corner.

Always use an envelope, except for letters of mere business. Fashion now demands it, and it has the advantages of keeping the letter clean and insuring secresy.

What you have to say in your letter, say as plainly as possible, as if you were speaking; this is the best rule. Do not revert three or four times to one circumstance, but finish up as you go on.

Let your signature be written as plainly as possible (many

mistakes will be avoidec, especially in writing to strangers) and without any flourishes, as they tend not in any way to add to the harmony of your letter. We have seen signatures that have been almost impossible to decipher, being a mere mass of strokes, without any form to indicate letters. This is done chiefly by the ignorant, and would lead one to suppose that they were ashamed of signing what they had written.

Do not cross your letters; surely paper is cheap enough now to admit of your using an extra half-sheet, in case of necessity. (This practice is chiefly prevalent among young ladies.)

Avoid the too frequent use of French and Italian phrases. A letter thus larded is the fit production of a boarding-school miss.

If you are not a good writer it is advisable to use best ink, the best paper, and the best pens, as, though they may not alter the character of your handwriting, yet they will assist to make your writing look better.

The paper on which you write should be clean, and neatly folded.

There should not be stains on the envelopes, if otherwise, it is only an indication of your own sloveliness.

Common wafers should never be nsed, at least in general correspondence. For letters of business they are still permitted. Should you send a note on business by hand, be careful that the wafer is dry before it reaches the party addressed. Nothing is more offensive than a wet wafer. We have seen a commercial man tear away the corner of a note in great disgust, when delivered to him thus secured.

Courtesy requires that letters of condolence to a friend on the death of a relative, should be written on black-edged paper, and sealed with black wax, even should you have been unacquainted with the deceased.

Give the proper address and date of writing at the head of every letter. Never assume that your correspondent knows your address so well that it is unnecessary to repeat it.

Go straight to your main subject at once, whatever it may be; for therein is the charm of all good writing. Just observe how a clever "leader" in a newspaper arrests your attention, by the very first line, or curtainly by the first paragraph.

Avoid postscripts, for they are ugly, *old-womanish*, and,

as a rule, unnecessary. Ladies are said to write long letters having no meaning, and to crush into a postscript the only matter of importance they have to communicate. This we cannot believe. The fair are more shrewd than they get credit for from their clumsy partners. A postscript containing the pith of the letter always reminds us of a cracker attached to a dog's tail; the glory is at the wrong end, and the spectacle is more likely to amuse the observer than arrest the attention of his sober sympathies.

Long letters are more easily written than short ones, for condensation requires some exercise of skill. Therefore, do not take pride in the length of your letters, as our members of the council of collective wisdom do in their long speeches, for though both may serve as anodynes, or at least as soporifics, yet we do not desire compulsory repose when we read the one, or listen to the other. If you find it difficult to compress your thoughts rewrite your letter, and with a little perseverance you will soon discover that a great many *heres*, and *theres*, and *whichs*, and *whats*, and *ifs*, and *buts*, besides no end of superfluous adjectives, that encumber the sense, and render many things more "wonderful," "extraordinary," and "unparalleled," than they really are or ever will be.

In writing to a person, especially if a stranger, on your own business exclusively, and wishing to receive an answer, do not fail to enclose a stamp for that purpose.

And, finally, remember that whatever you write is written evidence either of your good sense or your folly, your industry or carelessness, your self-control or impatience. What you have once put into the letter-box, may cost you lasting regret, or be equally important to your whole future welfare. And, for such grave reasons, *think before you write, and think while you are writing.*

COMPLETE RULES OF ETIQUETTE,

AND

THE USAGES OF SOCIETY.