

**ANALYSIS OF LETTER-
WRITING, WITH A LARGE
NUMBER OF EXAMPLES OF
MODEL BUSINESS LETTERS**

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Analysis of Letter-writing, with a Large Number of Examples of Model Business Letters by
Calvin Townsend

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CALVIN TOWNSEND

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PREFACE.

FOR several years past the author has been engaged in the *Rochester Business University* as Lecturer on *Commercial Law*, and instructor in *Business Correspondence*. His method of presenting these subjects on the blackboard is peculiar. The favor with which his work on *Commercial Law*, analytically and topically arranged, published in 1871,* has been received both by business colleges and the legal profession, has encouraged him to the preparation of this work on a plan similar to that.

It is designed chiefly for the use of pupils in normal and high schools, business colleges, the advanced classes of the common schools, and especially for business men, and young persons of both sexes preparing for business life. It is hoped it will be found useful also to teachers and instructors of every grade.

No attempt, so far as the author is aware, has hitherto been made to teach letter-writing topically and analytically, as to form or matter, in the schools of any grade in this country. So far as his knowledge extends, this is the first effort of the kind in that direction. He has long felt the want of a good text-book for the use of his own classes.

* Published by Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor, & Co., New York.

This little volume makes no pretensions to teaching the pupil how to compose a letter. That can hardly be done by itself, either as an art or as a science. But all the arts and all the sciences contribute to that end.

To give a finished literary character to a letter requires superior literary qualifications on the part of the writer. These cannot be acquired through the study of this or any other work on letter-writing. They are the fruits of broad culture in all departments of learning. The ability, therefore, to write a scholarly letter implies that the writer is a person of scholarly attainments.

But literary culture does not always enable one to give the proper details of mechanical arrangement to a letter. It may have all the literary polish and rhetorical finish that might be expected from the pen of a Milton, an Addison, or a Chesterfield, yet the manuscript may present a very uncouth and shabby appearance. Were it fortunately to fall into the hands of a printer who was master of his art, on him would devolve the labor of correcting all its mechanical blunders, and of bringing order out of chaos. Many a printer has saved, or at least protected, the reputation of an author.

The manuscript letters of not a few of the most gifted literary characters would, in mechanical arrangement, be a discredit to an ordinary schoolboy or merchant's clerk of fifteen or sixteen years of age. Thousands of letters are written every day, faultless in composition, but abounding with errors in mechanical detail. They read well to the ear, but are horrid deformities to the eye.

Few, indeed, of the letters of our best business men, taken just as they are written, are fit for the press. Their authors would be

ashamed of them, were they to be published, perchance, with all their errors. The composition may be excellent, — perhaps not a word needs to be added or omitted, — the penmanship may be good, but the entire appearance and dress are faulty in the extreme. And the faults are purely of a mechanical character, and such as any schoolboy could learn in a few hours to avoid.

This work is intended as a correct guide in the matter of mechanical detail, and in the combinations of the parts of a letter, whether, in its composition, it be a good one or a poor one. This is its chief end and aim.

If the student will attentively study it, he will readily learn to avoid all that class of common errors in letter-writing. It will cost him the labor of but a few lessons at most.

DIRECTIONS TO THE TEACHER.

IN teaching according to the plan of this work, the blackboard and slate must be brought into constant use. It will be idle to attempt to teach this subject, as herein arranged, without them. With them, the pupil who can write a tolerably fair hand must be dull indeed if he cannot learn perfectly in a few lessons how to give to a letter its proper mechanical form, dress, and features. A little careful blackboard practice, following the models and examples, will be found to be all that is necessary. The author, therefore, hopes the teacher will not attempt to use this work without the blackboard.

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