

**TALKS ON
BUSINESS
CORRESPONDENCE**

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Talks on business correspondence by William Cushing Bamburgh

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WILLIAM CUSHING BAMBURGH

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BY

WILLIAM CUSHING BAMBURGH



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INTRODUCTION

THIS book assumes that the reader and user of its suggestions and statements has received some primary education. It also assumes that the student, whether he is still in school or engaged in the first years of his business career, or is even a business man of some standing, has some desire to want to be more than he is.

Grammar is taught to some in their school days, whereas it is a natural gift to others. The rules of good grammar govern all expression alike when oral or written, whether epistolary or literary — and business letter writing is no exception. The business youth or man who is deficient in grammar should

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purchase a standard grammar-book and then study it with interest and care. This book is not meant to be a grammar.

Neither is it a spelling book or a book of synonyms or phrases. Some are born spellers, some acquire spelling and others lean on the dictionary all their lives. The poor speller generally knows it and should carry his crutch with him, particularly when writing letters. A wide range of words and phrases is desirable in business life. The employee who has a limited fund of words is the most easily misunderstood and has the misfortune to mislead others in what he says. So, too, the man of keen intelligence in the meaning of words occasionally interprets what he reads or hears in so literal a manner that he is misled by the less intelligent. The study of words and spelling is too great to be included in this book.

What sort of a book is it, then?

In the business world there are many customs, methods, rules and principles

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which are accepted by men of business as composing the basic spirit governing their relationships and communications with one another. Many youths and men entering business life between the ages of 15 and 25 are not equipped with even the ordinary rudiments of business methods, and the struggle to obtain that knowledge is attended with difficulty from the start. (Business methods are seldom taught in schools and rarely taught in a business-like manner when included in the curriculum where "business" is a single study included in a varied course during a short school term. Business methods should be a compulsory study included in every high school course. It would provide the means for the salvation of many who would otherwise become business failures.)

The capability of a business man often comes to him after a laborious experience and not soon enough in his life for him to be at his best in his prime. That,

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except in the case of the slothful, the unambitious and the wholly incapable, is more often than otherwise caused by the lack of knowledge about the customs, methods, rules and principles of good business early enough in life, — a lack naturally retarding growth and that growth being continually obstructed by the competition for place and advancement among associates. Although the best business ability has been considered that which is acquired in spite of obstructions and the reticence of others, the increase in the number of text books during the past few years has placed business among the sciences which can be acquired somewhat by study, thus removing experience to its proper relationship with a specific business.

In the simple or primary conduct of any business there may be classified seven working branches :

(a) Ownership and executive management.

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- (b) Finance and accounting.
- (c) Equipment and manufacture.
- (d) Production cost and price making.
- (e) Marketing and salesmanship.
- (f) Advertising.
- (g) Relations with customers and others.

The beginner in business life feels that he must acquire a smattering of all of these phases, or else he must specialize in some particular feature of the business. In the former condition, the widest field open to his endeavor is in an executive position where his knowledge of the entire business and the capacity for directing the work of others, places him among the leaders. Specialization in turn produces equally large rewards; but isolation in a small position without the knowledge of business processes nor the wish to battle with experience, produces the inevitable sorehead for whom even charity changes to scorn.

Within the limits either of a single