

**IRVINE'S DICTIONARY OF TITLES. AN
EXHAUSTIVE WORK ON THE
CORRECT USE OF TITLES AND
SALUTATIONS IN WRITING AND
SPEAKING. UPON ORIGINAL PLANS**

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Irvine's Dictionary of Titles. An Exhaustive Work on the Correct Use of Titles and Salutations in Writing and Speaking. Upon Original Plans by Leigh H. Irvine

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LEIGH H. IRVINE

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IRVINE'S DICTIONARY OF TITLES

An Exhaustive Work on the Correct Use of
Titles and Salutations in Writing
and Speaking.

UPON ORIGINAL PLANS

Containing Authentic Information on the Etiquette of Correspondence,
Official Forms of Address, Superscriptions, Closing Forms of
Letters, Including Federal, State, Ecclesiastical,
Military and Naval Customs.

METHODICALLY ARRANGED AND ELABORATELY
CROSS-INDEXED

By LEIGH H. IRVINE

Assisted by a Corps of Eminent Writers, Editors, Specialists, Prelates, and
Heads of University Departments.

Being in Part a Codification of One Section of the Author's
Cyclopedia of Diction, an Exhaustive Work on
the Correct Use of the English
Language.

CROWN PUBLISHING COMPANY
San Francisco
1912

WHY THIS BOOK?

IF THE reader asks, Why this book? the answer is, Because it covers a useful field that has been until now almost wholly neglected. Remarkable as the statement may seem, there is not extant an exhaustive and authentic treatise on the etiquette of correspondence, salutations, and forms of address.

Many little manuals that pretend to give information on the subject are misleading, incomplete, and worthless. A few works of real value are cited in these pages, and many authorities are given due credit.

Long observation impels the author of this work to believe that not one person in thousands knows how to address and conclude a letter to a governor, a Federal bureau chief, to the President of the United States, to the prelates of sundry churches, or to the wife of an officer of the Navy. In scores of similar instances the lack of information is equally complete, and there is an embarrassing dearth of knowledge concerning the many forms demanded in everyday commercial, official, and social correspondence. This is an age when even the humblest citizen may have occasion to appeal to men and women in all ranks of life.

That so important a field has been overlooked by authors and publishers in an era of prodigious correspondence, when thousands of mail cars are laden with all sorts of letters, is a mystery; yet such information as this book contains should be within the reach of every person who ever writes a letter. In these matters memory can not be trusted, for many forms are exceedingly technical.

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The contents of this volume are codified from the author's *Cyclopedia of Diction*, a massive work on which many editors have been engaged for more than a decade. Not until they reached the department of Addresses and Salutations was it realized how scant is trustworthy information on this practical and highly important subject.

By correspondence with ambassadors, archbishops, Federal bureau chiefs, the librarian of Congress, and almost every department at the National Capitol Building, and by consulting a few rare official records, much definite and valuable information has been obtained.

Every business man, school child, club woman, and educated person in the land should be familiar with the recognized customs of correspondence.

Suggestions and criticisms are invited. In spite of great pains, minor errors will doubtless be discovered by the acute.

LEIGH H. IRVINE.

San Francisco, March, 1912.

AUTHORITIES QUOTED.

Hundreds of books have been examined, and correspondence has been carried on with scores of persons in official, scholastic, and social positions in order to obtain the forms submitted in this *Dictionary of Titles*. It is useless to name all the authorities consulted, but it may be said in a general way that every work of importance has been at hand. A critic of many years' experience was engaged to visit the Library of Congress and the principal Federal departments in search of information, and to verify forms that had been suggested. The following works, among others, were referred to by the editor:

DeB. Randolph Keim's *Handbook of Official and Social Etiquette and Public Ceremonies at Washington*.

How to Write Letters, by J. Willis Westlake, professor of English, Millersville, Pennsylvania.

Commercial Correspondence, by Carl Lewis Altmaier, of the Drexel Institute, Philadelphia.

Rhetoric in Practice, by Newcomer and Seward, of Stanford University.

Belding's *Commercial Correspondence*.

The many decisions of F. Horace Teall, published in *The Inland Printer*.

Elements of Rhetoric, by G. R. Carpenter, of Columbia University.

Pliny's Letters.

The Etiquette of Correspondence, by Helen E. Gavit.

The Paston Letters.

Knight's Half Hours With Best Letter Writers.

Dante's Eleven Letters.

Macaulay's Life and Letters, by Trevelyan.

Henderson's *Ethics and Etiquette of the Pulpit*.

Thomas's *Official and Social Etiquette of Washington*.

The Yea and Nay of Correspondence Etiquette, by White and Wyckoff.

Besides these, a number of books referred to throughout this section were examined, and many reports (issued by states and by the Federal Government) were reviewed. Acknowledgment is made to editors and others who gave aid in Roman Catholic forms and other departments of the work.

PART I.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

ASK the first educated person you meet, "How should I address a letter to the President of the United States?" and he will probably admit that he does not know, although he will suggest either *Honorable* or *Excellency* as part of the address. As to the proper close of the letter, he will usually have the vaguest imaginable idea. When told that all his surmises are wrong, he will be interested.

If you pursue your inquiries, you will probably discover that he knows just as little about addressing his Congressman, a governor, a mayor, an archbishop, a firm of women, or the heads of sundry departments in the Roman Catholic orders, be they male or female directors. The use of *Mr.*, *Esq.*, *Sir*, *Madam*, and hundreds of kindred appellations will be almost as puzzling to a large number of those interviewed on the subject.

Yet the etiquette of correspondence, especially the prime rules applicable to the head of the Nation, and to men of rank, should be known to every schoolgirl, to say nothing of the schoolboys whose future activities may bring them into close relations with political movements.

"Sweet and courteous manners," which the Southern aristocracy were wont to call *deportment*, demand a knowledge of proper forms. That less than ten persons in a thousand know the cardinal principles of correspondence is less remarkable than the fact that there seems to be no book, school, or person where the forms may be consulted. The word *consulted* is used advisedly, because

the forms are so technical and numerous that nobody should try to remember them. It would be like trying to commit a city directory to memory. There are a number of good little books that treat of some of the forms in current use. Westlake's *How to Write Letters* and Altmaier's *Commercial Correspondence* are the most satisfactory obtainable, though Keim's greater volume, now out of print, is more complete in official forms. Most of the works essaying these subjects are incomplete, and many of the forms are misleading. Few cite any authority for their rulings, and dissenting opinions seem to be ignored.

1. NOT A "LETTER-WRITER" BOOK. This work makes no attempt to give set forms, a field which belongs to the many humorous young-man's own-letter-writer and young-lady's-correspondence-companion type of works. To learn how to write delightful letters is to master an important branch of learning, in a field almost wholly neglected in these days of haste and bustle.

The delightful Joseph Addison complained that little attention was devoted to the art of letter-writing, which he considered more important than the study of Greek and Latin. He realized that many who pretended to go into raptures over the phrases of Demosthenes and Cicero lacked the ability to express themselves on the most ordinary occasions. President Hadley, of Yale, speaking two centuries later, regretted the inability of college graduates to write business letters—and Professor Adams Sherman Hill, of the same University, writes that the ordinary college graduate's ignorance of English would disgrace a boy twelve years of age.

Questions of this character are beyond the province of

this work, which limits itself almost wholly to titles and salutations. The author has essayed the larger questions in his voluminous *Cyclopedia of Diction*, a work almost a hundred times the length of this little volume.

2. IMPORTANCE OF LETTERS. So important is the art of letter-writing that it is not an exaggeration to say that half of the business of every civilized country is transacted through the mails. When it comes to social life, almost every movement of the times increases letter-writing. As education advances, correspondence grows. The invention of the typewriter has given a new vocation to women, and called many men to positions in charge of correspondence.

3. PROMPTNESS ESSENTIAL. Large business firms are systematic and courteous, as well as prompt with their correspondence. It is regrettable, however, that many persons, club secretaries, and even friends, neglect to answer civil letters of friendly inquiry, business, and social obligation. Failure to make some sort of courteous response within a reasonable time, if the letter in question is from a person who has a right, from his position or from the courtesy of his communication, to a reply, is a mark of rudeness. This is more particularly true if a stamp has been inclosed for reply. Failure to respond to an ordinary inquiry from a friend is as rude as failure to acknowledge a greeting from a friend whom we meet in the street. See paragraphs 6, 7, and 8.

4. FASHION RULES. As in clothes, furniture, social customs of salutation, etc., fashion rules in determining titles, salutations, and the concluding forms of letters. Whether we like this or that style or not, we are more or less under obligation to respect prevailing usage.