

**NEW LETTER-WRITER, FOR THE USE OF LADIES:  
EMBODYING LETTERS ON THE SIMPLEST  
MATTERS OF LIFE, AND ON VARIOUS  
SUBJECTS, WITH APPLICATIONS FOR  
SITUATIONS, ETC. AND A COPIOUS APPENDIX  
OF FORMS OF ADDRESS, BILLS, RECEIPTS. AND  
OTHER USEFUL MATTER**

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New Letter-Writer, for the Use of Ladies: Embodying Letters on the Simplest Matters of Life, and on Various Subjects, with Applications for Situations, Etc. And a Copious Appendix of Forms of Address, Bills, Receipts. And Other Useful Matter by Anonymous

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# ANONYMOUS

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COMPILED FROM THE BEST PREVIOUS WORKS ON THE SUBJECT,  
WITH CONSIDERABLE NEW ADDITIONS, HINTS  
OF STYLE, ETC., ETC.

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EDUCATION DEPT.

TO VIRU  
AIRPORT

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## PREFACE.

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In the present day when education is so rapidly progressing, a superior work on the subject of Letter Writing is obviously needed. The old works of the kind were obsolete in diction, exaggerated and unnatural—frequently to a ludicrous excess—in their thoughts, and the topics upon which they professed to give specimens were not well chosen. To illustrate this fact by example, the epistles in the old Letter Writers smack rather of Sir Charles Grandison's days than our own, and, although often entertaining, they are too high-flown for common life, without being refined enough to suggest ideas of legitimate letter-writing to the educated person.

Before, however, entering into the character of the present work, the editor feels it incumbent on him to state his impressions as to the extent to which such publications are really useful, and how far their use or abuse may affect the possibility of their readers becoming good or bad correspondents.

It is impossible that, even were ten thousand letters collected together, they would furnish epistles suited to *every* exigency, even during a single year of an ordinary

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person's life. So much must depend upon the character and position of the person to whom,—on the nature of the circumstances under which,—and on the humor and disposition in which we write, that, were every letter, from Cicero's time to Sir Thomas Moore's, to be pressed into our service, it is doubtful whether the precise one we really wanted would be forthcoming.

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. The dignitary may be the very venerable gentleman who gave the nuptial blessing to your cousin whom you are congratulating, and he may likewise have stood godfather to the child to whom you are sending your own blessing and a cake; but surely he will very reasonably expect to be addressed with, at all events, a more subdued familiarity, than as if he had formerly been your schoolfellow at cricket, or had just distinguished himself by a precocious entrance into *Propria quæ maribus!*

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 display 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.

But there is a class of people whose wants are likely to

be greater, and whose interest has been more immediately consulted in the following pages, viz: clerks, servants, sailors, and others, whose education may be very slight, but who may at the same time wish to be able to express themselves clearly, and to prefer something like an English diction to the vulgarity which a little pains and care might avoid: letters referring to obtaining a character, soliciting the recommendation to a situation—letters from sailors at sea, from relations at the gold-diggings, and on such like matters,—will be found in this little volume, and may, it is hoped, frequently prevent a good deal of hesitation and wondering “what to write, and how to write it.”

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I will now endeavor to point out a few features peculiar to female correspondence, which I hope may be thought *appropos* of the subject.

It were to be wished that more attention were paid to the subject of letter-writing in our national and district schools. In the present day, when ignorance is deservedly at a discount, and when so much is expected of every one, even in a humble position of life, there is no reason why the letters from one servant to another, or the application for a situation, or answer to an advertisement, should only furnish so many examples of outrageous grammar and absurd diction. A habit of expressing oneself distinctly, though without pretension, ought to be inculcated in every such establishment, and, where the difficulties of spelling and reading have once been conquered, there will be little difficulty in enabling the pupil to acquire such simple forms of correspondence as are necessary to the ordinary circumstances of her career.