

were brief reigns of many styles, chief among which was the day of the week printed in raised letters across the upper corner of the sheet. There was no beauty in this, but it was at least useful in letting the recipient of an undecipherable note know upon what day it was written.

After all these changes came the sensible style now in use. No crest, no monogram, no gilding—nothing to indicate that the sender is second cousin on his mother's side to the half sister of an Earl, or heir apparent of one of the sovereigns of Ireland. A plain square white envelope, without a mark upon it, except the address and the postage stamp. The paper a note-size sheet of unruled Irish linen or the American imitation, which is nearly as good, unsized, and with just one line of lettering to relieve its pure white surface. This letter is for use more than for ornament. It is simply the address from which the letter is written. "Eleven thousand Fifth Avenue, New York," for instance, printed across the right-hand side of the top of the sheet, sometimes in black, oftener in some deep color. This line is usually engraved, and is stamped into the paper so as to make a raised surface, and it is generally done in some appropriate gothic or old English letter. Under this single printed line the date is written. It is the first fashionable design used on letter paper for half a century that is sure to be understood instantly by every one who sees it, and it is the first letter ornament of the slightest use since the days of the old wax seal. It is a combination of simplicity and utility that deserves a longer existence than has been enjoyed by any of its predecessors in the mode. Written in the large, free hand now affected by young ladies on this paper, without a particle of gloss, and without a suspicion of the perfumed sachet, a fashionable letter of the present day is almost as stately and dignified as one of the old ones written by our forefathers.