

XI. Follow your own character in your letters : imitate nobody.

XII. By proposing to yourself to be laconic in your letters, take care not to make them too dry : a dry style is a proof of a dry heart.

XIII. A letter may be compared to a bouquet : the thoughts ought to be well chosen and well matched together.

XIV. In a crowd we do not find two faces that are perfectly alike : let it be the same thing with regard to your letters.

XV. Speak of your friends as if they were present ; write to them in the same manner.

XVI. Write your letters in such a manner that they may be easily understood by those to whom you address them : the young man ought to slacken his pace, when he walks either with an old man or a woman.

XVII. Do not accumulate beforehand shining or profound ideas in order to place them in your letters.

XVIII. All kinds of writing may enter into the epistolary style : that depends on the subject and on the person who writes. It is very well known that the sublime does not exclude the simple : on the contrary, the former supposes the latter.

XIX. Do not study long before you write ; but always take care to read it over again when you have written it.

XX. In common conversation, make little use of puns—and still less in your letters.

XXI. Be brief when you write to a magistrate : magistrates have neither time nor patience to read long letters.

XXII. In your letters, be short in finding fault, and still more so in giving praise.

XXIII. Do not show your learning in your letters : they would degenerate into academical memoirs.

XXIV. Never send off a letter that has given you either tediousness or pains in writing it : it will only serve to tire the person in reading it.

XXV. When you are thirsty, you drink off the whole cup at once. Stay till you have need to write, and let your letter be begun and finished, as it were, with one dash of the pen.

XXVI. In your letters, never sacrifice the truth to any consideration whatever, whether convenience or respect : forbear writing rather. A lie spoken is a great evil : a lie on paper is a still greater evil.

XXVII. Be not in a hurry to write to a friend who is suddenly called to an eminent position, or who finds himself on the top of the wheel of fortune. Wait till you have news from him.

XXVIII. Never write merely for the pleasure of writing, though it were but a note or a postscript. A reasonable being never does an action, speaks or writes one word without having some design and being able to give an account of it.

XXIX. It is chiefly in letters that the antiquated words of a language may be revived ; however, show your taste and sobriety in the use of them.

Many more rules might be given for letter-writing, though these seem to be the principal ones. Let the person who writes always bear this *main point* in mind : You are judged by your letters more than by your conversation—the former being usually the result of serious thought, seldom influenced by surrounding circumstances. A spoken word may be forgiven and forgotten : a written word of shame or offence always stands against you.

[These principles for letter-writing have been selected from N. G. Dufief's *Nature Displayed in her Mode of Teaching Language to Man*, and arranged into rules.]

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