

POST-OFFICE ETIQUETTE.

It is amusing sometimes to witness the little divergences from custom that occasionally take place in some of our rural post offices. Unbiased human nature seems to ooze out with perfect freedom. It would seem that rules might be adopted whereby the conduct of those who have business with the post-office department might be more consonant with conventionality, therefore the following suggestions may not be out of place.

Townsmen should hesitate before renting a post-office box; because, in so doing, the postmaster would not find sufficient employment to keep him busy, and therefore reduce his salary to a mere sinecure; and moreover, it would deprive the townsman of the privilege of inquiring two or three times each day, "Is there anything for me?" Townspeople should not deprive themselves of such privilege, as it opens the way for further inquiries that give pleasure to the post-master to answer, especially if he is busily engaged.

In superscribing letters, be sure and make the superscription as obscure as possible, so that experts will have to determine to whom letters are addressed when they arrive at their place of destination. There are illustrious precedents for such a course, such as Lord Byron, Rufus Choate, Horace Greely, and many of less note. Contrive to introduce a few capitals, misplaced, into the names; the curves will enhance the general appearance of the superscription, and put experts on their mettle a little more.

Carry letters to post just at the time the mail is being closed, unsealed, and beg ten minutes to add some important matter in postscript and then purchase just *one* stamp, not but one at a time, and offer a five dollar bill in payment for the same. If more than one stamp is purchased at a time they might depreciate on the purchaser's hand, which would be a dead loss, and moreover, buying one stamp a time makes a show of business in the office and keeps the post-master from reading postal cards. When finally, the letters are delivered to the post-master, don't forget to ask "Will they go?" and never rest *satisfied* till the mail disappears in the mail bag. When letters are received or other mail matter with the postmarks obliterated, be sure and inquire of

the post-master where they were mailed; he, of course, can tell at a glance, as his powers of vision are more penetrating than ordinary mortals.

The post-office is an excellent place to meet acquaintances, and exchange local gossip; therefore put in an appearance early and invite a cur dog or two to a promenade, especially if they are pugnacious in disposition. It is needless to remind ladies that the presence of *poodles* will add much to the occasion, when the curs indulge in a free fight, for while the curs sustain the general *score* of music, the poodles will render a thrilling *obligato*.

Parents whose mail matter amounts to one or more lottery circulars and as many more patent medicine advertisements per quarter, if they have five or six idle boys, two or more of them should be present on the arrival of every mail. They will greatly relieve the monotony incident to the assorting of mail by teasing yelping curs, or indulging in other noisy mischievous propensities, with their comrades.

Jealous young ladies, who have an aversion to the prying eyes of post-office officials, should also be in season. Etiquette demands that they should range themselves directly near and in front of the post-office boxes, so as to shut them entirely from view. It would add somewhat to the obscurity by spreading a parasol or Japanese sun-shade. They can find plenty of amusement by peeping into the different boxes and commenting on their discoveries. When the delivery is opened they (through gallantry) should be the first to receive their mail, which should be opened and read on the spot, unless they are requested to move one side by the office officials or are jostled away by ungallant bores—the old men. Finally, stand in the doorway, preventing ingress and exit till the day's gossip is exhausted in rehearsal. If, through mistake, a letter, is dropped without being properly stamped, berate the unaccommodating spirit of the post-office official for not stamping and forwarding it. If the act of licking mucilage on stamps is disagreeable, the post-master would be delighted to relieve one of the process. There are many other ways in which a sense of propriety can be exhibited; but the foregoing suggestions are sufficient for the first lessons in post office etiquette.

HENRY



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