

CHAPTER IV.

INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE.

All incoming correspondence passes through the hands of the managing solicitor, who opens all letters addressed to the firm. Letters addressed to a member of the firm and marked "personal," are not opened, but the envelope is stamped with the date of receipt. Letters addressed to members of the firm, and not marked "personal," are treated in the same way, unless that member of the firm is away. Clients frequently address the member of the firm who they know has their business in hand,—and when that member of the firm is absent these letters are mistaken for private letters: consequently many letters, the subject-matter of which might be easily and satisfactorily disposed of, are left till his return. The consequences suggest themselves. For these reasons the managing solicitor opens all such letters not marked "personal," and the matter is attended to if considered advisable.

All letters opened, whether addressed in the firm name or to a member of the firm, are stamped with the date of receipt. For this purpose various stamps can be obtained. The elaborateness and accuracy of a "time-stamp" may not be considered necessary, but in addition to the date, the word "Received," and the name of the firm, some such lines as "For....." and "Ans....." are advisable. Such a receiving stamp with changeable date, costs two or three dollars, and is of more value in a law office than any other stamp. We have seen one in which words indicating the file of correspondence were also added, but these may not be considered necessary. The best place to stamp each letter is just below the date of the letter. After each letter is stamped the initials of the person to whom it is assigned or who already has charge of the work to which it refers, are written on the second line (thus fixing responsibility), and it is then put along with enclosures in a wire letter basket, one for each department or member of the firm. The baskets keep the correspondence and enclosures together. Don't put the letter back into the envelope. This loses the time, both of the managing