

The Inglenook

How to Write a Letter.

In the first place, put it off as long as possible. Wait until your interest in your friend's letter has evaporated, and you have mislaid the same and partially forgotten its contents. Make it very apparent that nothing but stern duty drives you to the task.

Take any paper you may happen to have. If the envelope does not match, do not let a trifle like that deter you. If there is no pale ink at your disposal, a pencil will do. Write first horizontally, and then perpendicularly, and let your pen wander to any page it may fancy. Spell a few words wrong, to show that you are no pedant; you cannot be expected to be a walking dictionary. Blots may be accomplished incidentally, to indicate careless ease and a smudge is so pretty. Ignore all punctuation marks except the dash, and use that freely. When you are conscious of poverty of thought, underline that part. If you make a joke, an exclamation point will prevent its being overlooked.

When you write a business letter to a stranger there is more than one way to commend yourself to his notice. Never keep to the point. Perhaps there is not any. Indulge in lengthy digressions and explain everything fully. For all you know, the person addressed may not have the average amount of intelligence. Make assurance doubly sure by a good deal of repetition.

Sign yourself by some nickname, and, whatever else you do, take it for granted that the reader is a seer who can tell by the very way you cross your t's whether you are "Miss" or "Mrs." You may have had occasion to write to this man before. He of course has your address. It would be a deplorable waste of ink to give it again.

Now as to the matter of a friendly letter. It will be well to fill the first page or two with apologies for delay. Indicate that you have more to do than other people, and that your correspondent's occupations are trifling in comparison. Do not waste any time in arranging your thoughts. In fact you need not have any thoughts. Pull at the tangled skein of life by any end that comes uppermost. Be sure to describe your ailments in detail. Disease is so interesting. Then unload your worries. What is a friend for if not to bestow sympathy upon us? If anything cheerful presents itself to your mind, cut that short.

I strongly advise that you give not one moment's thought to the desires of the absent one. Do not ask yourself what she wishes to hear. True, her letter to you might be some guide, but that may have been merely the reflection of a passing mood. Neither should you meditate on her character, unless it is in order to produce a happy contrast. If she likes books you can write of children. Is she always interested in dress? Then describe your house plants. Should she not be above a little innocent gossip, you might quote something about ancient Rome. In pursuing this course you will be alone in the world, for it is rarely indeed that any one studies the tastes of a correspondent.

It is not nearly as important that your friend should know your opinion of the marked article which she sent you as that she should be made absolutely certain whether it came on Thursday or Friday. Never study variety, or think what kind of a letter you sent last in this direction. Why should you?

Do not insult the others' intuitions by answering any of her questions. Indeed, you might as well leave her in doubt whether her last letter was received. Reduce the connecting links and the common interests to their smallest proportions. Or, if you

prefer, manifest your interest in her affairs by repeating nearly every word she has written, in order to add a common place comment. It will save you from thinking up anything new for her entertainment. If you have anything it particularly concerns your friend to know, mention it briefly at the last and say you would write more about that if you had time.

These directions, faithfully followed, will doubtless soon save you from the nuisance of writing letters. If otherwise, one is tempted to think that your friend deserves all you have given her. —Self Culture.

A Song of Hope.

BY MARY A. LATHURRY.

Children of yesterday,
Heirs of to-morrow,
What are you weaving?
Labor and sorrow?
Look at your loom again,
Faster and faster
Fly the great shuttles
Prepared by the Master,
Life's in the loom!
Room for it
Room!

Children of yester day,
Heirs of to-morrow,
Lighten the labor
And sweeten the sorrow
Now—while the shuttles fly
Faster and faster,
Up, and be at it,
At work with the Master,
He stands at your loom;
Room for Him—
Room!

Children of yesterday,
Heirs of to-morrow,
Look at your fabric
Of labor and sorrow.
Seamy and dark
With despair and disaster
Turn it, and lo,
The design of the Master!
The Lord's at the loom;
Room for Him—
Room!

The Missing Cake.

Lottie had invited some of her little friends to spend the afternoon with her. They had played several games, and were just going to play "Hide the button," when one of the little girls said, "Oh Lottie, before we play this game may I have a drink of water? I am so thirsty!"

"I'll get you a drink," said Lottie, and she started for the dining room.

On the sideboard she saw a paper bag, and wondered what was in it. She knew that she had no right to meddle with her mother's things, but she said to herself, "It can do no harm for me just to see what is in there."

She very carefully untied the string and peeped in. There were some lovely cakes, full of currants. "They look so good!" said Lottie. "I will just take one little crumb." She broke off a little piece then took a little more and a little more until the cake was all eaten.

She took in the glass of water, and joined in the games. But somehow she did not have as nice a time as she had before. The games did not seem very interesting, and she could not help thinking of the cake she had taken.

Soon mamma called the children out to the dining-room, and gave them lemonade and cake.

"Lottie," said mamma, "you and sister Fannie will have to divide a cake, between you. I was sure that I bought one a piece; but there were only eleven in the bag instead of twelve."

Lottie knew where the other cake had gone, but she did not tell. She felt it would be too mean to take part of Fannie's cake, so she said, "Fannie you can have it all; I don't want any."

That evening, after all the friends had gone, mamma, who had come to kiss Lottie "good-night," said: "I was glad to see that my little girl was so generous to-day, and gave Fannie the whole of the cake."

"I was not generous at all, mamma," said Lottie; "for while the other girls were in the parlor I took one of the cakes out of the bag and ate it. I am very sorry, for I know it was naughty."

I am very sorry too," said mamma. "But I am glad that my little girl told me about it. Have you asked God to forgive you? You know he is ready to forgive, if we are sorry for our sins. And remember that God always sees you, even if no one else is looking."

"Yes, mamma," said Lottie; "I will try always to remember the verse, 'Thou God seest me.'—The Picture World.

Persistence Wins.

Persistence is characteristic of all men who have accomplished anything great. They may lack in some other particular, may have many weaknesses and eccentricities, but the quality of persistence is never absent in a successful man. No matter what opposition he meets or what discouragements overtake him, he is always persistent. Drudgery cannot disgust him, labor cannot weary him. He will persist, no matter what comes or what goes; it is a part of his nature; he could almost as easily stop breathing. It is not so much brilliancy of intellect or fertility of resource as persistence of effort, constancy of purpose, that gives success. Persistence always inspires confidence. Everybody believes in the man who persists. He may meet misfortunes, sorrows and reverses, but everybody believes that he will ultimately triumph, because they know there is no keeping him down. "Does he keep at it—is he persistent?" This is the question which the world asks about a man. Even a man with small ability will often succeed if he has the quality of persistence, where a genius without it would fail.—Success.

As Others See Us.

What a man gives out, not what he keeps, determines his appearance in the eyes of the world. Beauty, brightness, colour, consist not in what a thing keeps, but in what it gives out. A well known law of optics teaches us that a thing is seen, not in the color which it takes in and keeps, but in that color which it gives back again. The thing we call red is the one which is, in one sense, blue; that is it takes in the blue rays and keeps them for itself, but gives back the red ones in color. Gold has kept all the green rays, and gives back the yellow ones, so we think it is yellow. The object which we call black takes in every ray of light, and keeps them for itself, and we have strikingly enough seen in it the symbol of all evil. The object which we call white keeps nothing of the sun's rays, but gives them all out again, and we have seen in it the symbol of all good. So a man is seen and known not by what he receives and keeps for himself, but for what he gives forth to others. The rich man who keeps everything for himself, is seen and known to be a poor mean man. The wise man who holds haughtily his learning to himself will, in the judgement of men be very apt to seem a proud fool.

"Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth;
For life's strength standeth in life's sacrifice,
And whoso give the most has most to give."

Sunday School Times.