The Whys and Wherefores of Correspondence

Mildred Boyt
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker

Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation
Boyt, Mildred (1922) "The Whys and Wherefores of Correspondence," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 2 : No. 11 , Article 3.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol2/iss11/3

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
The Whys and Wherefores of Correspondence

By MILDRED BOYT

In ancient days no one traveled, and there was no business, therefore no need of letter-writing. When Mr. Cave-
man was hit with the wanderlust and decided to see what was over the hills, Mrs. Cave-
man had no hope of consolation by mail and simply had to wait patiently her spouse's return. However, as wanderlust became a more prevalent disease those at home began to receive slabs of bark and stone from the wander-
ers with their adventures pictured on them. These crude missives in turn gave rise to strips of parchment covered with hieroglyphics of a more or less legible nature. We owe our alphabet and much of our language to the ancient Greeks and Romans. It was they also who brought letter-writing into more common usage and developed many of the forms we use today.

Our etiquette of letter-writing consists of the best in social forms, fads, and general usage of past years that have survived the test of time. Etiquette, by the way, comes from an old English word that meant ticket. This slip of paper contained printed instructions of court etiquette and was given to persons who were to be received by the King. The word has come to mean that which is correct in social form.

The old proverb would well be changed to read "A man is known by the paper he uses." How well character may be judged by a letter! How easy to read between lines, along the margin and across the envelope, of good or bad taste. We see the garish, loud person in brightly colored paper, and the careless person in cheap blotting paper sheets. The grasping, dissatisfied person speaking from the freaky, faddy paper for 'tis he who is always on the watch for something new. While the plain, heavy, white paper tells us of good taste, but the woman of refinement prefers the plain, heavy, white paper. She avoids these styles that are not correct in social form. Correspondence assumes added importance as our lives grow busier, and corner has to be put to use. Even the first class room in which Mrs. Welch held her lecture work is still in use. Here and the demonstration classes are held and use much of the equipment that was placed there many years ago.

As the school has grown and become more popular the course has been changed and broadened out so that now it is very flexible, and can be made to fit the needs of almost any girl. Courses in elementary cooking, sewing and design are required but the sequence can be followed that may be desired, as for instance, electives in teaching. In this sequence several courses in vocational education are required and practice teaching in the downtown schools or in towns close around as a part of the work. Then one may wish to be a dictation, here one may take electives along this line. This is true of sewing, tea-room work, costume designing and even now there is some hope that a course of this kind may be catalogued for those desiring journalistic training.

The progress which home economics has made thus far is only an indication of what may follow later. For with the building only ten years old now, and crowds to overcrowd, is a promise that the work will increase and perhaps double itself. With the dim prospects of a new, larger and more efficient home in sight and with the coming of Anna J. Richardson as dean of home economics of Iowa State, the history from henceforth on is a matter of happy thought and wonderful promise.

For business correspondence and occasionally for friendly correspondence large sheets of white paper are used. These are never monogramed but may have the address, cable address, and telephone number engraved on them. Of course for a business house this information is included in the firm letter head and is printed in black or color at the top of the sheet.

Envelopes for social and friendly correspondence should match the paper and be of a size to contain the paper when it is folded once. Business letters are folded twice and may be contained in a suitably sized, stamped envelope that is engraved or printed with the address of the sender.

Correspondence assumes added importance as our lives grow busier, therefore it behooves us to pay some attention to the best forms of letter writing. To be a really good correspondent is truly an art, may be a gift, but possible to cultivate. What a pity to allow a friendship to slip simply because we are too lazy or careless to keep up a correspondence.