THE BEST OF LIFE.

Not till life's heat is cooled,
The headlong rush slowed to a quiet pace,
And every purblind passion that has ruled
Our noisier years, at least
Spurs us in vain, and, weary of the race,
We care no more who loses or who wins—
Ah! not till all the best of life seems past
The best of life begins.

To toil for only fame,
Handclappings, and the fickle guests of praise,
For place or power or gold to gild a name
Above the grave whereto
All paths will bring us, were to lose our days,
We, on whose ears youth's passing bell has tolled,
In blowing bubbles, even as children do,
Forgetting we grow old.

But the world widens when
Such hope of trival gain that ruled us lies
Broken among our childhood's toys, for then
We win to self-control!
And mail ourselves in manhood, and there rise
Upon us from the vast and windless height
Those clearer thought that are unto the soul
What stars are to the night.

—The Spectator.

CHAPTER I.

Three steely wreaths of smoke from three cigars floated toward the park. The night was calm, with scarce a breath of air to set the tree tops nodding

No one thought to jar upon the stillness of the scene by uttering his thoughts aloud. Besides there was no need of speech; they were friends, and, being friends, smoked on in peace, helping by their presence the unfolding of each other's dreams.

But the spell was broken at last. The warm coloring of Lewis Forbes' dream had vanished into a grayness of vacancy.

He rose, and by his motion disturbed his guests.

The three men rose and shook themselves free of the last remains of what they had just tried to conjure up again before them.

The heat from the fire began to make them more sociable, and they talked on all sorts of topics, their conversation taking on a wide range, from the newest book on conveyancing to the latest opera.

At last the talk came in nearer circles and assumed a more personal interest.

"I suppose you are both going to the Ransome dance next week?" suggested Lewis Forbes, the host.

"Perhaps; I know quite know yet," replied his friend Spencer, in a tone of the least possible concern.

"I dare say I shall go," drawled Carew.

Who could have connected these almost careless replies with Agnes Ransome's bewitching eyes and cherry lips, whose unsubstantial image they had been kissing in their counterfeit of passion?

Each slowly took from his pocket a delicately-tinted envelope, from which he drew a letter.

A glance sufficed to show that the contents of all three were the same. The truth flashed upon them, lighting up for them the ludicrous side of the matter.

To do them credit, they tried to be angry, but, despite themselves, they burst into a roar of laughter.

When they had finished they consoled themselves by calling the lady a flirt, accepting their infatuation as a fact too real to be displaced by reason. Forbes was the first to suggest that they should discuss the matter in all its bearings.

"What is the good of that?" asked Carew.

"To arrive at some understanding," was the reply.

"Well, but after all," insisted his friend, "the best man will win."

"Yes—or the first," was the rejoinder.

They sat for a long time propounding solutions of the difficulty. All kinds of devices were mentioned to ascertain the lady's feelings on the subject.

At last Spencer was seized with a happy idea.

"Let us all propose together," he exclaimed.

They looked at him in surprise. "All together?" they echoed.

"Yes," he explained, "why should we not all three call on her, or, perhaps, writing would be less embarrassing."

They sat a while and pondered, raising objections that were not objections. Finally they set themselves seriously to think out the details.

CHAPTER II.

Agnes Ransome, like a bee among the heather, hovering over the purple bells, was in her boudoir turning over with dainty fingers the books and pretty things.

She left the mirror and lay on the couch before the fire, too indolent almost to think.

She had not lain long before a gentleman was announced, and it was evident by her eager and loving welcome that they were more than friends. This was his first visit after his acceptance, and as yet he was still only a friend of the family.

They were still talking—now about themselves—when the maid brought her mistress a letter.

She read it and very demurely handed it to her lover, but before he had half got through it she broke into a peal of laughter.

"What answer shall I give, dear?"

"Well, I think you had better tell the truth," he replied.

"Tell the truth?" she asked, repeating his words.

"Yes, that you haven't any preference."

"Oh, but suppose I have?" she rejoined archly.

A kiss was her only reply.

This was the letter which caused her such amusement:

"Dear Miss Ransome: We, the undersigned, having the honor to make you a somewhat curious request. Each of us aspires to the honor of your hand, and, being dear friends, we cannot, in the light of this knowledge, set our own fancied individual claims before those of each other We pledge ourselves to abide by any decision at which it may please you to arrive. Hoping that you will find it possible to help us, and that you will pardon what may appear impertinence, we have the honor to remain, your most devoted admirers.

"LEWIS FORBES,
"HUGH SPENCER,
"WILLIS CAREW."

They discussed the wording of the reply, and decided to couch it in such a form that no mention should be made of the engagement, while no direct acceptance of the proposal contained in this note should be given

Agnes suggested that Jack should call on Forbes that same evening, shrewdly guessing that the friends would meet at his lodgings in eager expectation of the reply.

CHAPTER III.

It seemed as though the clock would never strike 4. Would the court never rise, that poor juniors might doff their wig and stuff gown and hasten away westward?

But Lewis Forbes got home at last, eager for a letter that he hoped to find. But when he found it he did not open it, but, with his mind in a ferment, waited for dinner and the arrival of his friends, who were to dine with him.

They arrived together, and both inquired: "Where is it?"

They arranged themselves around the table, in the middle of which lay the precious envelope.

"Open it," suggested Carew.

Spencer nodded approval.

"Gentlemen: I thank you most sincerely for the honor you propose to confer upon me. I much regret that I cannot help you out of your difficulty by personal preference. Would not such a case be better left to pure chance? A pack of cards might work out a solution. Thanking you once more most sincerely, and awaiting the result with some anxiety, I remain, Yours very truly, AGNES RANSOME."

He finished, and set a pack of cards on the table without speaking a word. They shuffled them still in silence.

Forbes was the first to break it. "You see, cutting for the highest or lowest card is one of the crudest of methods. Let us play vingt-et-un, the first to turn up a natural to be the lucky man."

They agreed, and the deal fell to Forbes.

Play began and went on round after round, but still no "natural" turned up. Every other combination in the pack was dealt except a "natural."

A visitor was announced to relieve the monotony. He proved to be Millman, who, true to his proposal of the morning, had called and found things as he had anticipated.

"We won't keep you a moment," urged Forbes. "We are only waiting for a natural."

CHAPTER IV.

Another round was being dealt; each one had a card. Millman, looking on saw the light in Spencer's eyes; glancing at Carew he was surprised to see his mouth twitching nervously. Both evidently had a good card. Forbes dealt each a second.

"Natural!" came from both simultaneously, as they started up from the table.

Forbes looked at his own cards, rather from curiosity than anything else.

"Natural!" he shouted, his face aglow with excitement.

"But," insisted Spencer, "you forget the agreement was the winner should be the man who turned up a natural first."

"Yes," objected Forbes, "but surely we must keep the rule of the game. If the dealer gets a natural it cancels any others. The rule is, as you know, 'Quits—pay the dealer.'"

"But don't you see," argued his friend, "that this is not a regular game?"

"Appeal to Millman," suggested Carew, himself uncertain whether to advance his own claim or not.

Forbes undertook the task, and after putting him in possession of the leading facts, concluded by saying:

"Now, who do you think is entitled to propose to Miss Ransome?"

Jack appeared for a moment to be deep in thought.

At last he said, very slowly:

"There is one way out of the difficulty——"

"Yes?"

"I will save you the trouble. I will marry Miss Ransome myself."

"Oh, but it's no laughing matter," protested Forbes, giving utterance to the feelings of his friends as well.

"Of course not," assented the umpire; "but it solves the difficulty, doesn't it? Besides," he added, "it's easier for me—I'm engaged to her."

SOME people may think it the easiest thing in the world to write a letter, but graceful letter-writing is an art; and it is an undeniable fact that, notwithstanding the superior educational advantages of the present time, comparatively few women of the period can write a well-expressed note. The construction is apt to be awkward, and the whole production lacking in that indescribable stamp of culture which the note of a well-bred woman ought to possess.

It is hard to say just how this state of affairs has been brought about, for certainly this most essential part of a young woman's education has of late been apparently neglected. Thirty or more years ago note-writing was an accomplishment; to be sure, the diction was then somewhat labored and the style verbose, but every well-educated woman understood the art of writing letters and notes. It may be that the higher branches of education are today deemed of more importance, and that the student's time is too engrossed with them to attend to what may be termed the purely womanly accomplishments. In these days, when two or three hastily written pages take the place of the old-fashioned six or eight pages, note-writing should reach a state of perfection; and it is to be hoped that teachers and parents will become conscious of this need in modern education, and that the next generation of girls will be proficient in it.

Facility of expression and readiness of diction should receive particular attention in a school course, and practice notes on every conceivable subject should be frequently written. Let more attention be paid to composition and less to the modishness of the handwriting Let that be natural; it matters little whether the style be angular, round, large or small, so long as it be legible. If there are any who doubt that note-writing is a lost art let him look over a dozen or more notes of invitation, regrets and acceptances written by debutantes and the average society woman. They are for the most part loose and crude. Verbosity is tiresome, but it is preferable to brevity that amounts to curtness. An able rhetorician once said: "If you have not time enough to write a letter or invitation correctly do not write it at all." Higher education has its great advantages, but young women wrote better notes in the days of less pretentious home training and governesses.

New Styles in Bathing Dresses.

The Wheeling Women.

On came they, the loveliest throng in the world,
Their banners of faith and allegiance unfurled,
Bent low every knee, upraised every eye
To their star of deliverance far up in the sky.

—American Wheelman.

Farmers and Their Wives.

There is no question that some farmers' wives have a hard time. I am not speaking of farmers' wives as a class. They not only have to do all the household work, which is often too much for one woman to perform, but quite frequently too much outdoor and barn work. I say the farmer should take a great deal better care of his wife than of his team. I am not sure that he always does. There is one thing the husband can do if he is poor, and that is to be kind and affectionate to his wife, says a writer in the Miror and Farmer, for even if she has to work hard the work will seem lighter if she knows it is appreciated, and that her husband still loves and appreciates her. The farmer should be courteous to his wife, yet some are far from being so, you would think, if you could hear them talk to their wives and scold them. They don't appreciate what they do for them and for their comfort. When going to your work for the day, won't a kiss, a loving smile or a few affectionate words cause her to have better spirits all the time she is alone, and won't she be glad to see you when your work is done? I think so. It is well worth trying. Let us try to make life more cheerful and happy for our wives. Then we shall find more enjoyment and profit in farm life and farming. There is no place where kindness and gentle words pay as well as in home life. The farmer should be kind and gentle with all of his stock, but his wife claims more and should receive it. Won't she appreciate it, though!

The Wide Skirt Must Go.

Our prayers have been answered! The heavy, widely-distended skirts will very soon be a thing of the past. They are an abomination and ought never to have been allowed to become fashionable. Why, it would take four hands to manipulate the folds in such a way as to keep the skirt out of the dust, and when a woman tries to accomplish the task with two her gown is soon forgotten in her cramped fingers, and she gives it up in despair. How anything so totally unfit to be worn in the street ever became a fashion is a mystery to everyone, except, perhaps, those who manufacture the hair-cloth. But physicians have denounced the heavy linings as injurious to health, and this, with the good sense of long-suffering and heroic women who have patiently tried to endure the burden for fashion's sake, has brought about a decided reaction against them and the heavy skirt must go.

First of Her Sex to Get the Office.

Miss Celine Gray, of Guthrie, O., has the honor of being the first woman appointed as a United States Commissioner. In business circles it is well known that Miss Gray is in every way capable.

Spotted esprit net in both black and white is used for neck ruffles.

Skirts remain straight and round, with godet and organ pipe backs.

The newest materials for costumes are alpaca and bareges of the old kind revived.

Double-breasted traveling capes when opened and thrown back reveal revers of velvet or corded silk.

A fetching cotton fabric, showing fancy stripes on dark and light blue grounds, is known as marine twill.

The general revival of wash material for gowns will be an interesting phase of the summer world of fashion.

All bouffant effects should be left entirely to the thin woman, who needs them and can wear them with good results.

Patent leather shoes, with black stockings and tan shoes with stocking to match, are the reigning styles of the season.

Hats of combination straw and satin braid are trimmed with bands and rosettes or standing bows of the same pliable fancy braid.

Tall women may wear long capes with good results, but those who are short or of medium height should wear them much shorter.

Garden hats for the coming summer are better named than ever, since on top and sides is a horticultural display marvelous to look upon.

Lace on the stylish shoulder capes by means of stiff linings is made to stand out after the manner of quills upon an offended porcupine.

White duck suits are to continue in vogue, but not the cheap, domestic duck. The material that comes over the sea will have the preference.

New silk waists of Rob Roy plaided taffeta silk are made with plaited fronts, bias yoke backs, full elbow sleeves, and velvet stock collar.

A recent imported French grass cloth is made over a china rose silk, the intense glowing hue of the lining giving the entire gown a roseate tint.

NEWS OF EDUCATION.

REMARKABLE GROWTH OF THE SUMMER SCHOOL.

A Woman Wins the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering—Many Colleges in This Country—Fads in the Schools.

Where Teachers Train.

The summer school idea has spread in America with amazing rapidity of late, "summer institutes" and "summer assemblies," springing up in all parts of the country. Chautauqua leads in popularity, though the school at Martha's Vineyard enjoys the distinction of being the oldest and broadest in its methods. The first summer school ever founded was that inaugurated by the eminent naturalist, Prof. Agassiz, on Penikese, island, the neighbor of Martha's Vineyard. The Chautauqua school of pedagogy was last season placed in charge of the president of the Teachers' College of New York, Walter L. Hervey, Ph. D. He will again be its dean this season. With an able corps of assistants, principally professors and instructors from the Teachers' College, he puts into practice the methods of teaching adopted at that institution, the finest of its kind in existence.

The Chautauqua School of Pedagogy, known as the Teachers' Retreat, offers for 1895 courses designed to meet the needs of teachers in elementary and secondary schoods, in normal and training schools, and of school principals. Seven departments are open—psychology and pedagogy, methods of teaching English literature and composition, nature study and primary methods, botany and geology, experimental science, form, drawing and color and expression.

In a number of the courses laboratory and field work are included, and in all the courses opportunity is given for definite work toward a well-defined aim. A progressive course covering three years, supplemented by definite reading and study to be done between times with suitable tests, leads to the Chautauqua teacher's certificate. The number and variety of the courses enable the students of the retreat to return year after year without duplicating their work. The observation classes are an important and interesting feature. These number as pupils the little sons and daughters of the summer cottagers, who are taught by the retreat professors that the student teachers may learn the practical ways of applying their theoretical knowledge of instruction. At Martha's Vineyard the summer institute offers additional inducements for the training of teachers this coming season, including instruction in all grades, from the kindergarten and primary through the regular college course. A presentation is made of the most practical and philosophical methods of teaching.

Besides these two leading summer schools which are offering special departments in pedagogy, others younger, but promising, are being formed in many and widely separated localities. Some are State schools, as the Connecticut one, and that at Plymouth, N. H., which is the only free one in the country. The National Summer School at Glens Falls, N. Y., is doing good work, while the Virginia one is on the same plan as the institute at Martha's Vineyard. The new school at Ann Arbor, in connection with the University of Michigan, has a college of pedagogy. At the Agricultural College, at Lansing, Mich., whose botanical gardens are noted, the summer students camp out. Harvard University has its summer school at Cambridge, Mass. Even New Jersey lays claim to one, the Avalon Summer Assembly, at Avalon, including a school of forestry, while the Brooklyn Institute has opened a summer school at Cold Springs, Long Island.

Our Colleges.

The general impression produced by the commencement day reports from all over the country, says the New York World, is that we have a great many colleges in this country, and that they are turning out a great many graduates. The impression is not erroneous. The increase in the resources of higher education in the United States during the last thirty years is one of the most prominent features of our national development. While the other nations of the civilized world have been standing still or at best moving slowly in the matter of college growth, we have passed them with a rush, until we now head the list in the number of colleges, the number of students and the amount of endowment devoted to this worthy object.

Not only is this growth highly creditable to the educational spirit of the age, but there is one feature of it which distinguishes it from the collegiate history of Europe and which is worthy of special attention. This is the fact that while we have quite a number of well endowed and thriving State universities, the larger number of our colleges and the greater endowments represent the voluntary gifts of the private friends of education. This is true of no other country. Nowhere else is wealth so generous and so judicious in its bestowal of bounty. The endowments given to colleges by citizens of the United States in the past thirty years far exceed in amount all that has been given for the same purpose by all the rich men in all the great countries of the world in all history. Nothing like it has ever been seen.

With such an origin and such a history our colleges must be typical and genuine American institutions. Their foundations must be deep down in our national life, their strength is a part of the strength of the nation, and they are yet in their early youth. Our great universities are really the creation of the past thirty years. If the recent rate of growth is maintained, as it has every promise of being, another generation will make us the most profoundly as well as the most widely learned nation the world has ever known.

Young Woman Architect.

Miss Marian Sara Parker, of Detroit, is the first woman to graduate from the department of engineering of the University of Michigan. She recently won the degree of bachelor of science in civil engineering. She has taken the full course provided for those who desire to become civil engineers, except the field work in surveying, and for this she substituted drawing. However, she has taken all the theoretical work of the course and has stood all the time well at the head of her class.

MISS MARIAN SARA PARKER.

Miss Parker entered the university four years ago from the Detroit high school, from which she graduated in 1891.

Her object in pursuing this course, she says, was to become a practical architect. Upon finishing her course she expects to practice her profession somewhere in the West, which she believes to be the most promising section in which to settle. Her desire and determination in overstepping the ordinary bounds of woman's activity by seeking a technical education were not at all of a spasmodic nature. She asserts that it has been her steadfast intention for at least ten years.

Commencement Day in Georgia.

Hitch up the ox team, Johnny, an' drive 'em to the gate;
For me an' yer mother's goin' to see Moll graduate;
An' Jenn's a-bakin' biscuits, an' Sally's a-slicin' ham,
An' I'm jest so proud o' Molly that I don't know where I am!

Yer mother raised the chickens that bought her books, an' sweet
To me was the daily labor in the summer's burnin' heat,
When I thought of her bright eyes beamin' an' said to myself: "I'll state
Thar ain't no gal in the country so fitten to graduate!"

So I plowed in the summer sunshine, an' worked in the winter's cold;
An' I've bought her the finest dresses that ever the store-men sold;
An' I'll see her there, with her bright, sweet eyes, like stars in the twilight late;
An' maybe there'll be some tears in mine when I see her graduate!

I never was much on larnin'—for my means was mighty small,
But I reckon when Molly comes back home she'll know enough for us all;
An' thar ain't a gal in Georgy, though you hunt for 'em soon an' late,
That'll look as sweet as Molly when she comes to graduate!

—Atlanta Constitution.

Fads in the Schools.

When the public schools get away from the rudiments of an English education, says the Atlanta Constitution, the tendency is to drift to the special fads of certain reformers, who are eternally tinkering away at our educational system. One good thing about our old-fashioned schools was their freedom from these new-fangled notions. They trained up a race of men and women whose intelligence and culture are the crowning glory of American citizenship, but they did not study one-fourth as many text-books as are now used in the schools. If they wanted to find out something about alcohol and tobacco they learned what they wanted to know at home. Their time in school was devoted to the elementary studies, and the teacher who paid too much attention to matters outside of a practical English education was never wanted long in one place. Something will have to be done to reduce the number of text-books and special studies or the schools will do the children of the poor very little good.

Educational Notes.

A copy of the first edition (1633) of George Herbert's "the Temple" was sold at auction at New York for $1,050.

The public school property of the United States is estimated to be $400,000,000. All property used for educational purposes is valued at $800,000,000.

A dispatch to the London Standard from Moscow says the Czar has assigned 50,000 rubles ($37,500) to be allotted yearly as pensions for scholars and authors.

A violent discussion is going on in France over the co-education of the sexes, and French public sentiment is much opposed to the attempt to introduce it.

The California School of Mechanical Arts, founded by the generosity of the late James Lick, has proved to be a revelation to its trustees, teachers and students in more ways than one. Although the school has been in operation for only about six months, it is already attracting general attention, and has so systematized its students as to abridge the labor of years and to attain the most surprising practical results.