

"The Sweet Girl Graduate."

At various times in this balmy month of June a vast army of sweet girl graduates will be sent forth from the many schools of our land. Among them all you will find no two alike. Yet I propose to treat of them all under this one heading, since it is the common expression used in speaking and writing of them.

The general idea of the sweet girl graduate has changed materially in the last half century. And why? Simply because the girl herself has changed so much. Before she became known by this name was what might be called a "dark age" for women. Girls seemed to be rather a failure than otherwise, because there was nothing for them to do but to get married as soon as they had spun and woven themselves an "outfit".

But people and ideas were developing, and it came about that girls aspired to something better in the educational line than the few marks in a year of primitive district school. So we hear of the

first sweet girl graduates from Oberlin in 1840. This was then the only school in our broad land that admitted girls, and it took them through only what is now primary work.

From here the idea spread, but very slowly.

From an article written late in the '50's I quote the following which gives a good idea of how education for women was looked upon by our not-long-gone ancestors,

"We do not object, let it be understood, to a full cultivation of the intellectual powers of woman. We do not hold, because she is said to belong to the weaker sex, that her intellect is capable of digesting nothing but the thinnest of literary slops.

We believe there is a greater difference in the education of men and women than there should be. We do not desire, it is true, to see the petticoat flaunting in the pulpit — to hear the gentle voice of woman raised among the bickerings of the court, or the noisy disputations of the senate — or to have her delicacy blunted by the

hardening experiences of the surgical shambles of a hospital: yet there is no reason why women should be always kept with 'nimble fingers and vacant understandings'."

No, there was no reason, and so she was not kept so. But the bones of the person who wrote those words would probably rise up in horror from the grave if they once got an inkling that all those dreadful things had come to pass, and that the world was much better for their having come so.

Soon after this article was written there were plenty of schools for girls to attend; but they had better not have been for some one says at this time "Girls brought up under the present system of fashionable education are useless for the serious duties of life."

And now (passing over the years of the civil war) we reach the time that, in the educational world may be called the present. We girls of today are very like our mothers, only our advantages are many more and easier within our reach than were theirs. But for all

this many of us will be satisfied if we grow up into as good, helpful women as our mothers are !!

But to speak more directly of the sweet girl graduate of today. Many questions concerning her arise. What sort of a girl is she? Is it possible for the sweet girl graduate of today to be a "model"? Can she be at once perfect, and a success? What is she made of? And what is she good for when she receives the appellation "Sweet Girl Graduate" and a diploma from one of the multitude of schools which are so proud to claim her? Other questions about her are found in such poetical effusions as follows,
The Graduates.

"Fresh, blushing flowers of modern learning
They bowed on the bemuslined stage,
And aired their various views concerning
The women of the glacial age;
The rise and fall of ancient Rome; or
The late Carlyle, the mill he had;
The personality of Homer,
Whether he wrote the Iliad,
Or some inglorious, nameless bard did.

Some asked if Bellamy's grand schemes
 Should be accepted or discarded;
 One talked of hypnotistic dreams;
 One analyzed the solar spectrum,
 Another placed the river Styx;
 Another showed the sad effect rum
 Can work in local politics.

I mused and thought, now should I marry
 That girl who wrote an old Norse fable,
 Would she turn out a household fairy,
 And set an appetizing table?
 Or would she be a slave to books,
 With learning plenty for a wizard,
 And yet the frightfullest of cooks,
 Incompetent to broil a gizzard?
 Would she go round in shabby skirts?
 Could she do up my linen shirts
 As daintily as mother does 'em,
 Or would she spot and crease each bosom?

Yes sir. We can answer all your ques-
 tions to your perfect satisfaction and when
 we have finished you will be entirely con-
 vinced that she is a treasure indeed!
 Well, then, what sort of a girl is she?

Why, she is a good-hearted girl, with a good, general education. She has very little worldly experience, but she has good sense and breeding, and strength of character enough to make many experiences unnecessary.

Is it possible for her to be a "model"? She is careful, thoughtful, helpful and kind wherever she is. She is ready to begin life in an earnest, whole-souled, confident way that is good to see. And you cannot help feeling that she is bound to make herself known in the world — be it in a public way or through a quiet influence. Now if this is not a good foundation for a "model" you will probably never find one.

What is she made of? and what is she good for? These questions are answered by one Anna C. Brackett who says — "We have the finest material the world has ever produced, and the best chances for its development. Our girls' schools ought to send forth the finest women that have ever blessed and beautified the world, the strongest and truest

mirrors, the wisest and tenderest mothers, the most intelligent and worthy citizens; and there ought to be no places as pure, healthful and inspiring as the homes presided over by American women. If we do not find the results, the fault must be that of their education." But the results are in no way disappointing. The fact that, (according to statistics of '89) there were 40,000 girls in attendance at the various colleges of our land, goes to show that there is little fault found with our present systems of education.

Often, after many explanations of her abilities, we are confronted with the question "What does she know?" She is an intelligent girl and the extent of her knowledge does not depend upon the schools she has attended nor the teachers she has studied under. And her intellect is not measured by the branches she has studied nor by the number of languages she speaks. Her education began with home and its amenities; it was carried

further by school, books and society, and now that she is graduated she realizes that the course of modern "educational lash" which she has just taken, is but the skeleton of an education which must be clothed by years of study and reading and work.

Her range of knowledge includes the Sciences, Arts, Music and Domestic Economy (which at present is an important part of her curriculum.)

Speaking of her in a general way we might say she is a remarkable creature. We are proud to claim her as something truly American. Her brothers designate her a "regular brick" and she is talked of and praised the world over. She is loved and looked up to and depended on as no girl ever was before. And she will make her life work such that the smart girl graduate of the future will be even more perfect than is herself.

She is called "Queen of the rose-bud garden of girls", a "house-

- hold fairy", "an angel yet a
woman too,"

"A creature not too bright or good
For human natures daily food," and
endless other things both appropriate
and expressive. Yet the name that
she is universally known by, the
name that finds her a place in the
heart of the world, the name she and
you like the best, and the name that
describes her best is

"The Smart Girl Graduate."

Fanny E. Waugh.