

WE also acknowledge the receipt of the *University Herald*, *Argosy*, *Sunbeam*, *Acta Victoriana*, *Earlhamite*, *Messenger*, *University Gazette*, *College Message*, *Simpsonian*, *St. Viator's College Journal*, *Young Idea*, *Normal News*, *College Index*, *Rex Academicae*, *University Monthly*, *The Dartmouth*, *Wilmington Collegian*, *Southern University Monthly*, *Hamilton College Monthly*, *St. Charles Gazette*, *Oak*, *Lily and Ivy*, *Cue*, *Student Life*, *Premier*, *Beacon*, *Emory Phoenix*, *The W. T. I.*, *Lutherville Seminarian*, *Chironian*, *Home and School Supplement*, *Genevan*, *Troy Polytechnic*.

LETTER-WRITING.

Letter-writing has become an easy matter in modern days. We write because we have something to say, feeling careless how it is said; or we write to stop the mouth of a correspondent, and as we know he must swallow the sop we throw him, are not over nice about kneading it to his taste. But things were different in the days of our grandfathers. They wrote to do themselves credit, and to keep up their literary reputation. The good letter-writer had a distinct and recognized place in society, as much as the good dancer or dresser. The perfect gentleman had to acquire an elegant style, which he must exhibit as a mark of his standing, as he did his rapier and his well-trimmed wig. His mind had to wear a court dress as well as his body, and he would have as soon thought of seizing his sovereign by the hand as of presenting himself to a correspondent without the epistolary bows and flourishes which good breeding demanded. Letter-writing was made an art; and the epistles of a great letter-writer of the last century had not a merely general and remote connection with his character and history, but served him as a field on which he might display and exercise his powers. To succeed in the literary effort was the primary object, and to please or inform the friend addressed was the subsidiary one. This art had a peculiar history of its own; its course may be marked off into characteristic epochs; it rose, grew and faded away. Pope began the series; in his hands letter-writing was an instrument by

which the writer strove to adopt and preserve the tone of an exclusive artificial society, a means of establishing a sort of freemasonry between those whom birth or the privilege of genius entitled to speak a peculiar kind of language denied to the vulgar. With Pope we may couple Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as a specimen of a writer whose letters exhibited the high-bred ease and wit that suggested a corresponding display in men of literary reputation. The art of letter-writing passed into a second stage when, from this beginning, epistolary graces came to be cultivated as a requisite for high standing among the upper classes of society. It grew to be a study with the most refined members of these classes how to say everything to their correspondents in the most pointed and elegant way. Of such writers we may take Horace Walpole and Lord Chesterfield as sufficient examples. Lastly, that which had been confined to the higher circles spread downwards, and all educated men imbibed something of the love, and in some measure used the style current in the world of fashion. Letter-writing then attained its highest perfection. It lost its forced and hot-house character, and retained all its beauty and grace. The style adopted was more elevated and sustained than would be employed in the present day; but still it was perfectly easy, natural and simple. Of the writers whose letters exhibited this perfection, Gray and Cowper are perhaps the most conspicuous. After the time of Cowper, the art of letter-writing may be said to have quickly perished. How this happened must be obvious to anyone who reflects on the change undergone towards the close of the century throughout the whole structure of society, and on the causes, political and moral, that conducted to this alteration. Society changed, and the art that suited and belonged to the old society did not suit the new.

SELECTED.

HE is the best soldier who conceals his weapons, carries his knapsack jauntily, never crushes a violet, nor treads on a daisy, and who has a bugle hung so near his lips that he can send a note of cheer to any drooping comrade. E. V. G.