help she so needs, but which, under existing circumstances, it is so often impossible to secure. And so it is that our army of sweet girl graduates who enter this battle field of labor are at once forced into active service with little or no training or re-enforcements. Amid the dust and smoke of battle, in their war against dirt and disorder, they must also attend to the culinary department, in itself a varied and extended industry, including several separate and distinct branches of labor; to the making and mending of garments; to the laundering, dairying, fruit-picking, canning, preserving and pickling; to the setting and clearing away of tables; the washing, wiping and putting away of dishes, three times a day, for 365 days in the year, and one additional day for every fourth year. And more than all, there come the work, the care, the ceaseless anxiety and responsibility of raising her family of children.

Strength and Brains Needed.—Roasting in the kitchen, chilled in the ice-house or cellar, needed in the nursery, the poor, distracted, despairing mother needs a leviathan for strength, and a Napoleon for brains, to conduct her warfare amid this labyrinth of difficulty and danger.

As the girls with brains are rapidly deserting our kitchen ranks, we must capture our leviathan in the iron harness of steam-propelled machinery, with a few trained keepers to superintend his labors; and the Napoleon who shall lead our despondent army safely through these, narrow, steep and dangerous deiles onward and upward to victory is industrial education, with its more civilized method of warfare—organized cooperation.

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TO IMPROVE OUR COUNTRY SOCIAL LIFE.

By Mrs. J. A. CLARK, Jefferson County, Wis.

Third Paper.

Farmers in Town.—I read, not long since, in a Chicago paper, a complaint that social life among the farmers was dying out; and one of the reasons given was that so many of our well-to-do farmers are in the habit, when they have things fixed comfortably and to suit them on the farms, of letting them, and moving to far less pleasant quarters in town. In fact, in every village you can see something like a half dozen men, gentlemen farmers I suppose one should call them, men who own broad acres and homes having every comfort, who have let them to tenants, and now live in some small house, on a back street, industriously doing nothing, and who propose to spend the remainder of their lives in this cheerful occupation.

Country vs. City Life.—I am not blaming these men; they know what they want, and are able to have it. But it seems to me there is something wrong about our social system, to cause such a
state of affairs. In other and longer-settled countries than this, life on a farm is considered by far more enjoyable than life in a town. For centuries it has been the ambition of nearly every city-bred Englishman to own some estate in the country, where he could put his foot on his own ground, and enjoy pure country air and existence free from the tumult, din and smoke of city life. From the time of Virgil and Horace to our own Longfellow and Whittier, all poets have sung the joys of country life.

“A little farm, well tilled,” writes one.

Says another:

“Happy the man whose wish and care,
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.”

Men like Webster and Clay, like Jefferson and Washington, delighted in their country homes and spent all their available time there, and physicians all agree that the prospect for health and long life is much more favorable in the country than in the city. Since men so eminent and intelligent unite in considering the country so desirable an abiding place, we should earnestly seek the reason why so many people leave it, for if the best people do leave the business and settle in town, it must necessarily follow—the best going and the poorest staying—that the race of farmers will deteriorate and become an inferior people. The reasoning of Darwin and Herbert Spencer proves this, but we have not come to this yet, and I hope we shall not.

Why Farmers Leave the Farm.

—The reason these people do leave the farm is doubtless because of the want of social advantages to be found in the country, which they hope to find in the town, and which they undoubtedly do find to a greater extent.

The Happiest Man.—I will mention two ways in which one family have oc-

casionally relieved the tedium that does at times envelop a farmer’s existence, saying first, however, that I do not agree with a remark which I read of Senator Inglis, where he says “that the happiest man he knows of, is the farmer who has no acquaintances farther away than eight miles from his home,” meaning that a farmer’s business and friends and life should be centered in his own township. It seems to me that this idea of happiness is as correct as to say that the happiest thing in existence is a fat hog in a pen. There can be no doubt that he is happy, but it is not the kind of happiness we look forward to, especially in a land like ours. This is a beautiful State, embracing a great variety of scenery, with its lovely lakes, its fine forests, its rolling prairies, its rushing rivers, its ridges covered with woods, its valleys waving with grain. In such a country to limit a man to eight miles is to deprive him of much of the best that God has given free.

A Pleasant Ride.—When my husband and I were younger than we are now, it was our custom—after our spring crops were in—each year to take a little ride. People emigrated a good deal in those days, and we used rather to envy them as they went by in their canvas covered wagons. So we rigged a white top on a light wagon, and started out to see the State. We camped, cooked and ate our meals by the roadside, slept in our wagon, and our expenses were trifling. We drove about forty miles a day, and though I expect people wondered to see an emigrant wagon scooting along at a good trot, and also at the various directions we sometimes took, yet we were always used well, and not only obtained a practical knowledge of the geography of our surrounding counties, but in several instances increased the circle of our friends,
and after a week's journey came home satisfied that providence had fixed our dwelling in such glorious surroundings.

Wedding Trips.—If any of our young people are contemplating a wedding trip before settling on a farm, I would suggest that they may combine economy (which all young people should take into account) and fun in the novel nature of the conveyance, and seclusion, which newly married people always desire, and instruction in the geography of their immediate neighborhood, in such a journey, to a far greater extent than in the more expensive arrangements that are usually made. If they start about the 1st of June, which is an excellent time, they also will be able, every few miles on their road, to get a realizing sense of the practicability, the excellencies, and the great and glorious common sense in every way displayed in our Wisconsin systems of road-making and repairing. This would make a nice wedding journey, and as each year went by they might repeat it; only perhaps on the next trip they might feel like taking a few friends with them. Do you have any doubt that a party of young farmers and their wives would have a good time on such a journey?

By-and-bye there would be children to take along. I well remember when our wagon-seat made a good spring bed for our boy, and his delight when, in one of our rambles, he caught his first brook trout.

Fishing Excursions.—As our young friends grow older, and perhaps tire of long rides, shorter distances and longer stops could be arranged. This State is full of lovely sheets of water, well filled with fish. Parties think it worth while to come to these lakes from Milwaukee, Chicago and St. Louis, to pay their fare and put themselves to much expense for a few days outing in such charming situations. Why is it that in-
telligent farmers living within easy distance, with plenty of transportation at comparatively no expense, do not avail themselves of such privilege? Have they worked so hard as to blunt their sense of enjoyment? This is what I fear of our farmers, and it is a danger that should be attended to. Let them try this next season. After the corn is planted, I believe any fairly well-to-do farmer can manage his affairs, so as to be gone a week. Let him arrange a small party, not of his immediate neighbors, if he can do otherwise (he sees enough of them at home) but of those of his acquaintances who are farthest away who are congenial to him. Thus he not only enlarges the number of his friends, but the further advantage in that seeing them seldom, he only sees their good qualities and does not discover their bad ones. Let them take teams and tents and go at least a day's drive from home, to secure a good fishing place, and camp, and fish, and spend one week in a total change of conditions from the usual surroundings, and if they are good fellows—and nobody else ought to go into camp—and their wives are pleasant companions, they will come back rested and refreshed for all the rest of the year, and will look forward with interest and pleasurable anticipations to its renewal the next season.

One not only sees but learns much in such a trip. I remember once asking the road, and a man told us to go to the corner where the school-house stood before it was moved, then turn to the left and go through the woods till within a half mile of old man Jones, then go down to the town line, and pretty soon we would strike the county road and that would take us where we wanted to go. It is needless to say we got there. How many of my readers know and have seen Oil City in this State? Yet it is not only on
the map, but a splendid artesian well throwing a 4-inch stream twenty feet high, and one house mark the spot where one patriotic citizen tried to make this state the equal of Pennsylvania.

Not Good to Vegetate.—I have suggested these trips as a way that farmers might profitably and pleasantly spend a week in the summer. We are told that a rolling stone gathers no moss, and my idea is to roll a little moss off some of our farmers; perhaps there are too many moss-backs among them. Most sorts of vegetation are good on the farm, but it is not good for the farmer himself to vegetate; yet there is a tendency that way, and I think it would not be difficult for any one hearing me to bring to mind some farmers, or perhaps some whole family of farmers, who do not live more of a life than their own cattle, if as much.

Saving and Hoarding.—Within my own neighborhood an old man and his wife have lately died. They were childless; they had no near relatives nor any friends to care for; yet all their life was spent in saving and hoarding. They neither had good food nor good clothes; they lived in the worst room of a mean house; although the man was fond of reading, he took no paper; they had no enjoyment except what they derived from knowing they had money, and the constant fear of losing that offset that pleasure.

When they died, they left 80,000, all they had; they didn’t take a cent with them, and now three sets of lawyers are dividing it up among themselves. This case reminds me of a man who, when he was a boy, found a piece of money in the road. This gave a turn to his life; ever after he walked with his eyes on the ground, seeking to find other pieces, and while he did at times pick up small sums, yet the beauties of nature—the sun, sky, the procession of the stars, the clouds, the various colors of the woods and fields were unknown to him. He gained a little money; he lost everything that life is worth living for. It is not the man who has the most acres, nor even he who raises the largest crops that is the most successful farmer; but rather he who, with an active and intelligent mind, a happy and cheerful heart, an industrious and prudent disposition so averages his work and his life, that his labor, and the rewards of his labor, give him means for instruction, recreation and amusement; and these in turn so refresh him that he returns with pleasure to his work. His is a well-balanced life. All work and no play, makes any one dull, and it is more amusement that a farmer needs. He rarely, if ever, suffers for work. We need not urge him to work, nor need we hunt up work for him; but if we can suggest anything in the way of fun, we are doing him a good service, and if I can show any way that can add to a farmer’s enjoyment, I am willing that others should teach him how to add to his crops.

Winter Amusements.—I have given you my idea of what might be done in summer. I will now offer a suggestion as to how we might improve on social life in the winter. I premise that at this season farmers have plenty of leisure. Our winters lately strike me as being about nine months long, and but few farmers are pressed with work at this time of the year. Granted the leisure, granted intelligent and well-to-do farmers, how can they spend part of their time intellectually, pleasantly and socially? Some one will probably say with a reading club, with a debating society and with the grange. Well these are all right if you can get them to do it. But I never knew a farmer to join a reading club. They prefer to sit by their own
fire and read. A debating society runs into tariff and politics, and amuses the ladies but very little. I belong to the grange and enjoy it, particularly the social features of it, and think these might be enlarged to advantage.

Whist Clubs.—But the particular plan which I would suggest would be for intelligent farmers and their wives in any neighborhood to form a whist club. Whist is emphatically a farmer’s game. Dependent not upon surprises, it requires of its players a clear, solid intellect, a good memory, quick and accurate observation, a patient attention and ready reasoning powers. It is not only a recreation, but it is a discipline. As an intellectual exercise, it is as powerful and potent to strengthen the mind and exercise the wits as are algebra and geometry, and far more pleasant to take.

If a man can by his reasoning learn that it is for his interest in the game to lead up from his long suit rather than from his short one, he is making the same kind of discovery that leads him to make a four years rotation of his crop in preference to the short-sighted, though sometimes for the moment profitable plan, of following wheat or barley with the same crop. In either case he looks and reasons ahead of his immediate surroundings.

Whist Quickens Wit.—We frequently see it stated that while the farmers of Wisconsin are naturally the most intellectual people we have, they do not sufficiently exercise their faculties, and have need to learn to use their brains, and I think whist—a purely intellectual game—would give them this opportunity. It would also make them quicker-witted. We hear farmers say when they have been swindled by the Bohemian oats man, or the lightning rod sharper, or by some other scamp that preys on them, that if they had taken time to think the matter over they never would have done so, the fact being that the farmer, having so much more time than other people for intellectual operations, has given himself a larger allowance of it than the business men do, so that when there comes a sudden call for a quick decision he very frequently arrives at a wrong conclusion, much to his detriment. Now, had these farmers been whist-players—had they, in the various contingencies of the game, been in the habit of being called on for immediate decision in regard to their course of action, they would have acquired a quickness of apprehension, and a readiness of intellect that would have been of profit to them in the emergencies above mentioned. There is a continued call in farmers’ lives for greater intellectual activity, and the discipline of whist would supply it.

Recreation for Farmers’ Wives.—I read in the last agricultural report that a farmer was never known to get along unless his wife knew something. I mention this here, but what I have said as to whist should not lead the men to go off by themselves and have a game together, for, in my opinion, women are fully entitled to their share of any fun. I waive the question as to whether a man or his wife does the most or the pleasantest work, but under any circumstances the most amusement falls to the man. It is he who goes to town. He can loaf around stores and post office, he can attend elections, and his business relations give some variety to his existence, while for his wife there is simply the treadmill of her daily duties. We continually hear that farmers and farmers wives should read and improve their minds. Perhaps they ought, but one thing a farmer’s wife needs. A woman shut up all day with an endless and unvarying round of labor—whose whole life is a narrow routine the
TO IMPROVE OUR COUNTRY SOCIAL LIFE.

limit of whose horizon is the back kitchen yard, and the extent of whose travels is the wood pile and the well—this woman I say needs recreation and amusement, and any plan of a farmers' whist-club that does not take her in as an equal partner is defective from its foundation. So here we have the material for our club. Two families can comprise it, though the more there are the better, and the more sociable the management. Of course they meet alternately in one or the other's house, and even if several families belong it is not necessary for more than two to get together at once; this, probably, is the better way, thus giving more opportunities for meetings.

There should always be some refreshment. Farmers who raise so much are the last people in the world who ought to go hungry. For the oysters are always good, and fried oysters are better than stewed, but they are comparatively expensive, and I believe that, as a rule, it is best to provide things as much as possible out of our own produce and above all things would mention against a too extravagant lay-out. We had at one place a little whist club, that was broken up I think because each lady felt it necessary to her reputation to go a little ahead of the one before. So that one little lunch ended in an extravagant spread and exhausted all our resources. Bread and butter and cold chicken, a turkey, or, if one knows how to make it, chicken salad (I do not think salads are quite as well known as they ought to be among our farmers), a cold tongue, broiled ham, spare-rib or corn beef neatly sliced (only one kind of meat at a time, of course), with coffee or cider, would make a perfectly satisfactory sort of a lunch for any kind of a farmer, as it would be a pretty poor farm-house where these things could not easily be set out, and a farmer always has one great advantage that occasionally fails a city man—he has a good appetite. I would allow one, and only one, kind of plain cake, and some sauce or jelly for a finish.

Work and Expense.—There is but little work in such a repast, and but little expense. A very nice wine jelly can be made by using Cox patent gelatine, at a cost of but little over 10 cents a quart, of course using home-made wine and not counting that in the price. Current wine gives a better flavor to sauces and jellies than any you can buy.

Books on Whist.—Now if I have persuaded any one that he wants to play whist, let me say something as to the game. The St. Paul Railroad last year issued a little book for beginners which I am pleased to say was written by a lady, and distributed free by the passenger department of the road. This book gives one some idea of the fundamental principles and value of modern whist, and if one should obtain it and study them, it might have a tendency to lesson in some degree our feeling of hostility toward a corporation which charges about as much for carrying a bushel of grain from Madison, as it does from St. Paul.

When the book is mastered, if the beginner wishes to learn the fuller development of the game, and the finer touches of scientific whist, I would refer him to the works of such authorities as Cavendish, Pole or Proctor, all of which are excellent, and there is no reason in the world why farmers should not master them.

Time Not Wasted on Whist.—We see in the papers accounts of the whist clubs of Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Chicago and other places. The members of these clubs are among the best and most prosperous people in these cities. They consider it neither frivolous or weak or waste-
ful to devote one evening to this recreation. We have the same chance at this game in the country that they do. We often hear comparisons drawn between the advantages of city and country life, and while I admit their superiority in many things—in schools, theatres and lectures—I believe we in the country have our compensations, and for certain classes even overbalancing city advantages. I am sure that farmers owning from one to two hundred acres of land, and worth from five to ten thousand dollars, are better situated to enjoy life, and do lead a freer and happier existence; that they have more comfortable homes and grounds, less anxieties, better health and purer and pleasanter natural surroundings than their city brothers.

Amusements for Children.—Our children, however, complain of the lack of amusement on the farm, and they have cause for complaint to a certain extent. When they go to the city they see their friends going to theatres, concerts and lectures, amusements unknown in the country, and they do not offset the advantages country life also has. I think the city boy who spends a week in the country hunting and fishing or loafing, enjoys himself fully as much as the country boy does in the city, but I claim that we might have more enjoyment than we do, and I have suggested whist as one equally practical in either place, and one which in a family of two, three or four children, is excellently adapted to restrain that restlessness which drives so many boys from home.

A Pathetic Sight.—It is at times most pathetic to see the endeavors farmers make for a little enjoyment. They will all turn out for a circus. My little village usually celebrates the Fourth of July; from miles around farmers and farmers’ children come to town and stand around all day in the hot sun, as they think, enjoying themselves. I know plenty of people to whom funerals seem to be about the happiest and almost the only event of their lives. To all these persons, if they have the intellect to comprehend the game, and I believe they have, whist would be a boon and a blessing.

Objections to Cards.—I will close with a word on one point of view on this subject. There are some people who object to games of cards, and while they will allow games of authors, and places, and such, they have a holy horror of cards with spots on them. To these I would quote Charles Wesley. When fault was found with him for setting his hymns to the music of worldly songs, he said he did not propose to let the devil have all the good times. So I would say, whist is a good game—a strong and intellectual, and a beneficial game to know.

Do not give satan the advantage of having the monopoly of such a game. Let him have the games of authors and proverbs, and all such foolish and trifling sports, if you will but reserve this good game for good men. “Bread and the circus,” was the old Roman cry. The farmers and farmers’ wives have lots of bread. Give us a little more of the circus.