

GIRTON COLLEGE.



THE higher education of women" is a hackneyed phrase, which has served as a peg to many—who do not stop to consider what the words may mean—whereon to hang anything they may wish to say in ridicule of the general desire of women in the present day to possess for themselves, and to give to others, those educational and intellectual advantages which have so long been denied them.

A little definite information as to how the movement arose, out of which the foundation of Girton College sprang, may be acceptable to some of our readers.

In 1871 Mrs. William Grey, who had long had the more systematic and thorough education of girls at heart, and had endeavoured to promote it in every way, initiated at the meeting of the Social Science Association held at Leeds that year, the union for promoting this "higher education."

The name by which the movement is officially known is "National Union for Improving the Education of Women of all Classes," and its office is at 1, Queen-street, Brompton; the secretary, Miss Louisa Brough. The president is the Princess Louise; and amongst its vice-presidents are Archbishop Trench, the Bishops of London, Exeter, and Manchester, Dowager Lady Stanley of Alderley, Dean Stanley, and other distinguished names. The central committee has as its chairman Captain Douglas Galton.

Out of this union came the girls' public day schools, usually called "High Schools," in which so many of you are being educated. Owing to its efforts, also, the authorities of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge consented to allow girls to be candidates for the examinations established at different local centres. None over the age of eighteen were to be eligible for these. This was a restriction which was thought by some to be both arbitrary and ungenerous. Why, they said, should women who had the desire and the means for study be limited in this way? In order to meet their needs and wishes an association was formed, having for its object the founding of a college which should stand in relation to girls' schools and home teaching as the Universities do towards the public schools for boys.

According to the report, this association aimed at erecting, maintaining, and conducting a college for the higher education of women (hence the phrase now so common); to take such steps as from time to time may be thought most expedient and effectual to obtain for the students admission to the examinations for degrees of the University of Cambridge, and to place the college in connection with that University.

Religious instruction and services according to the principles of the Church of England are given in the said college, but attendance on these is not required from any student of full age, or whose parents or guardians may object thereto in writing. No person is admitted who has not passed the entrance examination, unless they have passed one of the senior local university examinations.

These examinations are held in London in March and June, the fee being £1; and every candidate must pass the preliminary—arithmetic, English grammar and composition, physical and political geography, English and Scripture (New Testament) history; and, besides these, in any two of the following subjects: Latin—translation of easy passages from Latin into English, and the reverse; Greek, French, German, Algebra, geometry, trigonometry (up to and including the solution of triangles), and conic sections. Not all these, remember, but a choice of any two.

Some people imagine that all who enter Girton must try for a University degree. In reference to this, Miss E. Davies, the treasurer of the college, writes: "This impression is entirely contrary to fact, and, as it is calculated to frighten away those who might be glad to become students and also to discourage support on the ground of its being an unreasonable requirement, it is important in the interests of the college that it should be dispelled. No student, as such, apart from special conditions attached to certain scholarships, is, or ever has been, required to take any University examination, or to try for any kind of certificate. They choose their own course. If they choose to try for 'degree examinations' we do our best to obtain the opportunity for them on the same conditions as those which the University imposes on undergraduates."

About half of the students look forward to being teachers; not governesses in private families, but teachers and head mistresses in schools. The rest work without any special career in view, chiefly from the love of study.

The college was opened on October 16, 1869, and a house hired at Hitchin for the temporary reception of students. In October, 1873, the present building at Girton was ready for occupation, with accommodation for twenty-one students and the necessary classrooms. Since that time considerable enlargements and additions have been made. During last term over forty-two were residing in the college. The Michaelmas term begins about the middle of October, and lasts eight weeks; the Lent term, beginning about the end of January, lasts eight weeks; and the Easter term, beginning in April, lasts eight weeks. The charge for board, lodging, and instruction is £35 per term, to be paid in advance. This sum covers all charges.

For the encouragement of would-be students of limited means several scholarships are attached to the college. Last year Mrs. Russell Gurney presented the sum of £1,000 as the endowment fund of an entrance scholarship, to be called the "Russell Gurney Scholarship" in memory of her husband, and to be awarded upon the results of an examination in Eistory. The Right Hon. Russell Gurney, late Recorder of London, was one of Girton's first and best friends. Lady Goldsmid also presented £1,200, in memory of her husband, Sir Francis Goldsmid, to found the "Sir Francis Goldsmid scholarship." This was awarded for the first time last March. Then there are two scholarships of £60 and £40 each, for three years, given by the Goldsmiths' Company; a scholarship of £35 a year, founded by Mr. F. D. Mocatta; the "Gilchrist scholarship" of £50 a year, for three years; a foundation scholarship of £90 a year, for four years; one formerly of £50, now increased to the value of 80 guineas a year, for three years, founded by the Clothworkers' Company for the benefit of a lady of limited means; Mr. R. S. Wright gave a scholarship of £100 a year, for three years; an entrance exhibition of 50 guineas a year, for three years, to a lady of limited means, who is engaged in or preparing for teaching, is also given by Lady Stanley of Alderley.

The course of study comprises divinity, modern languages, English, French, and German classics, mathematics, moral science, natural science, history, and vocal music. This course is, in a measure, optional. To quote again from Miss Davies: "The entrance examination puts a hindrance in the way of those whose early education has been so defective as to leave them unprepared for advanced studies. The examination is by no means severe, and the candidates who have failed to pass it were certainly not fit to enter upon a course of higher education.

"Then as to the nature of the teaching given at the college, which is, perhaps, its most important distinction. This, though it goes by the name of lectures, is very different from the sort of teaching usually understood by that term. It is given to very small classes, in which the students ask as well as answer questions. We consult the lecturers as to whether the instruction can be best given to a class or individually, and in some subjects, especially in mathematics, the differences in the stage of progress and the manner of working are such as to make it desirable that it should be to a great extent individually."

An old Girton student, an American lady, the founder of a scholarship mentioned above, has given in an American paper an account of student life at Girton, which presents an attractive and pleasant picture. From it we shall draw a little of our description. But first as to the daily routine, which is as follows: 7 a.m., prayers; 8.15 to 9 a.m., breakfast; 12 to 3 p.m., luncheon—which means that these two meals are allowed to remain so long on the tables, and the students come in as convenience serves and help themselves; 6 p.m., dinner. Students must enter their names on the marking roll at some time between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., 12 and 3 p.m., and 6 and 7 p.m. Every student must be present at all the lectures belonging to her course, except when leave of absence has been granted by the mistress.

Students can have tea in their rooms at four o'clock, and after dinner up to nine o'clock.

The college gates are closed in winter at 6 p.m.; in summer at dusk; after which students may not be out beyond the grounds. They may accept invitations from families, but not pay visits of any sort to college rooms without permission. They must not be later than 11 p.m., and must not accept evening invitations for more than once a week in any one term. In asking leave of absence the student must say where she is going. The house is closed at 10 p.m. Subject to such regulations as the mistress sees fit to prescribe, visitors may be invited to join in games in the college grounds and in the gymnasium, and may be entertained at luncheon or dinner in hall, or at tea in the private rooms at a fixed charge. The term friend or guest only applies to ladies, except in the case of parent or guardian. There is a public room in which general visitors, subject to the approval of the mistress, may be seen.

A bedroom and a study, or one large room serving as both, is set apart for each student, fitted with every necessary convenience: these are cheerful, airy rooms. In each is a large table, on which the occupant can place her papers, text books, &c. These rooms are made bright-looking, according to the individual character of the student, with photographs, flowering plants, art needlework, &c.

After luncheon, where plenty of good milk is supplied, they go off in pairs for an hour's walk over the fields, through hedge and ditch, rambling at "their own sweet will." If the weather is bad they turn into the gymnasium, which is a covered court separate from the college building. It is used much for "fives." In spring and autumn cricket and lawn tennis

are played on the lawns near the building. After lecture many of the students take exercise before dinner. Some of them make riding parties; those who can afford to hire. Most of the lectures take place in the afternoon, and, on an average, a student has only one lecture a day. The variety of subjects causes the attendance on each course to be rather small as yet. The lecturer reviews the work done by each student since the last lecture; any questions are answered, and special help needed is given. Then the lecturer gives his lecture proper, without the limitations of class book.

After dinner there is often choral music. After that, the students usually give themselves for a time to their labours, which are only broken by the advent of tea, coffee, or cocoa, in many cases. Others who are sociably inclined receive their friends in their own rooms.

The descriptions one hears from Girton students sound very pleasant, and make some of us older women wish such advantages had been open to us fifteen or twenty years ago. It is amusing in these days to read over again

the description of college life, given in Tennyson's "Princess," and pleasant to women to realise what progress in almost everything relating to woman's place in the world has been made since the time when that charming poem was written.

J. A. OWEN.

ON WATERING FLOWERS.

WATERING in gardens requires different rules from watering pot-plants, though both need thought, and must vary with the time of year and weather. In London, or any very smoky town, I should recommend more frequent watering than in the country in dry weather. In the country the water is only wanted for the roots of the plants, but in London it is wanted by the leaves too, or the foliage gets choked and poisoned by the smoke.

Plants breathe through their leaves, as we

do through our mouths, so it is necessary to the lives of some, and to the health of all, that their leaves should be kept clean. Otherwise, in watering your garden, you should try to imitate nature. Do not water your garden in a hot sun; it makes the foliage shrivel and turn colour. Nature takes care about this, for when rain falls the sun is hidden by clouds. So in hot weather do your watering very early, or else in the evening, unless your garden is shady, and then any time will do. You should water as seldom as possible, except when the foliage needs washing, and then you should be very careful to soak the roots thoroughly before any water touches the leaves. A sprinkling of water on the surface of the ground does much more harm than good, as it makes the ground cake, and then the earth below gets both hotter and drier than if the surface were loose, and not a single drop of water will have reached the roots of the plants.—*L. M. Forster.*



From the Painting of SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE.

GAZE on—'tis lovely! Childhood's lip and cheek,
Mantling beneath its earnest brow of thought!
Gaze—yet what seest thou in those fair and meek
And fragile things, as but for sunshine wrought?
Thou seest what grace must nurture for the sky,
What life must fashion for eternity!