

THOUGHTS ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

By A MAN.



HERE are all sorts of legends in Cambridge about Girton and Newnham girls. The beautiful ideal girl-graduate depicted by Tennyson does not exist in the imagination of the ordinary undergraduate. If you ask him for a description of a Girtonite or Newnhamite, he will immediately picture a lady whose personal attractions are *nil*, a wearer of spectacles, a being whose thoughts soar above such small details as fashion

or harmony of colour in dress. This is doubtless a libel on lady students, and if they chose to retort upon us, they might just as well take their type of the average undergraduate from the ranks of the typical smug; the gentleman who dresses worse than his gyp, who has been known at rare intervals to brush his hair and indulge in a clean collar; the man whose life consists of chapels, lectures, reading, and bed, with an interval of one hour for the Trumpton walk, and a few odd moments for meals.

It would be just as fair to judge "Varsity men" from such specimens as these, as it would be to judge Girton or Newnham by their exceptions.

I must say personally that my only experience at Cambridge of a Girtonite was not altogether happy. I make no claim to be in any sense a learned man, only an ordinary specimen of the great majority, the *οἱ πολλοί* of Cambridge, those whose ambition is limited to obtaining in their three years an ordinary degree and as much social life as possible. One evening at an "At Home," or Perpendicular, I was introduced to a lady who hailed from Girton. The trivialities of ordinary conversation were not sufficient for her mighty intellect, however, and in a moment I was appalled with the question, "Are you mathematical?" I replied as best I could, and shortly afterwards turned the tables by introducing the subjects of music and art, of which I possess some slight smattering. Doubtless I met with one of the exceptions, and it would be wrong to form an opinion from such slight data, and so I willingly believe what others have told me—that just as our finest specimens of English manhood are to be met with at our universities, so there also are to be found our finest specimens of English girlhood.

My thoughts on woman's education, however, have nothing whatever to do with Girton or Newnham. All women cannot avail themselves of such a great privilege as a university course, and it is quite possible to fulfil the best ideals of womanhood and of education away from either Oxford or Cambridge. It is my purpose rather to send to the GIRL'S OWN PAPER what I believe are not my own thoughts and opinions alone, but the thoughts and opinions of many Englishmen upon a much-vexed question.

What is the ideal of an educated woman? Not a woman's ideal, but a man's ideal. Here I must confess myself to be old-fashioned, for the whole question depends upon what is woman's mission in this world.

I am old-fashioned because I believe that woman's true mission and man's true mission are one and the same. I am no believer in single blessedness; I believe there is no more miserable object in the world than a bachelor condemned for life to the tender mercies of a

landlady; and just as in an old bachelor you see vestiges of good qualities which have withered, and perceive an incomplete man—one whose life has been to a great extent a failure, so do you see often in ladies who have never married many lovely and beautiful qualities—qualities which would have brightened and made happy any home; and seeing this, feel a sense of sadness that such lives should have been warped and arrested in their development by the force of circumstances. Yes, reproach me as you may, no argument will ever shake my conviction that the true ideal of life for man and woman alike is marriage; not society marriages of convenience, not marriage for the sake of marriage, but marriage based upon a union of souls; the old-fashioned, much abused, love-match; when all the joy and happiness of life ceases to be centred in self, but is centred instead in another, apart from whom life ceases to be worth living.

Now what is the common complaint of educated men at this present day—I mean the educated man who is in a position to marry? Is it that he cannot find girls with money, or girls possessing beauty and refinement? Is it this? I know full well we men are called mercenary, and that we are believed to look for only one great charm in woman—money. I know full well that the world is becoming every day more mercenary and less romantic; that Cupid is fast losing his bow and arrow, and is arming himself instead with bags labelled *£ s. d.*; I know all this, but I still say the lament of all true, manly Englishmen is that the girl of the nineteenth century is shallow and insipid; and far from wishing to see women beautiful automatons, able to preside at our tables, and to do the honours of the house and credit to their dressmakers, we, as men, desire to see them thoroughly well educated; not *bookish*—something more than that, *educated*—able to give opinions on varied subjects, well read, well travelled, well refined, our mental equals in every respect.

Do I then consider woman's intellect inferior to man's?—that is to say, the average woman inferior mentally to the average man? By no means. I do not believe that any sensible man holds that there is any real inferiority, but there is a considerable difference. As we compare the physical development of a woman with that of a man, as we compare her intellect with the masculine mind. That which is masculine is essentially masculine, and that which is feminine is feminine. We look for muscular strength, breadth of shoulder, length of limb, hardness of the facial lines, and general angularity in man; we look for that which is graceful in woman; no hard lines, no masculine biceps, but smooth undulating curves. A manly man is just as much an object of beauty in nature as a womanly woman; but it is beauty regarded from an entirely different standpoint, and that which is lovely in man is very unlovely in woman. And the same physical differences prevail in the composition of the mind—no inferiority, but an essential difference.

Now what are the characteristics of the feminine mind? This is a very difficult question for a man to answer. It requires considerable experience and knowledge of character; I must therefore ask pardon if I err in my conclusions.

It has always struck me that women are not strictly logical; they do not possess that power of advancing step by step to a conclusion which men possess; but at the same time they have a power which is in advance of

logic, a power of forming a conclusion without proceeding through each stage; and the conclusion is generally an accurate one, although not arrived at by strictly logical steps. Women will form opinions, and correct opinions too, at a glance, which it takes men a long time to arrive at. I should say, therefore, that quickness in reasoning is feminine, as opposed to solidity and depth of reasoning in man. I think the Greek compared to the Roman intellect in some respects resembles the comparison between the female and male intellect. The Greek certainly was logical, and therefore I may appear to contradict myself; but his great qualities were quickness in reasoning, brilliancy rather than depth, versatility, adaptability, and, above all things, love of the beautiful. The Roman intellect was, on the other hand, practical and prosaic. It was the essentially masculine qualities of the Roman which led to Rome being the mistress of the world. It is to Greece, however, we owe all the refinement of antiquity, and a large portion of the refinement of the present.

Personally, I much prefer the Greek temperament. Vague longings after the ideal, an eye for beauty of form, a mind for beauty of thought, an ear for beauty of sound, are far to be preferred to the power of solving deep and abstruse problems. The artist is in reality a far greater man than the mere scholar; he is born, the other is made. The artistic temperament is one of the greatest of God's gifts, and is, to my mind, more often found in women than in men. We find many men without one spark of imagination or romance, but very few women. Almost every woman has some romance in her composition. Versatility is essentially part of woman's nature; concentration a part of man's nature. And here arises a strange paradox. A man who concentrates himself upon one subject, while naturally less versatile than a woman, at the same time does not lose his versatility by his concentration. Let a woman, however, once concentrate herself upon one particular thing, and she loses all her natural versatility, and becomes a creature of only one idea.

A man may be reading law, medicine, theology, mathematics, or any other subject, making one special subject the study of his life; but he will still take an interest in general matters, and be able to converse upon a score of other subjects; and oftentimes the more learned he is, the more will he delight in the most sensational of all sensational novels by way of relaxation. A learned, or rather *bookish*, lady, on the other hand, is essentially a creature who moves in a groove and is never able to get out of it. It does not matter what the subject is, the fact still remains. I have known even theological ladies, ladies whose greatest ambition would be to get up in a pulpit and preach, and my experience tells me they have only one topic, which they *must literally drag* in by the hair of the head on every occasion. I have one friend, for instance, whose great subject is the moral and social welfare of the London cabby. At first it is refreshing to know that the man who looks with disgust at anything less than double his legal fare is such a delightful character; but when you know him by heart he ceases to be refreshing, and when he is served up daily at every meal until your mental atmosphere reeks of him, and you begin to dream of him and to spend most of your nights in phantom growlers, he becomes, to put it mildly, a nuisance. It is the same with other subjects. The legal lady is always full of some interesting point of law, the medical lady of some interesting demonstra-

tion or operation; and if in a crowded room she can possibly button-hole you and discover you are really an M.B. Cantab., you may be sure of getting through the whole or greater part of "Quain's Anatomy" at express speed.

But I fancy I am wandering somewhat from my subject, and will, before proceeding further, sum up what I have said. Woman's ideal, I have said, is marriage; that is, the making the life of the man she loves as happy as it is possible to make it. I also hold the same ideal for a man, for all true love is unselfish and reciprocal. Woman's great natural gift is versatility; man's great complaint is that the women of the day are dull and insipid. What education, then, will serve to make women good wives and real companions for their husbands? It will be an education which develops the natural endowment, *versatility*; an education which aims rather at general culture than deep knowledge. The deeply-read specialist is not necessarily a cultured individual, for culture spreads itself over a very wide area. My ideal of an educated woman would not exclude classics, history, modern languages, music (if she be musical), art, some knowledge of mathematics, and even science. She should be, however, widely rather than deeply read.

The ladies of Girton and Newnham are only allowed to go in for an honours course, I believe. I cannot help thinking, however, that if the ordinary degree course were encouraged, and more ladies' colleges started, it would be better. The averagely well-educated English-woman should be at least educated up to that standard as a basis; and then, if there be any special subject which will cultivate the taste and increase the imagination, let it be studied. Harmony, counterpoint, all the higher branches of music for those who are musical; as much

classics and history as you please; anything which will develop a taste for the beautiful or re-people a world long since dead; anything which will make our ancient ivy-clad ruins and stately cathedrals once more alive with the forms of those who long since have mouldered into dust; anything which will call up for us the spirit of the past; for while "the old order changeth, yielding place to new," "God repeats himself in many ways."

The subjects to be avoided, save in an elementary manner, are mathematics, and possibly science—certainly, however, the former. The subjects most to be encouraged are classics and history. These two widen and refine, while the tendency of mathematics for women is to make them narrow, and creatures of only one idea.

But what of those women who have to earn their living in the world; those who wish to be independent; to marry if they have the opportunity; but to be certain, if necessary, of earning their living? How are they to be educated? I would venture here to point out that women educated on the lines laid down are best able to educate their sisters on the same lines. It often happens that the women who would, if properly educated, make the very best of wives, by persisting in pushing the higher education craze to its limits, become creatures to be avoided by the average man; avoided not because of their culture, but because of their lack of culture; because they have become the creatures of an idea. At the same time there are exceptions. Some women are naturally masculine in their ideas, just as some men are feminine. Let such as these by all means immerse themselves in mathematics, science, or medicine; but may the day be long distant when any numbers of England's fair

daughters follow in their footsteps. It does not follow that all mathematical, medical, or scientific women are to be avoided. The type is, indeed, as a type; but there are exceptions to every rule, and some very charming and delightful exceptions too. Personally, I cannot associate the tenderness of true womanhood with the torture of frogs, in order to see the action of galvanism upon the nerves, or with many other things inseparable from a deep scientific or medical education. And these are not my own thoughts alone, but the thoughts of men who have themselves been in for science. Depend upon it, ladies, the judgment of the Cambridge undergraduate represents fairly the judgment of English manhood upon your sex; and if there is anything he hates and ridicules, it is a masculine, unwomanly woman. His idea of womanhood is a lofty one. He wants to find sympathy in his pursuits—true womanly sympathy; a help-mate, not a lady who understands differential and integral calculus, who will discourse learnedly and drearly upon one everlasting subject. Nor, on the other hand, a lady who will endanger his life and spoil his sport when after the birds, by blazing away haphazard with the light gun specially made for her, and who loves to join in sports and occupations suited to men alone. No; he seeks and admires neither of these types, but those women who are still true to the best traditions of their sex; those whose mission in life is to make homes happy and cheerful with their presence; those whose influence is a holy and pure one; those who will make him what in his inmost nature he wishes to be, though perhaps far removed from that ideal now—a chivalrous, high-minded Englishman; a man who shall leave this world better than he found it.

THE OLFATORY NERVE.



HE law of association is more closely allied to the sense of smell than to any other of the senses. Memory, imagination, old sensations and phases of thought, are more readily reached through it than

through any other channel. It plays the part of middleman, connecting the present with some bygone event or state of feeling. Everyone must, at some time, have experienced how, on suddenly coming across an odour which had been encountered in previous years, everything connected with that past occasion flashes before one. The mind has been acted upon by the association and the odour at the same time, and the one cannot be recalled without the other. This may be attributed, not simply to coincidence, but to a physiological fact, for the olfactory nerve is not a mere nerve only, but a portion of the cerebrum itself, and thus intimately connected, as no other sense is, with the cerebral hemispheres—that part of the brain in which the intellectual processes are believed to be performed. This thought is brought out in a recently published American story, in which the hero, with the scent of violets, recalls a scene in his early life, with all its attendant circumstances, and even the state of mind in which he had passed through those circumstances.

Agreeable and disagreeable odours seem to be equally powerful in reviving the past,

though in the majority of cases the association is with an agreeable odour. That odours affect our dreams all who have studied telepathy can attest. The presence of sea-weed will cause us to dream of ocean voyages or visits to the shore, whilst a cedar box or a sandal-wood fan will produce dreams of tropical wanderings or eastern travels. Sometimes such associations will give to dreams almost a revelatory power. The wife of General Sleeman was once sleeping in a tent on the edge of a jungle. Each night her dreams were haunted by the sight of dead men, and so vivid was the impression made upon her mind that her husband caused the ground to be opened beneath the tent. Fourteen bodies were discovered, victims of the Thugs. Doubtless, the odour of the dead suggested to the lady, in the unconscious cerebration of her dreams, the horrible vision.

One of the most curious facts concerning the sense of smell is that it will call up to our mind associations which have so entirely passed from our recollection that we cannot remember having experienced them; places we have no recollection of seeing, feelings we have no memory of having entertained. The somewhat nauseous scent of the poppy always brings to the mind of a certain writer a sunny afternoon in summer, and a walking through a field of standing corn on a cliff overhanging the sea—a scene he cannot connect with any memory. Lavender makes us think of old gardens with trim, straight walks, and flowers now out of date, or of old chests full of white linen and dainty naperies. Camphor "seems to open drawers and show

us strange, brocaded gowns, fur boas, and flapping hats." Magnolia takes us to Southern States, shows us low, verandahed homes of planters:—

"The blinds are dropped, and softly now and then
The day flows in. . . should you enter, there
will greet
Your sense, with vague allurements, effluence
faint
Of a magnolia bloom."

Magnolia, honeysuckle, and limes have a sensuous, intoxicating perfume, which bring back all there has been of passion and romance in our lives. Many people are strangely affected by breathing the air laden with their perfume; it has even been stigmatised as "a demoralising atmosphere." Very different is the effect produced by the scent of the mignonette or the rose. They take us back to our happiest, purest moments, recall our innocent and simple pleasures, and, in a word, "do us good." Chrysanthemums have a bracing, invigorating scent, but, like "the wholesome air of poverty," a little of it goes a long way.

Naturally, all people are not affected similarly; one person may be susceptible to an odour which upon another has little effect. Yet this does not invalidate the fact that feelings, association, distant memories, are more easily reached through the sense of smell than through any other channel, and that with certain odours we re-live many chapters of our lives.

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