

EDUCATION.

IN order to appreciate any educational scheme in England for the benefit of women it is necessary to consider the limited opportunities they have hitherto enjoyed, especially that large class—one half of the whole number of Englishwomen—who are dependent upon their own exertions for a livelihood. For those destined to teach there are no such institutions maintained by the public as our normal schools, and nothing corresponding to our high schools for girls; nor are there charitable foundations like St. Paul's and others that exist in London and elsewhere in England for the use of boys. Large sums of money and grants of land, given originally for the purpose of founding schools for both boys and girls, have been appropriated to the exclusive use of the former. The most noteworthy example of this kind is that of Christ's Hospital, designed for the support and education of both sexes, which now gives to twelve hundred boys free of all expense a good public-school education, and provides outside of London for the support of forty girls who are trained in the capacity of domestic servants. It is not surprising that this and other instances of glaring injustice should have aroused the indignation of women and called forth condemnation from men of ability and distinction. But a large number of Englishmen still persist in seeing in the educational movement only a convenient means on the part of its advocates for producing a universal chaos in which parental authority, conjugal fidelity, and maternal love are to be scattered to the winds.

It may be true, as their opponents have said, that lectures are superfluous and examinations are the test and not the means for acquiring an education, but there are sometimes predicaments in which a choice is denied; and to have received any recognition at all of their claims to higher education by the University of Cambridge has been a subject of congratulation with most Englishwomen, who as a class have heretofore been limited to the ordinary advantages of a home education. This system still has its devoted advocates, and it has doubtless in times past thoroughly harmonized with the organization of English society; for above all others it is the plan best

adapted to secure seclusion, to foster a love of privacy. Excellent as home education may be under favorable circumstances, the method as pursued at present is as a general thing very inadequate, and presents in England a pitiful contrast to the magnificent opportunities so generously lavished upon the young men at the public schools and universities. As a rule, the girls of a family, no matter how numerous, share between them the imperfectly trained faculties of a governess employed at a stipend of about two hundred and fifty dollars per annum. By means of her assistance the pupil very soon attains the necessary proficiency in inaccuracies and want of method to enable her to fill the position of governess, and in her turn to impart these acquisitions to future generations. The more intelligent among Englishwomen have long felt restless under these conditions, and have grasped eagerly at the opportunities given by the different university examinations, namely, those of Cambridge, Oxford, London, and Queen's College, Ireland. At Cambridge a closer connection has been effected than elsewhere. This connection, real as it is, is by no means very great, and may be regarded rather as an introduction to a future relation of a more substantial character. A beginning has nevertheless been made in a quiet and praiseworthy manner, by men and women who, while they have talked comparatively little, have acted in a consistent and determined manner.

The experiment of holding local examinations has now extended over a period of ten years, and may be fairly deemed a success, not only on account of the numbers who have presented themselves for examination, but on account of the average good scholarship. These examinations are held in such places as the syndics appointed by the university may determine upon. Twenty-five fees of ten dollars must be guaranteed before the syndicate will entertain an application; a committee of ladies must also undertake to superintend the examination, one of whom is expected to act as local secretary and another to receive the examination papers and collect the answers. The fortunate candidates have long since begun to reap substantial benefits from

having received the Cambridge certificate : not only are they preferred as teachers and governesses, but in the public estimation are deemed worthy of better salaries than those who have not passed the examination.

The lectures at Cambridge for women are of more recent date, and are given with the view of enabling women to make more thorough preparation for the existing examinations. These lectures are delivered by some of the college professors and lecturers, and are under the control of a general committee of management composed of university fellows and lecturers, also of an executive committee whose members are resident ladies and gentlemen. The range of studies embraced by this plan is approximately similar to those required of the candidate for the Cambridge bachelor of art degree. The fee for a single course of lectures is five dollars, reduced to one half in the case of those intending to become teachers. The lectures are not usually delivered unless the applicants number from three to six. For the benefit of young ladies from a distance a pleasant home has been provided at Merton Hall, an ivy-covered house, which aside from its present attraction is interesting as an old Saxon building; the so-called school of Pythagoras is said to have been once held within its venerable walls.

Here the young ladies apparently have no temptation to lead other than a studious life, and their surroundings are all of a refined and home-like character. Not more than a dozen young ladies can be comfortably lodged at present. These, in the regulation of their conduct, are subject to certain rules laid down by the managing committee, while the domestic arrangements are left entirely to the good sense of the principal. Young ladies of limited means, particularly those preparing to teach, are aided by a special fund. There are also in existence four scholarships, worth from fifty to sixty dollars each. The committee is at present trying to collect money for the purpose of establishing others; gifts of money have been made from time to time by the friends of the movement, in order to meet incidental expenses; but the want of money is still a serious drawback to the success of this as of other educational schemes.

As an instance of the indifference felt by the English public towards projects of the kind for the benefit of girls, we cite the appeal made through the papers in behalf of the Camden collegiate schools in London.

This appeal for money resulted in contributions to the amount of six hundred dollars, whereas about the same time three hundred thousand dollars were obtained by the same means for a boys' middle-class school in Cowper Street. We allude particularly to the Camden schools since they are esteemed at Cambridge among the best of the London schools for women; they have become through the disinterestedness and energy of Miss Bass (the former principal) an endowed institution.

Among the other London colleges for women are Queen's and Bedford. The former is connected with the established church, the latter is independent of it. To each is attached a small school in which pupils of the college take their first lessons in the art of teaching. Alexandra College, Dublin, under the immediate supervision of Archbishop Trench, although a young institution, is said to be one of the best in the United Kingdom.

One of the most interesting of the experiments that have been made at Cambridge is that of instruction by correspondence. This method would seem in many respects applicable to our own wants, in a country where distances are so great and where so many women are engaged as teachers in remote places, away from the centres of learning. In the prospectus the committee only claim for this system value as an aid to self-education, and do not offer it as a substitute for thorough oral instruction where such can be obtained; it is furthermore only recommended to such persons as are willing to make considerable exertions. The committee do assert, however, that when pupils have sufficient intelligence to grapple with the subject valuable aid has been rendered. The teachers, fortunately for themselves, reserve the right of discontinuing the correspondence whenever its results do not seem profitable. The range of subjects embraced by this plan includes most of those contained in the different groups of the examination papers. The instruction consists of general directions in the choice of books, and of questions set from time to time, the answers to which are carefully looked over and returned with comments. The correspondence is carried on at fortnightly or monthly intervals, as the case may demand. Drawing and music are both omitted in this plan, although the former suggests itself as one of the possibilities of the system, particularly since the prevailing realistic tendencies in drawing

leave so much to be done by the pupil and comparatively little by the teacher. Some of the most exquisite pen-and-ink drawings it has been the writer's good fortune to see, the artist confessed to have been the result of patient labor and attention to written criticisms and suggestions that were made from time to time by Mr. Ruskin.

The different individuals interested in the various educational projects for women have felt the necessity for active coöperation, and out of this necessity has sprung the National Union for Improving the Education of All Classes. The members of this union have gone to work with surprising energy and directness of purpose; branch committees have been formed to investigate and report upon the local needs of the communities over which they have supervision. The central committee in London, in addition to other incentives, now offers a number of scholarships to the most successful candidates for the different university examinations.

The heretofore unprecedented solicitude and activity in England has doubtless in a measure been awakened by the report of the Schools Inquiry Commission. This report is unrelenting in its condemnation of the existing systems of education for girls. In the same report Mr. Fisk observes, "If the reproach be just, that women do not reason accurately and that their knowledge when they possess it is deficient in organic unity, in coherence and depth, there is no need to look for any recondite explanation of the fact: the state of the schools in which they are educated explains it."

Again, in a report upon certain local schools, the writer says, "They (the schools) suffer from the want of some guiding principle, which the boys' schools find in the public schools and universities."

With the view of meeting this last deficiency, and of giving direction and aim to the education of girls, "Girton College was founded, incorporated by license of the board of trade, and opened temporarily in 1869 at Hichen; its ultimate destination is the parish of Girton, about three miles from Cambridge. The buildings in process of construction give assurance that the 'airy nothing' of skeptical minds is destined to find a local habitation." The ambitious object of this college is to obtain for the students admission to the examination for the degrees conferred by the university, and to permit neither compromises nor half-way substitutes, but to insist upon the full rigor of a university education.

In England it was as by a sort of inspiration that the leaders of the women's educational movement dropped the ragged schools and staked everything upon higher education. Their method has been from the beginning to work from the top to the bottom; ours just the reverse. The action in this matter cannot be better illustrated than by a comparison of the Edinburgh Ladies Educational Association with the one in Boston "for the better education of women." The former is said to be the most systematic and successful attempt that has yet been made to meet the so-called great want of the age. It is an association the avowed object of which is to provide an education for women according to the university standard. The examination papers are based upon those of the university, and the diplomas conferred are said to have a real value in the educational world. At the University of Edinburgh there is strictly speaking no collegiate department, nor has the dormitory system been adopted; therefore but few obstacles have been met in the organization of classes for women. In Boston, on the other hand, the association has not concentrated its attention upon the higher forms of education, but has labored equally in behalf of the industrial.

The necessity for taking some steps towards the diffusion of sanitary knowledge has been so thoroughly recognized in England that an association of ladies, with the Duchess of Argyll at the head, has been formed with the view of promoting "the physical and social well-being of those around them." These ladies propose effecting their object by the distribution of tracts on sanitary and domestic subjects, written with especial reference to the poor. Loan-libraries of popular books on kindred subjects have been established, and lectures are given from time to time on health, domestic economy, etc.

The sustained efforts and disposition on the part of Englishwomen to find out their own wants and to help themselves, and the number of women dependent upon the result, has invested their action with great weight and responsibility; the leaders have found themselves closely watched by a large class actively engaged in the struggle of life, against whom there exist practically trades-unions in the professions and in other lines of business; and for whom, while there is but little incentive to industry, there is no provision made on the part of the state for supporting in idleness.