

Editors' Table.

THE ORIGIN OF HARVARD.

THAT the oldest of our universities probably owed its beginning to the suggestion of a woman has not till lately been suspected. Mrs. Lucy Downing, a sister of Governor John Winthrop, shared in the high intellectual and moral endowments which marked her distinguished family. She and her husband had been urged to join her brother and his friends in New England. Her husband was willing, but she hesitated, for fear that her son George, who showed a great aptitude for learning, should lose the means of completing his education. She wrote from England to her brother, the Governor, on the subject an earnest letter, which is still extant. She urges her objection that the colony had yet "no societies nor means in that kind for the education of youths in learning," and she adds, in the quaint style of the age, some touching and persuasive sentences:—

"It would, I think, as we say, grieve me in my grave to know that his mind should be withdrawn from his books by other sports and employments, for that were but the way to make him good at nothing. I am bold to present this solicitous suit of mine with all earnestness, to you and my nephew Winthrop, that you will not condescend to his going over till he hath either attained to perfection in the arts here, or that there be sufficient means for to perfect him therein with you, which I should be most glad to hear of. It would make me go far nimbler to New England, if God should call me to it, than otherwise I should; and I believe a college would put no small life into the plantation."

This letter was written in 1636; and in October of that year the Massachusetts General Court voted £400 for the establishment of a college. It was commenced in the following year at Cambridge; and in 1638 Mrs. Downing came to the colony with her family. Her son George entered the college immediately, and his name is included in the first class which graduated.

It is fair to suppose that the success and usefulness of Harvard were among the inducements which led to the establishment of other colleges, sooner at least than they might otherwise have come into existence. Yale, William and Mary, Princeton, Dartmouth, Columbia, and others of our ancient institutions of learning, to which many of the great men of the first age of our republic owed their education, were probably indebted, in no small degree, for their existence to the example of Harvard, which showed that in a young and feeble colony a college might not only flourish, but largely aid, as Mrs. Downing suggested, to "put life into the plantation."

One cannot help thinking how much greater the usefulness of this college and its example would have been, if this excellent lady and her friends had been far enough in advance of their age to have urged and obtained that young women should receive in the new institution the same advantages of education as were to be given to young men. For nearly two centuries the instruction received by the mothers of our people—those to whom the early training of our future citizens was to be committed—remained far inferior to what was needed to prepare them for their duties; and all this time there were in existence many institutions with able instructors, good libraries, and other aids to learning, that might have been rendered doubly useful in this way, if our forefathers could only have been led to think that the young men

and maidens who worshipped together in church, and mingled freely in society, might be allowed to pursue their studies together in the same brotherly and sisterly companionship.

One result would certainly have been that a very different moral atmosphere would have pervaded the colleges. We should not, for example, hear that the authorities in Harvard are still vainly striving to put a stop to the unpleasant usage, by which the members of the older classes have thought themselves warranted in inflicting various annoyances and indignities upon the newly-entered "freshmen." Some years ago the custom had led to such disgraceful scenes that Edward Everett thought it necessary to denounce them in vigorous terms, in an eloquent address delivered by him at a commencement dinner at Cambridge. Speaking of the older students, he said: "They act, from year to year, on the idea that what would be mean, cowardly, and cruel everywhere else, may be practised without discredit by persons calling themselves young gentlemen, at places of education; that acts of oppression and insult, and personal indignity, on the part of the strong towards the weak, of numerous bands towards isolated individuals, of those at home toward the timid new-comer—acts worthy only of a mean-spirited bully and blackguard, and so regarded by the rest of the civilized world—may be practised without disgrace or remorse, nay, with brutal glee, by a sophomore at college."

If young ladies were admitted to Harvard as students, we may feel assured that this and all other customs of a low and rude cast would disappear at once. It is of like character and origin with the fagging system and the other brutalities which have long been practised in the great public schools of England, to which boys alone are admitted. The two sexes are not intended to live separately. Whenever this violation of nature's design occurs, whether in colleges, in monasteries, in standing armies, or elsewhere, the results are seen in the evil dispositions and habits which speedily manifest themselves.

Now that it is shown that Harvard University in all probability owed its existence to the suggestion of a noble-minded and far-sighted woman, we may hope that the time is not far distant when the distinction which that world-famous institution has attained will be enhanced, and its usefulness immensely increased, by the abolition of the antiquated rule excluding one-half of the community from those privileges and endowments which it should hold for the benefit of all.

THE WOMAN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

THE two annual reports which have been issued by the Woman's Christian Association of Philadelphia show a surprising amount of good already accomplished during its brief existence. The society was organized in December, 1870. The object of its founders, as set forth in the act of incorporation, was to promote "the temporal, moral, and religious welfare of women, especially young women, who are dependent on their own exertions for support." Their first effort was to establish a boarding-house, where young women who were without parents or protectors in the city, could find a comfortable home at rates barely sufficient to pay the expenses of the house. The so-

ciety was without funds, but acting upon the advice of experienced members of similar societies in other cities, the managers determined upon the bold step of purchasing a house, relying upon the liberality of the public for the means of paying for it. In January, 1871, they contracted for a house on Filbert Street, at the price of \$10,500. The alterations and repairs cost over \$5000, and a considerable expense had to be incurred in furnishing the rooms. Yet in less than six months, the committee say, "our house, neatly and comfortably furnished, was opened, *free of debt*; and at the end of three additional months we found it containing forty happy inmates, being filled to its utmost capacity, and *self-supporting*." This is certainly a cheering example of the success which attends an appeal to the public sympathies on behalf of a work of real benevolence. It shows also that the business of the society must have been conducted with energy and prudence by the ladies who had charge of it.

Encouraged by this success, the managers of the association determined in the following year to extend their work in other directions. They resolved to establish an Industrial School, and to open dining-rooms, where women employed in stores and workshops at a distance from their residences could obtain good meals at cost price. They also wished to provide temporary lodging-rooms for women who might need such accommodation. A room was required for the Employment Committee, who were doing much in obtaining suitable employment for women out of work. For all these purposes a house was procured on North Seventh Street, in January, 1872, at a cost, including necessary alterations, of \$18,500. On the third day of June following, "every department, consisting of kitchen, dining-rooms, lodging-rooms, employment office, a room for the Industrial School and Association Hall, was neatly and comfortably furnished, and ready for occupancy." Since that time the various departments have been in full operation, and with the best results. The average number who have dined at the rooms has been over one hundred daily. Many were thus furnished with comfortable meals who, from lack of means or of time, had not been able to procure them before. The records of one day showed that forty-three persons had dined at a cost to each of five cents, and seventy-one at an aggregate of less than five dollars, or about seven cents each. "Many of the young women who come to our dining-rooms," say the committee, "tell us of the benefits they experience from a warm meal. Some have spoken of permanently impaired health, due in great measure to eating a cold, insufficient dinner for many years. From these testimonies we have abundant evidence of the great benefits of this part of our enterprise."

The temporary lodging-rooms are open to needy, homeless women, at any hour of the day or night, the charges being from ten to twenty-five cents per bed. From June to October, the number furnished with lodgings was one hundred and seventy-six. In the employment department there has been equal efficiency. The committee have been able to find employment for more than four hundred women, and to furnish useful counsel and assistance to many more. In the Industrial School, instruction is given to young women, first in the much-neglected art of plain sewing, in all its branches, and afterwards in practice on the sewing machine. When proper proficiency is attained, the pupils are furnished with a certificate sufficient to insure them employment in any place where plain needlework of the highest class is required.

These labors, however, do not limit the efforts of the association. There is a visiting committee,

whose duties are somewhat of a missionary character. "They seek out the needy, the stranger, the homeless, the friendless, and having found any one can be benefited by the association, they introduce her to its benefactions. They stately visit the patients of Wills' Hospital, administering sympathy and Christian counsel. They also conduct a bible class at the boarding house."

There still remained, at the date of the last report, a debt of \$10,500 on the Seventh Street property. The managers hoped, through the liberality of the Christian public, not only to pay off this debt, but to establish other homes and dining-rooms in various parts of the city. It is gratifying to observe that all the leading Protestant denominations have joined heartily in the work; and we cannot doubt that if it is carried on hereafter with the same zeal and good judgment, all the excellent objects which the managers have in view will be accomplished. The condition of young women employed in stores, shops, and manufactories in our large cities, is often very painful and trying. Small wages and excessive labor are too frequently their portion; and if we add to these the miseries of comfortless lodgings and insufficient food, and consider, on the other hand, the fearful temptations to which they are exposed, we shall appreciate all the value of a society like the Woman's Christian Association, which furnishes these precisely the assistance and protection they most require. If such a society were found in every city and large town in our country, there would be no lack of work for them to do, and the good which they might accomplish would be beyond measure.

PUSS AS A FRUIT GUARDIAN.

It is so seldom that a good word is said for cats, that the friends of those much-abused animals will perhaps be pleased to learn of a new and useful vocation which has been discovered for them. A correspondent of an agricultural paper speaks of the "invaluable help" they can give in protecting garden fruits and flowers from birds and other small depredators. All that is required, it seems, is "a cat on a small chain sliding on a wire, and giving the animal the walk up and down the whole length of the strawberry-beds. A knot at each end of the wire readily prevents the cat from twisting around the post which supports the wire, and a small kennel placed in the middle of the walk affords her shelter and a home for her kittens." The writer says that he has used, and seen used, for more than thirty years, with perfect success, this easy method of protecting fruit, and that the same plan is equally effectual in keeping hares and rabbits off flower-beds. We are not quite sure that the lovers of cats will be altogether pleased at first thought with this idea of pussy ranging up and down a garden bed all day, at the end of a complicated tether. It will, however, be a satisfaction for them to learn, from the same authority, that cats, after a while, come to like the duty, and after a few months of the chain will, when set free, keep on guard of their own accord. The kittens more especially, we are told, attach themselves to the occupation, and become in this way the gardener's best allies. These facts seem to open a vista of unexpected usefulness for these unjustly depreciated creatures, whose education, like that of other pets of the injudicious, has evidently been neglected.

A MUNIFICENT GIFT.—Commodore Vanderbilt is a clear-headed man, who knows how greatly any object which he desires to promote will be benefited if he becomes his own trustee, instead of leaving his