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 depicted by Tennyson does not exist in the imagination of the ordinary undergrad-uate. If you ask him for a description of a Girtonite or Newhanbante, he will imme-diately think of some other girl; his personal attractions are not of the typical snub; 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 ambition is limited to obtaining in his three years an ordinary degree and as much social life as possible. One evening at an "At Home," or Perpen-dicular, I was introduced to a lady who hailed from Girton. The trivialities of ordinary conversation were not sufficient for her. She was intelligent, however, and in a moment I was appalled, "Are you not a little mathematical?" I replied as best I could, and shortly afterwards turned the tables by introducing the subjects of music and art, of which I was quite well versed. She then told me about her experiences with the gys, and how she had 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 that is the average specimen of English manhood to be met with at our universities, so there are also to be found our finest specimens of English girlhood.

My thoughts on women'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 education, and it is quite possible that 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 my own thoughts and opinions alone, 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 our 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 wasted 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 character of a marriage is not marriage but marriage based upon a union of thought, not surface, satisfying intellectual, social, and practical; when all the joy and happiness of life ceases to be centred in self, but is centred instead in another, apart from which 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?—Vague language, vague ideas, a desire for something unattainable, a money-minded, selfish, loveless, passionless woman. Is it this? I know full well men are called mercenary, and that we are believed to look for gold in the marriage market—money. I know full well that the world is becoming everyday more mercenary and less romantic; that Cupid is fast losing his bow and arrow, and is in love with a lady labelled £ s. d.; I know all this, but I still say the lament of all true, many Englishmen is that the girl of the nineteenth century is shallow and insipid; and far from wishing to see women become less material, I am more than ever convinced that, educated—able to give opinions on various subjects, well read, well travelled, well refined, our mental equals in every respect. Do I think the woman 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 would say man has an inferiority, but there is a considerable difference. As well compare the physical development of a woman with that of a man, as compare her intellect with that of a man. And the same physiological difference prevails in the composition of the mind—no inferiority, but an essential difference.

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, and such a man I am not. But I am sure that I err in my conclusions. It has always struck me that women are not strictly logical: they do not possess that power of reasoning 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 strict logical steps. Women will form opinions, and correct opinions too, at 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 that 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 conclude that which he had to do in life his great qualities were quickness in reasoning, brilliancy rather than depth, versatility, adaptability, and, above all things, love of 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 that we find the whole refinement of antiquity, and a large portion of the refinement of the present.

Personally, I much prefer the Greek temperament to the Roman. I have 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 difficult and abstruse problems. The artist is in reality a far greater scholar; he is born, the other is made. The artistic temperament is one of the greatest of God's gifts, and, as such, is often found in women more 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, and naturally loses his breadth of mentality, and becomes a creature of one idea. A man may be reading law, medicine, theology, mathematics, or any other subject, and lose his breadth of mentality; but he will still take an interest in general matters, and be able to converse upon a score of other subjects; often times the more he reads the more he learns this is the most sensational of all sensational novels by way of relaxation. A woman, 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 be the best in their subject, 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 cabbies. 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 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 books; one cannot, however much 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-hold 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 Göttingen 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 Englishwoman 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 repel a world long since dead; anything which will make our ancient piled 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 "of 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 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 in theirs; such cases 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 helpmate, not a lady who understands differential and integral calculus, who will discourse learnedly and drearily 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.