

THE CO-EDUCATION OF THE SEXES.*

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WITHIN a few years the subject of female education has received a large share of public attention. In nearly every country of Europe progress has been exhibited towards securing higher intellectual advantages for the female sex. The discussion, which still goes on, is not limited by distinctions arising from differences of race or creed. Christian communities are fast acknowledging the justice of woman's claims, and the reflex influence which man has felt from her improved attainments warrants continued efforts in her behalf.

In Canada the question is presenting itself at an important period in our educational history. The course of study in our High Schools and Colleges has been widened and modified to meet the growing wants of the people. The advisability of building and endowing female academies has been considered by many religious denominations. Our future position and prospects, in an intellectual point of view, will largely depend upon the policy which guides our present course of action. The course we now adopt should be one prompted by the suggestions of reason and the teachings of experience.

In this article I purpose considering a phase of the question which has been extensively discussed in the United States, England, and Continental Europe. Where and how shall females be educated, is the important matter that has developed such varied

opinions. Shall girls be taught in the same institutions as boys? I am in favour of the joint education of the sexes in the Public School, the High School, the College, and the University, and for the following reasons:

I. The system of co-education is preferable on economical grounds, since from the same expenditure of money greater efficiency will be secured. I do not attach the highest importance to this evident advantage, because, if not superior in other respects, economy alone should not settle the case. This point, nevertheless, cannot be overlooked, since the question has its practical side. With separate institutions for the sexes the cost of education will be nearly doubled if like efficiency is to be maintained. The mistaken notion that woman does not require a superior education, would seriously militate against her prospects of high attainments if the sexes are placed in separate institutions. The public would continue to neglect her wants, and the state colleges that might be provided for her training could scarcely be expected to become highly efficient. Unless provision were made by public funds, the demands of all would not receive attention. Private institutions, if established, would only answer the requirements of the wealthy, and the poor man would have no opportunity of giving his daughter the advantages of superior education. If co-education is injurious for the daughter of the

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