

## ❁ Special Papers. ❁

### THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN ONTARIO.

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OCCASIONALLY one can hear that some women possess university degrees obtained in Ontario. On enquiry it will be found that these degrees are of very recent date. As an example we may name Miss E. Fitzgerald, classical master in Lindsay Collegiate Institute. Miss Fitzgerald is, according to law, a Master of Arts and a schoolmaster. Now this young lady obtained her degree, with a gold medal in classics, as late as 1884, and was handicapped during half of her undergraduate course by the fact that the Collegiate authorities refused her admittance to lectures. There was no precedent for such a thing. It was an innovation of which the authorities could not approve. They could go just far enough to permit her to attend the examinations, but they could not think of permitting her to endanger the discipline of the State University by listening to lectures on classical languages. Now this did not occur in the middle ages, nor yet in the last century, but within the last ten years; and it occurred in the city of Toronto. The case of this young lady is only one example of the operation of the prejudices which still exist amongst civilized people.

Going back a little further, it will be observed that women began to matriculate in quite large numbers in the year 1879, and that about half a dozen had succeeded during the preceding two years. It is only about twelve years since women managed to complete the High School course in order to enter the universities. In pursuing the inquiry as to the reason for this, it is found that the Ontario High Schools were only founded in 1871, when the old Grammar Schools were abolished and the law was enacted that "in High Schools provision shall be made for teaching *both male and female pupils*." The Grammar Schools had originated in the year 1807, nine years before a single public school of any kind (there were some scattered private schools) existed in the country to act as a feeder to a higher class of schools, when the legislature should be induced to authorize their establishment for the education of boys. Notwithstanding the large grants given by the government, these Grammar Schools were very unpopular, and in most cases inefficient. To be consistent the legislature of that day ought to have founded a university before the Grammar Schools. In order to maintain the existence of these schools it was necessary to have at least *ten boys* learning Latin, and great exertions were often made to obtain enough boys to qualify. These Grammar Schools, to obtain funds, in many cases united with adjacent public schools, and then the girls attending these Union Public Schools began to creep into the sacred precincts of the Grammar Schools, even before the law of 1871 was passed.

Thus even in the city of London, the Grammar School was obliged through poverty to unite with the Public School, and became known as the "Union School"

in that city, at which both boys and girls were educated. During the latter days of the Grammar Schools the pupils were the prey of conflicting regulations. The girls who first began to attend were taught, but their names were not entered on the school registers, as they were not "boys learning Latin." This regulation, however, has since been abolished.

It is rather curious to observe that when Latin became entirely optional, the number of pupils studying it increased, and the girls too began to study for matriculation. The higher education of women in Ontario has therefore been the growth of the last twenty years.

Previously there were not even good Central Public Schools for either sex.

In a few places such a school as the London Union School was doing a good work. This school was under the management of the late Inspector, J. B. Boyle, who was the Principal at that time.

It must not be forgotten that the Toronto Normal School filled the place of the Women's College for Ontario for many years, prior to the establishment of High Schools, yet the attendance of each student at that institution extended only over half a year, and therefore its standard was not very high in those days.

During the last twenty years Ladies' Colleges pursuing studies similar to the High Schools, have sprung up in large numbers, and have become feeders to the Universities.

It may be asked, "To what is all this higher education leading?"

That is not an easy question to answer, even in the case of men. But in the case of women, it has enabled them to discharge their duties as teachers more efficiently. It has also given them greater opportunities for becoming good writers. Teaching and writing are occupations that seem to be within "woman's sphere." It has also enabled some of them to enter the medical profession, which cannot be quite unsuitable to them, as the greater part of the duty of nursing the sick always falls upon women.

Men, as a rule, do not seem to object to their presence in these professions. The real reason why men do try to keep them out of certain trades is because the women who enter them, having generally no families to support, can undercut the men who have. It would be well for women who secure higher education to demand the same salaries as men for performing the same work, or a reaction may take place.

The progress of the higher education of women, which has been so remarkable of late, will, it is to be hoped, prove a blessing to them, not only in the professional careers of the few, but also in domestic life to which the majority of women will always retire.

The education which fits a woman to be a wife and a mother cannot be of too high a character.

"It is the mother more than the father who determines the intellectual and moral, if not material interests of the household. A well educated woman seldom fails to leave upon her offspring the impress of her own intelligence and energy, while, on the other hand, an uneducated or badly edu-

cated mother paralyzes by her example and spirit all the efforts and influences exerted from all other sources for the proper training and culture of her children."

Whilst it is gratifying to record that so much has been accomplished in the past, there still remains much to be carefully considered by all interested in the education of women. The branches of knowledge are many, but all are not equally suitable for all persons. This fact is generally recognized in the case of men. A parent does not usually send to college the boy intended for commercial life; for the future artist he does not demand much science; for the engineer he does not require music or a classical education. The education of girls is not usually conducted in this definite fashion. In fact, women do not seem to have clearly ascertained what pursuits are open to them, should they have to depend on their own exertions for a livelihood. The present school programme cannot be accepted as a finality, neither can the present schools be regarded as the only kinds which must be founded in the near future. In this respect the study of institutions in New England and Europe will be suggestive.

The kind of education to which women have been admitted is simply that which has hitherto been in vogue for men, and concerning the utility of which teachers do not seem to be unanimous in their opinions. For instance, in the public schools of Boston instruction in cookery is in successful operation; as it is rightly deemed that the majority of women will have the superintendence of the cuisine of the homes over which they will preside. As a knowledge of chemistry must underlie the practice of cookery, why should this subject not form an essential part of the higher education of women?

Again, instruction in the principles of hygiene has not yet been recognized as an important factor in the development of women's education, yet on them will devolve a large measure of responsibility on the health and happiness of the coming race. In these, as in many other respects, the enquiry may be made—Does the higher education of women, as at present constituted, tend to the better fulfilment of their future duties in the sphere they are most likely to occupy?

#### THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DUTY.

THE first duty of the Superintendent is to make the school strong in the community; therefore he should look out for the newspapers, because they have their opinions about things, and if they set the current against his good things it is not easy to counteract it. The next great point is, are his schools popular with the people? He ought to so present the work of the schools to the people that it will carry them in favor of it, that they may feel large interest in it and be proud of it. He should see his school board once a week, if he can, and see the members that have opinions of their own and are worth convincing. He should in this way carry the working majority always. And this is his work with the school board. Now let us take the school