

EDUCATION AND CO-EDUCATION.

THE levelling and equalizing tendency of American politics and social forms begets in us a rage for assimilating the condition of men and women. One meets in Europe constant reminders that the woman of America is there thought to hold the most enviable position, not merely because of the honour in which she is held, but because of the freedom allowed her to follow her bent, and indeed her whim. Yet it is in America that the air is most charged with the portentous sound of Woman's Rights and Woman's Wrongs; as if liberty were an appetite that comes with eating—as if such a function as depositing one's ballot for President contained a mystic virtue, deprived of which the feminine half of humanity languishes in a servile state. Here, too, we have the phenomenon of the sexes educated together long after they had reached the age when for prudential or for sentimental reasons they are separated in other communities. At a college like Cornell, the women are in a minority; but they are numerous enough to afford one some idea of the feasibility of co-education. At Aurora, not far off, is Wells College—an establishment for women alone; and at Poughkeepsie there is Vassar College, still better known. At Harvard we have the experiment of a woman's department, related to the university so far as examinations are concerned, but not co-educational in the sense of the system at Cornell. There are other mixed and purely feminine establishments, too many to mention; they spring from the desire of parents to give their daughters every advantage possible in the way of education, but exist more especially because of the ambitious nature of American

girls encouraged by all the incentives to self-reliance which surround American youth. Certain questions are natural, and lie on the surface. Do women evince an inclination to make more general use of these appliances for higher education? Are they good in results, moral, mental and physical? Do they prepare women for life? And if desirable for one reason or another, is the separate or mixed college the better?

Among men the higher education can be pursued only by sacrifices of time on the part of the student, of money on the part of relatives; and when the time for action comes, the rewards are, comparatively speaking, small and precarious. A brilliant man who has his own way to make is seldom advised to marry unless his choice has wealth at her command, and is often earnestly dissuaded whatever his choice is, owing to the interference of domestic concerns with a proper absorption in his life-work. Among women the higher education must be pursued with the same sacrifices on the part of relatives, and infinitely less chance of obtaining rewards in after life in any way commensurate with the efforts of preparation. Marriage is also to women a far greater interference with labour. Housekeeping and the crises and daily routine of maternity absorb the sum of energy in most women, and leave but a small margin to those who are exceptional in strength. This is why artists, for example, though naturally more attracted to pupils of the opposite sex, learn to place their hopes rather on their male pupils: they have been disappointed again and again by the disappearance of most promising workwomen in the rival career of matrimony. And yet it is