

THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN,

IN CONNECTION WITH

McGILL UNIVERSITY.

(From the GAZETTE.)

So much that is inaccurate and, therefore, mischievous in its tendency, in relation to this important subject, has recently appeared in one of your contemporaries, that it becomes necessary in the public interest to state as distinctly as possible the facts of the case. The criticisms in question proceed on certain assumptions, which we shall find as we proceed, to be unfounded. One of these is that the university is divided against itself on this question. I trust, however, that it will be found that though we may freely discuss matters of detail, we shall, as in the past, be found perfectly united against a common enemy, or in support of any great educational enterprise. Another assumption is that the method of co-education of the sexes is superior to that of separate classes pursued in all the large colleges for women on both sides of the Atlantic, or to that intermediate method of separate classes in the junior years with mixed classes in the senior years which has the sanction of some of the greatest educational bodies in England. A third is that all of the young women who desire a higher education are disposed to accept the method of mixed education as the best—a supposition directly at variance with the statistics, and with the testimony which we have as to the feeling of the community. A further and most ridiculous assumption is that co-education can be carried on almost without expense, where-

as, in our case at least, it would involve no little expense, and that of a kind condemned by our critics, namely, on rooms and buildings, while they, in consistency with this assumption, give us no hope of pecuniary aid.

We might admit that objections based even on such assumptions as these deserved consideration, if the means to be employed in prosecuting the work were those of the university itself, or of benefactors who had established foundations for the purposes of general education; but in the case of McGill university, the money employed is the income of an endowment voluntarily offered by a friend of the higher education of women for the express purpose of educating women, and women alone. The terms of his letter addressed to the board of governors, were that the income of the fund was for "a college for women with classes for their education in collegiate studies," and on these terms it was accepted by the board of governors, with the proviso that the work was to be carried just so far as the means of the endowment would permit. Yet we are regarded as malefactors because we are willing to accept and use such an endowment, and even the benevolent and public-spirited donor of a large sum in promotion of one of the most important educational interests of the community is treated as if he deserved censure for not spending his money as our critic would desire.