

ON CO-EDUCATION.

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OF late few subjects have been more eagerly, and one is inclined to say more fruitlessly, discussed than this one of co-education. I say fruitlessly, because in the conflict of opinion on one side and the other, it is difficult to arrive at safe conclusions, or to feel assured that the education of the sexes in mixed classes is altogether proper and desirable. In the general discussion of the subject on both sides there are indiscreet advocates and a mass of testimony more or less influenced by partizanship. On the one hand it is asserted that woman's capacity to undergo mental labour, to follow severe study, or do severe work that shall stand by the side of man's work, is limited by the physiological differences in the sex and by the special functions of women. This, it is claimed, were there no other reasons on the score of delicacy and propriety, makes it perilous for women to enter the race with men for university honours, and, disdaining any privileges of sex, to engage in educational contests, in studies which shall specially fit them for male occupations and pursuits. On the other hand, it is as confidently affirmed, that there is no sex in mind, or, at least, that sex must be excluded in considering the wants of those desiring to take advantage of higher education; that women are as capable as men of receiving and sustaining the strain of severe intellectual training; that in every sphere of life in which women have been allowed free scope and encouragement, they have been admirably successful; and, specially, that experience has proved

that in institutions where co-education obtains their regularity of attendance, assiduity, application, and the results of their work have been equal to those of the other sex; while there has been nothing in the demeanour or mode of life of women who attend lectures with men to give rise to the slightest apprehension or give occasion for unfavourable reflection. Without presuming to say which of these conflicting opinions is more nearly correct, one may at least assert the right of women to make the best they can of the educational machinery at their disposal, and commend the purpose of any of the sex to nourish and exercise their facilities to the utmost. If the state provides no separate college for women, and all are not agreed that there is necessity for this, it is hard to deny them the right to take advantage of the academic training in concert with men. The intrusion of women into class-rooms hitherto monopolized by the other sex may at first offend prejudice and possibly by the novelty of the act disturb order where it exists; but prejudices are not always reasonable, and the social disabilities of women are, for good or for evil, quickly being numbered with the things of the past. It may not be safe yet to say what is the training most appropriate to women, or what are the fields of activity and usefulness which they can with dignity and respect best enter. The industrial development of the present day, it is well-known, has deprived women of many of the occupations they could once profitably pursue within the limits of their