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CO-EDUCATION.

The movement in favour of co-education in University College has taken definite shape in the form of Provincial legislation. When the question had once come before the Local Legislature for a final determination, the result of the debate was a foregone conclusion. One side of this vexed subject was heard fully, even to surfeit; on the other, though a few insinuations were thrown out by one or two members with doubt and hesitation, nothing definite was urged. Those members known to be opposed to the desired innovation, kept silent, doubtless foreseeing the result of the debate, and also possible freedom from responsibility in the experiment.

We are opposed, in the abstract, to any system of co-education in college training. We long ago stated our position in this regard; and, though we have since seen many colleges of good standing adopt such a system, and have heard the lengthened and by no means always calm discussions of educationists in all parts of the Collegiate world, and have seen and heard of some conversions to the co-educationists' position, we have seen no reason to change our mind. The question has been so long and so often discussed by those who have made a special study of it, that there is now no hearing for any new presentation of the old arguments. But of late, when among us special motives have offered for the broadest avowal and upholding of co-education views, arguments have been advanced which, though bad, have been tacitly adopted as oracularly infallible. To one or two of these only shall we refer; they have, we believe, a most fundamental bearing upon the whole question.

Co-educationists have, to a large extent, abandoned abstraction, and taken to statistics. In this we believe they are unfortunate. Statistics, to be reliable, must have a rational principle underlying their accumulation. To rely upon them, merely as such, without examining into their formation and their character, is unfair and misleading. And no statistics that we can conceive of could be more misleading than those that have been collected to show the beneficent results of the introduction of co-education in Colleges. These have mainly been taken from, or founded upon, the reports of the presidents and faculties of American and Canadian Colleges. Now, in all the bearings the consideration of this question, and the practical adoption of such a system, can have upon either the intellectual or moral character of the students, we believe nobody is in a more unfavorable or more unsatisfactory position to judge than those very officials whose opinions are so approvingly received. Apart from the suspicion which must necessarily attach to the decided protestations of those who have become committed to, and responsible for, the co-education experiment, there always remains the doubt as to whether such prejudiced inferences may not also be founded upon ignorance. In many cases that have come under our notice, we are assured that they are so. We have heard the varied, unprejudiced, consistent and verified reports of some of the best students of those colleges which boast to have shown, by the introduction of co-education, their adaptability to the growing liberality and growing requirements of the age; and the conclusions to be drawn from them, and the state of facts they indicate, are not such as some of our warm upholders of woman's rights in this direction would picture for our admiration. Intellectual demoralization has often been the result; and the proximity and competition of the 'softer sex' is rarely a spur to intellectual activity. In the moral sphere, the considerations in-

involved are of so delicate a nature as to almost preclude their public discussion. The fact that they are of such a nature, is (as was pointed out in our Legislature the other day), a reason against relying too much upon denials in public of the doubtful moral results. The fallacy which seems to underlie the beautiful fabrications of some enthusiasts in this direction, is the assumption that the advance from the lower stages of educational training to the higher sphere of a varied College life, is always accompanied by a corresponding rise in morality. That such is by no means necessarily the case is a proposition which, to the mind of any University man, needs no support.

We are told of the improving effect the introduction of co-education would have upon College life and College feeling. We believe that effect would be pernicious. Genuine college feeling, rightly understood, has always been one of the grandest elements in University life. It is a feeling that can grow up in freedom and perfection only among men alone, and could not be participated in or understood by women. Those who ridicule this feeling, call it by what name they will, as a thing too airy and too valueless to deserve serious attention, ignore, or are wilfully blind to that element in the character and mental direction of all true University men, which marks them out as a class distinct by themselves, with sympathies and sentiments into which the generality of people cannot enter. We repeat that this can be preserved and fostered only among men, and add that the introduction of women to a full participation with men in College life will, in our opinion, cause, not the refinement of College feeling so much referred to, but the extinction of a genuine College feeling altogether.

A similar *esprit de corps* might be built up among women. Though similar in some respects, it would show points of radical difference, and would have to grow up among women alone. This is one benefit to women of annex colleges, the best solution of the difficulties involved in the satisfaction of the claim for an equal higher education. But it is a mistaken iconoclasm to infringe upon the distinctive character of the University, which has belonged to it from time immemorial, and has lain at the foundation of its world-wide power.

With us, there exist additional practical difficulties. When our Senate and Council are unable, through financial straightness, to supply improvements now absolutely necessary, it is scarcely to be expected that immediate attention can be given to a new feature in the college working which would involve a large additional expenditure. We presume the views of the Local Legislature will be adopted by the College Council and the University Senate, and will be acted upon as soon as possible. Before their being acted upon, there is a possibility that means may arise through which the primary object of the Legislature may be carried out, without the abandonment by the College authorities of the position they have hitherto held on the question of co-education, since it was first mooted as a possible practical solution of a difficult problem.

THE ELECTIONS.

Once more the spirit of party and elections is abroad. Caucuses, lobbying, canvassing and election talk relieve the monotony of the student's toil and dispel for the present the unpleasant thoughts of approaching examinations. There are several pleasing features in the coming contest. In the first