

THE MORAL EFFECT ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG GIRLS TAKING PART IN PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENTS.—(From a Mother's Standpoint.)

IS IT INJURIOUS OR OTHERWISE?

Paper prepared by MRS. EDWARDS and read by LADY RITCHIE at the Public Meeting on February 2nd, 1895.

Before we can decide this question we must have clearly defined in our own minds our aims and ideals for our girls. What is it we are educating and developing them for? We all acknowledge how important this question is in regard to our boys—our responsibility to decide early and direct their education with a certain aim in view. One of the first questions asked about our son is "What are you going to make of him?" This question is not asked of our daughter and perhaps for a good reason. It is taken for granted that we intend her to be a wife and mother. If we are careful to give our son an education that will best qualify him for his vocation in life, ought we not to be as careful about our daughters, and cultivate in them that which is most necessary for their probable career.

It is just a little over a hundred years ago since Sir Walter Scott sang of the ideal woman of his day.

"Oh woman in our hour of ease
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering Aspen made,
When pain and anguish wring the brow
A ministering angel thou."

This had been the ideal woman for centuries.

Tradition, romance and education taught the young girl three things at least she must *not* be.

She must not be learned,
She must not be strong minded, and
She must not be useful.

Innocently ignorant of everything but her own charms. She *must* be attractive. Her whole education was conducted to make her so. The sun must not spoil her complexion, work must not soil her hands, she must be accomplished that she might be entertaining, she must be helpless and clinging, like the ivy round the oak. Being beautiful, accomplished and feminine, she might be as unreasonable, as helpless, as capricious as a child.

The other picture of the ideal young woman of the past was angelic. She was one to be adored, one whose approval was worth