

THE TRAINING OF GIRLS.

In the core of the human heart, whether that heart throbs in a masculine or a feminine bosom, is the love of home; and in the centre of home, its soul and light is woman. These are fundamental truths, bottom facts, which underlie the framework of society, and on which it rests.

There has been a great deal said and written about enlarging the sphere of woman, opening new avenues to her of ambition, industry, success, which is all very well; but the wise ones who talk of these matters do not propose to effect what cannot, in the nature of things, be done—change the sphere of woman. God has marked the boundaries in a manner unmistakable. She is the mother, the wife, the home-keeper, and however widely her influence may radiate, how ever large the circumference she may illuminate, its central point is the hearthstone, the cradle, the home.

If we take the social relations in their natural order, we find that the duties of wife come first, and afterwards, growing out of these, the love and duties of the mother. The wife, by Divine appointment, is the guardian of her husband's honor, the boy of his preside, his "help-meet" in all the varied labors of life. This surely does not mean that she is to sit idly by and simply enjoy the rewards of his toil, that she is only to adorn as a figure-head the establishment at the head of which he places her, and wear honors graciously she has done nothing to earn. Yet how many young ladies look for just this in marriage, and nothing more; how many mothers count no other work for their daughters than only this; how many men look on women with this idea of their usefulness. But how can a girl be trained with special reference to becoming a wife and mother and yet be made capable of supporting herself independently of immediate masculine aid, if so circumstances demand of her. The problem is being worked out in ten thousand quiet American homes where the troublesome question of kitchen help has not yet disturbed the domestic peace, where the boys and girls, as they increase in strength and knowledge, are taught to do their part, at first small, but ever growing larger, in the labors of the household. It was this home training that made New England women of the last generation so wonderfully efficient, and able to turn their hand to almost anything required of them. Mothers are apt to feel that if their children are not porting over school books their education is being neglected; but a child who is taught how to perform stated tasks of every-day requirement, with fidelity, with diligence, with patience, with cheerfulness, is being as really educated in what is necessary to success in life as one kept constantly drudging over arithmetic and geography.

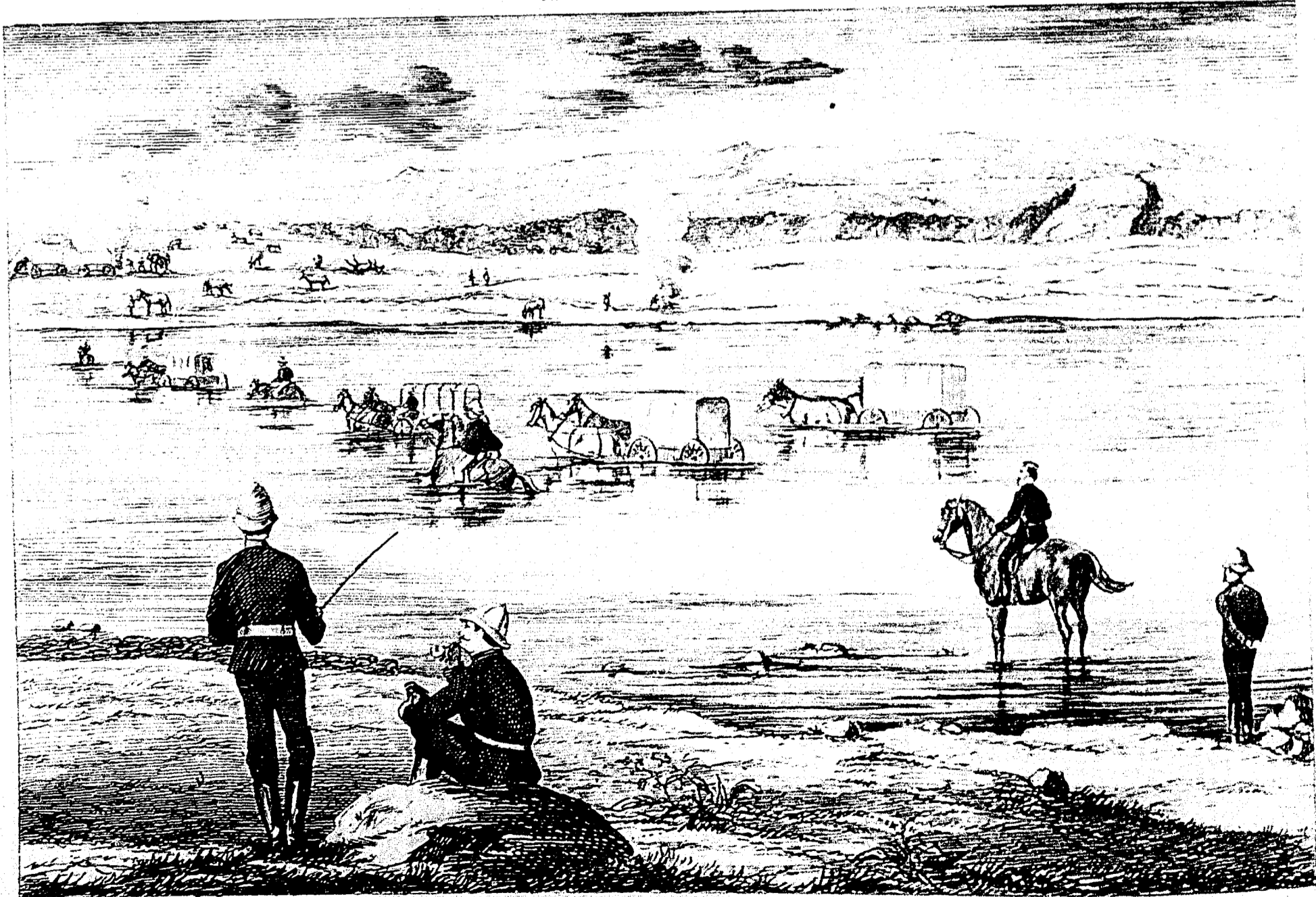


HALIFAX:—YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION BUILDING

—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY NOTMAN

The great masses of young and middle aged women now clamoring for something to do by which they can earn bread were not taught in their girlhood to do anything useful—to make bread, wash dishes, sweep floors, or do their own sewing—and their judgment has never been developed in the practical affairs of life; they have learned few lessons of self-control, they have no power of routine work, no adaptability to the requirements of their circumstances, and no wonder they clamor for another and a wider sphere. The sphere they really want is exactly that for the duties of which they have not been trained. The fault of all this lies largely with mothers, who, remembering the struggles and narrowness and poverty of their early married lives, wish to shield their daughters from what themselves have suffered, as if pain and poverty and suffering and struggle were not God's chosen means of developing whatever is noblest and sweetest and grandest in the human soul. The Divine One, in his earthly career, had but one crown, and that was a crown of thorns.

To many an intelligent and far-seeing mother the truth has been unfolded that by diligent training of her daughters in graceful household ways while yet they are in girlhood, such powers of mind, such mastery of self, such maturity and balance of judgment and faculty may be developed in them as will prepare them, in a manner, for whatever may be before them, to attain a high position with honor or to fill a humble one with nobility. It is not too much to say that if the time of girls, between the ages of 12 and 20, that is frittered away in the acquisition of empty accomplishments, which serve only to gladden fleeting brightness the few months or years that elapse between leaving school and getting a husband, were conscientiously devoted to mastering some one thing, of art or valuable accomplishment, they would be few women in the next decade that would complain of having no way of making a living. The wife who knows all her husband's business, and who is his partner in everything, often becomes capable, by reason of her very companionship with him, should death remove him from her side, of taking up the broken thread, and carrying on to completion the plan he laid, and realizing for her children the hopes he cherished. Especially is this true when, in early life, under the training of a judicious and out-to-homestead mother, she has learned to exercise the virtues of self-denial, abstinence, and cheerful submission to the daily requirements of duty. Enlargement of the sphere of woman must come from within and not from without. By so much as she becomes wiser, nobler, more helpful in the relations of wife, mother, daughter, sister, by so much will her power for success be increased and her resources be multiplied.



SIX MONTHS IN THE WILDS OF THE NORTH-WEST:

THE NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE CROSSING BELLY RIVER, 14th SEPT 1874