

Education For Young Women: Why?

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It has been accorded to me to present, at this time, a plea for the higher education of young women. I sincerely hope I may be able to awaken the minds of those present to deeper thought upon this subject, and to convince parents and guardians of the wisdom, justice and necessity of giving to the young women under their care the best educational advantages possible.

Perhaps no subject has received in these later years, more thoughtful consideration, passionate and dispassionate discussion, friendly and adverse criticism, both in this country and the United States, than this subject of female education. And, yet, even in the broad light of the 19th century, of so called Christian liberty and civilization, it is regarded by many, who have themselves enjoyed the blessing of education without having fully mastered its meaning and message, with bitter prejudice. Others profess not to see the advisability and justice of providing for young women the same, or equal, opportunities for mental development and culture as are offered to young men.

A glance at past history shows us that the dwellers in this beautiful, fruitful valley of Cornwallis, with its broad, cultivated acres and tasteful, commodious homes, have not been unmindful of their rights and privileges, in this work of educating, or forgetful of their duty to their daughters.

Therefore, confident of their continued interest, we turn to a closer consideration of the subject of female education.

First, let us ask, "Is it wise to educate our girls beyond the course of instruction provided by the common schools, and why?"

Each succeeding age in the world's history presents to its children new demands, necessities and opportunities. The age in which we live demands universal education and educated labor, in all departments of brain or hand work, from kitchen and farm to workshop and laboratory. Somewhere between these boundaries the daughters of our land, as well as the sons, will find their life-work. For this work, whatever it may be, they should be well prepared.

Skilled labor is the necessity of the age. So great is the demand for it that the uneducated, untrained laborer stands at great disadvantage and finds it difficult, or impossible, to compete with the laborer possessing a well formed brain.

Therefore, because the age demands of its children knowledge, and a high order of work, it is only wise and just to prepare the young woman to meet these demands and respond to them without suffering the mortification and the sense of loss that lack of knowledge must surely bring. There is no lack more grievous and fettering than the lack of trained education. No loss so hard to bear, in time, as the loss of the product of a well cultivated mind.

Every mind is worth, to God and humanity, its highest possibilities.

Education discovers and discloses these possibilities, develops, and sets in motion brain forces hitherto unsuspected and calls into practical use the powers of mind and body.

Education reveals God's laws and operations in nature and discloses His wonderful care over, and provision for, all His creatures.

Education makes plain the responsibility of the individual and opens up the secret of life's purpose—growth toward God, work for man.

This, I hold, is the work, meaning and message of education.—Who dare say that it is not the rightful dower of the young woman, that she may bring to the world's service the awakened faculties and discovered possibilities of mind, soul and body.

Once it was supposed that education was only necessary for those who chose a profession for their life work. Now, it is better understood, that education is the necessity of all, its mission to develop the individual to his fullest worth, and it should be the heritage of all God's conscious creatures. To deprive woman of this natural right, mental culture, is quite as cruel as to deprive her of food for the nourishment of the body, though it would not be so regarded, but the dwarfing of the mind is much more sorrowful than the dwarfing of the body and its effect is eternal, for the mind must live forever, but the body for only a brief measure of time.

Work is evidently God's purpose for his creatures—service somewhere and growth the aim of service. Everything He has given to man has been given for use and development, and he expects a reasonable interest on the gifts bestowed. This truth is clearly taught in the parable of the pounds, and the condemnation of the one who failed to cultivate his gift and return reasonable interest.

Our Heavenly Father has put exquisite work into this world that he has formed for our present occupation and development. He has thought it worth while to place all about us in this great work-shop, marvellous speci-

mens of His own handiwork, as tho' He would say, "These are your models, study them. Open up my treasure-stores of knowledge. Learn of me and do your best. I have provided you with all the implements for skilled workmanship in the minds bestowed, develop them and work upward, this is the real business of life."

And as we set ourselves to a closer inspection of His work all about us, we must feel that the world is worth our very best. But how can good work be accomplished with uneducated minds and unskilled fingers? Surely it cannot. Hence it is necessary that all the faculties of mind and body be fully developed to enable the individual to successfully perform the work which life will bring to brain and hand. We must not forget that the world's machinery in society, church, state, home, workshop and labor field, is really run by brain power, and brain and hand must ever be co-laborers in all departments of work from kitchen to parliament hall. Only as the brain is developed and the mind trained practically, does the hand become deft and cunning in performing its share of labor.

But perhaps some brother may be ready to exclaim, "What has this to do with the education of young women? We look after the running of the world's machinery!"

But no: look out on the world as it is today. In every sphere of usefulness and department of work the young woman is taking her place beside her brother as co-laborer. She is a bread-winner, a home-builder, an educator, a missionary, and what not?

She builds and holds together that curious institution called society, and moulds it as she will. Seeing, then, that such weighty duties and grave responsibilities reach out to her and rest upon her, is it not wise, just, and necessary that she be given the best possible preparation for those duties, that she may do well the work life brings her, and return to her Creator the required interest on her endowments?

But, while there is work of varied kind on every hand for the young woman to take up, and for which she should be prepared by some educating course of study, her true and natural sphere will ever be the home; her peculiar business home building. For this work more than for any other she needs the highest and best that education can give.

The home has ever been woman's province. We might well say "woman's world," for there it is that the majority of women live, move and have being, three hundred and sixty-five days of every year. Well it is, then, for those who have drunk at the fountain of knowledge, who have stored up beautiful truths and refreshing things that will help through the wearying round of many a toilsome day.

Nowhere are the refinements of education more necessary or beneficial than in the home life, and no home can really afford to lose them. To make the home what it should be—attractive, pure, wholesome bright—a place of rest, recreation, happiness and safety; to generate the right atmosphere, and wisely guide and mould, those whom God gives to the mother's care, is no light or easy matter. It is a mighty work, an unparalleled responsibility, and she who gives hand, heart and brain to the work needs to be well equipped for it. It is the mother who really moulds the race. Her influence is potent for good or ill for time or eternity, for home is the place where characters begin to form. Then, is it not a necessity, that those who will, in all probability, become home makers and rulers, be given, as a proper preparation for that work, the broadest possible education and the highest mental culture, that they may create in that sacred place an atmosphere of pure, high thought, right principle, noble purpose and true Christian refinement. It is often claimed by those who have not carefully studied the matter, that education unfits woman for the right performance of home duties, but there could scarcely be a more unjust claim than this.

Where could education possibly do a better work than in the home where, young minds are growing and characters forming for life? Where could it have a more uplifting, purifying, strengthening, developing influence than in that place where knowledge in all its forms is ever in demand, to satisfy the needs of these growing minds and forming characters? The sacred book gives this beautiful picture of true home-building, showing wisdom, understanding and knowledge as the necessary foundation and finishing materials. "Through wisdom is an house builded, by understanding is it established, and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all pleasant things."

Poverty stricken indeed is that home where education has not become a refining element. Where the highest mental enjoyment is found only in idle chit-chat, and speculation about the affairs of neighbors, or, worse still, in gossip, and uncharitable, unchristian comment. It is but too true that there are such homes. The mind is a busy worker; it must be doing something and if not supplied with the best material will use that which cannot build or develop in the right direction. But let us hope they are not numerous and that the type will disappear as our young women become more

thoroughly in love with knowledge and bring into the home life, more and more the healthy, sweetening and ennobling influences of Christian education.

There are already numberless homes, in this beautiful Canada of ours, where education has left her unmistakable mark. Enter these and it will soon appear that the senseless argument, advanced from time to time by meager souls; that the higher education unfits woman for the domestic side of life and robs her of her womanliness, is without foundation and unworthy of consideration.

We know there are those who would close and double bar the doors to knowledge against woman. Selfish curs, who gnaw their little bone of knowledge and snarl at the women who ask for a larger one. But does not common justice demand that the doors to all high, holy and beautiful places, all pure and exalting things, be flung wide open to all God's conscious creatures. We fully believe the time draws near, when all such groundless claims shall disappear under the influence of the refined, educated Christian wives, mothers and sisters of our Canadian homes. Godspeed the day, while we labor to that end. Of this we may be confident, the educated Christian woman will never desert her home, but will hold it as her most sacred trust. The place which she particularly makes and shapes—which presents the strongest claim to all she is or ever will be.

Can any one really believe that young women will become less efficient home-builders because they are more highly educated than their mothers or grand-mothers, and can do more things well?

Surely not; but as they become better fitted for this most important, most sacred work, they will build better and their homes will become centres of influence that cannot fail to have a refining, elevating effect upon their environment.

But I have reached the limits of this paper. I can but hope I have succeeded in showing the wisdom, justice, and necessity of educating young women for all life's work, but more especially for true home building.

With one injunction to fathers and mothers called from the words of the wise man, I leave these fragments of thought with you. To your daughters "Give instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold."

Bobbili Notes.

A PUZZLING PROBLEM.

When we think of the years of consecrated labor, and the thousands of consecrated dollars invested by the Maritime Baptists in their efforts to evangelize the Telugus, our hearts are sad because the returns are so small. I have heard this spoken about many times, and often it has seemed that in the minds of many at home, the missionaries in the field were the most indifferent to the fact that so few, comparatively, have forsaken their idols and become Christians. But, brothers and sisters, let me assure you that the missionaries are not at ease in regard to this burning question. You at home are not the only ones who long, with aching hearts, for larger results. I venture to say that the burden of the most interested of the workers at home is but slight, compared with that of even the least interested of the workers on the field.

It goes without saying, that the question of greatest moment in the heart of every consecrated missionary, ever has been, and we trust, ever shall be, in regard to ways and means of reaching the vast multitudes of Christless souls who swarm about them on every hand; and of imparting to them a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Inextricably connected with this and of almost equal importance, is that other great problem of vital and now universal interest, namely, how are the native people to be supported after they become Christians? Heretofore the missionary, either directly or indirectly, has very largely shouldered the responsibility. But the time has come when all the missionaries feel that the native Christians must come to the front in this matter, and feel the burden of helping themselves as they never before have done.

If our heart's desire is ever to be realized in seeing the native church entirely self-supporting, there must be no limit to prayer, patience, daily effort, grit and grace. Fellow-workers at home, you have only the very faintest conception of what it really costs these people to become Christians. Every man and woman who turns from the infamous idolatry of the land to seek and serve the true and living God, finds thrown across his pathway, obstacles without number; and but for the missionaries' help many of these obstacles would be insurmountable, blocking the inquirer's way to Christ, and causing him to turn back to heathenism and hell. In view of what I have learned of the hardships thus imposed by the heartless Hindu, I have many times of late wondered, not that so few have become Christians, but rather that so many have been able to stem the strong and cruel current of heathen opposition.

Were a whole village or town to turn to the Lord at