

# UNIVERSITY GAZETTE



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### Editorials.

The question of the admission of women to the educational advantages of McGill University is, we believe, under discussion at this moment. A committee has been appointed by the Corporation to collect information regarding the internal economy of the institutions which have already sanctioned altogether or in part what seems to be an extremely revolutionary movement. We do not intend to discuss the matter on its theoretical merits or demerits. That there are women desirous of embracing such opportunities of gaining advanced knowledge as Universities alone can offer is a fact; that they can more than hold their own in competition in certain branches of knowledge has been demonstrated time and again; and that the promoters of what is called the intellectual enfranchisement of women are rapidly increasing in number and in influence forces itself on the mind of any one who will take pains to inquire into the question historically. We do not propose to discuss in general terms why women should or should not be admitted to the privileges of a University training; that species of argument has been abandoned by all save those who are anxious to prove that woman's sphere is distinctly non-intellectual. These people conjure up all kinds of imaginary evils, anarchy among them, if women become, as undergraduates, rivals of men. Fancies of

every shade and colour are, however, wonderfully modified or completely dispelled by contact with experience. We allude not only to the surmises of teaching bodies, but also to the whimsical notions of many of the students whom they teach, and we speak, moreover, from intimate acquaintance with the system of co-education in its freest form. But at present we desire to point out the various methods in which the desire for a University education for women has been met and to notice the salient points of the history of the movement on its practical side.

One method is to establish colleges for young women similar in routine and in instruction to such colleges for young men as are widely recognised on account of their excellence; and to confer at the conclusion of the course of study degrees of the same title as those earned by men. The most conspicuous example of this kind of college is Vassar. Another method is to form in existing Universities an "annex" or department specially for women and to educate them separately by the professors already on the staff or to elect professors for the special purpose of teaching women only; but in either case the courses for the men and the women are the same, and also the examination papers, wherever the department is a common one; the degree is granted by the University without distinction of sex. A third method is to deliver lectures to what we called "mixed" classes; in short, to establish co-education. The main objection to the first method is that separate colleges are apt to cheapen their degrees and to become little better than High Schools unless they frequently come into contact with the work carried on in vigorous institutions founded for the education of men and jealously watched by those who are abreast of most recent discovery.

The agitation in favour of the higher education of women in England began about thirty years ago. It was opposed on various issues: "First that the average female mind is not capable of grasping the more difficult subjects of the University course; secondly, that the average female constitution is not equal to the strain to which the severity of such a course subjects; thirdly, that learning converts women into pedants—vulgarily called "blue-stockings"—so that its general prevalence among the sex would destroy the charm of social life; and further, that a woman is not a man and therefore, *ex vi termini*, she should not have a man's education. The answer to these objections was a practical one; the creation of Queen's College, London, where the course of study was made identical with that of King's College, London. The founders of Queen's College, London, hoped to induce the University of London to grant degrees to their students as it had already done to those of King's College for many years, but the University could not see its way clear to this until 1878. In the meantime, University College, London—the largest of the many colleges which prepare candidates for the examinations of the University of London—had opened certain of its classes to women. This concession was granted rather more