

CO-EDUCATION IN THE WEST.

It is, perhaps, difficult for persons living in the Eastern States, where the admission of women to men's colleges is an innovation and a hard won privilege, to appreciate the absolutely matter-of-course way in which co-education is regarded in the West. Nevertheless, it is in the West, where the experiment has been most frankly tried, that doubts are beginning to arise among those best acquainted with the system. In order to see the experiment of co-education tried fairly, fully and without prejudice, we should go to a Western college town. There the girls are no older, no more advanced and no more serious than the boys. They all go from the high school to the university. Some colleges have dormitories and boarding-houses for the girls, but the more general custom, particularly in the larger institutions, is for them to select their boarding places quite independently. It is an extremely rare thing for a parent to ask any one to assume the least control over the girl. She would resent it, and it is not considered necessary. She is as independent as her brother, free to make what friends she likes, to keep what hours she likes. Her comings and goings concern no one but herself. Luckily, she generally chooses to do well, according to her lights; but, frequently with the best intentions in the world, she makes unfortunate mistakes.

I believe it is claimed by the advocates of co-education that the system will tend to elevate young men, both mentally and morally, and will especially improve their manners. This latter claim scarcely seems well founded when one observes the extreme familiarity with which the young men treat their girl classmates. Doubtless they do not mean to be indecorous or

uncivil; they treat women as well as they treat one another, and no better. But, unfortunately, it is just the old-fashioned attitude toward women that is relied on to elevate college men. There are, of course, many who behave with perfect propriety and treat women with all the respect that can be desired, but *en masse* they have not a respectful manner, and instances of ill-bred familiarity can be multiplied by any one who chooses to take the trouble to use his eyes.

In the matter of study, it may be doubted whether the lessons learned by a young man and a young woman, sitting out of doors under the shelter of one sun-umbrella, are really as well learned as they would be under less distracting circumstances. As to the claim that the standard of morality will be raised by the constant companionship of women, I think that any professor who has worked under both systems will say that there is about the same element of lawlessness to contend with in one college as in another, and that gambling, for instance—the great vice of the West—is probably not diminished by the fact that women are admitted to the colleges. In considering the effect of co-education on women, it must be understood, once for all, that only the average college girl is considered, and that there are brilliant exceptions to all that is said of either boys or girls as a class. In respect to scholarship the girls are on the whole equal to the men, perhaps in some directions superior.—*Fane Cooper Sinclair, in the North American Review for October.*

The great high-road of human welfare lies along the old highway of steadfast well doing.—*Smiles.*