

## HOW SHOULD GIRLS BE EDUCATED—A VERY IMPORTANT PROBLEM.

WE have always maintained that up to the age of ten or twelve years girls and boys may well be educated, as well as allowed to romp together, but that after that period of life the welfare of the girl demands different management in the educational course. We are led to refer to this subject again by an excellent and exhaustive presidential address on the same by Dr. W. Warren Potter, delivered at the 85th annual meeting of the New York State Medical Society, and published in a recent number of the New York Medical Journal.

Dr. Potter says: The years between ten and fourteen are full of import to a girl; during them she lays the foundation for future weal or woe, and this is a period of infinite responsibility for mothers—perhaps the greatest of any part of the educational life of their girls,—education in its broadest sense, and not to mere scholastic acquirements. Many girls begin their new physiological life at the age of twelve; but if they should not do so quite as early, this is still a period when nature is making preparations for a new existence, and if her plans are interfered with or thwarted, even in their smallest details, years—long sorrowing years, perhaps—of pain and suffering and woe are sacrificed to the shrine of ignorance or wilful neglect.

During the age between eight and sixteen or seventeen girls pass most of their time in the overcrowded and badly-ventilated school buildings which are provided by our "splendid common school system"; or they are poring over their books at home, cramming their young brains with problems of algebra and geometry when they might better be cultivating a healthy physique to enable them to cope with the requirements of every-day life; or else, if they are in attendance upon one of the fashionable boarding-schools or colleges for young women, we find them from early morning until late evening making systematic endeavor to ascertain just how much overwork of mind and body the

human female of tender years can endure without breaking down.

The common school system, as Dr. Potter says, is even more dangerous in its demands than the private schools and colleges. A common standard is insisted upon for each grade, and the girl must work to the line with the same precision as the sturdy boy, or miss the chance of promotion to the next grade.

The scholastic training of girls is being carried on with its greatest vigor at the very time when they are physically least suited to bear the strain. Just when the special female organs and functions are beginning to require a large expenditure of nerve force, the brain, under our present system, is also demanding all that an active cerebration can produce, and oftentimes even more. Nature is demanding during this very period that the organs establish a function which shall properly fit the young maiden for her future sphere of wife and mother. How can she properly or without danger and much unnecessary suffering, fulfil this important law of her being if the reproductive organs are dwarfed, weakened or diseased by artificial causes imposed upon her during their development? Just here begin the causes oftentimes which in after life produce the sterile wife or invalid mother. "I have no doubt that in many instances these deplorable conditions take origin in the over education or improper education of girls during the tender years of their development into young womanhood."

"Mothers should be made to understand that when their daughters begin to complain of headache, backache, and indescribable malaise, these are the warnings which must be heeded. They are the manifestations of nerve-tire, the crying out of the nerve ends for rest, the protest of nature against further continuance of overwork, the danger signal hoisted to warn of the relentless ravages of the approaching tornado; and, further, that, unless they receive a patient hearing and an intelligent interpretation during their