

A REVIEW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

AMERICAN College education in the quarter century since the Civil War has undergone more numerous and more fundamental changes than befell it in a hundred years before. These changes have not occurred unnoticed. A multitude of journals and associations are busy every year discussing the results of the experiments in teaching which go on with increasing daring and fruitfulness in nearly all our colleges and schools. There still exists a wide divergence of opinion among the directors of men's colleges in regard to a variety of important questions; the conditions and proper age for entrance, the length of the course of study, the elective system, both of government and instruction, the requirements for the bachelor's and master's degrees, the stress to be laid on graduate work—these, and many sequents of these, touching the physical, social, and religious life of the young men of the land, are undergoing sharp discussion.

The advanced education of young women is exposed to all the uncertainties which beset the education of men, but it has perplexities of its own in addition. After fifty years of argument and twenty-five of varied and costly experiment, it might be easy to suppose that we were still in chaos, almost as far from knowing the best way to train a woman as we were at the beginning. No educational convention meets without a session devoted to the difficulties in "the higher education of women"; so important has the subject become, and so hard is it to satisfy in any one system the variety of its needs. Yet chaos may be thought more chaotic than it really is. In the din of discussion it would not be strange if the fair degree of concord already reached should sometimes be missed. We are certainly still far from having found the one best method of college training for girls. Some of us hope we may never find it, believing that in diversity, no less than in unity, there is strength. But already three tolerably clear, consistent, and accredited types of education appear which it will be the purpose of this paper to explain. The nature of each with its special strengths and weaknesses will be set forth in no spirit of partisanship, but in the belief that a cool understanding of what is doing

at present among fifty thousand college girls may make us wiser and more patient in our future growth. What, then, are the three types, and how have they arisen?

When to a few daring minds the conviction came that education was a right of personality rather than of sex, and when there was added to this growing sentiment the pressing demand for educated women as teachers and as leaders in philanthropy, the simplest means of equipping women with the needful preparation was found in the existing schools and colleges. Scattered all over the country were colleges for men, young for the most part and small, and greatly lacking anything like a proper endowment. In nearly every State west of the Alleghanias, "Universities" had been founded by the voluntary tax of the whole population. Connected with all the more powerful religious denominations were schools and colleges which called upon their adherents for gifts and students. These democratic institutions had the vigor of youth, and were ambitious and struggling. "Why," asked the practical men of affairs who controlled them, "should not our daughters go on with our sons from the public schools to the university which we are sacrificing to equip and maintain? Why should we duplicate the enormously expensive appliances of education when our existing colleges would be bettered by more students? By far the large majority of our boys and girls study together as children; they work together as men and women in all the important concerns of life; why should they be separated in the lecture room for only the four years between eighteen and twenty-two, when that separation means the doubling of an equipment already too poor by half?"

It is not strange that with this and much more practical reasoning of a similar kind, co-education was established in some colleges at their beginning, in others after debate, and by a radical change in policy. When once the chivalrous desire was aroused to give girls as good an education as their brothers, western men carried out the principle unflinchingly. From the kindergarten to the preparation for the doctorate of philosophy, educational opportunities are now practically alike for men and women. The total number of colleges of arts and sciences empowered by law to give degrees, reporting to Washington in 1888, was 389. Of these, 237, or nearly two-thirds, were co-educational. Among them are all the State universities, and nearly all the colleges under the patronage of the Protestant sects.*

* Report of the Commissioner of Education, 1887-88, Chapter xi.

Hitherto I have spoken as if co-education were a western movement; and in the West it certainly has had greater currency than elsewhere. But it originated, at least so far as concerns superior secondary training, in Massachusetts. Bradford Academy, chartered in 1804, is the oldest incorporated institution in the country to which boys and girls were from the first admitted; but it closed its department for boys in 1836, three years after the foundation of co-educational Oberlin and in the very year when Mount Holyoke was opened by Mary Lyon in the large hope of doing for young women what Harvard had been founded to do for young men just two hundred years before. Ipswich and Abbot Academies in Massachusetts had already been chartered to educate girls alone. It has been the dominant sentiment in the East that boys and girls should be educated separately. The older, more generously endowed, more conservative seats of learning, inheriting the complications of the dormitory system, have remained closed to women. The requirements for the two sexes are thought to be different. Girls are to be trained for private, boys for public life. Let every opportunity be given, it is said, for developing accomplished, yes, even learned women; but let the process of acquiring knowledge take place under careful guardianship, among the refinements of home life, with graceful women, their instructors, as companions, and with suitable opportunities for social life. Much stress is laid upon assisting girl students to attain balanced characters, charming manners, and ambitions that are not unwomanly. A powerful moral, often a deeply religious earnestness, shaped the discussion, and finally laid the foundations of woman's education in the East.

In the short period of the twenty years after the war, the four women's colleges which are the richest in endowments and students of any in the world, were founded and set in motion. These colleges—Vassar, opened in 1865, Wellesley and Smith in 1875, and Bryn Mawr in 1885—have received in gifts of every kind about \$6,000,000 and are educating nearly 2,000 students. For the whole country the Commissioner of Education reports 207 institutions for the superior instruction of women, with more than 25,000 students. But these resources proved inadequate. There came an increasing demand, especially from teachers, for education of all sorts; more and more, too, for training in subjects of advanced research. For this, only the best equipped men's universities were thought sufficient, and women began to resort to the great university centres of England and Germany. In an attempt to meet a demand of this sort the Harvard

Annex began, twelve years ago, to provide a few women with instruction from members of the Harvard Faculty.

Where, in a great centre of education, for many years books have accumulated, and museums and laboratories have multiplied, where the prestige and associations of a venerable past have grown up, and cultivated surroundings assure a scholarly atmosphere; in short, in the shadow of all that goes to make up the gracious influences of an old and honorable university, it was to be expected that earnest women would gather to seek a share in the enthusiasm for scholarship, and the opportunities for acquiring it, which their brothers had enjoyed for 250 years.

These, then—co-education, the woman's college, and the annex—are the three great types of college in which the long agitation in behalf of women's education has thus far issued. Of course they are but types, that is, they do not always exist distinct and entire, but they are rather the central forms to which many varieties approximate. The characteristic features of each I must now describe, and, as I promised at the beginning, point out their inherent strengths and weaknesses; for each, while having much to recommend it, still bears in itself the defects of its qualities. To explain dangers as well as promises is the business of the critic, as contrasted with that of the advocate. To this business I now turn, and I may naturally have most in mind the University of Michigan, my own *Alma Mater*, Wellesley College, with whose government I have been connected for a dozen years, and the Harvard Annex, whose neighbor I now am.

Co-education involves, as its name implies, the education of a company of young men and women as a single body. To the two sexes alike are presented the same conditions of admission, of opportunities during the course, of requirements for the degrees, of guardianship, of discipline, of organization. The typical features are identical classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, occupied at the same time, under the same instructors; and the same honors for like work. Ordinarily all the instructors are men, although in a few universities professorships are held by women. Usually no dormitories or boarding-houses are provided for either the young men or women, and no more surveillance is kept over the one than over the other. This feature, however, is not essential. At Cornell, Oberlin, and elsewhere, often out of local necessity, buildings have been provided where the young women may—in some instances, must—live together under the ordinary regulations of home life, with a lady in charge. But in most of

the higher co-educational institutions the principle has from the first been assumed that students of both sexes become sufficiently matured by eighteen years of home, school, and social life—especially under the ample opportunities for learning the uses of freedom which our social habits afford—safely to undertake a college course, and advantageously to order their daily lives. Of course all have a moral support in the advice and example of their teachers, and they are held to good intellectual work by the perpetual demand of the class-room, the laboratory, and the thesis.

The girl who goes to the University of Michigan to-day, just as when I entered there in 1872, finds her own boarding-place in one of the quiet homes of the pleasant little city whose interest centres in the 2,500 students scattered within its borders. She makes the business arrangements for her winter's fuel and its storage; she finds her washerwoman, or her laundry; she arranges her own hours of exercise, of study, and of sleep; she chooses her own society, clubs, and church. The advice she gets comes from another girl student of sophomore dignity who chances to be in the same house, or possibly from a still more advanced young woman whom she met on the journey, or sat near in church on her first Sunday. Strong is the comradeship among these ambitious girls, who nurse one another in illness, admonish one another in health, and rival one another in study only less eagerly than they all rival the boys. In my time in college the little group of girls, suddenly introduced into the army of young men, felt that the fate of our sex hung upon proving that "lady Greek" involved the accents, and that women's minds were particularly absorptive of the calculus and metaphysics. And still in those sections, where, with growing experience, the anxieties about co-education have been allayed, a healthy and hearty relationship and honest rivalry between young men and women exists. It is a stimulating atmosphere, and develops in good stock a strength and independent balance which tell in after life.

In estimating the worth of such a system as this, we may say at once that it does not meet every need of a woman's nature. No system can, no system that has yet been derived. A woman is an object of attraction to men, and also in herself so delicately organized as to be fitted peculiarly for the graces and domesticities of life. The exercise of her special function of motherhood demands sheltered circumstances and refined moral perceptions. But then, over and above all this, she is a human being—a person, that is, who has her own

way in the world to make, and who will come to success or failure, in her home or outside it, according as her judgment is fortified, her observations and experiences are enlarged, her courage is rendered strong and calm, her moral estimates are trained to be accurate, broad and swift. In a large tract of her character—is it the largest tract?—her own needs and those of the young man are identical. Both are rational persons, and the greater part of the young man's education is addressed to his rational personality, rather than to the peculiarities of his sex. Why, the defenders of co-education ask, may not the same principles apply to women? Why train a girl specifically to be a wife and mother when no great need is felt for training a boy to be a husband and father? In education, as a public matter, the two sexes meet on common ground. The differences must be attended to privately.

At any rate, whatever may be thought of the relative importance of the two sides—the woman side, and the human side—it will be generally agreed that the training of a young woman is apt to be peculiarly weak in agencies for bringing home to her the importance of direct and rational action. The artificialities of society, the enfeebling indulgence extended to pretty silliness, the gallantry of men glad ever to accept the hard things and leave to her the easy—by these influences any comfortably placed and pleasing girl is pretty sure to be surrounded in her early teens. The co-educationalists think it wholesome that in her later teens and early twenties she should be subjected to an impartial judgment ready to estimate her without swerving and tell her as freely when she is silly, ignorant, fussy, or indolent as her brother himself is told. Co-education, as a system, must minimize the different needs of men and women; it appeals to them and provides for them alike, and then allows the natural tastes and instincts of each scope for individuality. The strengths of this system, accordingly, are to be found in its tendency to promote independence of judgment, individuality of tastes, common sense and foresight in self-guidance, disinclination to claim favor, interest in learning for its own sake; friendly, natural, unromantic, non-sentimental relations with men. The early fear that co-education would result in class-room romances has proved exaggerated. These young women do marry; so do others; so do young men. Marriage is not in itself an evil, and many happy homes have been founded in the belief that long and quiet acquaintance in intellectual work, and intimate interests of the same deeper sort, form as solid a basis for a successful marriage as ball-room intercourse or a summer at Bar Harbor.

The weaknesses of this system are merely the converse of its strengths. It does not usually provide for what is distinctively feminine. Refining home influences and social oversight are largely lacking; and if they are wanting in the home from which the student comes, it must not be expected that she will show, on graduation, the graces of manner, the niceties of speech and dress, and the shy delicacy, which has been encouraged in her more tenderly nurtured sister.

The woman's college is organized under a different and far more complex conception. The chief business of the man's college, whether girls are admitted to it or not, is to give instruction of the best available quality in as many subjects as possible; to furnish every needed appliance for the acquirement of knowledge and the encouragement of special investigation. The woman's college aims to do all this, but it aims, also, to make for its students a home within its own walls, and to develop other powers in them than the merely intellectual. At the outset this may seem a simple matter, but it quickly proves as complicated as life itself. When girls are gathered together by hundreds, isolated from the ordinary conditions of established communities, the college stands to them pre-eminently *in loco parentis*. It must provide resident physicians and trained nurses to be ready in case of illness, and, to prevent illness, must direct exercise, sleep, hygiene, and sanitation, accepting the responsibility not only of the present health of its students, but also, in large degree, of their physical power in the future. It generally furnishes them means of social access to the best men and women of their neighborhood; it draws to them leaders in moral and social reforms to give inspiration in high ideals and generous self-sacrifice, and it undertakes religious instruction while seeking still to respect the varied faiths of its students. In short, the arrangements of the woman's college, as conceived by founders, trustees, and faculty, have usually aimed with conscious directness at building up character, inspiring to the service of others, cultivating manners, developing taste, and strengthening health, as well as providing the means of sound learning.

It may be said that a similar up-building of the personal life results from the training of every college that is worthy of the name; and fortunately it is impossible to enlarge knowledge without, to some extent, enlarging life. But the question is one of directness or indirectness of aim. The woman's college puts this aim in the foreground side by side with the acquisition of knowledge. By setting its students apart in homogeneous companies, it seeks to cultivate com-

mon ideals. Of its teaching force, a large number are women who live with the students in the college buildings, sit with them at table, join in their festivities, and in numberless intimate ways share and guide the common life. Every student, no matter how large the college, has friendly access at any time to several members of the faculty, quite apart from her relations with them in the class-room. In appointing these women to the faculty no board of trustees would consider it sufficient that a candidate was an accomplished specialist. She must be this, but she should be also a lady of unobjectionable manners and influential character; she should have amiability and a discreet temper, for she is to be a guiding force in a complex community, continually in the presence of her students, an officer of administration and government no less than of instruction. Harvard and Johns Hopkins can ask their pupils to attend the lectures of a great scholar, however brusque his bearing or unbrushed his hair. They will not question their geniuses too sharply, and will trust their students to look out for their own proprieties of dress, manners, and speech. But neither Wellesley nor any other woman's college could find a place in its faculty for a woman Sophocles or Sylvester. Learning alone is not enough for women.

Not only in the appointment of its teaching body, but in all its appliances the separate college aims at a rounded refinement, at cultivating a sense of beauty, at imparting simple tastes and generous sympathies. To effect this, pictures are hung on the walls, statues and flowers decorate the rooms, concerts bring music to the magnified home, and parties and receptions are paid for out of the college purse. The influence of hundreds of mentally eager girls upon the characters of one another when they live for four years in the closest daily companionship is most interesting to see. I have watched the ennobling process go on for many years among Wellesley students, and I am confident that no more healthy, generous, democratic, beauty-loving, serviceable society of people exists than the girls' college community affords. That choicest product of modern civilization, the American girl, is here in all her diverse colors. She comes from more than a dozen religious denominations and from every political party; from nearly every State and Territory in the Union, and from the foreign lands into which English and American missionaries, merchants, or soldiers have penetrated.* The farmer's daughter from the western prairies is beside the child whose father owns half a dozen mill towns

* See the President's Report of Wellesley College for 1889-90.

of New England. The pride of a southern senator's home rooms with an anxious girl who must borrow all the money for her college course because her father's life was given for the Union. Side by side in the boats, on the tennis grounds, at the table, arm in arm on the long walks, debating in the societies, vigorous together in the gymnasium and the library, girls of every grade gather the rich experiences which will tincture their future toil, and make the world perpetually seem an interesting and friendly place. They here learn to "see great things large, and little things small."

This detailed explanation of the peculiarities of the girls' college renders unnecessary any long discussion of its strengths and weaknesses. According to the point of view of the critic these peculiarities themselves will be counted means of invigoration or of enfeeblement. Living so close to one another as girls here do, the sympathetic and altruistic virtues acquire great prominence. Petty selfishness retreats or becomes extinct. An earnest, high-minded spirit is easily cultivated, and the break between college life and the life from which the student comes is reduced to a minimum.

It is this very fact which is often alleged as the chief objection to the girls' college. It is said that its students never escape from themselves and their domestic standard, that they do not readily acquire a scientific spirit, and become individual in taste and conduct. Is it desirable that they should? That I shall not undertake to decide. I have merely tried to explain the kinds of human work which the different types of higher training schools are best fitted to effect for women. Whether the one or the other kind of work needs most to be done is a question of social ethics which the future must answer. I have set forth a type, perhaps, in the endeavor after clearness, exaggerating a little its outlines, and contrasting it more sharply with its two neighbor types than individual cases would justify. There are colleges for women which closely approximate in aim and method the colleges for men. No doubt those which move farthest in the directions I have indicated are capable of modification. But I believe what I have said gives a substantially true account of an actually existing type—a type powerful in stirring the enthusiasm of those who are submitted to it, subtle in its penetrating influences over them, and effective in winning the confidence of a multitude of parents who would never send their daughters to colleges of a different type.

The third type is the "annex," a recent and interesting experiment in the education of girls, whose future it is yet difficult to predict.

Only a few cases exist, and as the Harvard Annex is the most conspicuous, by reason of its dozen years of age and nearly 200 students, I shall describe it as the typical example. In the Harvard Annex, groups of young women undertake courses of study in classes whose instruction is furnished entirely by members of the Harvard faculty. No college officer is obliged to give this instruction, and the Annex staff of teachers is, therefore, liable to considerable variation from year to year. Though the usual four classes appear in its curriculum, the large majority of its students devote themselves to special subjects. A wealthy girl turns from fashionable society to pursue a single course in history or economics; a hard-worked teacher draws inspiration during a few afternoons each week from a famous Greek or Latin professor; a woman who has been long familiar with French literature explores with a learned specialist some single period in the history of the language. Because the opportunities for advanced and detached study are so tempting, many ladies living in the neighborhood of the Annex enter one or more of its courses. There are consequently among its students women much older than the average of those who attend the colleges.

The business arrangements are taken charge of by a committee of ladies and gentlemen, who provide class-rooms, suggest boarding-places, secure the instructors, solicit the interest of the public—in short, manage all the details of an independent institution; for the noteworthy feature of its relation to its powerful neighbor is this, that the two, while actively friendly, have no official or organic tie whatever. In the same city, young men and young women of collegiate rank are studying the same subjects under the same instructors; but there are two colleges, not one. No detail in the management of Harvard College is changed by the presence in Cambridge of the Harvard Annex. If the corporation of Harvard should assume the financial responsibility, supervise the government, and give the girl-graduates degrees, making no other changes whatever, the Annex would then become a school of the university, about as distinct from Harvard College as the medical, law, or divinity schools. The students of the medical school do not attend the same lectures or frequent the same buildings as the college undergraduates. The immediate governing boards of college and medical school are separate. But here comparison fails, for the students of the professional schools may elect courses in the college and make use of all its resources. This the young women cannot do. They have only the rights of all Cam-

bridge ladies to attend the many public lectures and readings of the university.

The Harvard Annex is, then, to-day a woman's college, with no degrees, no dormitories, no women instructors, and with a staff of teachers made up from volunteers of another college. The Fay House, where offices, lecture and waiting rooms, library and laboratories are gathered, is in the heart of old Cambridge, but at a little distance from the college buildings. This is the centre of the social and literary life of the students. Here they gather their friends at afternoon teas; here the various clubs which have sprung up, as numbers have increased, hold their meetings and give their entertainments. The students lodge in all parts of Cambridge and the neighboring towns, and are directly responsible for their conduct only to themselves. The ladies of the management are lavish in time and care to make the girls' lives happy and wholesome; the secretary is always at hand to give advice; but the personal life of the students is as separate and independent as in the typical co-educational college.

It is impossible to estimate either favorably or adversely the permanent worth of an undertaking still in its infancy. Manifestly, the opportunities for the very highest training are here superb if they happen to exist at all. In this, however, is the incalculable feature of the system. The Annex lives by favor, not by right, and it is impossible to predict what the extent of favor may at any time be. A girl hears that an admirable course of lectures has been given on a topic in which she is greatly interested. She arranges to join the Annex and enter the course, but learns in the summer vacation that through pressure of other work, the professor will be unable to teach in the Annex the following year. The fact that favor rules, and not rights, peculiarly hampers scientific and laboratory courses, and for its literary work obliges the Annex largely to depend on its own library. Yet when all these weaknesses are confessed—and by none are they confessed more frankly than by the wise and devoted managers of the Annex themselves—it should be said that hitherto they have not practically hindered the formation of a spirit of scholarship, eager, free and sane to an extraordinary degree. The Annex girl succeeds in remaining a private and unobserved gentlewoman, while still, in certain directions, pushing her studies to an advanced point seldom reached elsewhere.

A plan in some respects superficially analogous to the American annex has been in operation for many years at the English, and more

recently at some of the Scotch universities, where a hall or college for women uses many of the resources of the university. But this plan is so complicated with the peculiar organization of English university life that it cannot usefully be discussed here. In the few colleges in this country where, very recently, the annex experiment is being tried, its methods vary markedly.

Barnard College in New York is^a an annex of Columbia only in a sense, for not all her instruction is given by Columbia's teaching force, though Columbia will confer degrees upon her graduates. The new woman's college at Cleveland sustains temporarily the same relations to Adelbert College, though to a still greater extent she provides independent instruction.

In both Barnard and Cleveland women are engaged in instruction and in government. Indeed the new annexes which have arisen in the last three years seem to promise independent colleges for women in the immediate neighborhood of, and in close relationship with, older and better equipped universities for men, whose resources they can, to some extent, use, whose standards they can apply, whose tests they can meet. When they possess a fixed staff of teachers they are not, of course, liable to the instabilities which, at present, beset the Harvard Annex. So far, however, as these teachers belong to the annex, and are not drawn from the neighboring university, the annex is assimilated to the type of the ordinary woman's college, and loses its distinctive merits. If the connection between it and the university should ever become so close that it had the same right to the professors as the university itself, it would become a question whether the barriers between the men's and the women's lecture rooms could be economically maintained.

The preceding survey has shown how in co-education a woman's study is carried on inside a man's college, in the woman's college outside it, in the annex beside it. Each of these situations has its advantage. But will the community be content to accept this; permanently to forego the counter advantages, and even after it fully realizes the powers and limitations of the different types, firmly to maintain them in their distinctive vigor? Present indications render this improbable. Already co-educational colleges incline to more careful leadership for their girls. The separate colleges, with growing wealth, are learning to value intrepidity, and are carrying their operations close up to the lands of the Ph.D. The annex swings in its middle air, sometimes inclining to the one side, sometimes to the other. And

outside them all, the great body of men's colleges continually find it harder to maintain their isolation, and extend one privilege after another to the seeking sex.

The result of all these diversities is the most instructive body of experiment that the world has seen for determining the best ways of bringing woman to her powers. While the public mind is so uncertain, so liable to panic, and so^a doubtful, whether, after all, it is not better for a girl to be a goose, the many methods of education assist one another mightily in their united warfare against ignorance, selfish privileges, and antiquated ideals. It is well that for a good while to come woman's higher education should be all things to all mothers if by any means it may save girls. Those who are hardy enough may continue to mingle their girls with men; while a parent who would be shocked that her daughter should do anything so ambiguous as to enter a man's college may be persuaded to send her to a girl's. Those who find it easier to honor an old university than the eager life of a young college, may be tempted into an annex. The important thing is that the adherents of these differing types should not fall into jealousy, and belittle the value of those who are performing a work which they themselves cannot do so well. To understand one another kindly is the business of the hour—to understand and to wait.

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PHYSICAL HINDRANCES TO TEACHING GIRLS.

EIGHTEEN years ago, when Dr. Clarke's "Sex in Education" * was published, it aroused anxious questionings and indignant protests. Vassar College was then only eight years old. Many felt that possibly Dr. Clarke might be right in his conclusions regarding women; at any rate, they could not prove that he was wrong. On the other hand, those that protested had only general principles and few and possibly inconclusive experiments upon which to base their dissent. If the little book had appeared in 1891 instead of in 1873, a host of vigorous college *alumnae* from Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Cornell, Girton, and Newnham, might have revived the memory of their Harkness to answer: "*Usus magister optimus est.*" Good doctor, look at us! Look at the statistics published in a recent number of the "Century" magazine for information concerning our health as compared with the health of our sisters who are not college-bred!

But however the case may stand with college women, were Dr. Clarke alive, and were he the attending physician at most private schools for girls, where he could see with what wear and tear of the flesh, in many cases, any attempt at thorough work is attended, he would be confirmed in his conclusions. And if the teachers in private schools did not have before them the experience of the colleges for women, they might be tempted to answer, Yes, you are right. One must choose between a healthy animal and an educated invalid. What may be the experience of public schools, it is not the purpose of this article to consider. It will confine itself to private schools—to thorough private schools, because only in them comes any demand upon brain and soul—and to the more expensive private schools, because there we find girls of our wealthy leisure class, girls whose intellectual training has received a very small share of public attention. It is not strange, indeed, that during these twenty-six revolutionary years of education for women, the college girl should have monopolized public attention; but now that women's colleges are no longer an experiment, it is time that some thought be given to the girls for

* "Sex in Education," by Edward H. Clarke (Boston, 1873).