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ART. II.—THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS.

MUCH has been written about the education of children during the first seven or eight years of their life. It has been said that during these years the character is determined for life. If parents fail in their duty at this early stage, it is not from want of guidance. Time and growing experience may modify what is known as the "Kindergarten System," but the underlying principles are based on the rock of eternal truth, and cannot be shaken.

It is therefore unnecessary to dwell upon the scheme of carefully elaborated "gifts," games, and occupations by which Froebel has indicated to parents and educators an excellent method of cultivating the growing physical and mental activities of the child. It may be objected that the system is too artificial, and that "Nature-study" is not sufficiently prominent in his curriculum; but a constant appeal to Nature is implied in its principles, and the educator is at liberty to fill up what seems to be lacking.

It has been well said by the late Mr. Thring, headmaster of Uppingham, in his "Education and School" (p. 22), that the succeeding ten years—from eight to eighteen—"are the years of preparation and practice which determine, as they are used or abused, the position of each nation in the scale of creation." He adds: "The mighty ten years that change the face of the world are passed at school, and all experience proves that, with few exceptions, the after-life is cast in the same mould as the life at school was cast in."

It has been decided, with a fair amount of unanimity, what we may expect in the way of literary attainment when the years of school life have come to an end. We have evolved a highly complex system of examinations by which parents are able to test the value of the instruction for which they have paid so long. If *instruction* and *education* were synonymous, there would be little more to be said, supposing that all were agreed in fixing a reasonable standard of proficiency. But as the two words differ widely, and have, as it were, no common measure, there results some confusion of ideas, for it is admitted that a man or woman may be highly instructed and yet badly educated, or *vice versa*.

Let others pronounce upon what seems to be the best system of education for boys, a point on which the writer can claim to have no experience; she will confine herself to remarks on a subject on which uncertainty seems to exist, and to which she has devoted her time and thought for the last quarter of a century—the education of girls.

That has been a stirring period in the history of women. It has been an era of revolutionary excitement and activity. Three systems have been on trial—home education; education in public day-schools, known as High Schools; and education in boarding-schools.

There is much to be said in favour of home education—that is, education by the father or mother, or a governess to whom they delegate the task, during the earlier years of a girl's life. Careful habits and refined manners can be unconsciously acquired, and the instruction can be more directly fitted to the individual child's capacity; but, on the other hand, the tendency to desultory reading, slipshod work, and general inaccuracy is so great that, as a matter of fact, girls thus brought up are at a great disadvantage when they go to school. If they never go to school at all, they usually enter upon life unarmed for the conflict. If such girls, when grown to womanhood, are not, in the course of nature, transferred from the protecting arms of their parents to those of a husband, they are, as a rule, destined to a life of misery. Trained as they have been to find their happiness chiefly in the exercise of their affections, they cannot "battle with the world," as people say, and they shrink from association with strangers.

Education at what is known as a "select" boarding-school differs but little in its results from education at home. The conditions of home life are repeated on a somewhat modified scale, with the addition of special facilities for acquiring accomplishments such as music, painting, and foreign languages. Time is rarely made for studies of a disciplinary nature, and the view is but little enlarged where the numbers are not greatly in excess of a large family party.

Between thirty and forty years ago two great women, on somewhat different lines, mapped out a wider system. Miss Beale, as principal of the Ladies' College, Cheltenham, developed the idea of a great central college, surrounded by approved boarding-houses for the residence of pupils. This system has many advantages. The college affords an education on the most comprehensive scale, and a kind of home life can be maintained in the boarding-house. There is, however, the drawback of a divided allegiance. It may happen that the head of a boarding-house compares unfavourably with the more widely-cultured teachers and lecturers in college. There may be divergence of aim in the dual life which is liable to neutralize the results of either half. The system, which is a triumphant success under a great leader, has in it the elements of weakness.

At about the same date as the Ladies' College was started

at Cheltenham, the late Miss Buss, in the North London Collegiate School, may be said to have originated the great public day school for girls. How that system has developed, and how signally it has revolutionized the education of women, is known to all. A quarter of a century ago the pioneers of the movement for the higher education of women found as much difficulty in passing the then lately-instituted Cambridge Higher Local Examinations for Women as their successors, the fair girl graduates of the present day do, in winning honours in a Tripos. Such are the advantages of a good start and methodical training from the first.

The day-school system, however, exacts sacrifices from parents which many are either unwilling or unable to make. The practice of keeping girls at home, and yet letting them attend a day-school, seems to be less popular than it was a few years ago. The presence of daughters has to be reckoned with at times, when they are rather in the way. Their hours for meals and study interfere with the convenience of the rest of the household. Owing to the strain put upon the resources of middle-class families to provide sufficient supervision out of school hours for girls in large towns, a decided reaction has taken place against a natural, and in many ways healthful, arrangement.

To combine the advantages of the great public day-school and the boarding-school seems to be the tendency of the hour. One witnesses the extinction of one small boarding-school after another. The rush of life in a great school, the facilities for specialized teaching, where the staff is large, the organized games, turn the scale against the "select school" so much patronized in former days. Large boarding-schools for girls have existed in England for a century under Protestant auspices, while they have always been numerous where a conventual education is given. In this country they were till lately, as a rule, orphanages or class-schools for the daughters of officers or of the clergy, etc. They were generally foundation or subscription schools, and were originally, at least, conducted with more economy than was quite consistent with comfort. The large boarding-school, nevertheless, offers peculiar opportunities for training, and the tide of popularity seems to be turning in its favour. Assuming that it may be inconvenient to educate a girl at home or at a day-school, there are distinct advantages in placing her in surroundings that will develop and strengthen character.

It may be useful to offer a few hints as to the choice of a school. First, it is a matter of great importance that the locality fixed upon should be healthy, if possible combining the benefits of sea-air with the neighbourhood of country

walks. It should not be too far from the stir of a town, though isolated from its noise and publicity. The house itself should be spacious; if possible, dignified in appearance. In addition to airy class-rooms and dormitories, it should contain a large, well-lighted recreation-room. This room may be utilized for choral singing or calisthenic classes, but should mainly serve as a place where relaxation can be taken at a spare hour and on wet days. It is most important that there should be a sick-house or sanatorium, to which a pupil may be sent at the first sign of indisposition, or even when slightly tired or overstrained. There should be a playing-field, where, with due moderation, girls may enjoy the rapture of vigorous motion, and may learn by co-operation in games the grand lesson of self-effacement. Hockey and stool-ball are in every way admirable games for girls; and although cricket has to be shorn of some of its glories to render it equally suitable, yet "King Willow" is educationally preferable to the more selfish lawn-tennis, which, nevertheless, deserves a place in the programme. Lastly, there should be a large garden. A school without a garden is unfurnished with the most indispensable of classrooms. How much more may be learnt at first hand from observation of the tree overhead or the flower at one's feet than from the finest diagrams in the best-equipped lecture-room! There is a growing sense that too much has been made of literary culture, and that the study of nature has been unduly neglected in the past. But, given the externals of play-room, playground, garden, and sick-house, there is a whole world of requirements to be sought for where we would place our girls with an easy mind.

The *tone* of the school should be sincerely, but unostentatiously, religious. There must be an atmosphere of reality and sincerity as distinct from ritualistic formality. The atmosphere should be morally bracing, and free from sickly sentimentalism. There should be an enthusiasm for work. The hours of whole-hearted play should prepare the way for earnest study. The faults called into existence by idleness and vacuity cannot flourish in such a soil.

There should also be the pleasant variety of an occasional entertainment, to prevent the sense of routine from becoming monotonous. The regular studies should at intervals be broken by happy evenings, enlivened with music, dancing, and simple scenic representations.

In such a school the action and reaction of elder upon younger girls, the *esprit de corps* engendered by the traditions of the place, form in themselves a school of manners and of morals. It may sometimes happen that, whether from slowness of development or defective early training, a pupil may

pass through school life with little apparent benefit. In all but a few cases, however, the effects of a good school will sooner or later manifest themselves. The majority will make a good start in art, literature, science, classics, and mathematics, and will leave with sufficient appetite for learning to make them desire to go on further. A few, gifted by nature, will make conspicuous progress, and be prepared to go on to the higher work of a University.

It is a great benefit to girls who may have a somewhat restricted life to start with a wide circle of congenial acquaintances. The idiosyncrasies which in a narrow environment become eccentricities are less liable to become obtrusive. Angles get rubbed down without any wound to sensitiveness. The give-and-take of a large school prepares a girl to show a wise consideration for others which does not always distinguish the gentler sex.

The writer has thus attempted to sketch in brief outline the tendency of different methods of education. It is to be deplored that some parents have not fully awakened to the knowledge that changed conditions of life demand a different kind of preparation from that which prevailed for girls a generation ago. Girls need a much more scientific knowledge even of domestic matters than sufficed for their mothers; but the further development of a subject so important must be dealt with in a separate paper.

C. M. BIRRELL.



ART. III.—MATTER AND SPIRIT.¹

THIS is an exceedingly interesting book. Like the author's well-known Bampton Lectures on "Personality"—to which, as he says, "it is in some sense a sequel"—it is so thoroughly well written and so admirably arranged, that it is a delight rather than a labour to read. In this respect it is a great contrast to many works upon philosophical subjects. Such books are too often written in a style which seems to have been almost designedly chosen to warn off the general reader, who is often driven to confess that, in order to understand their meaning, he must first study the language in which they are written, because that language, in far too many instances, is certainly not his own. This, we believe, is one reason why

¹ "Divine Immanence," an Essay on the Spiritual Significance of Matter, by J. R. Illingworth, M.A. (author of "Personality, Human and Divine"). London: Macmillan and Co., 1898.