The Cambridge Chronicle.

JOSEPH R. ECCLESTON,] " LIGHT FOR ALL. " [Editor & Proprietor.

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TERMS.

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MR. EDITOR:—You would confer a favour upon the writer of the accompanying essay by publishing it. It was written in the early part of last summer and originally published in the Easton Gazette. At the time of writing the author merely intended to while away an idle hour by committing his thoughts to paper, little dreaming that any good would be done thereby—that any great revolution was to be effected by new fangled theories of his starting—and much less that a trial of his doctrines would be called for in any vocation to which he might betake himself so soon thereafter. It *does* happen now that the author holds the very relation to the community which renders the publication of the opinions contained in the essay appropriate; and it is therefore he begs the favour of you to copy it.

For the Easton Gazette.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

Sir:—By an article which I read in your paper some time since credited, I think, to the American Farmer and handling, with some severity, the system of female education as ordinarily pursued in this country, I was induced to reflect a little more seriously on that subject than I had done before. The result of such reflection is the conclusion that the writer in the main is correct; but that a very obvious fault in his essay is, that it has not gone far enough in the work of condemning, whilst in his plan of amelioration he has suggested nothing beyond a few ideas on mere domestic virtures. Indeed from his piece one is allowed to infer that he thinks nothing worth attending to in the education of a young lady but the study of honsewifery, and that to fit her for society, the rearing of children, and the companionship of a husband, all she need acquire is the art of turning her hand to every thing and the best manner of using that art as occasion may demand. Now my reason for *generally* agreeing with him is the fact, that our system of female education is wrong in toto, and requires radical alterations to make it right; and a small matter of difference between us is, that domestic qualifications, how important soever in the matron, are secondary only in the scholastic pursuits of the girl.

It would, no doubt, be pronounced rash in any one to attack usages of universal approval, and more especially so in your humble and unpretending correspondent; but I really see so much to condemn, and the subject is one in which, with a growing family, I feel so deep an interest, that I can no longer refrain. Nor do I despair of having some to hink with me.—Defects in existing systems, when pointed out will be plain, and to justity any animadversion upon the usual mode of instructing girls, one need not require any more cogent argument than the obviously depressed condition of female improvement among us.

A radical and ruinous fallacy prevailing on this Shore at least, is in setting down a liberal education as worth nothing except to prepare young persons for the business of after life. It is regardad somewhat in the light of a mechanic art, and is sought exclusively with a view to the learned professions, from which females, of course, being excluded, can no more enjoy the benefits of an elementary education than they could be made to wield the sledge hammer or broad-axe. A man of property and influence among us, who may have sons and daughters to bring up, will flatter his vanity with the prospects of a promising boy in medicine or at the bar, whilst his daughters are obliged to content themselves with the ponderous erudition of a common school. And it not unfrequently happens that a girl of some talents is kept at home without the slightest chance for instruction beyond the capabilities of her twopenny master, to supply and decorate the wardrobe of some blockhead of a brother at college. Such a system of things is not only unjust, but it is the worst of folly. Families in which education is appreciated are sometimes found without any cultivation at all, because of an injudicious selection of a single child to be educated; whereas if all had fared alike, a spark of genius might have been discovered and kindled into a flame, where otherwise it must remain latent and unobserved.—Take notice too how often youths return from elementary schools, or from the study of a profession, bright in the lore of Aristottle and Seneca, whose sisters know no more of these sages, or of any other, than they do of Egyptian hieroglyphics. While the boy is swaggering with an air of conscious superiority, the girls sit mute lest they should betray their ignorance in the uterance of a single idea; or if perchance they should vouchsafe to hear their voices mingling in the family colloquies, they make the effort at the risk of perpetrating offences against Lindley Murray in every sentence. This picture is not overcharged. There are a few of the more intelligent families on this Shore blessed with sons and daughters, which do not attest the accuracy of the delineation; and I have been surprised that parents of liberal information themselves should value the education of their children only as preparing the boys for business and the girls to superintend the larder, to carry the keys, and it may be—to rock the cradle.

But the great and abiding error in female education is the one alluded to by the writer whom you copied. The system pursued at the better schools is a false one from beginning to end. It is too complicated.—There is too much attempted and too little done.—There is usually a variety presented to the undisciplined mind of the pupil which it is as impossible for her to grasp as it is to number the stars in the sideral nebulæ spoken of by Herschel. How can any mind set in order and systamatize its attainments in the abstruse sciences without a preparatory training, step after step in something it is capable of comprehending? To disregard this training is to throw matters of science upon the understanding in a chaotic jumble, from which nothing can be culled in order to be made practically useful. This no doubt is the reason why we so seldom see females clear in their apprehensions of branches of learning in which they pretend to have been instructed. It is not for the want of capacity for I propose to contend that, in point of talents, they are, at least equal to men. The fact, nevertheless, is established, and I know of no way of accounting for it but in the efforts to force upon the understanding that which it has not been made ready to receive.—With what amount of reason is it, for instance, that a girl is made to lay down her English grammar,—a grammar from which there is little to be learned, at best, either in arrangement, or general philology—and by a sudden transition passes into the formidable list of "*ologies*" spoken of by the writer referred to, and usually constituting the programme of female schools? Assuredly very little more than in transferring a boy from Comley's spelling book to Lock's Essay on the human understanding. And the absurdity arises from the fact sufficiently well established by every day's experience and observation, that no science however simple, can be embraced by the immature mind, without a gradual expansion and strengthening by previous training. I say sufficiently well established: I beg pardon of the ladies for the remark; but the truth is too manifest, that notwithstanding the array of "logoi" through which girls usually travel at school, they seldom return home in possession of any thing more than a smattering of French which they forget in a week, for the want of some use to put it to,—a little music and a little drawing. They have no relish for study, no taste for literary pursuits beyond the trashy gossip of a "Ladies Newspaper" or a mawkish romance, no knowledge of either antient or modern classical literature, in short, nothing. The fact is well known and it is useless to minse it. I allude to it for two reasons; one is to express my sorrow that those whose minds should be most abundantly stored with the thoughts of others, in order to enable them to think correctly themselves, and whose tastes should always be refined, are scarcely ever sufficiently cultivated to think profoundly at all; and the other is, to propose a remedy.

The question here occurs, what is that remedy?—Well, is there no study in which one can engage calculated to develope the mind by degrees, and from the exercise of a single faculty in its simplest way, gradually proceed till it opens all its resources and elicits the utmost vigour of which it is capable? Such a study there certainly is; or we should have no one capable of analytical reasoning among us. This study is the antient languages, or at least Latin. I do not know that it is worthwhile to speak of Greek, for the time commonly allotted to the education of a girl would forbid the hope of its being available. But as I have said, Latin. Be not shocked at the idea of a young lady's studying Latin. I mean what I say. There is no study attended with the same advantages to the opening mind, none more available even to girls, and none worth digrifying with the name of study, less expensive. The whole list of arguments now used in favor of the antient classics will apply as well to females as to boys, except that some mere matters of nomenclature in the professions, with which of course, girls have nothing to do, are taken from the dead languages.* To commit the grammar requires memory—the first faculty manifested in the child. To construe a sentence calls forth efforts of the judgment. To read and translate handsomely, gives exercise to the fancy; and here are, at once, the three cardinal (so to speak) Faculties of the human mind, brought, by a single study, into the fulness of the blown flower, from the unopened bud. It is admitted by all who understand its advantages, and it cannot be denied by those who do not, that of all studies for disciplining the mind Latin is the best, for the simple reason here given; to wit, its adaptation to the development of the faculties, slow though that development may be, yet cartain and steady it must be.—After such a development as a mastering of the language is sure to effect, the mind is prepared for any thing you may present to it. Study becomes easy, nay a pleasure; a thirst for knowledge is the prevailing feeling, and books the only ministers to happiness. Nor is this all. It is the actual foundation to all classical literature. Four at least and certainly the most elegant of the languages of modern Europe are mainly derived from it. The study of the grammar of any of those languages after a knowledge of Latin is attained will consist in a mere examination of idiomatic peculiarities. Besides it will unquestionably induce the study of rhetoric, of history, of poetry and of prose composition. In short, it is the giant study of the schools; and I must here be permitted to remark, with all deference to those who may conceive themselves accomplished without it, that I have no faith in the attainments of any one who does not insist upon it in our systems of education, whether male or female. You may ring the chimes of the Parisian dialect and preach "ologies" to girls forever; but without a ground work in the antient languages they will go on in their contempt of solid literature and of the useful sciences to doomsday.

Let it not be supposed that I am instituting a comparison between the merits of any two languages as such. I am fully sensible of all the excellencies of our own tongue, and to its actual superiority to the Latin, in many important respects. But the merits of the language is not the question when we speak of study to prepare the mind for exploring the fields of science and solid literature. The intrinsic excellence of the Latin, though great, is nothing when compared with the effects which the study of it produces. He who imagines that a knowledge of this language is sought at school, merely to enable the pupil to speak like the Romans and to read their writings, has not got hold of a single reason for continuing it as the basis of a liberal educaton.

Since I have been so rash as to hazard a theory in opposition to universal practice, it will be well for me to anticipate objections. The first that occurs is that girls have not time allowed them to acquire a knowledge of Latin. True there is a disposition on the part of every young lady to hurry over her education the very moment she thinks herself old enough to enter society; and it is to be lamented that this disposition is not only too often, but almost invariably, indulged by parents. The age of sixteen is apt to be fatal to all steady pursuits, for it is then that the idea of beaux is sovereign of the ascendant—an idea which if not repressed, is as certainly destructive to the domestic, as it is, to the intellectual changes for happiness. Order things as they should be—give a daughter no reason to believe that she should enter society before she is twenty,—an age at which both experience and better information will enable her to more judiciously shape her course and mould her destiny,—and girls will have more time for elementary instruction than boys. Besides this is the fact that if you go about an education upon the plan I suggest, it will require less time than the old system. By that system you undertake to teach what your pupil is not capable of learning, and you may teach forever with about the same advantage that you would (to use a homely but appropriate adage) "sing psalms to a dead horse," but by mine, you lay a substantial foundation and upon it you may build rapidly, with safety and a fabric of any magnitude. You may put three pupils, one in the English, another in the French, and a third in the Latin grammar, with the view to ultimately instruct all three in the two modern languages mentioned, and I will assert that he who commences with the Latin will accomplish his object the first. Persons frequently say, "oh I don't want my child to learn Latin! What is the use of it?' Such persons are not aware that a knowledge of it will facilitate the acquisition of every thing else, and actually shorten the time necessary to be at school to make a scholar of any pretentions at all. One could retort by asking the farmer some such questions as—"oh what is the use of preparing your ground before your corn is planted! Why not plant your corn first and depend upon putting it in order afterwards?" And the carpenter—"why do you wait to dry your lumber before you build. Here you will lose a week instead of going to work at once." These ideas serve to illustrate what I would be at, to wit. that preparation in the acquisition of elementary knowledge is as important as it is in any agricultural or mechanical operation, and that by such preparation time will actually be saved. From Latin the study of the ordinary branches of female education will follow by an easy transition. English grammar, French, and if you please, Spanish and Italian, modern & ancient geography, descriptive astronomy, history, composition, rhetoric, moral and natural philosophy, &c. &c.; besides which may be cultivated, not as essential to accomplish the mind though most generally constituting the entire education of the female, but as convenient and beautiful appendages *music* and *drawing*. I verily believe that if the entire time a young lady usually spends at school, were employed in the single study of the ancient languages, her mind would thereby receive an impulse, which even the ruling passion of females—a love of society—could not check and which would stop at nothing short of compassing the whole region of science, at least to the extent of her capacity.

The second objection will come in the shape of a sneer and must be answered as such. We would hear the very profound enquiry, "What is the use of educating females in this way? They have nothing to do in the business of life but to superintend the dinner-pot, make up linen for their lords, and butter the babies' bread on the right side! Would you have them diving into the great ocean of Grecian and Roman literature to accomplish them for so important a position in society?" Here is a common and ruinous error.—We want no surer record than history to bear witness that notwithstanding the place men have in all contries and at all times labored to assign her, women decrees the weal or wo of society. In all the moral and in nearly all the political changes the world has undergone from time to time she has been either the pioneer or an important agent. She was the foster-mother of christianity itself when in the cradle; she was the instrument through which our holy religion first received the sanction of the Roman purple; and she was the morning star that preceded the dawn of the same eternal light upon the barbarous Britons. I have witnessed, sir, with some surprise, attempts in newspapers to cast reflections upon female schools in different parts of the United States aspiring to be of an order somewhat higher than such schools generally are. Degrees have been instituted in some instances. This I think a folly; for nothing of the kind is necessary even as a stimulus to females whose sex forbids their entering into the more masculine duties of the scholar. Besides there is too much of sound, I fear, about it without the substance—vox et preteria nihil. But be this as it may, the sarcasms attempted are but the offspring of the same morbid feeling against which woman has insidiously and most successfully been contending in all ages. Bow to her supremacy we must in spite of ourselves. Greater physical powers protect us against the terrors of her frown and the danger of personal violence when we would fain taunt, and insult her with sneers; but to overbalance such an advantage, she comes upon us with all the force of her moral strength. With this moral power she guards the domestic hearth, promotes religion, protects society against the inroads of vice, and slyly controls the ballot box.—Her principles are imbibed by her children, her character felt by all within the range of her influence, her feelings the index of her husband's thoughts and his will. With such a power confessedly in her hands, what wise man will ask the question, 'Why should females be liberally educated?'

The question of talents is mooted only by those who superficially observe her as she is, not as she might be. In the comparatively few instances of great attention bestowed on female education, woman has almost invariably distinguished herself; and the proportion of illustrious female monarchs to those of an inferior order, is decidedly greater than the like ratio of kings. Save by Alfred the glory of Elizabeth has never found its parallel on the English throne. Save Peter who of the muscovite autocrats equal to the imperial Catharine? And save Zenobia what monarch of Palmyra is worth knowing in history? With her it flourished with machless splendor, and with her it sunk forever, under the insatiable grasp of Roman ambition. To establish the former position the literature of our language at this moment is sufficient, a considerable proportion of which is supplied by female pens too numerous to mention. If these examples suffice to settle the claims of females to be considered of equal talents with men, what might we not hope from their general leisure, from their temperance, from their strong religious feelings, and from their morality, if the same pains were taken to educate them, that are bestowed upon boys?* Free from the cares and vexations of business, the young lady, with sentiments properly regulated, might bestow the whole powers of her mind upon its cultivation and a new and auspicious era could not fail to follow in society.—Here and there we would have polished writers in poety and prose—all fitted for inculcating sound principles and liberal views upon those whom they have the charge of rearing. Instead of the amusements derived from the tales of scandal too freely circulated in the absence of loftier themes by female vivacity, our social enjoyments could be enriched by classical allusions, the treasures of lore and the flights of fancy. Instead of the despondency which naturally seizes the mind in advancing age, when all the objects of ambition and hope have fled, we would see the most exquisite and refined pleasures drawn from the fountains of imagination, or from the stores of erudition which hundreds of ages have amassed. Instead of rendering the domestic fireside a prison in which the young doze away that part of their existence which could be most profitably employed, or from which they fly as from the cells of a penitentiary, parents would have it in their power to make it the centre of their children's pleasure, and the approach of long winter evenings from being dreaded with horror, might be hailed as the advent of a season of the richest enjoyment. Nor is the loss felt under the present system, that of the individual only. The intellectual world is a general loser. That there are now, females passing a life in ignorance and obscurity who under other circumstances are capable of the highest mental effort, is not less certain than that

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The deep unfathomed caves of ocean bear,"
&c. &c.

I *do not* and *cannot* undervalue the lighter accomplishments taught young ladies at the best schools. I regard them however as mere appendages which rarely occupy the attention longer than the unmarried season of the young lady.—The pencil is a charming accomplishment, and music is an enchantment itself. They and the like graces invest the female with unquestionable attractive influences before marriage, but are too apt to fall worthless upon the hands of the matron; and that so much time is to be spent in merely arming the damsel with power to batter down the adamantine walls with which Cupid sometimes perversely fences the hearts of his votaries is an absurdity, only equalled by that of enabling her to make a conquest which she has not intelligence enough to appreciate.

I will close with an unanswerable argument in favor of female education. The young lady after all, holds the character of society both in point of intelligence and virtue in her own hands. If she be educated, suitors will not dare to approach her without considering themselves fit for her society. If she be the uncompromising friend of virtue, vice will never insult her with its presence; and rather than be deprived of the exquisite pleasures imparted by the powers of her understanding, or debarred the privilege of cherishing the most absorbing of all the affections men will labor to qualify themselves in such a way, as she would have a right to demand. The society of an accomplished lady is never sought but with feelings of the highest respect, no more than the presence of a common woman is left without contempt.—Were the education of females more general it is impossible to estimate the salutary effects that would follow. Boorishness would be banished—the fop of silk stockings and no brains would be compelled to think less of his coat and more of his head;—an enlightened society would grow out of one by no means distinguished for its intelligence. The lady herself would be worth more in every respect. She would then have sense enough to know that domestic industry is not incompatible with accomplishments of the highest order, and instead of spending all her time in burnishing up her own personal attractions, she would divide it between the improvement of her mind, and preparing herself for the rigid duties of the wife.

S.

*It so happens, however, that the nomenclature in nearly, if not quite, all the little dainty sciences such as botany, zoology, &c. &c., is of Latin origin. It is somewhat amusing to listen to one of these female Thebans just from the hands of her governess, in the indulgence of her poetic fancy, running over the names of her flowers in the words of learned length, not one of which does she understand, repudiating at the same time the good old names used by our grandmothers.

*It may be well here to remark that the writer does not contend but what there is a difference in the order of talents as they appear in the two sexes; but he believes that this difference is owing more to what phrenologists call the difference in temperaments, than to any real difference in the faculties. It is admitted by all, that the child most generally inherits the intellectual qualities of the mother; and if this be the case were women inferior in point of talents, every generation would degenerate. Whether it be the case that we have less sense than our fathers, others must judge.

Bulwer says with a good deal of truth and severity, that "while young ladies are so sedulously taught all the accomplishments that a husband disregards, they are never taught the great one he would prize. They are taught to be *exhibitors*—he wants a *companion*. He wants neither a singing animal, nor a drawing animal, nor a dancing animal: he wants a talking animal. But to talk they are never taught: all they *know of it is slander, and that comes by nature*,.

Temperance Movement in the West.—The cause of Temperance is still onward in the West. The Lexington, Ky, Gazette of the 25th December says—

Messrs. Vickers and Brown, delegates from the Baltimore and Cincinnatti Washingtonian Temperance Societies have been lecturing in our city for the past week, and have met with astonishing success. Upwards of five hundred have already signed the pledge of total abstinence, and the number may be doubled before the conclusion of their efforts, as there appears to be no abatement yet of the excitement.

A WISH.—The following is the eloquent close to an editorial in the New York Mirror.—

"On the unopened volumn of the year the bright eyes of hope shed a genial lustre; and when it is filled, may the quenchless light of mercy be rayed over the leaves, gilding the darkest pages with a dazzling whiteness. May the old still trace the even lines of virtue they have already traced: and conscience, in regard to their well tried diligence in former years, will permit them to leave a wider margin of ease and rest. Let the young man dip his high-plumed quill, not in the pale waters of vanity, that vanish from the page as soon as they are dry, but in the enduring colors of truth and virtue. May every sentence be inspired by honorable ambition, and corrected by firm morality. And, gentle maiden, for whom spring spontaneous the best auguries of our heart, thy writing would never err, if it were guided by the control of our wishes. May the soft hand of Love hold the recording pen, and trace on thy life-book his richest, purest thoughts. May every page be smooth as the verses of Waller, and as bright as the feathered foam into which the wings of angels ruffled the blue cloudless sky."

CAPT. BOLTON.—The Philadelphia Chronicle says:—"We were told yesterday (Friday) that his sword had been returned to him. This is equal to an acquittal."

The *running time* on the Western Railroad (from Boston to Albany, 200 miles,) on Monday last, was precisely *ten hours*.

Savings Bank of Baltimore.—The annual Report on the condition of this most excellent institution is published in another column of to day's *American*. It will be seen that all its concerns are "safe and sound," and that the number of depositors is steadily on the increase.—*Balt. Amer.*

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