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THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS.

(Extracts from a Paper read at the Secondary Schools Conference, Wellington, by Miss Nancy Jobson, M.A.)

In considering the question of the Education of Girls, it is of primary importance that we should have a clear vision of the aims and the ideals of Education in the true sense of the word: for, as educational matters at present stand, either our ideals are not what they should be or the divergence of practice from theory is far too wide.

Education, in the words of Dr. Reddie, the famous founder of the new school, Abbotsholme, is the harmonious development of the whole nature of the child, and therefore demands that the training of the child should be (1) physical and manual, (2) artistic and imaginative, (3) literary and intellectual, (4) moral and religious. Professor Butler, of the Columbia University, expresses a similar conception in different terms. "It becomes absolutely impossible," he says, "for us any longer to identify education with mere instruction, and we begin to look upon it as really the vestibule of the highest and the richest type of living. . . . Education must mean a gradual adjustment to the spiritual possessions of the race. These possessions may be variously classified, but they are certainly at least five-fold. The child is entitled to his scientific inheritance, to his literary inheritance, to his aesthetic inheritance, to his institutional inheritance, and to his religious

inheritance. Without them he cannot become a truly educated or cultivated man." With these authorities, I think we shall agree, undoubtedly lies the truth. It is not sufficient that a child be trained to know and to do: he must be trained also to think and to feel; he must learn not merely how to work, but also how to play; not only how to earn his daily bread, but also how to use his leisure aright. I fear that, looking round upon our young people of to-day, we must admit that thus far our system has failed to teach them the right use of leisure, and that this failure is the source of much of the restlessness, the mistaken ideas and the low ideals of pleasure, the passion for picture shows, and the love of excitement which characterise the present generation.

Returning to Dr. Reddie's definition of Education, let us pause a moment on the word "development." We may define it as the process of unfolding from within—so that Education means the process of unfolding from within the nature of the child. Just as the bud, growing in the right soil, and receiving under the right conditions the right nourishment, unfolds into a flower of beauty, so should the child in like circumstances unfold into a womanly woman or a manly man. We must not forget that the process is from within.

Under present educational systems, the child's scientific inheritance is assured in greater or less degree. Whether he enters upon it in the best way is, however, open to question. Some part at least of his literary in-

heritance comes to him, but practically nothing of the aesthetic or of the religious, which means an incalculable loss, rendering any system of education hopelessly incomplete. Then, again, some endeavour is made to secure the child his institutional inheritance, which brings him into contact with his fellows, making him realise that though an individual, he is also a citizen, though free, yet subject to the law. This side of education is of great importance, carrying with it, as Professor Butler says, lessons of duty and the necessity for co-operation in the working out of high ideals.

If the education of our girls is to be complete, therefore, it must, I maintain, be made up of these five elements, and in whatever measure any system lacks these, in such measure is it unsatisfactory and incomplete. Before dealing with this part of our subject, however, let us take a brief survey of the existing conditions which make this question of greater importance than ever before—conditions some of which it must be our aim to alter and improve.

(1) The excessive and dangerous freedom allowed the child and the adolescent girl, generally the result of ineffectual parental control.

(2) The frequent lack in parents of the sense of responsibility in and for the formation of the character of their daughters.

(3) The necessity for teaching in the school what should undoubtedly be taught in the home.

(4) The possession of the franchise by women.