

(5) The necessity for girls and women to earn the means of livelihood.

Now it seems to me that the first three conditions make it imperative that it should be one aim of any system of Education to make the home take its rightful place, and parents assume their lawful responsibilities in the training of the child. On the subject of home influence, Dr. Littleton, of Eton, writes: "The school cannot plant what the home has neglected to plant—namely, a certain view of life and its responsibilities that is above the dictates of public opinion. . . . The normal outcome of Education is the outcome of the home." This, in the majority of cases, is undoubtedly true—but none the less it is in our power—nay! more, it is our bounden duty—to help our girls to become women who will be wise and capable mothers, so that the home influence may be the best and the strongest influence, which the school training will but strengthen. We must not, however, fail to recognise the importance of the economic factor—which, unfortunately, seriously affects education in so many ways—in this lack of true home life in many of our homes, and we must also remember that often the underlying cause of the lack of parental control and of parental responsibility is primarily ignorance, together with the fatal ease of saying "Yes" and the tiresome difficulty of saying "No." Here, then, is work for the school: we must try to inculcate the qualities of ideal womanhood—purity, strength of character, kindness, courage, justice, courtesy, thoughtfulness, and a wise discretion or wisdom—in short, self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control.

Womanhood suffrage adds another responsibility—that of training the girl to use her vote aright when given the power. What a field is here! Many years may pass, indeed, before the majority of women learn to use the vote wisely and on their own reasoned judgment alone. Do the majority of men even now thus use it? But we must persevere, finding encouragement in the thought that a woman's vote will always be more disinterested and less influenced by considerations of personal gain than the votes of many men.

Let us now consider the defects of our present system of educating girls

—and, indeed, the first defect is that, save in the introduction of the Domestic course in some schools, we have no such system—only a system of educating boys to which, forsooth, girls must conform. Girls differ from boys in too many respects—intellect, temperament, physical strength, and destiny—to be educated on the same system. I do not mean that the girl is weaker in intellect than the boy—her academic achievements have long since disproved that—but her natural aptitude is different, and her intellect, tastes, and powers, as a rule, lie in other directions. Women, after being long denied them, at last obtained the rights of education—but of education not suited to their peculiar needs, but to those of men, and no deviations from the path were approved of or permitted. Now that women have scaled the heights and won their way to intellectual freedom, it is their duty to work out and establish a new and appropriate system of girls' education.

Again, the competition at present existing between girls and boys is undesirable and injurious, and is one of the causes of over-pressure in girls' schools. Let it be granted that girls and boys possess equal ability, and equal brain power: must it not follow that, as the physical strength of girls is substantially less, competition must entail upon girls a greater amount of application and study, and that those who wish to excel must, as a rule, work much harder than is right or wise. Why, I ask, should the real interests of girls' lives and of girls' education be sacrificed to the mistaken idea that the withdrawal of girls from competition with boys would mean the acknowledgment of intellectual inferiority, for that idea lies at the root of the objection to such withdrawal. Like the opposition to conscription, it seems based on a false conception of liberty. Girls' interests, girls' duties, girls' responsibilities, girls' pleasures, differ materially from those of boys, and so do their intellectual pursuits.

The lack of connection between Primary and Secondary Schools is another source of difficulty. The Secondary School subjects require special attention, while often the standard of acquirement attained at the Primary School in English, Arithmetic, Geography, and History does not render, as it should, the first year

Secondary School requirements in those subjects comparatively simple. Hence the first term especially is often something of a strain, demanding, as it does, the undertaking of entirely new work and the mental adjustment to new conditions of school life and to new environment.

The unsuitability and uncongenial nature of certain subjects taught at girls' schools is another defect in our present system, and another cause of over-pressure. Among such subjects Mathematics must undoubtedly be included. The existence of the un-mathematical mind cannot be questioned, and the fact that the majority of girls possess it demands recognition. The time spent by most girls upon Mathematics—save, perhaps, elementary Practical Geometry—would be far more profitably employed in the study of other subjects of greater educational value, which, under present conditions, are more or less neglected. History, for example, can receive but slight attention—instead of being accorded its rightful place as an important factor in Education. All that is possible is a very superficial and unscientific study of English History, with occasional glances at the history of other nations and other times.

Another marked defect in the present system is the almost entire absence of aesthetic training. The important influence of beautiful and harmonious surroundings is, as a rule, unconsidered, and there is little attempt to train the taste of the child to appreciate the finer and the higher things of life. A love of the beautiful in the younger generation would do much to render picture shows unattractive and to combat the dangerous fascination they at present exercise.

The lack of provision for moral and religious instruction, unsectarian and undogmatic in character, is also unquestionably serious, and must sooner or later undermine our national character. Apart from other considerations, surely the right to study and know the Bible, both as priceless literature and as the foundation of all that is good and noble in the world, is the divine inheritance of every child which no one dare deny him.

Another unsatisfactory feature exists in the present scheme of technical instruction, in that girls begin specialisation at too early an age—i.e., on leaving the primary schools.