

might be due, and that, as the greater accumulations of sediment were forming on the American side, it was probable that the Atlantic coast of America would be the first scene of disturbance. Lest, however, such a forecast might give rise to misconceptions, I remarked that it was something to be looked for only in the distant future, "not an event of to-day or to-morrow." It so happened, that the time of the delivery of my address was that of the Charleston earthquake of 1886, the news of which appeared in the next morning's papers, together with the report of the address itself, and when I came into the reception room that day, I was at once accused by Dr. Barker of Philadelphia, of having had a private intimation of the event, while other members alluded to the circumstance that Lyell had been said to carry an earthquake in his pocket.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN

DURING the early years of my connection with McGill, when we were occupied with the enlargement of the Faculty of Arts, and the establishment of the Normal School, the movement for the higher education of women was still in its infancy, both in Great Britain and in the United States. We were, it is true, founding in the Normal School, what was practically a professional college for women, but beyond this there were no means of proceeding, nor did there seem to be any demand, since there were few opportunities enabling young women to fit themselves for entering college. Still, I was not without thought in reference to this new departure, as may be gathered from the following little episode in connection with my earlier work in Montreal. The late Miss Hannah Willard Lyman, a noble woman, subsequently appointed Lady Principal of Vassar College, was then the head of a school for young ladies in Mon-

treal. She was desirous of securing for some of her pupils the benefit of a course in Natural Science, and I invited her to attend, with such of her pupils as she might care to bring, my afternoon lectures. At the time, our classes of men were small, the ladies occupied a separate part of the hall, and Miss Lyman always accompanied them. No difficulty, so far as I know, arose, but the experiment was in some respects unsatisfactory, so, after the experience of one session, it was tacitly dropped by mutual consent.

In the University lecture for the session of 1869-70, attention was drawn by me to the subject of the higher education of women, in the following somewhat tentative way:—

“I believe that further benefits might be conferred by the University, as to the education of young women. I have no doubt that the more elementary education, as now carried on in our many excellent private schools for girls, is efficient, and I have no wish that the University should assume these responsibilities. But there seems no reason why the school examinations of the University should not, here, as in the case of Cambridge and Oxford, include the pupils of schools for young women; and I think it would be quite pos-

sible for the University to provide lectures on scientific and literary subjects, which would be open to the pupils of all ladies' schools in the city, and that certificates of attendance and examination might be given to such pupils. I do not propose, either that young women should attend the ordinary college classes, or that, except in special cases, the ordinary professors should lecture to them. I would have special class rooms, and, in many instances at least, special lecturers appointed by the University. Of course, this is a purpose for which the constitution of the University does not permit its funds to be used, even if they were sufficient for it, which they are not. I only wish to intimate my conviction, that an opening for usefulness lies in this direction,—one which I have often wished to have the means of cultivating, knowing that in this country, very few young women enjoy, to a sufficient extent, the advantages of the higher kinds of education; and that the true civilisation of any people is quite as much to be measured by the culture of its women as by that of its men.”

Early in 1870, the Governors determined to make a further appeal to the liberality of the citizens of Montreal, to increase the funds of

the University, and a meeting of friends, convened by the Governors, was held in February of that year, in the college library, at which resolutions were passed and a committee appointed to that end. At this meeting, in addition to three resolutions, which had been prepared beforehand, an impromptu resolution was moved by the late Dr. Wilkes, and carried unanimously, in the following terms:—

“That this meeting rejoices in the arrangements made in the mother country, and on this continent, to afford to young women the opportunity of a regular college course; and being persuaded of the vital importance of this matter to the cause of higher education, and to the well-being of the community, respectfully commends the subject to the consideration of the Corporation of the University, for such action as the expected addition to the endowment may enable them to take.”

The result of the appeal, was an addition of \$52,000 to the endowment of the University, besides the W. C. McDonald scholarships, of the annual value of \$1250, and the Jane Redpath exhibition, of the annual value of \$90. No part of these sums was, however, specially devoted to the education of women.

In December of the same year, an entertainment was given to the benefactors in the William Molson Hall, on which occasion the thanks of the University were formally given to them by the Chancellor, the Hon. Judge Day. In his address on this occasion, he referred to the resolution of Dr. Wilkes in the following terms:—

“I now ask your patience for a closing word. It is about the ladies. I have read to you Dr. Wilkes' resolution, which points to the necessity for providing the means of furnishing a higher education for women, a matter in which we are woefully behind the age. I shall not discuss this subject now,—it is far too important for the few moments I could bestow upon it,—but I may say, that I trust the time is not far distant, when McGill College may become the privileged instrument of ministering to this urgent need. In this whole matter of education for either sex, women are directly and deeply interested. They are its earliest and most important ministers. Upon the delicate impressions received from the mother's gentle accents, depends, in a large measure, the development of character in youth and manhood. These impressions, so soft and slight,

and at first apparently unimportant, deepen and harden with the growth of each succeeding day. They become the ineffaceable things of life, and extend, for good or for evil, through all the motives of action, and the impulses of thought, to the last breath of existence. But woman is not only the first great high priestess of education, she is also, in a signal degree, dependent upon its influences. From the feebleness of her frame, and the fineness of her organisation, it regulates her position and happiness far more than that of man. The wild hunter, or the savage chieftain, differs incomparably less, from the polished leader of European armies, or the accomplished Senator, than the poor, oppressed, broken-spirited slave, whom the savage calls his wife, differs from the cultured, refined, respected and beloved woman of civilised life. It is education which has made the difference. There is no surer evidence of the degree of that education, which is an essential part of the Christian civilisation of a people, than the social position of its women, and it is for the enlargement of the means of furthering this great object,—of vital importance to both sexes and all classes,—that the University has made its appeal for sympathy and for succour.”

I should here mention an endowment, which stands first in order of time, as indicating the course to be taken by the University in this matter, viz., the Hannah Willard Lyman Memorial Fund. On the death, in 1871, of the lady whose name this fund bears, a number of her former pupils determined, in some way, to perpetuate her memory. With a prophetic instinct as it seemed, they chose to form a scholarship or prize for women in the University, and this was to be given, “in a college for women affiliated to the University, or in classes for the higher education of women approved by the University.” In the first instance, the income of the fund was given for prizes in the Ladies’ Educational Association, founded in 1871, and more recently, has been awarded in prizes in the Donalda Special Course. These ladies obviously looked forward to the affiliation to the University of a college of the character of Vassar College, of which Miss Lyman had been Lady Principal.

The question as to how the aims and objects of Dr. Wilkes’ resolution, or the Hannah Willard Lyman endowment, were to be carried out, seemed, however, to have no immediate means of solution. Neither

the Governors, nor the mover of the resolution, had any idea of imitating the practice, then being introduced in colleges in the western States, of admitting young women into the classes for men. Their ideas were rather based on the plan of Vassar College, or on the methods at that time being introduced in England. Information was needed as to the latter, and having the opportunity of spending the summer of 1870 abroad, my wife and I made it a part of our business, as already mentioned, to study the working of the associations which had been formed for this purpose both in Scotland and England. These were at the time in their infancy, but were exciting much public attention, and aimed at bringing young women up to the standard of the college degree, though no provision had as yet been made by the universities for granting such degrees. After much inquiry, and visiting colleges in Cambridge and elsewhere, the method which appeared to us most suited to secure good results in Montreal, was that pursued by the Ladies' Educational Association of Edinburgh. Accordingly, on returning to Montreal in the autumn of 1870, the subject was discussed with the professors of the Univer-

sity and others, whom it was desirable to interest in the work, but I found that the moral obligation, which, in my judgment, rested on the University in the matter, did not weigh very heavily with the greater number of these, and the result was rather the suggestion of difficulties than any offer of cordial co-operation,—though this was subsequently given when the work was actually commenced.

In these circumstances, we turned from the University proper to its lady friends, and at a large and influential meeting of ladies, held under the auspices of the late Mrs. John Molson, in her residence of Belmont Hall, the Ladies' Educational Association of Montreal was constituted, on a plan which had been previously carefully prepared,—Mrs. Molson being elected president, while Mrs. Simpson, one of our ablest and most experienced educationalists, became honorary secretary. This association carried on its useful work for fourteen years, or up to the time of the institution of the classes for women in the University, and was entirely self-supporting, charging only moderate fees to its students, and paying its lecturers handsomely; whilst it undoubtedly contributed largely to cultivate

a taste for higher education, and enabled young women to obtain at least some of the benefits of a university course.

I had the honour, in October 1871, of delivering the introductory lecture of the first session of the Ladies' Educational Association, and, as the substance of this lecture had been discussed beforehand with some of the thoughtful women engaged in the work, it may be taken, to some extent, as an expression of their views, and I may be pardoned for quoting a portion of it here:—

“The ancient Stoics, who derived much of their philosophy from Egypt and the East, believed in a series of great cosmical periods, at the end of each of which, the world and all things therein were burned by fire, but only to reappear in the succeeding age, on so precisely the same plan, that one of these philosophers is reported to have held that in each succeeding cycle there would be a new Xantippe to scold a new Socrates. I have sometimes thought that this illustration expressed, not merely their idea of cosmical revolutions, but also, the irrepressible and ever recurring conflict, of the rights and education of women. Notwithstanding all that may be said to the

contrary, I believe that Xantippe was as good a wife as Socrates, or any of his contemporary Greeks, deserved. She no doubt kept his house in order, prepared his dinners, and attended to his collars and buttons, (if he used such things), and probably had a general love and respect for him. But she was quite incapable of seeing any sense or reason in his philosophy, and must have regarded it as a vexatious waste of time, and possibly as a chronic source of impecuniosity in family affairs. The educated Greek of her day had small respect for woman, and had no idea of any other mission for her than that of being a domestic drudge. No one had ever taught Xantippe philosophy,—hence she despised it, and being a woman of character and energy, she made herself felt, as a thorn in the flesh of her husband and his associates. In this way, Xantippe derived from her husband's wisdom only a provocation of her own bad temper, and he lost all the benefits of the loving sympathy of a kindred soul; and thus, the best and purest of heathen philosophers found no helpmeet for him.

“So, Xantippe becomes a specimen of the typical uneducated woman, in her relation to

the higher departments of learning and human progress. In ordinary circumstances she may be a useful household worker. If emancipated from this, she may spread her butterfly wings in thoughtless frivolity, but she treats the higher interests and efforts of humanity with stolid unconcern, or insipid levity, or interferes in them with a capricious and clamorous tyranny. In what she does, and in what she leaves undone, she is equally a drag on the progress of what is good and noble, and the ally and promoter of what is empty, useless, and wasteful. If the Stoics anticipated a perpetual succession of such women, they might well be hopeless of the destinies of mankind.

“But the Stoics wanted that higher light, as to the position and destiny of woman, which the Gospel has given to us; and it is a relief to turn from their notions, to the testimony of the Word of God. The Bible has some solution for each of the difficult problems of human nature, and it has its own theory on the subject of woman's relations to man.

“In the old record in Genesis, Adam, the earth-born, finds no helpmeet for him among the creatures, sprung, like himself, from the ground, but he is given that equal helper in the woman made from himself. In this new

relation he assumes a new name. He is no longer Adam, the earthy, but Ish, lord of creation, and his wife is Isha,—he the king, and she the queen, of the world. Thus in Eden, there was a perfect unity and equality of man and woman, as both Moses and our Saviour, in commenting on this passage, indicate,—though Milton, usually so correct as an interpreter of Genesis, seems partially to overlook this. But, a day came when Isha, in the exercise of her independent judgment, was tempted to sin, and tempted her husband in turn. Then comes a new dispensation of labour and sorrow and subjection, the fruit, not of God's original arrangement, but of man's fall. Simple as a nursery tale, profounder than any philosophy, this is the Bible theory of the subjection of woman, and of that long succession of wrongs, and sufferings, and self-abnegation, which have fallen to her lot as the partner of man in the struggle for existence, in a sin-cursed world. But even here, there is a gleam of light. The seed of the woman is to bruise the head of the serpent, and Isha receives a new name, Eve, the mother of life. For in her, in every generation, from that of Eve to that of Mary of Bethlehem, resided the glorious possibility of bringing forth the

Deliverer from the evils of the fall. This great prophetic destiny formed the banner of woman's rights, borne aloft over all the generations of the faithful, and rescuing woman from the degradation of heathenism, in which, while mythical goddesses were worshipped, the real interests of living women were trampled under foot.

"The dream of the prophets was at length realised, and in Christianity, for the first time since the gates of Eden closed on fallen man, woman obtained some restoration of her rights. Even here some subjection remains, because of present imperfection, but it is lost in the grand status of children of God, shared alike by man and woman; for according to St. Paul, with reference to this divine adoption, there is 'neither male nor female.' Our Lord Himself has given to the same truth a still higher place, when, in answer to the quibble of the Sadducees, He uttered the remarkable words, 'They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they are equal to the angels.' If both men and women had a higher appreciation of the dignity of their position as children of God,—if they would more fully realise that world, which was so shadowy to

philosophic Sadducee and ritualistic Pharisee, though so real to the mind of Christ, we should have very little disputation about the relative rights here, of men or women, and would be more ready to promote every effort, however humble, which may tend to elevate and dignify both. Nor need we fear that we shall ever, by any efforts we can make, approach too near to that likeness to the angels, which embraces all that is excellent in intellectual and moral strength, and in exemption from physical evil.

"But what bearing has all this on our present object? Much in many ways, but mainly in this, that, while it removes the question of the higher training of women altogether from the sphere of the silly and flippant nonsense so often indulged in on the subject, it shows the heaven-born equality of man and woman, as alike in the image and likeness of God; the evil origin of the subjection and degradation, inflicted on the weaker sex; and the restored position of woman as a child of God under the Gospel, and as an aspirant for an equal standing, not with man only, but with those heavenly hosts, which excel in strength. In this light of the Book of books, let us proceed to consider some points bearing on our

present duty in reference to this great subject.

“Only a certain limited proportion of men or women can go on to a higher education, and those who are thus selected, are either those who, by wealth and social position, are enabled to claim this privilege, or those who intend to enter into professions, which are believed to demand a larger amount of learning. The question of the higher education of women in any country, depends very much on the relative numbers of these classes among men and women, and on the views which may be generally held as to the importance of education for ordinary life, as contrasted with professional life. Now, in this country the number of young men who receive a higher education, merely to fit them for occupying a high social position, is very small. The greater number of young men who pass through our colleges, do so, under the compulsion of a necessity to fit themselves for certain professions. On the other hand, with the exception of those young women who receive an education for the profession of teaching, the great majority of those who obtain what is regarded as higher culture, do so merely as a means of general improvement, and to

fit themselves better to take their proper place in society. Certain curious and important consequences flow from this. An education, obtained for practical professional purposes, is likely to partake of this character in its nature, and to run in the direction rather of hard utility than of ornament; that which is obtained as a means of rendering its possessor agreeable, is likely to be æsthetical in its character, rather than practical or useful. An education pursued as a means of bread-winning, is likely to be sought by the active and ambitious of very various social grades; but that which is thought merely to fit for a certain social position, is likely to be sought, almost exclusively, by those who move in that position. An education intended for recognised practical uses, is likely to find public support, and to bear a fair market price; that which is supposed to have a merely conventional value, as a branch of refined culture, is likely to be at a fancy price. Hence it happens, that the young men who receive a higher education, and by means of this attain to positions of responsibility and eminence, are largely drawn from the humbler strata of society, while the young women of those social levels, rarely aspire to similar

advantages. On the other hand, while numbers of young men of wealthy families are sent into business with a merely commercial education, at a very early age, their sisters are occupied with the pursuit of accomplishments, of which their more practical brothers never dream. When to all this is added the frequency and rapidity of changes in social standing, in a country like this, it is easy to see that an educational chaos must result, most amusing to any one who can philosophically contemplate it as an outsider, but most bewildering to those who have any practical concern with it,—especially, I should suppose, to careful and thoughtful mothers, whose minds are occupied with the connections which their daughters may form, and the positions which they may fill in society.

“The educational problem which these considerations present, admits, I believe, of but two general solutions. If we could involve women in the same necessity for independent exertion, and professional work, as men, I have no doubt, that, in the struggle for existence, they would secure to themselves an equal, perhaps a greater, share of the more solid kinds of higher education. Some strong-minded women and chivalrous men, in our day, favour

this solution, which has, it must be confessed, some show of reason in older countries, where, from unhealthy social conditions, great numbers of unmarried women have to contend for their own subsistence. But it is opposed by all the healthier instincts of our humanity, and in countries like this, where very few women remain unmarried, it would be simply impracticable. A better solution would be, to separate, in the case of both sexes, professional from general education, and to secure a large amount of the latter, of a solid and practical character, for both sexes, both for its own sake and because of its beneficial results in the promotion of our well-being, considered as individuals, as well as in our family, social, and professional relations. This solution also has its difficulties, and it cannot, I fear, ever be fully worked out, until either a higher intellectual and moral tone is reached in society, or, until nations visit with proper penalties the failure, on the part of those who have the means, to give to their children the highest attainable education, and with this, also, to provide the funds for educating all those who, in the lower schools, prove themselves to be possessed of promising abilities. It may be long before such laws can be instituted even