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MENTAL DIFFERENCES OF MEN AND WOMEN.

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IN his "Descent of Man" Mr. Darwin has shown at length that what Hunter termed secondary sexual characters occur throughout the whole animal series, at least as far down in the zoölogical scale as the Articulata. The secondary sexual characters with which he is chiefly concerned are of a bodily kind, such as plumage of birds, horns of mammals, etc. But I think it is evident that secondary sexual characters of a mental kind are of no less general occurrence. Moreover, if we take a broad view of these psychological differences, it becomes instructively apparent that a general uniformity pervades them—that while within the limits of each species the male differs psychologically from the female, in the animal kingdom as a whole the males admit of being classified, as it were, in one psychological species and the females in another. By this, of course, I do not mean that there is usually a greater psychological difference between the two sexes of the same species than there is between the same sexes of different species: I mean only that the points wherein the two sexes

differ psychologically are more or less similar wherever these differences occur.

It is probably due to a recognition of this fact that from the very earliest stages of culture mankind has been accustomed to read into all nature—inanimate as well as animate—differences of the same kind. Whether it be in the person of Maya, of the pagan goddesses, of the Virgin Mary, or in the personifications of sundry natural objects and processes, we uniformly encounter the conception of a feminine principle coexisting with a masculine in the general frame of the cosmos. And this fact, as I have said, is presumably due to a recognition by mankind of the uniformity as well as the generality of psychological distinction as determined by sex.

I will now briefly enumerate what appeared to me the leading features of this distinction in the case of mankind, adopting the ordinary classification of mental faculties as those of intellect, emotion, and will.

Seeing that the average brain-weight of women is about five ounces less than that of men, on merely anatomical grounds we should be prepared to expect a marked inferiority of intellectual power in the former.[1] Moreover, as the general physique of women is less robust than that of men—and therefore less able to sustain the fatigue of serious or prolonged brain-action—we should also, on physiological grounds, be prepared to entertain a similar anticipation. In

actual fact we find that the inferiority displays itself most conspicuously in a comparative absence of originality, and this more especially in the higher levels of intellectual work. In her powers of acquisition the woman certainly stands nearer to the man than she docs in her powers of creative thought, although even as regards the former there is a marked difference. The difference, however, is one which does not assert itself till the period of adolescence—young girls being, indeed, usually more acquisitive than boys of the same age, as is proved by recent educational experiences both in this country and in America. But as soon as the brain, and with it the organism as a whole, reaches the stage of full development, it becames apparent that there is a greater power of amassing knowledge on the part of the male. Whether we look to the general average or to the intellectual giants of both sexes, we are similarly met with the general fact that a woman's information is less wide, and deep, and thorough, than that of a man. What we regard as a highly-cultured woman is usually one who has read largely but superficially; and even in the few instances that can be quoted of extraordinary female—industry which, on account of their rarity, stand out as exceptions to prove the rule—we find a long distance between them and the much more numerous instances of profound erudition among men. As musical executants, however, I think that equality may be fairly asserted.

But it is in original work, as already observed, that the disparity is most conspicuous. For it is a matter of ordinary

comment that in no one department of creative thought can women be said to have at all approached men, save in fiction. Yet in poetry, music, and painting, if not also in history, philosophy, and science, the field has always been open to both.[2] For, as I will presently show, the disabilities under which women have labored with regard to education, social opinion, and so forth, have certainly not been sufficient to explain this general dearth among them of the products of creative genius.

Lastly, with regard to judgment, I think there can be no real

question that the female mind stands considerably below the male. It is much more apt to take superficial views of circumstances calling for decision, and also to be guided by less impartiality. Undue influence is more frequently exercised from the side of the emotions; and, in general, all the elements which go to constitute what is understood by a characteristically judicial mind of comparatively feeble development. Of course, here, as elsewhere, I am speaking of average standards. It would be easy to find multitudes of instances where women display better judgment than men, just as in the analogous cases of learning and creative work. But that as a general rule the judgment of women is inferior to that of men has been a matter of universal recognition from the earliest times. The man has always been regarded as the rightful lord of the woman, to whom she is by nature subject, as both mentally and physically the weaker vessel; and when in individual cases these relations happen to be

inverted, the accident becomes a favorite theme for humorists—thus showing that in the general estimation such a state of matters is regarded as incongruous.

But if woman has been a loser in the intellectual race as regards acquisition, origination, and judgment, she has gained, even on the intellectual side, certain very conspicuous advantages. First among these we must place refinement of the senses, or higher evolution of sense-organs. Next we must place rapidity of perception, which no doubt in part arises from this higher evolution of the sense-organs—or, rather, both arise from a greater refinement of nervous organization. Houdin, who paid special attention to the acquirement of rapidity in acts of complex perception, says he has known ladies who, while seeing another lady "pass at full-speed in a carriage, could analyze her toilet from her bonnet to her shoes, and be able to describe not only the fashion and quality of the stuffs, but also to say if the lace were real or only machine-made." Again, reading implies enormously intricate processes of perception, both of the sensuous and intellectual order; and I have tried a series of experiments, wherein reading was chosen as a test of the rapidity of perception in different persons. Having seated a number of well-educated individuals round a table, I presented to them successively the same paragraph of a book, which they were each to read as rapidilyas they could, ten seconds being allowed for twenty lines. As soon as time was up I removed the paragraph, immediately after which the reader wrote down

all that he or she could remember of it. Now, in these experiments, where every one read the same paragraph as rapidly as possible, I found that the palm was usually carried off by the ladies. Moreover, besides being able to read quicker, they were better able to remember what they had just read that is, to give a better account of the paragraph as a whole. One lady, for example, could read exactly four times as fast as her husband, and could then give a better account even of that portion of the paragraph which alone he had had time to get through. For the consolation of such husbands, however, I may add that rapidity of perception as thus tested is no evidence of what may be termed the deeper qualities of mind—some of my slowest readers being highly distinguished men.

Lastly, rapidity of perception leads to rapidity of thought, and this finds expression on the one hand in what is apt to appear as almost intuitive insight, and on the other hand in that nimbleness of mother-wit which is usually so noticeable and often so brilliant an endowment of the feminine intelligence, whether it displays itself in tact, in repartee, or in the general alacrity of a vivacious mind.

Turning now to the emotions, we find that in woman, as contrasted with man, these are almost always less under control of the will more apt to break away, as it were, from the restraint of reason, and to overwhelm the mental chariot in disaster. Whether this tendency displays itself in the overmastering form of hysteria, or in the more ordinary

form of comparative childishness, ready annoyance, and a generally unreasonable temper—in whatever form this supremacy of emotion displays itself, we recognize it as more of a feminine than a masculine characteristic. The crying of a woman is not held to betray the same depth of feeling as the sobs of a man; and the petty forms of resentment which belong to what is known as a "shrew," or a "scold," are only to be met with among those daughters of Eve who prove themselves least agreeable to the sons of Adam. Coyness and caprice are very general peculiarities, and we may add, as kindred traits, personal vanity, fondness of display, and delight in the sunshine of admiration. There is also, as compared with the masculine mind, a greater desire for emotional excitement of all kinds, and hence a greater liking for society, pageants, and even for what are called "scenes," provided these are not of a kind to alarm her no less characteristic timidity. Again, in the opinion of Mr. Lecky, with which I partly concur:

> In the courage of endurance they are commonly superior; but their passive courage is not so much fortitude which bears and defies, as resignation which bears and bends. In the ethics of intellect they are decidedly inferior. They very rarely love truth, though they love passionately what they call "the truth," or opinions which they have derived from others, and hate vehemently those who differ from them. They are little capable of impartiality or doubt; their thinking is chiefly a mode of feeling; though very generous in their acts, they are rarely generous in their opinions or in their judgments. They persuade rather than convince, and value belief as a source of consolation rather than as a faithful expression of the reality of things.

But, of course, as expressed in the well-known lines from "Marmion," there is another side to this picture, and, in now taking leave of all these elements of weakness, I must state my honest conviction that they are in chief part due to women as a class not having hitherto enjoyed the same educational advantages as men. Upon this great question of female education, however, I shall have more to say at the close of this paper, and only allude to the matter at the present stage in order to temper what I feel to be the almost brutal frankness of my remarks.

But now, the meritorious qualities wherein the female mind stands pre-eminent are, affection, sympathy, devotion, self-denial, modesty; long-suffering, or patience under pain, disappointment, and adversity; reverence, veneration, religious feeling, and general morality. In these virtues—which agree pretty closely with those against which the apostle says there is no law—it will be noticed that the gentler predominate over the heroic; and it is observable in this connection that when heroism of any kind is displayed by a woman, the prompting emotions are almost certain to be of an unselfish kind.

All the æsthetic emotions are, as a rule, more strongly marked in women than in men—or, perhaps, I should rather say, they are much more generally present in women. This remark applies especially to the æsthetic emotions which depend upon refinement of perception. Hence feminine "taste" is proverbially good in regard to the smaller matters

of every-day life, although it becomes, as a rule, untrustworthy in proportion to the necessity for intellectual judgment. In the arrangement of flowers, the furnishing of rooms, the choice of combinations in apparel, and so forth, we generally find that we may be most safely guided by the taste of women; while in matters of artistic or literary criticism we turn instinctively to the judgment of men.

If we now look in somewhat more detail at the habitual display of these various feelings and virtues on the part of women, we may notice, with regard to affection, that, in a much larger measure than men, they derive pleasure from receiving as well as from bestowing: in both cases affection is felt by them to be, as it were, of more emotional value. The same remark applies to sympathy. It is very rare to find a woman who does not derive consolation from a display of sympathy, whether her sorrow be great or small; while it is by no means an unusual thing to find a man who rejects all offers of the kind with a feeling of active aversion.

Touching devotion, we may note that it is directed by women pretty equally toward inferiors and superiors—spending and being spent in the tending of children; ministering to the poor, the afflicted, and the weak; clinging to husbands, parents, brothers, often without and even against reason.

Again, purity and religion are, as it were, the natural heritage of women in all but the lowest grades of culture.

But it is within the limit of Christendom that both these characters are most strongly pronounced; as, indeed, may equally well be said of nearly all the other virtues which we have just been considering. And the reason is that Christianity, while crowning the virtue of chastity with an aureole of mysticism more awful than was ever conceived even by pagan Rome, likewise threw the vesture of sanctity over all the other virtues which belong by nature to the female mind. Until the rise of Christianity the gentler and domestic virtues were nowhere recognized as at all comparable, in point of ethical merit, with the heroic and the civic. But when the ideal was changed by Christ—when the highest place in the hierarchy of the virtues was assigned to faith, hope, and charity; to piety, patience, and long-suffering; to forgiveness, self-denial, and even self-abasement—we can not wonder that, in so extraordinary a collision between the ideals of virtue, it should have been the women who first flocked in numbers around the standard of the Cross.

So much, then, for the intellect and emotions. Coming lastly to the will, I have already observed that this exercises less control over the emotions in women than in men. We rarely find in women that firm tenacity of purpose and determination to overcome obstacles which is characteristic of what we call a manly mind. When a woman is urged to any prolonged or powerful exercise of volition, the prompting cause is usually to be found in the emotional side of her nature, whereas, in man, we may generally observe

that the intellectual is alone sufficient to supply the needed motive. Moreover, even in those lesser displays of volitional activity, which are required in close reading or in studious thought, we may note a similar deficiency. In other words, women are usually less able to concentrate their attention; their minds are more prone to what is called "wandering," and we seldom find that they have specialized their studies or pursuits to the same extent as is usual among men. This comparative weakness of will is further manifested by the frequency among women of what is popularly termed indecision of character. The proverbial fickleness of *la donna mobile* is due quite as much to vacillation of will as to other unstable qualities of mental constitution. The ready firmness of decision which belongs by nature to the truly masculine mind is very rarely to be met with in the feminine; while it is not an unusual thing to find among women indecision of character so habitual and pronounced as to become highly painful to themselves—leading to timidity and diffidence in adopting almost any line of conduct where issues of importance are concerned, and therefore leaving them in the condition, as they graphically express it, of not knowing their own minds.

If, now, we take a general survey of all these mental differences, it becomes apparent that in the feminine type the characteristic virtues, like the characteristic failings, are those which are born of weakness; while in the masculine

type the characteristic failings, like the characteristic virtues, are those which are born of strength. Which we are to consider the higher type will therefore depend on the value which we assign to mere force. Under one point of view, the magnificent spider of South America, which is large enough and strong enough to devour a humming-bird, deserves to be regarded as the superior creature. But, under another point of view, there is no spectacle in nature more shockingly repulsive than the slow agonies of the most beautiful of created beings in the hairy limbs of a monster so far beneath it in the sentient as in the zoological scale. And although the contrast between man and woman is happily not so pronounced in degree, it is nevertheless a contrast the same in kind. The whole organization of woman is formed on a plan of greater delicacy, and her mental structure is correspondingly more refined: it is further removed from the struggling instincts of the lower animals, and thus more nearly approaches our conception of the spiritual. For even the failings of weakness are less obnoxious than the vices of strength, and I think it is unquestionable that these vices are of quite as frequent occurrence on the part of men as are those failings on the part of women. The hobnailed boots may have given place to patent pumps, and yet but small improvement may have been made upon the overbearing temper of a navvy; the beer-shop may have been superseded by the whist-club, and yet the selfishness of pleasure-seeking may still habitually leave the solitary wife to brood over her lot through the small hours of the morning. Moreover, even when the

mental hobnails have been removed, we generally find that there still remains what a member of the fairer sex has recently and aptly designated mental heavy-handedness. By this I understand the clumsy inability of a coarser nature to appreciate the feelings of a finer; and how often such is the case we must leave the sufferers to testify. In short, the vices of strength to which I allude are those which have been born of rivalry: the mental hide has been hardened, and the man carries into his home those qualities of insensibility, self-assertion, and self-seeking which have elsewhere led to success in his struggle for supremacy. Or, as Mr. Darwin says: "Man is the rival of other men; he delights in competition, and this leads to ambition which passes too readily into selfishness. These latter qualities seem to be his natural and unfortunate birthright."

Of course, the greatest type of manhood, or the type wherein our ideal of manliness reaches its highest expression, is where the virtues of strength are purged from its vices. To be strong and yet tender, brave and yet kind, to combine in the same breast the temper of a hero with the sympathy of a maiden—this is to transform the ape and the tiger into what we know ought to constitute the man. And if in actual life we find that such an ideal is but seldom realized, this should make us more lenient in judging the frailties of the opposite sex. These frailties are, for the most part, the natural consequences of our own, and even where such is not the case, we do well to remember, as already observed, that they are less obnoxious than our own, and

also that it is the privilege of strength to be tolerant. Now, it is a practical recognition of these things that leads to chivalry; and even those artificial courtesies which wear the mark of chivalry are of value, as showing what may be termed a conventional acquiescence in the truth that underlies them. This truth is, that the highest type of manhood can only then be reached when the heart and mind have been so far purified from the dross of a brutal ancestry as genuinely to appreciate, to admire, and to reverence the greatness, the beauty, and the strength which have been made perfect in the weakness of womanhood.

I will now pass on to consider the causes which have probably operated in producing all these mental differences between men and women. We have already seen that differences of the same kind occur throughout the whole mammalian series, and therefore we must begin by looking below the conditions of merely human life for the original causes of these differences in their most general form. Nor have we far to seek. The Darwinian principles of selection both natural and sexual—if ever they have operated in any department of organic nature, must certainly have operated here. Thus, to quote Darwin himself:

Among the half-human progenitors of man, and among savages, there have been struggles between the males during many generations for the possession of the females. But mere bodily strength and size would do little for victory, unless associated with courage, perseverance, and determined energy. . . . To avoid

enemies or to attack them with success, to capture wild animals, and to fashion weapons, requires reason, invention, or imagination. . . . These latter faculties, as well as the former, will have been developed in man partly through sexual selection—that is, through the contest of rival males—and partly through natural selection—that is, from success in the general struggle for life; and as in both cases the struggle will have been during maturity, the characters gained will have been transmitted more fully to the male than to the female offspring. . . . Thus man has ultimately become superior to woman. It is, indeed, fortunate that the law of the equal transmission of characters to both sexes prevails with mammals; otherwise it is probable that man would have become as superior in mental endowment to woman as the peacock is in ornamental plumage to the peahen.

Similarly, Mr. Francis Galton writes:

The fundamental and intrinsic differences of character that exist in individuals are well illustrated by those that distinguish the two sexes, and which begin to assert themselves even in the nursery, where all children are treated alike. One notable peculiarity in the woman is that she is capricious and coy, and has less straightforwardness than the man. It is the same with the female of every species. . . . [Were it not so], the drama of courtship, with its prolonged strivings and doubtful success, would bo cut quite short, and the race would degenerate through the absence of that sexual selection for which the protracted preliminaries of love-making give opportunity. The willy-nilly disposition of the female is as apparent in the butterfly as in the man, and must have been continually favored from the earliest stages of animal evolution down to the present time. Coyness and caprice have in consequence become a heritage of the sex, together with a cohort of allied weaknesses and petty deceits, that men have come to think venial, and even amiable, in women, but which they would not tolerate among themselves.

We see, then, that the principles of selection have thus determined greater strength, both of body and mind, on the part of male animals throughout the whole mammalian series; and it would certainly have been a most

unaccountable fact if any exception to this rule had occurred in the case of mankind. For, as regards natural selection, it is in the case of mankind that the highest premium has been placed upon the mental faculties—or, in other words, it is here that natural selection has been most busy in the evolution of intelligence—and therefore, as Mr. Darwin remarks, we can only regard it as a fortunate accident of inheritance that there is not now a greater difference between the intelligence of men and of women than we actually find. Again, as regards sexual selection, it is evident that here also the psychologically segregating influences must have been exceptionally strong in the case of our own species, seeing that in all the more advanced stages of civilization—or in the stages where mental evolution is highest, and, therefore, mental differences most pronounced—marriages are determined quite as much with reference to psychical as to physical endowments; and as men always admire in women what they regard as distinctively feminine qualities of mind, while women admire in men the distinctively masculine, sexual selection, by thus acting directly as well as indirectly on the mental qualities of both, is constantly engaged in molding the minds of each upon a different pattern.

Such, then, I take to be the chief, or at least the original, causes of the mental differences in question. But besides these there are sundry other causes all working in the same direction. For example, as the principles of selection have everywhere operated in the direction of endowing the

weaker partner with that kind of physical beauty which comes from slenderness and grace, it follows that there has been everywhere a general tendency to impart to her a comparative refinement of organization; and in no species has this been the case in so high a degree as in man. Now, it is evident from what has been said in an earlier part of this paper, that general refinement of this kind indirectly affects the mind in many ways. Again, as regards the analogous, though coarser, distinction of bodily strength, it is equally evident that their comparative inferiority in this respect, while itself one of the results of selection, becomes in turn the cause of their comparative timidity, sense of dependence, and distrust of their own powers on the part of women, considered as a class. Hence, also, their comparative feebleness of will and vacillation of purpose: they are always dimly conscious of lacking the muscular strength which, in the last resort, and especially in primitive stages of culture, is the measure of executive capacity. Hence, also, their resort to petty arts and pretty ways for the securing of their aims; and hence, in large measure, their strongly religious bias. The masculine character, being accustomed to rely upon its own strength, is self-central and self-contained: to it the need of external aid, even of a supernatural kind, is not felt to be so urgent as it is to the feminine character, whose only hope is in the stronger arm of another. "The position of man is to stand, of woman to lean"; and although it may be hard for even a manly nature to contemplate the mystery of life and the approach of death with a really Stoic calm, at least this is not so impossible as

it is for the more shrinking and emotional nature of a woman. Lastly, from her abiding sense of weakness and consequent dependence, there also arises in woman that deeply-rooted desire to please the opposite sex which, beginning in the terror of a slave, has ended in the devotion of a wife.

We must next observe another psychological lever of enormous power in severing the mental structures of men and women. Alike in expanding all the tender emotions, in calling up from the deepest fountains of feeling the flow of purest affection, in imposing the duties of rigid self-denial, in arousing under its strongest form the consciousness of protecting the utterly weak and helpless consigned by Nature to her charge, the maternal instincts are to woman perhaps the strongest of all influences in the determination of character. And their influence in this respect continues to operate long after the child has ceased to be an infant. Constant association with her growing children—round all of whom her affections are closely twined, and in all of whom the purest emotions of humanity are as yet untouched by intellect—imparts to the mother a fullness of emotional life, the whole quality of which is distinctively feminine. It has been well remarked by Mr. Fiske that the prolonged period of infancy and childhood in the human species must from the first "have gradually tended to strengthen the relations of the children to the mother," and, we may add, also to strengthen the relations of the mother to the children —which implies an immense impetus to the growth in her

of all the altruistic feelings most distinctive of woman. Thus, in accordance with the general law of inheritance as limited by sex, we can understand how these influences became, in successive generations, cumulative; while in the fondness of little girls for dolls we may note a somewhat interesting example in psychology of the law of inheritance at earlier periods of life, which Mr. Darwin has shown to be so prevalent in the case of bodily structures throughout the animal kingdom.

There remains, so far as I can see, but one other cause which can be assigned of the mental differences between men and women. This cause is education. Using the term in its largest sense, we may say that in all stages of culture the education of women has differed widely from that of men. The state of abject slavery to which woman is consigned in the lower levels of human evolution clearly tends to dwarf her mind *ab initio.* And as woman gradually emerges from this her primitive and long-protracted condition of slavery, she still continues to be dominated by the man in numberless ways, which, although of a less brutal kind, are scarcely less effectual as mentally dwarfing influences. The stunting tendency upon the female mind of all polygamous institutions is notorious, and even in monogamous or *quasi*-monogamous communities so highly civilized as ancient Greece and pagan Rome, woman was still, as it were, an intellectual cipher—and this at a time when the intellect of man had attained an eminence which has never been equaled. Again, for a period of about two thousand years

after that time civilized woman was the victim of what I may term the ideal of domestic utility—a state of matters which still continues in some of the Continental nations of Europe. Lastly, even when woman began to escape from this ideal of domestic utility, it was only to fall a victim to the scarcely less deleterious ideal of ornamentalism. Thus Sydney Smith, writing in 1810, remarks: "A century ago the prevailing taste in female education was for housewifery; now it is for accomplishments. The object now is to make women artists—to give them an excellence in drawing, music, and dancing." It is almost needless to remark that this is still the prevailing taste; the ideal of female education still largely prevalent in the upper classes is not that of mental furnishing, but rather of mental decoration. For it was not until the middle of the present century that the first attempt was made to provide for the higher education of women, by the establishment of Queen's College and Bedford College in London. Twenty years later there followed Girton and Newnham at Cambridge; later still Lady Margaret and Somerville at Oxford, the foundation of the Girls' Public Day-Schools Company, the opening of degrees to women at the University of London, and of the honor examinations at Cambridge and Oxford.

We see, then, that with advancing civilization the theoretical equality of the sexes becomes more and more a matter of general recognition, but that the natural inequality continues to be forced upon the observation of the public mind; and chiefly on this account—although doubtless also on account

of traditional usage—the education of women continues to be, as a general rule, widely different from that of men. And this difference is not merely in the positive direction of laying greater stress on psychological embellishment: it extends also in the negative direction of sheltering the female mind from all those influences of a striving and struggling kind, which constitute the practical schooling of the male intellect. Woman is still regarded by public opinion all the world over as a psychological plant of tender growth, which needs to be protected from the ruder blasts of social life in the conservatories of civilization. And, from what has been said in the earlier part of this paper, it will be apparent that in this practical judgment I believe public opinion to be right. I am, of course, aware that there is a small section of the public—composed for the most part of persons who are not accustomed to the philosophical analysis of facts—which argues that the conspicuous absence of women in the field of intellectual work is due to the artificial restraints imposed upon them by all the traditional forms of education; that if we could suddenly make a leap of progress in this respect, and allow women everywhere to compete on fair and equal terms with men, then, under these altered circumstances of social life, women would prove themselves the intellectual compeers of man.

But the answer to this argument is almost painfully obvious. Although it is usually a matter of much difficulty to distinguish between nature and nurture, or between the

results of inborn faculty and those of acquired knowledge, in the present instance no such difficulty obtains. Without again recurring to the anatomical and physiological considerations which bar *a priori* any argument for the natural equality of the sexes, and without remarking that the human female would but illustrate her own deficiency of rational development by supposing that any exception to the general laws of evolution can have been made in her favor —without dwelling on any such antecedent considerations, it is enough to repeat that in many departments of intellectual work the field has been open, and equally open, to both sexes. If to this it is answered that the traditional usages of education lead to a higher average of culture among men, thus furnishing them with a better vantage-ground for the origin of individual genius, we have only to add that the strong passion of genius is not to be restrained, by any such minor accidents of environment. Women by tens of thousands have enjoyed better educational as well as better social advantages than a Burns, a Keats, or a Faraday; and yet we have neither heard their voices nor seen their work.

If, again, to this it be rejoined that the female mind has been unjustly dealt with in the past, and can not now be expected all at once to throw off the accumulated disabilities of ages —that the long course of shameful neglect to which the selfishness of man has subjected the culture of woman, has necessarily left its mark upon the hereditary constitution of her mind—if this consideration be adduced, it obviously

does not tend to prove the equality of the sexes; it merely accentuates the fact of inequality by indicating one of its causes. The treatment of women in the past may have been very wrong, very shameful, and very much to be regretted by the present advocates of women's rights; but proof of the ethical quality of this fact does not get rid of the fact itself, any more than a proof of the criminal nature of assassination can avail to restore to life a murdered man. We must look the facts in the face. How long it may take the woman of the future to recover the ground which has been lost in the psychological race by the woman of the past, it is impossible to say; but we may predict with confidence that, even under the most favorable conditions as to culture, and even supposing the mind of man to remain stationary (and not, as is probable, to advance with a speed relatively accelerated by the momentum of its already acquired velocity), it must take many centuries for heredity to produce the missing five ounces of the female brain.

In conclusion, a few words may be added on the question of female education as this actually stands at the present time. Among all the features of progress which will cause the present century to be regarded by posterity as beyond comparison the most remarkable epoch in the history of our race, I believe that inauguration of the so-called woman's movement in our own generation, will be considered one of the most important. For I am persuaded that this movement

is destined to grow; that with its growth the highest attributes of one half of the human race are destined to be widely influenced; that this influence will profoundly react upon the other half, not alone in the nursery and the drawing-room, but also in the study, the academy, the forum, and the senate; that this latest yet inevitable wave of mental evolution can not be stayed until it has changed the whole aspect of civilization. In an essay already alluded to, Sydney Smith has remarked, though not quite correctly, that up to his time there had been no woman who had produced a single notable work, either of reason or imagination, whether in English, French, German, or Italian literature. A few weeks ago Mrs. Fawcett was able to show us that since then there have been at least forty women who have left a permanent mark in English literature alone. Now this fact becomes one of great significance when we remember that it is the result of but the earliest phase of the woman's movement. For, as already indicated, this movement is now plainly of the nature of a ferment. When I was at Cambridge, the then newly-established foundations of Girton and Newnham were to nearly all of us matters of amusement. But we have lived to alter our views; for we have lived to see that that was but the beginning of a great social change, which has since spread, and is still spreading, at so extraordinary a rate that we are now within measurable distance of the time when no English lady will be found to have escaped its influence. It is not merely that women's colleges are springing up like mushrooms in all quarters of the kingdom, or that the old type of young

ladies' governess is being rapidly starved out of existence. It is of much more importance even than this that the immense reform in girls' education, which has been so recently introduced by the Day-Schools Company working in conjunction with the University Board and local examinations, has already shaken to its base the whole system, and even the whole ideal, of female education, so that there is scarcely a private school in the country which has not been more or less affected by the change. In a word, whether we like it or not, the woman's movement is upon us; and what we have now to do is to guide the flood into what seem likely to prove the most beneficial channels. What are these channels?

Of all the pricks against which it is hard to kick, the hardest are those which are presented by Nature in the form of facts. Therefore we may begin by wholly disregarding those short-sighted enthusiasts who seek to overcome the natural and fundamental distinction of sex. No amount of female education can ever do this, nor is it desirable that it should. On this point I need not repeat what is now so often and so truly said, as to woman being the complement, not the rival, of man. But I should like to make one remark of another kind. The idea underlying the utterances of all these enthusiasts seems to be that the qualities wherein the male mind excels that of the female are, *sui generis,* the most exalted of human faculties: these good ladies fret and fume in a kind of jealousy that the minds, like the bodies, of men are stronger than those of women. Now, is not this a

radically mistaken view? Mere strength, as I have already endeavored to insinuate, is not the highest criterion of nobility. Human nature is a very complex thing, and among the many ingredients which go to make the greatness of it even intellectual power is but one, and not by any means the chief. The truest grandeur of that nature is revealed by that nature as a whole, and here I think there can be no doubt that the feminine type is fully equal to the masculine, if indeed it be not superior. For I believe that if we all go back in our memories to seek for the highest experience we have severally had in this respect, the character which will stand out as all in all the greatest we have ever known, will be the character of a woman. Or, if any of us have not been fortunate in this matter, where in fiction or in real life can Ave find a more glorious exhibition of all that is best—the mingled strength and beauty, tact, gayety, devotion, wit, and consummate ability—where but in a woman can we find anything at once so tender, so noble, so lovable, and so altogether splendid as in the completely natural character of a Portia? A mere blue-stocking, who looks with envy on the intellectual gifts of a Voltaire, while shutting her eyes to the gifts of a sister such as this, is simply unworthy of having such a sister: she is incapable of distinguishing the pearl of great price among the sundry other jewels of our common humanity.

Now, the suspicion, not to say the active hostility, with which the so-called woman's movement has been met in many quarters, springs from a not unhealthy ground of

public opinion. For there can be no real doubt that these things are but an expression of the value which that feeling attaches to all which is held distinctive of feminine character as it stands. Woman, as she has been bequeathed to us by the many and complex influences of the past, is recognized as too precious an inheritance lightly to be tampered with; and the dread lest any change in the conditions which have given us this inheritance should lead, as it were, to desecration, is in itself both wise and worthy. In this feeling we have the true safeguard of womanhood; and we can hope for nothing better than that the deep, strong voice of social opinion will always be raised against any innovations of culture which may tend to spoil the sweetest efflorescence of evolution.

But, while we may hope that social opinion may ever continue opposed to the woman's movement in its most extravagant forms—or to those forms which endeavor to set up an unnatural, and therefore an impossible, rivalry with men in the struggles of practical life—we may also hope that social opinion will soon become unanimous in its encouragement of the higher education of women. Of the distinctively feminine qualities of mind which are admired as such by all, ignorance is certainly not one. Therefore learning, as learning, can never tend to deteriorate those qualities. On the contrary, it can only tend to refine the already refined, to beautify the already beautiful—"when our daughters shall be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." It can only tend the better to equip a

wife as the helpmeet of her husband, and by furthering a community of tastes, to weave another bond in the companionship of life. It can only tend the better to prepare a mother for the greatest of her duties—forming the tastes and guiding the minds of her children at a time when these are most pliable, and under circumstances of influence such as can never again be reproduced.

It is nearly eighty years ago since this view of the matter was thus presented to Sydney Smith:

> If you educate women to attend to dignified and important subjects, you are multiplying beyond measure the chances of human improvement by preparing and medicating those early impressions which always come from the mother, and which, in the majority of instances, are quite decisive of genius. The instruction of women improves the stock of national talents, and employs more minds for the instruction and improvement of the world: it increases the pleasures of society by multiplying the topics upon which the two sexes take a common interest, and makes marriage an intercourse of understanding as well as of affection. The education of women favors public morals; it provides for every season of life, and leaves a woman when she is stricken by the hand of Time, not as she now is, destitute of everything and neglected by all, but with the full power and the splendid attractions of knowledge—diffusing the elegance of polite literature, and receiving the homage of learned and accomplished men.

Since the days when this was written, the experiment of thus educating women to attend to dignified and important subjects has been tried on a scale of rapidly-increasing magnitude, and the result has been to show that those apprehensions of public opinion were groundless which supposed that the effect of higher education upon women

would be to deteriorate the highest qualities of womanhood. On this point I think it is sufficient to quote the opinion of a lady who has watched the whole course of this experiment, and who is so well qualified to give an opinion that it would be foolish presumption in any one else to dispute what she has to say. The lady to whom I refer is Mrs. Sidgwick, and this is what she says:

> The students that I have known have shown no inclination to adopt masculine sentiments or habits in any unnecessary or unseemly degree; they are disposed to imitate the methods of life and work of industrious undergraduates just as far as these appear to be means approved by experience to the end which both sets of students have in common, and nothing that I have seen of them, either at the university or afterward, has tended in the smallest degree to support the view that the adaptation of women to domestic life is so artificial and conventional a thing that a few years of free, unhampered study and varied companionship at the university has a tendency to impair it.

So far as I am aware, only one other argument has been, or can be, adduced on the opposite side. This argument is that the physique of young women as a class is not sufficiently robust to stand the strain of severe study, and therefore that many are likely to impair their health more or less seriously under the protracted effort and acute excitement which are necessarily incidental to our system of school and university examinations. Now, I may begin by remarking that with this argument I am in the fullest possible sympathy. Indeed, so much is this the case that I have taken the trouble to collect evidence from young girls of my own acquaintance who are now studying at various high-schools with a view to subsequently competing for first classes in

the Cambridge triposes. What I have found is that in some of these high-schools—carefully observe, only in *some*—absolutely no check is put upon the ambition of young girls to distinguish themselves and to bring credit upon their establishments. The consequence is that in these schools the more promising pupils habitually undertake an amount of intellectual work which it is sheer madness to attempt. A single quotation from one of my correspondents—whom I have known from a child—will be enough to prove this statement:

I never begin work later than six o'clock, and never work less than ten or eleven hours a day. But within a fortnight or so of my examinations I work fifteen or sixteen hours. Most girls, however, stop at fourteen or fifteen hours, but some of them go on to eighteen hours. Of course, according to the school time-tables, none of us should work more than eight hours; but it is quite impossible for any one to get through the work in that time. For instance, in the time-tables ten minutes is put down for botany, whereas it takes the quickest girl an hour and a half to answer the questions set by the school lecturer.

These facts speak for themselves, and therefore I will only add that in many of those high-schools for girls which are situated in large towns no adequate provision is made for bodily exercise, and this, of course, greatly aggravates the danger of overwork. In such a school there is probably no play-ground; the gymnasium, if there is one, is not attended by any of the harder students; drill is never thought of; and the only walking exercise is to and from the school. Let it not be supposed that I am attacking the high-school system. On the contrary, I believe that this system represents the

greatest single reform that has ever been made in the way of education. I am only pointing out certain grave abuses of the system which are to be met with in some of these schools, and against which I should like to see the full force of public opinion directed. There is no public school in the kingdom where a boy of sixteen would be permitted to work from eleven to eighteen hours a day, with no other exercise than a few minutes' walk. Is it not, then, simply monstrous that a girl should be allowed to do so? I must confess that I have met with wonderfully few cases of serious breakdown. All my informants tell me that, even under the operation of so insane an abuse as I have quoted, grave impairment of health but rarely occurs. This, however, only goes to show of what good stuff our English girls are made; and therefore may be taken to furnish about the strongest answer I can give to the argument which I am considering—viz., that the strength of an average English girl is not to be trusted for sustaining any reasonable amount of intellectual work. Upon this point, however, there is at the present time a conflict of medical authority, and, as I have no space to give a number of quotations, it must suffice to make a few general remarks.

In the first place, the question is one of fact, and must therefore be answered by the results of the large and numerous experiments which are now in progress; not by any *a priori* reasoning of a physiological kind. In the next place, even as thus limited, the inquiry must take account of the wisdom or unwisdom with which female education is

pursued in the particular cases investigated. As already remarked, I have been myself astonished to find so great an amount of prolonged endurance exhibited by young girls who are allowed to work at unreasonable pressure; but, all the same, I should of course regard statistics drawn from such cases as manifestly unfair. And seeing that every case of health impaired is another occasion given to the enemies of female education, those who have the interests of such education at heart should before all things see to it that the teaching of girls be conducted with the most scrupulous precautions against over-pressure. Regarded merely as a matter of policy, it is at the present moment of far more importance that girls should not be overstrained than that they should prove themselves equal to young men in the class lists. For my own part, I believe that, with reasonable precautions against over-pressure, and with due provision for bodily exercise, the higher education of women would *ipso facto* silence the voice of medical opposition. But I am equally persuaded that this can never be the case until it becomes a matter of general recognition among those to whom such education is intrusted, that no girl should ever be allowed to work more than eight hours a day as a *maximum;* that even this will in a large proportional number of cases be found to prove excessive; that without abundant exercise higher education should never be attempted; and that, as a girl is more liable than a boy to insidiously undermine her constitution, every girl who aspires to any distinction in the way of learning should be warned to be constantly on the watch for the earliest symptoms of

impairment. If these reasonable precautions were to become as universal in the observance as they now are in the breach, I believe it would soon stand upon the unquestionable evidence of experimental proof, that there is no reason in the nature of things why women should not admit of culture as wide and deep and thorough as our schools and universities are able to provide.

The channels, therefore, into which I should like to see the higher education of women directed are not those which run straight athwart the mental differences between men and women which we have been considering. These differences are all complementary to one another, fitly and beautifully joined together in the social organism. If we attempt to disregard them, or try artifically to make of woman an unnatural copy of man, we are certain to fail, and to turn out as our result a sorry and disappointed creature who is neither the one thing nor the other. But if, without expecting women as a class to enter into any professional or otherwise foolish rivalry with men, for which as a class they are neither physically nor mentally fitted, and if, as Mrs. Lynn Linton remarks, we do not make the mistake of confusing mental development with intellectual specialization—if, without doing either of these things, we encourage women in every way to obtain for themselves the intrinsic advantages of learning, it is as certain as anything can well be that posterity will bless us for our pains. For then all may equally enjoy the privilege of a real acquaintance with letters; ladies need no longer be shut out from a solid

understanding of music or painting; lecturers on science will no longer be asked at the close of their lectures whether the cerebellum is inside or outside of the skull, how is it that astronomers have been able to find out the names of the stars, or whether one does not think that his diagram of a jellyfish serves with admirable fidelity to illustrate the movements of the solar system. These, of course, I quote as extreme cases, and even as displaying the prettiness which belongs to a child-like simplicity. But simplicity of this kind ought to be put away with other childish things; and in whatever measure it is allowed to continue after childhood is over, the human being has failed to grasp the full privileges of human life. Therefore, in my opinion, the days are past when any enlightened man ought seriously to suppose that in now again reaching forth her hand to eat of the tree of knowledge, woman is preparing for the human race a second fall. In the person of her admirable representative, Mrs. Fawcett, she thus pleads: "No one of those who care most for the woman's movement cares one jot to prove or to maintain that men's brains and women's brains are exactly alike or exactly equal. All we ask is that the social and legal status of women should be such as to foster, not to suppress, any gift for art, literature, learning, or goodness with which woman may be endowed." Then, I say, give her the apple, and see what comes of it. Unless I am greatly mistaken, the result will be that which is so philosophically as well as so poetically portrayed by the Laureate:

"The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink
Together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free.

* * * * * *

"Then let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn to be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.

"Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care.
Nor lose the child-like in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words.

* * * * * *

"Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:
Then springs the crowning race of human kind.
May these things be!"

—Nineteenth Century.

1. ↑ This is proportionally a greater difference than that between the male and female organisms as a whole, and the amount of it is largely affected by grade of civilization—being least in savages and most in ourselves. Moreover, Sir J. Crichton Browne informs me, as a result of many observations which he is now making upon the subject, that not only is the gray matter, or cortex, of the female brain shallower than that of the male, but also receives less than a proportional supply of blood. For these reasons, and also because the differences in question date from an embryonic period of life, he concludes that they constitute "a fundamental sexual distinction, and not one that can be explained on the hypothesis that the educational advantages enjoyed either by the individual man or by the male sex generally through a long series of generations have stimulated the growth of the brain in the one sex more than in the other."
2. ↑ The disparity in question is especially suggestive in the ease of poetry, seeing that this is the oldest of the fine arts which have come down to us in a high degree of development, that its exercise requires least special education or technical knowledge, that at no level of culture has such exercise been ostracized as unfeminine, that nearly all languages present several monuments of poetic genius of the first order, and yet that no one of these has been reared by a woman.

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