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## Educational Trends

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## CHAPTER II

## CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL TRENDS.

IN THE MIDST of this changing social milieu, three distinct currents of thought regarding the education of girls made themselves felt before the middle of the nineteenth century. The first of these in point of time may be called the right wing of the movement, if a political term may be applied to a social phenomenon. This group was composed of extreme conservatives who wished to maintain the *status quo*. The center wing formed a group of those who wished to tread the *via media*, men and women who tried to bridge the gulf between two extremes by adhering in words to the respectable past while trying by example to inaugurate something better. The left or radical wing broke sharply with the past, casting aside all tradition and demanding a new type of education in preparation of the new life which was opening up before women. The conservatives, those of the right wing, took essentially an aristocratic position. They inaugurated no new movement but endeavored simply to keep things as they were. No concerted effort was needed to establish this position. It had behind it all the strength of a long tradition. To prevent any change in the ideal which would fit their daughters for life in society, while training the children of the poor to be decent, self-supporting toilers, was their aim. Trusting to the strength of inertia and the sacredness of inherited belief, they filled the newspapers and magazines with their protests against the new ideas which were making headway. They thundered denunciations from pulpits and scattered pamphlets abroad. The basis of their arguments was twofold—religious and personal. Calling on religion for aid, they repeated again and again that the Creator had made woman with lower and weaker intellectual faculties than man. Granting this, they said, it would surely border on the irreligious to change the type of education so long considered proper for women. Others, less religiously inclined, claimed their own personal choice as the determinant of what education should be given to girls. "We," they said, "admire and love woman as she is so why do anything to change her?"

Like their English cousins, American girls were taught a profusion of things because everyone learned them. Such studies served to fill up the time, and to occupy their attention harmlessly while improving their conversational abilities. Marriage being the only sphere open to the higher and middle class young women, care was taken that education should contribute to, not detract from this end.<sup>1</sup> If the education of girls

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<sup>1</sup> Martineau, Harriet, "Society in America," p. 107.

controlled and approved by the conservative group could be said to have an aim, this was it.<sup>2</sup> The leaders in the movement were not disinclined to express themselves quite frankly on the subject. In advising his daughters to marry, the Englishman, Dr. Gregory, in a well known essay much used in reading books for young women both in America and abroad, gives as one reason for taking this step, that he “knew the forlorn and unprotected situation of an old maid, the chagrin and peevishness which are apt to infect their tempers, and the great difficulty of making a transition with dignity and cheerfulness from the period of youth, beauty, admiration and respect into the calm, silent, unnoticed retreat of declining years.”<sup>3</sup> Continuing his advice, Dr. Gregory suggests as a method of attaining their goal, that his daughters should be cautious of displaying their intelligence. “It will be thought you assume a superiority over the rest of the company. But if you happen to have any learning keep it a profound secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts and a cultivated understanding.”<sup>4</sup> Doubtless Dr. Gregory was competent to speak for his own sex. His fellow country woman, Mrs. Hannah More, felt the same drive to speak for hers. Rather caustically she warns, in an essay “On Conversation” addressed to young women, “In regard to knowledge, why should she ever affect to be on her guard lest she should be found guilty of a small portion of it? She need be the less solicitous about it as it seldom proves to be so very considerable as to excite astonishment or admiration: for, after all the acquisitions which her talents and her studies have enabled her to make, she will, generally speaking, be found to have less of what is called learning than a common school-boy.”<sup>5</sup>

America was not without writers who upheld the conservative position. To quote only one of the many contributors to periodicals, which might be duplicated endlessly from sermons, lectures, etc., “Woman’s chief ambition is gratified by a single conquest: the scope of her happiness and usefulness is circumscribed by the domestic and social circle. Beyond this, her influence is only felt by its moral reflection on the hearts and lives of mankind. Nor is this the result of any system of education—it is a distinguishing circumstance in her existence—one which God never intended to be otherwise.”<sup>6</sup>

However it was impossible that America should forever remain in

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> The Lady’s Pocket Library, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid p. 123ff.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, William, Esq., “Literary Emporium,” Vol. 1, p. 15, 1845.

tutelage to England. After the war of 1812, the country gathered itself together and began to awaken to the opportunities which lay before it as a democracy. With the opening of the much heralded Erie canal, the building of highways and railroads and the invention of the telegraph an inter-change of ideas was made possible and the extreme conservatism which can exist only in relative isolation was forced to yield ground to more liberal views.

The center wing of the movement which was concerned with promoting the education of girls, feeling the force of current democratic trends, broke away somewhat from the traditional conservative position. Although they continued to advocate the belief that woman's place was in the home, the adherents of this faith appreciated the fact that more than a training in the "ornamental branches" was needed to fit a girl to be a wife and mother. They claimed that the only way in which the state could hope for good citizens was by training the future mothers of the nation to a sense of the greatness of their responsibilities and by making women God-fearing, intelligent members of society. The shallowness, the pettiness, the dependence on male approbation which resulted from the current practices was deplored as weakening not only the young women, who were subjected to such training, but their children as well. The state, in turn, suffered from badly brought up children who were incapable of becoming good citizens.

Unlike the conservatives, these reformers of liberal view could not rest on the favor of public opinion. In advocating any change in the education of girls, they were destined to encounter opposition. Starting with personal protests, they advanced to a platform and, in the end, to an association just before the radical forces overtook them and won the day.

Among the earliest reformers was Dr. Rush, the eminent physician of Philadelphia. Early in the nineteenth century, 1802, he laid down a programme for the education of girls in the new nation which is very suggestive of later reforms. Dr. Rush's underlying principle, as stated in his programme, was that "female" education should be accommodated to the state of society, manners and government of the country in which it was conducted. By thus setting up a national ideal for the girls of America, he threw off all allegiance to England, and denied the desirability of following in her footsteps. The reason for taking such a step, he stated, was that the several circumstances in the situations, employments and duties of women in America required a peculiar mode of education. The circumstance of their early marriages, which were more numerous than in England, limited the time possible for education and confined it, of necessity, to useful branches of knowledge. The state of property made it obligatory on all to work, therefore, women should be trained as stewards

of their husbands' wealth. Since the arduous duties of men imposed most of the parental care on the mother, girls should be trained for that duty even to a slight knowledge of the principles of liberty and government, and as there were no housemaids available, girls should be trained to perform such tasks.

The studies outlined to cover the above principles included a knowledge of the English language, fair and legible handwriting, figures and bookkeeping, geography and some chronology in order that "she might be an agreeable companion to a sensible man," the first principles of astronomy, natural philosophy and chemistry to prevent superstition and to assist in domestic and culinary purposes. Vocal music was to be taught for use in public worship and to soothe the cares of domestic life. However no instrumental music was to be learned since teachers were too expensive and the instruments too costly. Dancing was considered desirable to promote health and grace and as a substitute for the ignoble pleasures of drinking and gambling. The reading of history, travels and moral essays was urged to offset the passion for novels, and the Christian religion was to be taught as the apogee of all. The essay ends with a repetition of the statement that the "present servility to the modes of English life must cease and that education must become adapted to the needs of the new country."<sup>7</sup>

The programme so comprehensively outlined by Dr. Rush is typical of the liberal or center wing of the movement. Girls were to be well-trained in those duties which America required of them. The yoke of English tradition was to be thrown off and there was the usual offering of literary, domestic and religious training. Some twenty years later, Emma Willard embodied the same ideals in the plan for the education of girls which she laid before the legislature of the state of New York. Mrs. Willard spoke with the authority of one well acquainted with the shortcomings found in girls' education. Having been the head of a girls' school for some years, she had come to the conclusion that a reform was needed, more comprehensive than was possible for one individual to accomplish. In laying her plan before the legislature of a state as large as New York, she hoped to interest the whole nation in her thesis. The need for a proper education for the future mothers of the race, she felt was too important to be left longer to the caprices of any chance individual who wished to make money by undertaking the task of training girls.

Her plan was outlined under four heads—the defects of the present system, the principles which should govern education, plans for a "female" seminary, and the benefit which society would derive from such a

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<sup>7</sup> "Thoughts on Female Education," *New England Quarterly*, No. 1, p. 146.

foundation. In stating the defects of the present system, Mrs. Willard draws very clearly a picture of the insufficiency of the schools of her time. These institutions, she said were of a temporary character, founded by individuals whose object, was of necessity, present emolument. Owing to a lack of endowment, neither suitable accommodations nor adequate apparatus and laboratories could be afforded. There were not enough teachers per pupil nor was their capacity adequate to their task. Not infrequently one teacher taught at the same time and in the same room ten or twelve distinct branches. There was no proper system of classification nor could such a classification be made for fear of offending patrons. Pupils entered at any time and left when the fancy struck them. Each pupil of mature age felt that she had a right to judge for herself respecting what she should study and the parents of the younger girls felt that they were entitled to the same privilege. For the sake of advertisement, the schools taught only showy accomplishments in a superficial way instead of useful learning. As the head of the school was accountable to no one, the public was often imposed upon by unworthy and dishonest individuals.

Having sketched in bald outline a picture of education as then existing, Mrs. Willard continued by stating her ideal of what education for girls should be. The first requirement was a building with large rooms for lodging, for recitations, for the reception and accommodation of the apparatus of the domestic department. A library was needed but not so much as a judicious board of trustees. The duties of such an impersonal board should be to protect the principal from the undue exactions of her patrons and at the same time guarantee the public of the integrity of the principal's actions.

The course of study was to be divided into four departments very similar to those which Dr. Rush had advocated. Moral and religious training, literary work, domestic economy and the ornamental branches comprised the curriculum which Mrs. Willard approved. A school patterned along such lines, she felt, would not exist for itself alone but, by setting standards and by training teachers, would have an elevating effect upon the education of girls in general. In this statement, Mrs. Willard showed herself a true prophet. The influence of Troy Female Seminary, which she founded as an overt expression of her ideals, has more than fulfilled her expectations and her claims.<sup>8</sup>

Thus more than a decade before the general educational renaissance in America, so ably conducted by Horace Mann, Henry Barnard and others, a plan was formulated for standardizing education which, while

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<sup>8</sup> Willard, Emma—Plan.

intended for girls, might well have been adapted to all branches of education. Nor was this plan abortive. By example at her own school, by precept in books and lectures, by training teachers, Mrs. Willard worked and worked successfully to achieve the aims stated in her plan. So successful was she, in fact, that Europe, South America and Canada, as well as the United States, acknowledged their indebtedness to her. What Mrs. Willard thought of her own achievement she was not unwilling to state. Speaking, at a later date, of her address to the New York legislature, she said that "the circumstances attendant upon that address seem to me to have been the commencement of a general movement in favor of female education which has pervaded the whole United States and which is extending to Europe and South America, which, though not yet sufficiently powerful to influence our legislative bodies to do the justice which every candid mind must acknowledge they owe our sex, yet so influenced lesser political bodies that for the first time large buildings have been erected for the use of female schools in different parts of the country, apparatus and libraries and numerous competent teachers are attached to them and such is the excitement in favor of female education that schools are supported by individuals who must, of necessity, pay more for a daughter's education in them than for a son's in one of our best colleges. . . . In urging the subject of giving the stamp of permanence to improvements already made in female education, I have something to say which, perhaps, does not become me to set forth. But, if I should say that I now think those colleges for males which fourteen years ago I proposed as models (as far as might be) for female seminaries might make considerable improvement in their systems by examining what we have done and why we have done it, I should say no more than I solemnly believe to be true and which, I think, I could convince any candid mind who should take pains to examine the subject."<sup>9</sup>

Mrs. Willard had a genuine flair for publicity without which any reform is destined to be merely local. She was never so much at home as when in the center of public attention. Acquiescing in the state of society as it was in her century, she acknowledged the paramount importance of masculine commendation. For this reason, she never hesitated to bring to the attention of eminent men whatever she proposed or did. In this way, her work received the approval of such men as Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, endorsements which she valued for the sake of her work, not personally. This was curious as she was a pronounced individualist and worked always as an individual. Even when ostensibly working

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<sup>9</sup> Willard, Emma, "Letters to Brother-in-law," quoted by Lord John. "Life of Emma Willard.



through organizations as in her plans for furthering the training of girls in Greece or with organizations of teachers at home she worked alone. Her name is not found on lists of pioneer associations of women nor did she ever find time to commend any of the many activities which were being undertaken by her sex at this time.

The career of Catherine Beecher, a second pioneer in the education of women, was of a different type. A member of the Beecher family, long famous for its social activity, her work showed the influence both of heredity and of environment. As the eldest of thirteen children, her teaching began in the home and, when in 1828 she became principal of a school for girls in Hartford, Conn., she simply carried her work outside the home. Compelled by ill-health to give up her school at Hartford, she taught, at a later date at Cincinnati. The organization of the Woman's Educational Association was largely influenced by her and she was an active worker in both the Western Literary Institute and in the American Association for the Advancement of Education. In all of these activities, Miss Beecher showed herself a partisan of her sex. She worked at all times with and through women. Even at the times when she wrote as an individual on topics which might seem somewhat startling to society as then constituted, she was careful to receive the approval of her social equals before publishing her work. She never called the attention of the public to herself nor to her work but tried by means of propaganda, innocuous to the most conservative, to bring about an improvement along the lines in which her interests lay. Training in the domestic arts had long received the sanction of public approval and to her advocacy of the less acceptable physical training, she brought the endorsement of her own social group.

Catherine Beecher typifies, in a rather special way, the path of compromise which the liberal group followed. In one breath she said that "Heaven had appointed to one sex the superior and to the other the subordinate station and this without any reference to the conduct or character of either," a statement which is not to be distinguished from one made by any conservative. Nor could any liberal standard be gleamed from the following that "all the sacred protection of religion, all the generous promptings of chivalry, all the poetry of romantic gallantry, depend upon woman's retaining her place as dependent and defenceless and making no claims and maintaining no rights but what are the gifts of honour, rectitude and love."<sup>10</sup>

Having thus made certain her position as a non-radical, in the next breath she pleads for a better education for girls. Criticising the schools

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<sup>10</sup> Beecher, Catherine, *On Slavery*, p. 99.



for too much memory work and for not teaching girls to reason, but not stating why a "dependent and defenceless female" should reason, she repeats very largely the strictures which Mrs. Willard had made. There were no trained teachers, no standards of work, no proper school books, no apparatus, no physical training and no training in domestic pursuits.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout her long life, Miss Beecher did not advance beyond this position. Believing in a separate and distinct sphere for women, limited largely to the home, she contended always for training women exclusively for some phase of domestic work. Thirty years after her suggestions for Hartford Seminary, she laments the state of social unrest and attributes it entirely to the lack of proper training of women for their peculiar duties in the domestic sphere. The same year she outlined a plan for a Woman's University in which girls should be taught to be mother's assistants, superior seamstresses and mantua makers, and teachers. Training was also to be given in music, drawing and the fine arts as well as in authorship and elocution.<sup>12</sup> In outlining her plan for a university, she criticizes very severely those colleges for girls which had already been founded for not educating girls in the domestic sciences.<sup>13</sup>

As early as 1845, Miss Beecher had conceived the idea of training large numbers of young women as teachers and sending them by the hundreds and the thousands to the destitute children of the nation. In this way, a profession was to be opened to women by means of which those who were toiling for a mere pittance could be relieved from their destitution.<sup>14</sup> She planned to train the superfluous women in the east and send them to teach in the west<sup>15</sup> thus honoring them as the Roman Church honored its unmarried women whom it trained for service not simply for marriage as did the Protestant sects.<sup>16</sup>

Influenced by this ideal, a meeting was held in New York in 1852 to effect an organization which should secure to American women a liberal education, an honorable position and a remunerative employment in their "appropriate" profession. The association planned to establish and to endow institutions of elementary and secondary grade as well as normal schools to train teachers. Half the support for these foundations was to come from local effort, half from the association.

The list of the founders of the organization includes the names of

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<sup>11</sup> Beecher, Catherine, "Suggestions for Hartford Female Seminary," p. 7ff.

<sup>12</sup> Beecher, Catherine, "Woman Suffrage," p. 100.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>14</sup> Beecher, C., "Duty of American Women," p. 64.

<sup>15</sup> Beecher, C., "Evils Suffered by American Women," p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

some of the leading women of the day. Mrs. Sigourney, a leading author, Mrs. Hale, the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, Mrs. Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Miss Beecher and Mrs. VanNorman, the wife of the principal of a well established school for girls in New York City. The goal which was set was that of creating a profession for woman with a three-fold aim. First, they proposed to educate girls to be able to train the human mind, that is as teachers; second, to care for human bodies, as nurses; third, as family assistants to conserve the family. This profession, they felt, "which all society approves," was the appropriate calling for women.<sup>17</sup> In other words, they had no intention of venturing after strange gods as had the women at Seneca Falls some years previous. They intended to keep the approval of society as the surest means of winning success for their movement. At the same time they conceived the bold idea of reaching out and conquering the west thus "gaining possession of the helm of the nation and the destiny of the world."<sup>18</sup> The report does not state explicitly why the association wished to assume this responsibility. Doubtless it was to stem the rising tide of propaganda in favor of woman suffrage or to divert the already large stream of women working in factories back to work in the home. For the census of manufacturers taken in 1850, the first reasonably complete industrial census, showed that 225,922 women and 731,137 men were employed in manufacturing industries in the establishments whose annual product was valued at \$500.00. In 1850, then, 24% of the total number of these employees were women.<sup>19</sup> Small wonder was it that far-sighted women, interested not only in their own sex but in the welfare of the home and society, should endeavor to devise some method by which work in the home could be made more highly respected and more remunerative. In addition it is of tremendous import that, at a time when the public in general were not awakened to the possibilities latent in education that an association should be formed whose purpose it was to advance social welfare through improvements in education.

Ten years later the society was still in existence and still enthusiastic for domestic pursuits. At the annual meeting held in 1869, it was resolved that the science of domestic economy, in its various branches, involved more important interests than any other science. The association felt that the evils suffered by women would be extremely lessened by providing institutions for training woman for "her profession" while, at the same time, domestic economy should be made part of the curriculum

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<sup>17</sup> Women's Educational Association. First Annual Report.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Abbott, Edith, "Women in Industry," p. 81.

of all institutions for girls and of the common schools. Further it was felt that every young woman should be trained to some business by means of which she could earn her living in case of poverty.<sup>20</sup> Later in the same year, a meeting was held in New York of "benevolent and influential ladies" to interest them in the work of the association.<sup>21</sup>

The practical results of the Women's Educational Association were not great. Two institutions were founded, one at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the other at Dubuque, Iowa. The school at Milwaukee had two hundred pupils in attendance and a large and beautiful building. Dubuque had only half as many pupils but an adequate building also. Toward the foundation of these schools the Association gave twenty thousand dollars and the localities provided the remainder of the money needed. The original plan had included professional schools as part of the building plant but this design was not carried out owing to lack of public support.<sup>22</sup>

It was many years before the ideal so nobly voiced by these women came to fruition in Simmons College and the School of Practical Arts of Teachers College. When these foundations were established there was a fundamental difference in the reason for taking such a step. Instead of home economics being handed down by a group of "benevolent and influential ladies," it has come as a result of democratic forces which seek to provide individual training to meet individual needs and which recognize that the home is the center of life and the safeguard of the state.

It is not to be assumed that domestic pursuits were not receiving attention in some girl's schools in the east. Mrs. Willard, at the Troy Female Seminary, had early in her career insisted that the household work done in her school should be related to theory. She even received an appropriation from the New York legislature for a teacher of chemistry in relation to household arts. Numerous other schools, like Mt. Holyoke, were using household duties as a means by which the girls could pay their way through school. However, in most instances the work was on an apprenticeship basis which lacked the dignity of the other studies. It was just this attitude of mind which the Women's Educational Association tried so hard to offset with proper training.

Mary Lyon, a third pioneer in the education of women was, also, of New England birth. Born in Massachusetts at the end of the eighteenth century, she spent her whole life in study and teaching. Unlike Catherine

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<sup>20</sup> Godey's Lady's Book, Vol. 74, p. 359.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 452.

<sup>22</sup> Andrews, Benjamin R., "Miss Catherine Beecher, Pioneer in Home Economics." *Journal of Home Economics*, Vol. 4. June, 1912.

Beecher, she narrowed her interest to her own work and, differing from Emma Willard, she believed in private philanthropy not in state aid for the education of girls. However, all three women shared a common ideal that higher schools for young women must be "founded, endowed and sustained."<sup>23</sup>

Acting on this conviction, Miss Lyon started a campaign to raise the sum of one thousand dollars for the establishment of a seminary for girls. In this attempt she was successful and, in 1836, Mt. Holyoke Seminary was opened at South Hadley, Massachusetts. The school was not only a local success but became the model for many institutions of learning all over the country. Not only was it noted for its high ideals of scholarship and moral training but also because it provided a splendid opportunity for poor girls to gain an education at slight expense.

Among the many activities which accompanied the common school revival none was more important than the founding of educational periodicals. In these journals and magazines, the prophets of a new day voiced their aspirations and formulated their demands. Among the many reforms championed none was stressed with more vigor than the need for more extended "female" education. There is scarcely a number of any of these journals which does not contain some reference to the subject. The general tone of the articles is the same, that woman's place is in the domestic sphere. The knowledge which should be given her, it was repeated again and again, was that which would make her a pleasing wife, a competent mother, and a good cook. One of the best known journals of the day quotes with much evident approbation from the English weekly, *Punch*, to the effect that it had just made an examination of the accomplishments of sixty-five girls. Out of this number only three knew how to can beef, six what sausages were made of, four how to make onion sauce and none knew how to brew. They knew the latest song but not the current price of beef and yet everyone meant to marry. "What," bewails *Punch*, "is to become of their husbands?"<sup>24</sup>

The next year the same journal amplifies its idea of the "Duties and Pleasures of Woman," by quoting from *Blackwood's Magazine*. "Great indeed is the task assigned to woman. . . . Not to make laws, not to govern empires but to form those by whom laws are made, armies led and empires governed . . . . to soften firmness into mercy, to chasten horror into refinement, to exalt generosity into virtue. . . . by her soothing

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<sup>23</sup> Gilchrist, Betty B., "Life of Mary Lyon," p. 162.

<sup>24</sup> Common School Journal, Vol. 6, p. 29.

care to allay the anguish of the body and the far worse anguish of the mind."<sup>25</sup>

Even as far sighted a reformer as Horace Mann felt dubious about this new demand of women for education. Writing in 1838, he says: "When the infant spirit, which even too rude an embrace would wound, is first ushered into this sharp and thorny life, let whatever the gross earth contains of gentleness, of ethereal delicacy, of loving tendencies, be its welcomer and cherish it upon its halycon bosom and lead it as by still waters. And why should women, lured by false ambition to shine in courts or to mingle in the clashing tumults of men, ever disdain this sacred and peaceful ministry? *Why*, renouncing this serene and blessed sphere of duty, should she ever lift up her voice in the thronged marketplace of society, higgling and huckstering to barter away that divine and acknowledged superiority *in sentiment* which belongs to her own sex, to extort confessions from the other of a mere equality *in reason*? Why, in self-abasement, should she ever strive to put off the sublime affections and the ever-beaming beauty of a seraph, that she may clothe a coarser, though it should be a stronger spirit, in the stalwart limbs and highness of a giant? . . . If the intellect of women, like that of man, has the sharpness and the penetration of steel or iron, it must also be as cold and hard. No! but to breathe pure and exalted sentiments into young and tender hearts . . . . to take the censers which Heaven gives and kindle the incense which Heaven loves . . . . this is her high and holy mission."<sup>26</sup>

The examples just cited are typical of the spirit in which the subject so vital to the welfare of the country was approached. There seemed to be a total lack of understanding of what women needed and of what they were striving for. But what was lacking in understanding was made up in volume, for the discussion agitated the public throughout the length and breadth of the land,<sup>27</sup> until wearied of the subject many women, young in spirit if not in years, openly remonstrated. Their remonstrance took the ground that since so many books were written for women and about women, it seemed as if American women ought to be the most graceful, accomplished, virtuous, and happy in the world. Instead they were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their narrow sphere and were claiming a fuller participaion in the rights, privileges, occupations and duties of men.<sup>28</sup> This restlessness on the part of half the members of

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Vol. 7, p. 31. 1845.

<sup>26</sup> Common School Journal, 1838, Vol. 2, p. 100.

<sup>27</sup> Connecticut Common School Journal, 1854. p. 283.

<sup>28</sup> New York Review, July 1839. Book review of a book by Mrs. Louisa C. Tuthill.

society was never adequately met by either the common school revival or the liberal wing of the educational movement. Neither group was willing to advance as rapidly as the most progressive leaders wished, so inevitably a new movement arose.

It was to be expected that the new movement should be radical in its demands. Tired of waiting for advantages which never materialized and wearied of the half measures which were offered, the men and women comprising the radical wing of the educational movement did not hesitate to break with the past nor to establish new aims and ideals in the training of girls. By thus doing they tried to produce a new woman fitted to live and work in a new world.

It was a long and bitter fight which was started at Seneca Falls in 1848. Here a band of intellectually stalwart women met in the first Woman's Rights Convention. The world has been too prone to interpret the word "rights" as there used as votes but such was not its significance. These women felt from the inception of the movement that the only path to the recognition of sex equality for all women, lay through the successful accomplishment by large groups of women of the curriculum of a man's college and subsequent successful work in fields traditionally assigned to men.<sup>29</sup>

At their first meeting no time was lost in breaking sharply with the past. At once they stated that woman had a right to determine her own destiny,<sup>30</sup> thus flouting the time-honored dictum that woman existed only for the pleasure of man. The next year the demand was made that woman be rendered self-supporting in order that she might scorn to live on the bounty of another, thus repudiating the ideal of the "dependent female."<sup>31</sup> To pile Pelion on Ossa the further declaration was made that woman's sphere should be limited only by her mental capacity and the plea was offered for an education which should put an end to lives of emptiness and frivolity.<sup>32</sup> As the years passed demands continued to be made that education for girls should enable them to "care for themselves and they will be cared for: to protect themselves and they will be protected,"<sup>33</sup> thereby bidding adieu to the long cherished ideal of the "de-

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<sup>29</sup> Martin, Gertrude, "The Education of Women and Sex Equality." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. November, 1914, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Hecker, Eugene A., "A Short History of Women's Rights," p. 161.

<sup>31</sup> Proceedings of the First Anniversary of the American Equal Rights Association.

<sup>32</sup> Anthony, Susan B. and Stanton, Elizabeth C., "History of Woman Suffrage," Vol. 1, p. 233.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 663.

fenceless female" dependent solely on the chivalry of man for her protection.

A very telling argument of the conservatives had been that girls would not be interested in higher education even if it were provided for them. Such an argument had much evidence to give it weight. However, the radicals did not fear to face the dilemma. Give the girls, they said, the same motives as society gives the young men—honors and money in a profession—and they will flock to institutions of higher learning faster than boys do. But what results could be expected from a situation in which girls were given books but no motive for studying them? "The doors of science are open but why should she enter? she can gain nothing except in individual and exceptional cases. Public opinion drives her back, places a stigma on her of blue stocking and the consequence is the very motive for her education is taken away."<sup>34</sup>

It had been the desire of the Suffrage Association that the highly endowed and well established colleges for men such as Yale or Harvard should open their doors to women. But, after ten years, no progress had been made in this direction. Meanwhile numerous petty "female" colleges had sprung up. All of these were second rate and inadequate to meet the needs of the ambitious girls who were clamoring for a real higher education not a subterfuge. A few colleges for men, small, pioneer institutions, such as Oberlin and Antioch in Ohio and the Central College in New York State, had admitted women on terms nearly equal to men.<sup>35</sup> But there were galling if amusing restrictions even here. For example one of the inequalities which persisted at Oberlin was that girls were not permitted to have instruction in elocution nor to speak on Commencement Day.<sup>36</sup>

Failing in their efforts to open to women the doors of the eastern colleges for men these courageous women tried other avenues of approach to their goals. Although they could found no colleges themselves owing to lack of money, yet they could and did persuade men to found such institutions. Elmira College<sup>37</sup> and Vassar College,<sup>38</sup> both in New York, are monuments to the zeal of women in furthering the education of their own sex. Other women more daring than their sisters rapped at the doors of men's colleges and, in some instances, gained admission. Others travelled

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<sup>34</sup> Phillips, Wendell, 7th National Woman's Rights Convention. *History of Woman Suffrage*, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 639.

<sup>35</sup> *Woman's Rights Almanac*, 1858. p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *History of Woman Suffrage*, op. cit. Vol. 1, p. 144.

<sup>37</sup> Pamphlet Published by Elmira College.

<sup>38</sup> Haight, Elizabeth H., "Autobiography and Letters of Matthew Vassar," 1845.



in all parts of the country giving lectures on the right of woman to an education while others carried on the agitation at home until this education was an accomplished fact. Their end was not achieved until the twentieth century. However, when Vassar College was opened and endowed with an adequate sum of money and with adequate equipment, exclusively for the higher education of girls, the principle was established. Vassar was the first college for girls founded without an apology to the ghost of a dead tradition. When Matthew Vassar, in 1865, as an act of social justice, gave half a million dollars to found a college for girls because he believed that women had received from their Creator the same intellectual constitution as men and that they had the same right to intellectual culture and development, the fight for the higher education of woman was won.

There were many forces which contributed to the establishment of the principle that girls as well as boys should and could be liberally educated. None was more potent than the work which women did for their own sex. The contributions made by Emma Willard, Catherine Beecher and Mary Lyon in this field have already been mentioned. Through their founding of seminaries for girls and their very practical working out of the ideals for which they stood, they were instrumental in raising the whole tone of girl's seminaries throughout not only New York and New England but the south and west as well. The work of Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell in opening the medical profession to women is of unique importance. In the face of the most violent opposition which, at times stooped to personal abuse, they demonstrated that women could and would be trained as surgeons and physicians. The work of Olympia and Antoinette Brown in studying for the ministry and in filling pulpits with satisfaction to their congregations served as another spur to the opening of opportunities to women. Mrs. Hale's work as editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, a publication ostensibly of fashion but really an organ of liberal thought, stands out as a contribution to the movement, while the suffrage leaders, such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, agitated in season and out for better educational and professional opportunities for girls. Had it not been for the work of these women and of many more too numerous to mention, it is doubtful whether the end would have been attained so soon or in so satisfactory a manner. Also a large amount of credit should be given to the great army of intelligent and ambitious girls who seized and made use of the opportunities for a more liberal education as such opportunities were opened up to them. Hence it seems only fair to say that, in large measure, the history of the education of girls in the East is really a history of the effort which woman has made to educate herself.