

Dawson  
Digo.  
I

REPORT  
ON THE  
HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

*Presented to the Corporation of McGill University, October, 1884.*

BY PRINCIPAL SIR J. WILLIAM DAWSON, C.M.G., LL.D.

*(Printed by order of the Corporation.)*

In introducing this subject it may be well to recall the history of the movement in relation to the higher education of women in connection with the University. Our attention was first directed to it at the time of the establishment of the McGill Normal School in 1857, by which we were enabled to carry on classes for the preparation of women for the higher positions in the profession of teaching, and which has undoubtedly given a great stimulus to education generally throughout this Province. A little later the attempt was made to render the benefits of the Normal School and of our classes in the Faculty of Arts available to ladies not intending to be teachers; and at one time classes of ladies from the school of the late Miss Lyman, regularly attended my lectures in our old rooms at Burnside Hall. These efforts were, however, very imperfect, and could not be expected to succeed unless followed up with more definite provision for the work, and were not long continued. In 1870, when the University appealed to its friends for additional endowment, at a meeting held in the College library, in February of that year, the Rev. Dr. Wilkes moved a resolution to the effect that the University should, as early as possible, extend its benefits to women. The resolution was carried unanimously, and our late Chancellor, Judge Day,

pledged himself that it should receive attention. It was in pursuance of this resolution that on my return from England in the autumn of the same year, I endeavoured to enlist the leading ladies of the city and our college professors in the scheme for a Ladies' Educational Association, similar to those then recently established in the mother country. This association has since that time been one of the recognized institutions of the city, and has done an incalculable amount of good; though in recent years, more especially since the institution of the High School for Girls and of the Examinations for the Associate in Arts and Senior Associate established by this University in conjunction with the University of Bishop's College, there has been a growing demand for a more definite and systematic training, which those who had been active in connection with the Ladies' Association and the Examinations for women, felt must soon be supplied. As an early indication of the feeling of thoughtful and educated ladies, I should not forget to mention the Hannah Willard Lyman Memorial Fund, founded by pupils of that eminent educationist, and placed in the hands of this University, in anticipation of the establishment of a college for women under our auspices. Further indications were the endowment of the Trafalgar Institute as a college for women by the late Donald Ross, and the bequest of the late Miss Jane Scott; though these were not in immediate connection with this University. The means for carrying out our wishes did not, however, appear to be available; and when, last year, the Rev. Dr. Murray brought the subject before the Corporation, by his resolution in favour of the admission of women, there seemed no nearer prospect of effective action than at any previous period. In these circumstances, the Corporation, after collecting by means of a committee a certain amount of information, in my opinion wisely determined to wait for still further facts and developments before committing itself to any decisive action. There was the more reason for this, inasmuch as very partial success had attended the admission of ladies to the classes in some of the Universities in this country, while in the University of Toronto the subject was actively discussed, and Dr. Wilson, President of University College, had taken strong ground against the method of mixed classes. Some of the best models for imitation seemed also to be those in use in the mother country, respecting which our information was very imperfect, and to some

extent contradictory. In connection with this decision, I proposed, in visiting Great Britain, to study in as great detail as possible the methods in operation in that country, and to report on my return as to their applicability to our circumstances.

#### EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN BRITAIN.

In Great Britain, there can be no question that the movement for the higher education of women has become one of the most popular of the day; and in the interval between my visit of 1870 and that of 1883, the progress in this direction had rivalled that in popular education connected with the institution of board schools, and that in technical education arising from the founding of the numerous local colleges of science and art. All of these are products of the last ten or fifteen years, and unitedly they are effecting a stupendous educational revolution. Perhaps no indication of the importance attached to the higher education of women in England could be more impressive than the character of the meeting of the convocation of Oxford, in May last, for the final vote on the admission of women to the higher examinations, at which I had the pleasure of being present. The meeting was said to be one of the largest on record, and the Sheldonian Theatre was crowded with spectators of the highest class, who welcomed with acclamation the declaration of the result of 464 votes in favour of the new regulations to 321 against. Yet the question at issue was merely that of extending to women the privileges already granted by the University of Cambridge; and the number of students in the two Halls attached to the University of Oxford does not exceed 50, though under the new arrangements it will probably increase.

In considering from a practical point of view the provision for the higher education of women, two subjects specially attract our attention. *First*, the Means and Methods of Educational Training, and *Secondly*, the Examinations and Distinctions to which education leads. These are no doubt closely connected, since education without any examinations or degrees is deprived of its most valuable tests and *stimuli*, and since examinations tend to guide the efforts of educators; while on the other hand examinations without adequate means of genuine education become mere inducements to cramming. These two departments of the work may, however, be considered separately, with some advantage in so far as the clearness of our conceptions is concerned.

## GENERAL METHODS AND RESULTS IN BRITAIN.

The most general statement that can be made with reference to the educational side of the question in the mother country, is that the training of women in the higher subjects is everywhere based on the curriculum of the colleges for men. At first sight it would appear that courses of study still somewhat hampered with mediæval precedents, and largely controlled by the requirements of the examinations for learned professions, would not be perfectly adapted to the education of women in our time. But though this may be admitted in the abstract, in practice it is felt that it is better for the interests of women that they should attain to the standard established as the result of experience, and accepted as sufficient in all cases of educational and other employment where a liberal education is required. It thus happens that the ladies insist on having the same course of study and being subject to the same examinations with the male students. At the same time they avail themselves fully of those exemptions and options which are connected with honour studies, and which now give so great a range of possible training to the senior student. In this way there can be no doubt that experience will settle the precise lines of study most desired by and suitable for women; but the experience is scarcely of sufficiently long duration fully to determine this, and in the meantime much of the discussion as to the capacity of women for the intellectual work required of men, and as to possible injury from their being subjected to it, may be set aside as purely theoretical, or may be left to be solved by the judicious practical trials of experienced educators, and by the good sense of the lady students themselves. The last report of Girton College, Cambridge, which is one of the older colleges for women, gives, however, some interesting figures on this point. The number of students of this college who have taken Degree Certificates of the University, since its establishment, stands as follows:—

Mathematical Tripos.....	24
Classical Tripos .....	28
Moral Science Tripos .....	9
Natural Science Tripos.....	15
Historical Tripos.....	6
Theological Tripos.....	1
Ordinary Degree.....	24
Total.....	<hr/> 107

The report of Newnham College, which has not been so long in operation, and reaching up only to 1883, is as follows:—

Mathematical Tripos.....	5
Classical Tripos.....	10
Moral Science Tripos.....	9
Natural Science Tripos.....	9
Historical Tripos.....	11
	<hr/>
Total.....	44

showing a somewhat larger proportion in favour of Natural and Moral Science and History.

These lists show that the women distribute themselves over the honour subjects in the same manner with men, and that their tastes and capacities lead them quite as much to the older mathematical and classical studies as to the more modern honour subjects, the proportion of successful candidates for mathematical and classical honours being in the Girton list, to those for all the other subjects as 52 to 31, and in the Newnham list 15 to 29, or in both 67 to 60.

It is worthy of note that no less than 47 of the ladies in the Girton list had become professional teachers, and most of them in high departments of the profession, while only one is noted as having entered any other profession. This is a fact which indicates the prevailing determination of educated women to the profession of teaching, and the probability that this profession will ultimately fall largely into their hands. I have not the figures for Newnham, but have reason to believe the proportion there is quite as large.

#### SEPARATE OR MIXED EDUCATION.

In Britain, as in this country, the question of separate or mixed education of the sexes has been much discussed; but in this, as in other matters, the practical and free genius of the English people has set itself to work out the problem in real life, instead of debating it in a theoretical manner, and consequently we find a number of experiments in progress. These may be classified under three heads: First. What is sometimes called in this country "co-education," or the education of both sexes in mixed classes; 2nd. Separate education in colleges specially for women; and 3rd. Intermediate or eclectic methods, in which the two first are combined in various proportions. The co-existence

of these different methods has the good effect of enabling parents and students to make a choice of systems, and to avail themselves of that which they prefer, without establishing anything more than a friendly rivalry between the different kinds of institutions.

I found the method of mixed classes in successful operation in University College, London, and in University College, Bristol, in both of which women are admitted freely into the ordinary classes. I did not hear of any serious practical difficulty, except in the case of the French class at Bristol, in which a separation had become necessary, but this was attributed rather to the number of students than to any serious failure in discipline.

In addition to the cheapness and facility of this method, it was claimed for it by its friends that it fitted women better for the struggle of life in competition with men, and was thus suited to those who required this hardening process, because in the present social condition of England they would have to earn their own subsistence. It does not appear, however, to be commending itself to the taste of women generally, as the number of women availing themselves of it has of late years diminished rather than increased, and in Owens College, Manchester, where it was attempted under what seemed favourable circumstances, it has been abandoned. In London its success has evidently depended greatly on the prestige of University College, and on the existence of several good colleges for ladies alone, which allow those who prefer the separate system to pursue their education in this way. Some facts which came to my knowledge would lead me to infer that the education in mixed classes may be more dangerous to the health of young women than that in separate classes, but this may depend rather on the circumstances of those who enter these classes than on the system itself.

The method of education in separate colleges for women is carried out in the great college of Cheltenham, which has as many as 500 pupils and students; in Bedford, North London and Milton Mount Colleges and in the King's College classes in London, and it is also to be pursued in the great college founded by the late Mr. Holloway, whose buildings are being erected at Windsor. I had much pleasure in visiting the Cheltenham College and in conferring with its principal, Miss Beale, one of the most zealous and able of the educationists of England, and

who has brought this institution into the highest state of efficiency almost without extraneous aid. The college has an admirable building, which is eminent among English educational structures for the excellence of its arrangements for heating and ventilation; and in many respects it resembles the great American colleges like Vassar and Wellesley, except that it receives young girls and gives them a preparatory education, so that it embraces all grades of classes from those of an ordinary school up to those preparing for the honour B.A. of the University of London, to which its students go up for their degrees. The class studying for the B.A. at the time of my visit was only twelve in number, the greater part of the students being content to pass in some of the previous examinations. Last year it sent up eight successful candidates for the B.A. and fifteen for the intermediate, formerly known as the first B.A. examination. Its teachers are ladies, some of them graduates of London, and the whole establishment is pervaded with an air of refinement and Christian influence quite different from that in ordinary colleges for men. The students do not board together in the college, but in separate houses, each under the care of a lady recognized by the college, and capable of superintending the studies of the students, or having a tutor for that purpose. Other colleges of this kind, though not so large as that at Cheltenham, are conducted on similar principles, and a large number of the students who annually take degrees of the University of London are from institutions of this class.

The third method, which may be characterized as intermediate or eclectic, is that pursued at Girton and Newnham Colleges, Cambridge; Somerville and Lady Margaret Halls, Oxford, the Women's Department of Owens College, Manchester, and the classes of the Edinburgh Ladies' Educational Association. As existing at Cambridge and Oxford, which have taken the lead in this method, it is merely a development of the same system of separate colleges attached to the University, which is pursued in the education of men. Colleges for women come in as an ordinary feature in such an arrangement; and as it is usual for male students to pursue the greater part of their studies in their colleges under tutors, and to take advantage of intercollegiate or university lectures only to a limited extent, it naturally follows that the same rule should apply to the colleges for women.

I had the pleasure of visiting Girton, Newnham, Somerville Hall and the Women's Department of Owens College, and of conferring with Miss Louisa Stevenson, the Secretary of the Ladies' Association of Edinburgh. I am under special obligations also to Miss Bernard, the Principal of Girton, to Miss Helen Gladstone, the Vice-Principal of Newnham, to Miss Shaw Lefevre and Miss Haigh, of Somerville Hall, and Miss Wilson, of the Women's Department of Owens College, for kindness in answering my questions and in explaining the plans and regulations of those institutions; while I had also opportunities of discussing their methods and results with leading members of the universities with which these colleges are connected.

Newnham College, which may be taken as an example, has two halls, the South and North Hall, on the opposite sides of a road, at Newnham, a suburb of Cambridge. It is managed by a council of ladies and gentlemen, and is sustained by an association known as the Association for promoting the higher education of women. The resident staff consists of a principal, vice-principal, three lecturers and a secretary, all of whom are women. The Principal has special charge of the South and the Vice-Principal of the North Hall. Besides the resident staff there are a number of teachers, some of them lecturers and fellows of colleges and others ladies, engaged by the College to lecture to its students, and representing the subjects of mathematics, classics, moral science, natural science, history, divinity, English literature and modern languages. Students must be eighteen before entering. The course of study is based on the requirements of the University examinations, and all students are advised to take honour subjects. In pursuing some of these, it is expedient for them to attend the public lectures of certain of the professors of the University, and to this extent mixed education is allowed in the senior years. The full course extends over 9 to 12 terms, that is 3 or 4 years, and all students in residence must take the regular course, though certain courses of lectures are open to women, not students of the College, on obtaining permission of the Council. The buildings accommodate 80 students, and are plain, neat and well planned. Each student has one room, with a curtained recess for a bed. There are a library, study-rooms, class-rooms, and chemical and physiological laboratory, and a garden and lawn are attached to each hall for recreation. The students who



attend classes in Cambridge, walk into town in all weathers, and wear boots and garments suited to the work. I had the pleasure, by request of my friend Prof. Hughes, of delivering a short extempore lecture on the questions relating to *Eozoon* to a class of about 20 students, one-third of them ladies, in the Woodwardian Museum; and I found that the lectures of Professors Adams, Cayley, Dewar, Harcourt, Liveing, Lord Rayleigh, Seeley, Stuart and others, are open to the students of the women's colleges in their senior years.

The arrangements at Girton are in the main similar to those at Newnham, but Girton is at a greater distance (about two miles) from the town, and has a finer building than that of Newnham with somewhat more luxurious accommodation for the students, most of whom have two rooms; and it is considerably more expensive.

Owens College, Manchester, has now definitely provided separate classes for women in the Junior years, and admits them to the College lectures only after passing an examination equivalent to our Intermediate.

With reference to the relations of the sexes, the principles of all the colleges and halls connected with the English universities seem to be—(1) the separate residence of the women in their own colleges. (2) The supervision and tutorial help of lady-principals and tutors in the colleges. (3) The employment of lecturers sanctioned by the universities to conduct separate classes for the ladies in their own colleges. (4) Permission in the senior years and for special subjects to attend the public lectures of University lecturers, with or without a chaperone. (5) The preparation of the students for the University examinations, and as far as possible for honour certificates.

It is evident that education on these principles is different, practically, from the system of "co-education" introduced in University College, London, and in some colleges in the Western States and in this country. It combines much privacy and seclusion, and separate study under female influence of a high order, with permission under certain conditions to attend public lectures; and it is to be observed that the student of Girton or Newnham can, if she so pleases, complete her whole course of study without attending any mixed classes. It seems to me that this is quite as far as we should venture in the matter of mixed edu-

cation; and I think we could venture so far, provided that, at the end of the second year, we find a number of lady students prepared to go on with the work of the third and fourth years, and that endowments sufficient to continue the whole work in separate classes are not provided.

#### EXAMINATIONS, DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES.

In England the examinations for degrees are now everywhere open to ladies, but under different conditions. The University of London and the new Victoria University admit ladies to the degree of B.A. without any restriction; and at London they come up to receive their diplomas habited in gowns and hoods in the same manner with the male graduates—an arrangement which has at least the merit of producing uniformity in dress. In the University of St. Andrews the degree given to women is Licentiate in Arts, with the letters L.A., and this degree is placed by the University on the same educational level with B.A. The advantages of this expedient are that, while it gives the lady graduates an equal standing with the men, it prevents the apparent anomaly of the use of a term which has popularly been restricted to men, and leaves the University free to deal on independent grounds with the question of advanced degrees, should these be provided for women. The practical difficulties connected with this last question, and with the privileges accorded to graduates in reference to voting, to offices, etc., have probably influenced the older English universities in withholding the B.A. and merely giving a certificate of having passed the examinations. Another difficulty of course occurs from the change of name in case of marriage, which would require some attention in the keeping of the University registers; but this could probably be avoided by exacting a small fee for keeping the name on the University books with any changes which it might undergo.

The point most insisted on by the ladies managing the several colleges is, that the certificate or degree, whatever its nature, should be understood to be equal to that accorded to men. This is with them not merely a matter of sentiment, but a practical consideration, since it is necessary to place the women who graduate on an equality with other graduates in the competition for educational employments. I was assured by

several ladies of much influence in the movement, that they attached little importance to any letters after the names of the graduates, provided their equality was practically acknowledged. On the other hand it is certain that some colleges for ladies send up their graduating classes to London by preference, in consequence of its giving the degree of B.A., and I was informed that the regulations of the Victoria University were likely to be of such a character as to attract large numbers of ladies to its examinations, which it is hoped will be managed in such a manner as to avoid the evils alleged against the London Examinations, in the matter of cramming, and of a hard and fast adherence to certain text-books not always fitted to give scope to the most practical and advanced teaching.

#### ACTION OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY.

As to our own action in this matter, I have felt that this must practically be regulated, not so much by the theoretical views which we might be inclined to favour, as by the demand on the part of women for a higher education than that of the ordinary schools, and by the means placed at our disposal to establish classes for the purpose. On my return from England last summer, I found that the first of these conditions was fulfilled by the fact that as many as eight young women, who had passed as Associates in Arts, were prepared to proceed at least as far as the examinations for Senior Associate, and were very desirous that the University should aid them in their studies. In endeavouring to meet this demand, in conjunction with Rev. Canon Norman, the Vice-Chancellor of Bishop's College, and supported by the voluntary offers of assistance made by several of the professors, I was prepared to recommend to the corporation that we should co-operate with Bishop's College and with the Ladies' Educational Association in opening classes for women in the first year in Arts, provided the means to pay for this, without trenching on the ordinary income of the University, could be secured. The scheme, which seemed to rest on the possibility of such aid, had not advanced beyond provisional suggestions for the course of study required, and for establishing it under the auspices of the Ladies' Educational Association, when the financial difficulty was removed by the liberal gift of the Hon. Donald A. Smith, who, believing that special classes for ladies should

be established, placed at the disposal of the University for this purpose the sum of \$50,000 to be invested for the endowment of a college and classes for women. Under this endowment the classes have been commenced with the most gratifying prospects of success; the number of students entered being 24, of whom 11 desire to proceed to the Degree examinations. This I consider a large number, when we make allowance for the fact that no special preparation could be made for these classes in the schools of last winter, and that the classes could be advertised only for a few weeks before they were opened.

The arrangements for this session refer only to the work of the first year in Arts, and are in every respect similar to those for male students of that year, except that women are allowed to take German as equivalent to Greek. Three students, however, have entered for Greek, and it is likely that in subsequent years the proportion may be larger. We have been enabled to use for the present the new class-rooms in the Peter Redpath Museum, which are sufficient to accommodate the classes, and will thus avoid any expense for rooms. These arrangements, and the provisional regulations passed by the Faculty of Arts under the resolutions of the Corporation accepting Mr. Smith's benefaction, will suffice for the second year. Our students will then be able to enter for the Intermediate examinations and those for Senior Associate in Arts; and the question will remain how many desire to go on for the Degree examinations, and in what way the work of the third and fourth years will be provided for. These questions will have to engage the attention of the Governors and Corporation, and the manner of their solution must depend on the means which may be placed at disposal of the University for the work to be done. Provided that no additional endowment can be secured, it will be necessary to open some of our present classes in the advanced years to women, and even this will involve some expense in the provision of proper waiting rooms and probably of a lady superintendent of the classes, while it is not impossible that a portion of the students may decline to go on under these conditions. If, on the other hand, an additional endowment should be provided, separate provision can be made for the ordinary work, and at least for most of the honour studies, so that, as in England, a choice may be offered of separate and mixed classes. It is my

decided conviction that this choice will be necessary to enable us fully to realise our wishes in this important work, though I am quite prepared to consider the other alternative and to devise means for carrying it out, should this be necessary.

Should the classes increase in number of students, and separate tuition be provided in the third and fourth years, additional class-room accommodation will be required. But this subject will, in any case, have to engage the attention of the Board very soon, since the class-rooms used by the Faculties of Arts and Applied Science are now overcrowded. The requisite accommodation would, in my judgment, be best provided by the erection of a new building adapted to the wants of the Faculty of Applied Science, and which might be sufficiently large to contain rooms for the classes for women; or a building, which need not be large or expensive, might be erected for the Women's College. The classes may, without inconvenience, remain for some time at least, as at present, a Special Course under the Faculty of Arts; and there will, in the infancy of the scheme, be great advantage in this arrangement, as tending to render more uniform the course of study for both sexes, and to extend to the one any improvement which may be introduced with respect to the other; while giving to the women the full benefit of the apparatus, library and museum of the University.

Two subjects still remain for consideration: one is the relation of our classes for women to those of the Ladies' Educational Association, and another, our relation to colleges for ladies, as for instance the Trafalgar Institute, which might become affiliated.

With respect to the first of these, it must be borne in mind that, while some of the subjects usually taken up in the lectures of the Ladies' Educational Association are similar to those in the college course, others are different, and that numerous ladies benefit by these lectures who could not take a college course. The commencement of college classes, therefore, affords no good reason for the discontinuance of these lectures. It will, however, be possible to open such of the college lectures as may be suitable to the members and students of the Association, and in this way its functions may be extended and its financial responsibilities diminished. This combination is carried on with great success by the Edinburgh Association, which has thus been coming into closer connection with the University, and has at the same

time been instructing large classes of students not intending to take a full University course.

With reference to affiliated colleges for women, these might either be altogether independent and situated beyond the limits of Montreal, so that their students would merely come up for examinations, or there might be colleges or halls in Montreal, in which, as in the Cambridge and Oxford colleges, the students might reside and receive a portion of their tuition while attending the University classes. Such a foundation as the Trafalgar Institute might in this way enjoy the benefits of connection with the University in the diminution of expense, in extending its course of study, and in obtaining for its students the University examinations and certificates, without losing any part of its distinctive character.

I think it quite possible also that the McGill Normal School may, in connection with the classes for ladies, do much for the greater elevation and improvement of its academy class. The arrangements for this have already been under consideration of the Normal School Committee and the Principal and Professors of the school, and it is hoped that proposals for securing these advantages may be presented to the Corporation of the University before the end of the session.

On the whole, I think the Corporation of the University has reason to congratulate itself on having already attained to a safe and progressive position in this important matter; and that, by continuing its work in the direction already pursued, it has an assured prospect of taking a leading place among Canadian universities in the great enterprise of providing for the higher education of women.

McGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
ACC. NO. 699/16
REF.