CO-EDUCATION AT COLBY.

To the Trustees and Faculty of Colby University:—

Gentlemen: We, the undersigned, Alumnæ of Colby University, take this method of placing on record an expression of our regret at the measures lately adopted at that institution with reference to the higher education of women.

Nineteen years ago, the trustees of the college opened its doors to young women on precisely the same terms as to young men. The result has been that a limited number of young women have availed themselves of the privileges so generously and unexpectedly offered, and have completed the prescribed course of study with a measure of credit to themselves and of satisfaction to their friends. They have won a fair porportion of the honors which the University had to bestow, and by their single-hearted devotion to study have aided materially in raising the standard of scholarship to its present degree of excellence. They have also by their presence heightened the moral tone of college life and have ameliorated its social conditions. This much we think will be granted by both the friends and enemies of co-education.

To-day the college virtually retreats from her position of a score of years ago, and, in effect, withdraws from women some of the privileges at that time so royally bestowed. The sexes, she decrees, shall no longer mingle in the class-room, but shall recite in separate departments. Women shall cease to compete with men for scholarly position, and shall content themselves with such honors as the University may see fit to bestow upon them. They are also advised to pursue a course of study modified to suit what are supposed to be their special needs.

This repentance on the part of the college seeks, indeeed, to justify itself as a higher generosity. She will establish, she says, within her precincts, a college for women, in which they may go on to even higher achievements than hitherto; where they may receive advantages which under the old system were impracticable. Not the less, however, does her present action seem to us a repentance. She virtually confesses that she made a mistake twenty years ago, and thus places her present Alumnæ in the anomalous position of being the visible evidences of that mistake. The *reductio ad non desideratum*, to which she confesses that she has arrived in her solution of the problem of co-education, invalidates the results which she has already reached, disparages the daughters whom she has already reared.

As Alumnæ of the college, to whom we owe allegiance for her generosity in the past, as well as a watchfulness for her best interests in the future, above all, as women, and friends of the higher education of woman, we earnestly protest against the course of action now entered upon. It is in no spirit of antagonism that we offer this protest. We simply deem it fair that both sides of the question should be considered. We speak solely because we cannot see what seems to us an injustice done, and remain silent. That we may make our reasons clearly understood, we ask leave to examine the position of the college as set forth in the circular lately addressed by the authorities to the women-graduates of the institution.

We are told that it is the conclusion of a majority of the college faculty that "an ideal college course for young men would not be an ideal course for young women, any more than the training which would be most advantageous for a bass singer would be advisable for a soprano voice."

But, as we understand it, the ideal college course bears the same relation to a man's or a woman's work in life, as the knowledge of the rudiments of music bears to the application of that knowledge to musical utterance in the bass or the soprano registers. The ideal college course does not specialize. It trains neither men nor women as such. Its proper object is to develop mind as the basis of character. Its province is not to fit a person for an occupation in life, but to train every faculty of the mind, that it may be fitted to take up afterward any special training requisite for a chosen occupation. It fits men to be neither fathers nor lawyers, women to be neither mothers nor school-teachers. It has the same aim as the common school education, of which it is but the amplification. Being general, then, and not special, in its aims, it should not be essentially different for men and women.

It is objected to this that women are different from men, and should, therefore, have a different training. But in what does this difference consist? The essential mental difference between men and women, though very real, yet presents difficulties to him who would state it. We believe, however, that it will be sufficiently accurate for the purposes of our argument to assume the truth of the commonly accepted statement, that is, that men and women differ chiefly in their intellectual processes, their methods of thought. With woman, the emotions control; with man, the reason. He proceeds in the methodical, business-like way of observation and conclusion, requiring the sanction of reason at every step. She is intuitive, anticipating the conclusion without going through the intervening steps in the argument. She *feels* that a given course of action is right or wrong, though she may not be able to tell why. He reasons it out first, and then bases his action on the conclusion. There seems no cogent reason, then, why a man and a woman might not profitably take the same college course, that is, might not attain to the same end—mental culture—by different methods of thought.

It is objected to this, that "a scheme of general culture for a man may be a monstrously special culture for a woman," and that, as woman's sphere is the home, "the culture most appropriate and desirable in that sphere would be obtained chiefly from a study of the humanities."

But the chief office of the humanities is confessedly to exert a refining influence; and as men are supposed to have less of refinement than women, it would seem, on the other hand, that a college course for men should embrace the humanities in even larger measure than should a course for women.

The truth is that no one study or class of studies, whether literary or scientific, disciplines a single power of the mind. It was the old idea of the mathematical studies that they trained the reasoning faculties exclusively. As they are taught to-day, it is found that they give an almost equal discipline to the intuitive faculties. Read the testimony of President Dwight of Yale in *The Forum.* "An admirable mathematical teacher, a friend of mine," he says, "affirms that imagination has the widest range in his science, and that imagination is even the largest element in Mathematics." Who that has studied Algebra, Analytical Geometry and the Calculus in all their beautiful depth of meaning, will not say that this testimony is true?

The pure Mathematics are the key to a door that no other studies can unlock. To the appreciative mind, they fill all space and time with beautiful possibilities. They tell of symmetry, harmony, order, law. The visible world is builded on them. They lie at the foundation of all art, whether of that which appeals to the eye or the ear. Not only have they been the nurture of the sturdiest thinkers of our race, but they have also fed the life of the bravest dreamers. The man or woman who has not drunk deeply at this fount of inspiration has missed much of the beauty and glory of living.

What shall we say of the physical sciences? They afford rich food for the reasoning powers, it is true, but are they not also deeply suggestive to the intuitive powers? From the the life that gleams in the stars above us to the life that pulses through the heart within us, from the sweep of a comet along its curve to the whirl of an atom at our feet, throughout their broad range, do they not impel toward the Source of all life? Psychology and Logic, what are they but the science of our own impulsive thought and speech, the analysis of our aspirations and our prayers, the knowledge of our own soul-life in its inner depths? In all these studies, an earnest, thoughtful woman finds something attractive, something akin to her own emotional nature. If she have that in her that thrills to the music of Sophocles or Milton, she will find the golden heart of Mathematics, if she have the chance.

The women-graduates of Colby know the worth of these studies. In a letter written a few years ago by ex-President Pepper and read before the American Institute of Instruction at Newport, R. I., he says: "It has been found that the average rank of the young women at Colby has been considerable higher in pure Mathematics, Physics and Natural Science, and Metaphysics than in the other departments, highest in Physics and Nat. Science, next in Metaphysics, and a little lower in pure Mathematics." Add to this the known fact that the complaints of the course of study for the last twenty years, have not come from the young women, and what better testimony can we have to the appreciation on the part of women-students of the value of the present curriculum?

Every woman knows, when she comes to an understanding of herself and her needs, that she never has attained to her birthright until she enters this "charmed circle" of the sciences.

What is there in such studies, or in the discipline that they afford, that renders them less appropriate for women, less desirable as an influence in the home-life, than the literary studies? The latter give us, indeed, the thought of man in all the ages, the record of his brave gropings after truth, his struggle with the beast to attain the angel, his pathetic, toilsome journey from paradise toward immortality. But after all, they begin and end with man, while the scientific studies lead us toward God.

Among the biographical records of this century may be found the story of a life that closed at Naples in 1872. It is the story of a woman gifted with all high womanly qualities, with love for the beautiful in art and nature, with sympathy with all human needs, and above all with an unwonted fervor of religious feeling. Says her biographer : "All things fair were a joy to her—the flowers brought from our rambles, the sea-weeds, the wild birds she saw, all interested and pleased her. Everything in nature spoke to her of that great God who created all things. Above all, in the laws which science unveils step by step, she found ever renewed motives for the love and adoration of their Author and Sustainer."

The inspiration which fed this marvellous life was derived from the study of the mathematical and physical sciences. From her childhood they were her delight. At the age of ninety we still find her at her desk revising and completing her treatise on the "Theory of differences" and studying the science of Quaternions. Her mathematical and physical researches take rank with those of the most eminent minds of her day. It was said that not twenty men in France were capable of following the profound reasoning of her "Mechanism of the Heavens," a work in which she attempted to bring the *Mécanique Céleste* of Laplace within the reach of a larger range of students.

Of course, not one woman in thousands could equal Mary Somerville ; but does not her work and character prove that such studies are not necessarily inappropriate for women ? Does it not reveal the existence in woman's nature of undreamed possibilities that the most favorable conditions might develop ? Read the record of that sweet and noble life and see that the wife and mother was no less of a woman because of her strength of intellect and her wide range of thought.

Look at the home-life with its needs and opportunity. Here is imagination to be guided, reason to be disciplined, morality and religion to be inculcated, enthusiasm to be enkindled. Shall anything less than the best and truest culture be laid upon this altar, anything less comprehensive than the whole range of knowledge, anything more special than the equal discipline of every power of the woman's soul ? The wife and mother must be a companion, comprehensive, appreciative, sympathetic, an arbiter of moral questions, an impulse toward the good and the true. She must point her children to the beautiful in art and nature, and awaken tastes that adorn and ennoble human life. Can she do this adequately if she is only half-educated, if she has studied art to the partial exclusion of nature ? She is the mother of sons as well as of daughters. It will not suffice to tell *them* that she *feels* a given course of action to be wrong. She must tell them that she *knows* it, and tell them *why*.

Is it necessary to argue for the good to society? Every observant person knows that the influence of an educated woman cannot be confined to her own family circle. It touches society at many points.

Let us say, then, that it is for the sake of the home-life, and its possibilities in the hands of educated women, that we ask you for a continuance of opportunity for liberal culture for the young woman of New England, a liberal culture, too, which shall be *unrestricted in its methods* and *aims*.

The college has thus far been training "women who possess mental and moral qualities of an exceptional order." It asks now for an inferior grade of endowment to train for wives and mothers. Can any one fail to see the conclusion of this syllogism? Something less than the highest of mental and moral qualities is good enough for the home!

But the heart of the question has not been reached yet. At bottom, it is a fear that woman will be made less of a woman and more of a man by education; the old fear that made men hesitate centuries ago before allowing her to learn the alphabet.

Is there any ground for such a fear? We believe not, for this reason. It is a fact, as every critical yet sympathetic observer of the mental life of women knows, as women themselves know when they come to know themselves, that whatever study or class of studies is given a woman, she will study in her own way. Feeling first, thought second; intuition first, reasoning last; this is for her the necessary order. Her Creator knew it when he placed in her nature the germ of all growth. She may be trusted to bend any study to the exigencies of her own imperative, emotional life.

"Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears" will shine equally from the page of Homer and the deduction of Euclid. Even sociological science will mean to her but the steady march of humanity toward the divine Perfection. From all flower-fields of thought she will cull the nectar of the gods, and find the bread of life in every harvest-field. Why may she not, why *ought* she not to take "all knowledge for her province," when she so easily learns to eliminate from it the essentials for spiritual as well as mental growth?

If woman are made less feminine by the sciences, then men are made less virile by the humanities. If it is deterimental to a woman to reason, it is equally detrimental to a man to feel. If a one-sided culture, or a half-culture is more appropriate and desirable for anybody, in any sphere of life, than a symmetrical development, then human progress is all a mistake, the cloister of the Dark Ages is better than the fireside of to-day, the Eden behind us is better than the Heaven before us.

What more shall we say? Has not the college taught us that over and above all present uses, for self, home or society, a truly liberal culture opens outward toward the "many mansions" of the great Hereafter? Thus, after all, in what lies the real worth of any study to man or woman, save in the wider sympathy, the more consecrated purpose, the nobler aspiration, that shall be born of it, the silent, inappreciable, yet potent force that slowly lifts the life to diviner levels? Shall not the broad-minded educator be able to forget the sex of his pupil, while he contemplates these "vaster issues" to which all education tends?

We come now to the consideration of the second point in the two-fold argument of the college. We are told that "when young men and women have reached the age of admission to college, competition and rivalry between them is unnatural, unwholesome, inexpedient, and disagreeable to both parties and to their instructors as well."

As regards the disagreeableness of that competition, when shown to be a fact, there can be no argument. "There is no disputing about tastes." The majority of the faculty of Colby have recorded the fact of its disagreeableness to them.

But the disagreeableness to the young men and women themselves is confessedly a matter of conjecture, a probability, and not an ascertained fact. If such competition is dissagreeable to the young men, the fact could be easily accounted for. So far as the young women are concerned, it seems to us that they have, by their action for the last nineteen years, shown that such competition has not been disagreeable to them. If it has been, why have they, in constantly increasing numbers, entered Colby and persevered in their course there, when female colleges all over the land would have welcomed them?

There may be in individual cases a dislike to competition, but the uniform courtesy and kindness, the mutual respect and cordiality evinced in the relations between male and female students, the life-long friendships, and the marriages consummated between men and women graduates, and even between graduates of the same classes, all seem to warrant the conclusion that competition and rivalry for scholarly position are not disagreeable to the parties most directly concerned. These facts show that the inevitable rivalry for intellectual pre-eminence has been carried on, in the majority of cases, in a large-minded spirit, a fitting response to the noble liberality of the University in throwing wide her doors to men and women alike.

This whole question, however, of the higher education of women and how it shall be best secured, should be viewed, we think, not from the stand-point of any personal feeling. A question so vital to the interests of society should be treated in a large, impersonal manner. What is agreeable or disagreeable in the premises, should have no place in the argument.

As regards the unnaturalness of competition between men and women in the class-room, "the evident intention of nature," it is said. 'is that masculine and feminine thought should be not competitive but complemental."

Nature's intention with respect to masculine and feminine thought can be fairly ascertained, not by observing nature at any one time, but by observing the general tendency that appears in nature since masculine and feminine thought began to be exercised. Any unprejudiced person, studying the trend of social life from that time to the present, will say that it is the evident intention of nature that masculine and feminine thought should gradually become competitive. This, it seems to us, is the only conclusion that the premises will warrant.

Or will it be said that the intent of nature with regard to masculine and feminine thought is to be ascertained from the observed difference between such thought as viewed in all time? But this difference, as we have seen, is only a difference in mode of action. Men and women think in different ways. Is that any reason why it may be unnatural for them to think to the same end? to strive together for the same end by different methods? Nay, is it not the evident intention of nature with respect to masculine and feminine thought, that it *should* seek the same end, though in each case by a different process? that the thought of men and women should be complemental, that is, each method supplying what the other lacks, helpful, sympathetic; yet also competitive, moving on toward the same goal?

It is only when we think of competition as involving a moral element that it becomes objectionable. Competition is the animation of the business world and is highly beneficial until it becomes intolerant of the rights of others. But even there, what is the reasonable remedy when that inevitable competition produces animosity? Shall we drive all but one of the competing tradesmen out of town, or shall we insist that they carry on their competition in harmony with the moral precept, "Live and let live"? Here, however, in the class-room, the competition is for an intellectual end and may, as we know, be carried on without envy or animosity. We therefore cannot regard it as objectionable.

We find competition everywhere in life. Even in the home we find men and women competitive, that is, striving for the same end though by different means. In the church and the drawing-room they viewith each other for moral excellence and social popularity.

Competition between masculine and feminine thought even becomes necessary at times. Whenever a woman steps out from the home to earn her own maintenance, she of necessity comes into competition with men who are engaged in the same occupations. Whether as author, musician, artist, teacher, or mercantile laborer, in whatever occupation an educated woman is likely to engage, she invariably becomes a contestant with men. The present indications are that she will become his in an even greater degree. Here, too, let it be remembered, she is ju ged by the quality of her work. She can excuse no lack of thorough ness, no failure to win success, on the ground that she is a woman. By the results of her labor she stands or falls precisely as man does.

The sphere of the typical woman may be the home: but all women do not marry, in the very nature of the case can not marry; and, even of those who do marry, many are *compelled* to engage in a contest with men, which means to them their own and their children's daily bread. Even those who are mothers may find leisure, after the more pressing cares of motherhood are over, to undertake some work which shall contribute to their own development or the service of their race. They may aspire to the prizes of art or authorship, organize philanthropies, engage in missionary labors, inaugurate social reforms, in all of which undertakings they come into competition with men. Such a state of society may be unnatural; but, as the present phase of our social development, it must be allowed for in framing theories of education. These may not be normal women, but it cannot be that Colby University wishes us to infer that she offers to educate only normal women, only prospective wives and mothers. Her province is to educate *men* and *women*, to give them the means of a liberal culture, not to prescribe special courses of study in law, theology, or household hygiene.

As to the alleged unwholesomeness of class-room association between the sexes, we offer testimony founded upon our own experience and observation. This testimony may not, indeed, cover the whole ground, but we think it should have a degree of weight. It is not the opinion simply of theorists, but of those who have had the best of opportunities for judging.

Facing, then, the question whether we found the class-room conditions at Colby to be unwholesome, we answer that on the other hand we found them to be most salutary. We know that we were helped and benefited by our association with the young men in the class-room. We believe, too, that it was mainly our association with them there, and not outside, from which we derived benefit.

That association furnished us an additional incentive, gave us an opportunity to compare the results of other methods of study with those of our own, initiated us into the workings of the masculine intellect, enlarged our ideals and sympathies; in short, gave us a *breadth of mental and social culture* that we could never have attained by ourselves. The bracing atmosphere of the recitation-room was to us a continuous object-lesson in mental and social ethics.

Women, when educated with those of their own sex exclusively, exhibit tendencies which, in our opinion, are prejudicial to the truest culture. We believe it to be an admitted fact that it is difficult, in classes composed exclusively of young men or of young women, to keep up the intellectual tone to that degree of excellence which obtains in mixed classes. Some of us can testify to this fact from our own experience as pupils or teachers before or since our college-life.

Furthermore, let us say, we were not conscious, while in the recitation-rooms at Colby, of being placed in any unnatural attitude of mind. Most of us had been trained with young men in the fitting-schools. It seemed to us natural and proper to continue in that way. There was not on our part any protest against the anomaly of the situation, whether formulated or unformulated. We were too much in earnest for sentimentalism, too busy for any approach to a weak coquetry. We believe it is the admission of the faculty that we conducted with womanly dignity. We never forgot that we were women, and yet we never felt that it was especially necessary to remember it. The way was smoothed so pleasantly by our instructors and the majority of our class-mates, that we found no exercise for any unusual amount of courage or self-reliance. It was perseverance, not courage or self-reliance, that chiefly enabled us to complete our course. Not the least among the advantages of our college life, do we count the friendships which we won through the daily intercourse of the recitation. We know the remark has been made that it is impossible for a young woman to go through a college like Colby without losing something from her womanly modesty. But we think it would be a most instructive experiment to compare in this respect fifty young women educated at Colby, Oberlin or Wesleyan, with an equal number educated at Smith, Wellesley or Vassar.

It is doubtless inevitable that women educated with men lose some of their diffidence and a part of their self-consciousness; but these are not the essentials of true modesty. Women bred to the austerities of the pure Mathematics, braced into earnestness by a real contest for mental excellence; is it such women that make the scathing protest of Miss Phelps' a shameful necessity? In the proposed system at Colby, where the sexes are to mingle only in a social way, can we reasonably expect any factor to be evolved that shall be more corrective of the evils of modern society than the past system has been?

As to the statement that freedom of discussion and question is impossible in the presence of both sexes, we can only say that we never found it to be so. We never chanced upon topics that we were unable to discuss freely and impersonally, if we wished to do so. If there was any lack of free discussion on the part of timid individuals, it was their own fault and not the fault of the system. Something has been said of a hostility which seems to have developed in those class-rooms where the young women have been present in considerable numbers, a hostility that has been prejudicial to the best conduct of the recitation. But the moral and social conditions of the class-room are largely under the control of the instructor. This hostility, if it has arisen, is due to individual characteristics and should be treated accordingly. It cannot have occurred in so large a number of classes as to warrant the conclusion that the system has been fairly tried.

During the last fifteen years, the impression has been allowed to go out from Colby that the presence of the young women in the classes has been a spur to masculine effort, and has helped to civilize college manners. Special instances of these facts have come within our own experience. If these results have been unwholesome, then we do not understand the meaning of the term.

Is it also an unwholesome effect of co-education at Colby that the young women have uniformly set the example of honesty and thoroughness in their methods of study? The faculty well know that surreptitious aids to classical study have been almost entirely unknown among the women-students, and also that the latter have never devoted much time to a search for electives requiring the least possible expenditure of mental effort.

On one further point are we obliged to differ with our Alma Mater. She justifies the association of boys and girls in the class-rooms of the public schools on the ground that their mental processes are not then so dissimilar as in after-life.

This is the result of observations made at Colby. But how can observations made at Colby, where there are only men and women and no boys and girls, have the force of those made by parents and school-teachers? *They* do not think it by any means certain that the mental processes of boys and girls may not be as totally dissimilar *in kind* as those of men and women. The truth is, it seems to us, that boys and girls find no anomaly in their relations as class-mates, simply because they have been accustomed to such relations from the beginning of their school life, and not because they are, virtually, of neither sex until the college doors swing open to them.

Having carefully examined the two-fold argument of the college, we regard the present measure as unjustifiable on any grounds presented. We think, however, that the "new departure" may possibly be justified in the minds of the authorities on the ground of expediency.

It is feared, perhaps, that, as the number of women students increase, the ablest young men, to escape competition with them, may be gradually drawn away to other colleges. The records of the institution may indicate such a tendency already. The result would be in a few years classes composed chiefly of exceptional young women, with only a small number of young men, and these of only average ability. This would, of course, be a disastrous result.

But is this tendency, if it exist, due entirely to the presence of women? Was it not the same before women were admitted, and in even greater degree than at present? Examine the old catalogues for the twenty years prior to the admission of women and find this to be a fact.

If there has been an increased falling away on the part of men students during the past nineteen years, is it the ablest that have gone away? Is it not possible, too, that women may have left the college in as great a proportion as men?

It would be profitable, perhaps, to compare Colby with other colleges in this respect. It might be seen that college training is always and everywhere a sifting process. If this process has really increased of late at Colby, it may be due to the increase of wealth. Young men may be now drawn more to Yale and Harvard because they can better afford such expense. It may be due to the rigidity of the curriculum, and the modern demand for superficiality at the expense of thoroughness. It may be some fault in the administration in the past. But to-day, with the encouraging outlook, with the infusion of youth and hope and energy into her managing boards, there would seem to be no possible flaw in Colby's administration.

Justice certainly demands this. It should not be *taken for granted* that the young women are the cause of any *supposed* defection in numbers. The matter should be sifted to the bottom before they are practically turned out.

Having, therefore, examined the argument presented, and also the possible argument of expediency, we are obliged to confess that we regard the measure lately adopted at Colby with reference to the higher education of women, as resting on no justifiable ground. We regard the present course of study as sufficiently well adapted to the needs of young women who may be seeking a *general* and not a *special* education. We should welcome any expansion of the course in the direction of literature, art and political science, that would not make these elective with more disciplinary studies. We do not think it just to us or to the Alumni that the diploma of the insitution be conferred under less rigid conditions than those at present in force.

The mingling of the young men and women in the class-room we regard as highly beneficial to both in many respects, as a natural state of things, and as in harmony with the present condition of society. To deprive women students of this privilege is to give them *much less than the best* which the college affords. We see no advantages to accrue from the new plan of two co-ordinate colleges that are not better obtained by the old method. We believe it will be the inevitable result, after a few years, that the standard of scholarship in each college will gradually deteriorate; and we fear that the result will be that women will in time be entirely excluded from Colby.

We believe, too, that our views meet the approval of the older, more thoughtful, and fairer-minded of the Alumni, as we believe that they coincide with the wishes of the women undergraduates. We know that the cause of co-education has many friends all over our land, who are dissappointed at the result which has been precipitated here. We think that public opinion, when it understands the real condition of things at

Colby, will sustain us in our position. We have waited for some one to speak in our behalf, but it seems to be our part to take the initiative in a cause that most directly concerns ourselves.

It may be expedient for the college to take this step, but we are obliged to ask the question, is it right and just? Let us not evade the real issue. This is not merely a question of whether men and women shall recite together or not; of whether women shall study this or that; of the advisability of co-education or co-ordinate education. Everyone knows that it lies deeper. We have tried to show you how it touches the dearest interests in our lives. In its wide outreach it means far more.

If we approach this matter at all, honesty forces us to the heart of it. The root of the whole question lies here. The old baseless prejudice against the admission of women to Colby is not quite dead. It would have died in time, but twenty years have hardly been long enough for the college to adjust herself to the new order. The average woman student has fewer interests outside of college work than has her brother. The result in that her scholarship compares favorably with and even sometimes surpasses his. From long custom the male student has come to regard mental superiority as his prerogative. If competition with women had always been the rule of college life, it would be no more disagreeable or unnatural than competition with his male classmates.

The question asks itself, would the same result have followed if the young women had shown only mediocrity instead of excellence? Have they not taken *too many prizes* for their own good?

Another question is forced into speech. Can we think it the part of a Christian institution of learning, one whose aim has ever been to uphold a lofty standard of intellectual excellence and above all to develop a symmetrical Christian manhood, can we think it the part of such an institution to give hostages to a spirit of envy and jealousy, to an illogical and irreligious prejudice, and to do an injustice that good may come? We impugn no motives. This is not a matter that requires personal vituperation. We forget not that many of you are warm and valued friends of ours. Let us then put the question in another form. Ought *we*, Alumnæ of Colby, to allow her fair honor to be tarnished while we remain silent?

She is *our* college now; ours by your bounty of two decades ago; ours by that long four years' struggle that tried us as gold in the fire; ours by that sacred legacy from the dead, who, had they not passed beyond all human speech, would enter more than one protest in our behalf; ours too by gift of a divine Providence, which moulds men and measures to its sovereign yet beneficent ends. This is not a "men's college, extending its courtesies to women." It is a college for *men and women*, or our diplomas are a sham. Nor is this a question of courtesy : it is a question of justice.

Let us be honest at least. If it be expedient for Colby University to close her doors to women, why should she not say so? If it be policy, for the sake of an increase of numbers, to invite hither young women to study music, art, and literature, and give them the diploma of a liberal education, why should she not say so? If the competitive system of rank and prizes is to blame for all this dissension, let it be so acknowledged and remanded to the childhood of civilization. Every one recognizes the existence of other measures of intellectual excellence.

For what increase of numbers or of wealth can compare with the high privilege of being consciously the chief formative influence for the youth of our State? Why should Colby University enter with inferior institutions a vulgar race for popularity? Her instructors in their several departments yield to none in learning and fine manhood. Her Alumni are found in high places all over our lands, and wherever the demand is for honest and helpful endeavor. Her benign influence broods over a thousand homes.

Out of the past she has come to us, a past wrought in toilsome effort, consecrated with prayer and sacrifice. Among our cherished heir-looms are her brave and beautiful traditions. They tell us how her founders laid their all upon these altars, stinting their children's bread that every spare dollar might speed "the glorious cause." They tell of how faithful men wrought in undeserved obscurity ; how

> "They forgotten and unknown,
> Young children gather as their own
> The harvest that the dead have sown."

They tell us, too, how sorely fell the storm and stress of civil war, yet how the brave old college struggled on ; then how at last, friends came, wealth flowed in, and how when her semi-centennial dawned, Colby's existence was assured.

Then came a change. They who had received her administration as a legacy from the past, men of broad comprehension, looking out upon modern life and its needs, and seeing that justice demanded that woman should have an equal chance with man for development, took a brave step forward, enlarged the scope of the institution and threw open its doors to women.

Its sphere was widened; but its aims remained the same, to inculcate "sound learning" and weld that learning into Christian character. In all her past, Colby has never swerved from that ideal. Through poverty, obscurity and almost failure, unmoved by the example of others and the demand for superficial education, she has held the curve of her progress true to its predestined law.

To-day, as the twentieth century dawns, she sees herself nearing the perihelion of prosperity. Independent, richly endowed by the friends of co-education, graced with learning and prestige, her future assured, conscious of being an inspiration in the lives of hundreds, shall she bend now from the aim which has bound her for nearly three-fourths of a century? Shall she lower now her standard of scholarship and her ideal of the perfect justice? Shall she, for the sake of an increase in numbers, do an injustice to children who love her, and throw open her doors to superficiality and its train of evils?

Both the friends and enemies of co-education know this: Colby University is the only college in northern New England that gives to women the means of a comprehensive and thorough culture. She is, too, we believe, the oldest institution in the country that has ever admitted women to full collegiate honors. Is it any wonder that women who know this, who want the liberal culture and its privileges saved to themselves and their sisters, burn with a sense of injustice at the adoption of this new measure?

Gentlemen, you have our protest. Will you kindly reconsider your action in this matter? It *cannot* have been canvassed by you in all its bearings. Your generosity has given us the ability to judge. Let that and our sincerity be the apology for speaking.

If a mistake be made here to-day, the life of a generation will be all too short to correct it.

The Infinite purpose works with us or without us, but earth grants us no greater privilege than to be consciously at one with the Divine.

Mary Lowe Carver,	Class of '75
Louise H. Coburn,	" " '77
Elizabeth Mathews,	" " '79
Minnie Mathews Mann,	" " '80
Kate E. Norcross,	" " '81
Mary A. Gould	" " '84

Minerva E. Leland,	Class of '82
Bertha L. Soule,	" " '85
Julia E. Winslow,	" " '86
Bessie R. White,	" " '86
Mary E. Pray,	" " '87
Bessie A. Mortimer,	" " '87
Winnifred H. Brooks,	" " '87
Lilian Fletcher Smiley,	" " '88
Alice E. Sawtelle,	" " '88
Mary E. Farr,	" " '88
Mary L. Tobey,	" " '89
Hattie M. Parmenter,	" " '89
Addie F. True,	" " '90
Cornie M. Spear,	" " '90

Waterville, Maine, September, 1890.