

Co-ordination at Colby.

Twenty years ago Colby University became pledged to the cause of higher education among women. Thus she came into accord with the progressive spirit of the age, which believes that man has no monopoly either on brains or on opportunities for improving them. Whatever differences may exist between the minds of men and women, each class has an undeniable right to the special development of its own talents.

Colby partially recognized this fact ; opened her doors on absolutely equal terms to both sexes, and became a co-educational institution.

To most people the plan seemed to work admirably, and so something of a sensation was caused when, two years ago, it was proposed to substitute for co-education, co-ordination. After much discussion, the new scheme was adopted, and its results awaited with fear and trembling. Many friends of the college are still dubious in regard to the change. Recognizing the rights of women to education, they yet do not see why co-education did not answer the purpose as well as the more cumbersome co-ordination. Some do not fully understand the scheme, and so do not offer any opinion in regard to it ; others are wondering whether the experience of two years has substantiated the hopes of the incorporators of the new system. It is for the benefit of these persons that the ORACLE, in its attempt to be a true mirror of college life, has ventured the present article.

Why was co-ordination introduced ? What are the points in its favor ? What are in opposition ? What is shown by two years of trial ? What is the probable future of the plan ?

Colby has claimed that the small college gives to its students in personal instruction, and intercourse with professors an advantage which far outweighs the advantages of larger institutions. Hence, as her classes increased in size, she must either abandon this claim, or else make a division of classes into sections. Perhaps, this alternative suggested the idea of the natural division by sexes. At any rate, the idea arose, and co-

education was once more brought to court and carefully examined. The result of this examination has been already indicated by the expression "Colby partially recognized" the spirit of the age. She had emphasized the rights of women to education, but had forgotten or ignored the fact of the fundamental differences of temperament or talent between the sexes, and the consequent need of separate training.

This fundamental difference of nature is clearly recognized everywhere, and it is no disgrace, but rather an honor for a man to be manly, and a woman to be womanly. The fondness of the girl for her dolls and of the boy for his marbles or top are but types of domesticity in the woman and business talent in the man. It is unnecessary to illustrate this matter further. A recent work called "The Presumption of Sex" shows the difference completely in the matter of the disagreeable qualities of each sex to the other. It is to be hoped, however, that the agreeable qualities would make a much longer work.

Co-education makes men and women equal, in the sense of being absolutely alike. Whereas, they are equal only in the sense of being equally important to humanity in quite different lines of activity. Each sex, therefore, in its higher education should have special attention paid to its own characteristics. This attention cannot be given under co-education. Colby's experience has shown the boys to be more interested than the girls in business affairs, not directly connected with college work, but as important to life training. So far, also as the mysteries of sorority life can be fathomed, the boys are more concerned in their social relations to each other. Physical capacities also cause the boys to spend much more time and energy in the rougher sports, such as foot ball, and base ball and field athletics. The girls, in their turn, are more fond of quiet recreation, and, if the truth be told, they have shown themselves on an average much more fond of books. They also devote more time to religious matters in college, and in this, they only illustrate the fact that in church membership rolls women outnumber men five to one. Whatever may be said about these things, they are true, and to be accounted for by the difference of nature between the sexes.

It may be claimed that while the above facts are true, yet they furnish no ground for abolishing co-education. For why should not the arrangement which was good in the fitting school remain good in the college? The answer is that in fitting schools the students are too young to have developed the characteristics of sex very strongly, at least not strongly enough to affect class-room work. Moreover, custom has a great deal to do with the matter. Tradition has made college life the distinctive property of boys, and so the separation of sexes in educational affairs

was come to be made at the beginning of the college course. By the time college is reached, the differences of sex have grown into considerable prominence. When associated together in class room, the two different classes of natures and tastes are artificially brought together. Hence, they clash, if not in open and formulated strife, yet in a way indefinitely felt. The boys feel that perhaps the course might be conducted with more special reference to their needs and conditions if the girls were absent, and vice versa. Pride of sex causes unhealthy competition, and, possibly, in some cases, ill feeling. The boys think that more latitude ought to be given them on the score of rank and scholarship because having athletic and business interests; the fact of the girls having as a rule, more time as well as inclination for lessons, often gives rise to jealousy among the boys, which is utterly groundless, but equally impossible to avoid.

Though all these things are rarely put in form, yet they are vaguely felt. Both sexes are far too polite to publish such feelings abroad, and, indeed, students do not allow themselves to think about them at all. These difficulties could, perhaps, be obviated, if the idea that the sexes, though equal, are unlike in character could be clearly recognized and formulated from the very beginning of the course. An agreement to differ might be made,—but facts show such a thing to be impossible. “Equal, but unlike” is a conception that grows up gradually and is not fully appreciated until the course is nearly finished.

Such was the actual experience of Colby under co-education, and it should be remembered that the difficulties of the question were made vastly greater by the large numerical preponderance of one sex. What was to be done? Should the classes remain as before and the amount of personal instruction allowed constantly to decrease? Should these difficulties above mentioned be allowed to remain? On the other hand, should women be excluded altogether from enjoying Colby's advantages? “Introduce co-ordination” was the answer, and by this is meant simply the pursuance of similar courses by the classes of young men and young women under the same instructors, but in separate recitations, and in such a way as to prevent absolutely any undesirable competition. This plan was adopted, as already said, with fear and trembling. Its supporters believed it would solve the problem; those opposed to it, hoped it would do no harm.

It now remains to indicate what the results of two years of trial have been. On the side of the faculty, the results are shown in the testimony of Dr. Small, who says in his last report, “In reporting upon the initial year of the ‘Co-ordinate Colleges’ it is difficult to repress a somewhat pre-

mature expression of triumph. The relations between the young men and the young women in college have never, to my knowledge, been so satisfactory as during the past year." Prof. Taylor says, "I am compelled to say that, as far as mere class-room work is considered, the advantages of the new system over the old can hardly be over-stated, and greatly exceed even what had been anticipated." Prof. Warren says, "In reply to a request for my opinion in regard to the 'Co-ordinate System' of recitations, I will say that I have been much pleased with it. Anticipated objections to the system have vanished. So far as I know both classes are satisfied with the arrangement."

The students are very generally satisfied with the new arrangement. If any are still opposed to the education of women at all, they would be as dissatisfied with one system as another, and this article cannot deal with them. They have been satisfactorily answered, however, in previous volumes of the ORACLE, as well as in many other publications.

A few objections are still made to co-ordination which should be discussed at this point. It is said that the girls are comparatively few in number, and that they have an unfair advantage in getting more personal instruction than the boys. The fact is true, but the objection amounts to nothing—for if the two classes were united, both sexes would be worse off in the matter of personal instruction. Moreover, as long as Colby pursues her present policy, the classes will never be large enough to prevent a considerable degree of personal work with each student. The division by sexes has headed off any present possibility of too numerous classes, and, besides, Colby's field will be too narrow for a long time to allow her development into a large college. In a college course the advantages of individual work and the advantages of class co-operation should be combined. No class can well consist of one person, nor, on the contrary, should it number hundreds. The line must be drawn somewhere, and experience shows that the average size of the Colby class best combines individual work and class co-operation. Another objection is that co-ordination removes the refining and restraining influences of the sexes on each other. But is this not better obtained outside the class-room in the numerous opportunities for social intercourse? At any rate, the advantages of class-room union in the social line, as well as in direct intellectual contact (which generally manifests itself in criticism rather than in co-operation) are over-balanced by the advantages on the other side. Each sex is now allowed to develop in its own way unhindered by fear of criticism from the other.

Other objections may be referred to the fundamental difference between the sexes and the need of separate development to fit each for its

own function. The object of the college course is not to emasculate men or masculate women, but to help each better to fulfill the offices of life. The old system did rather have a tendency at least to unsex students. It often made men pettily jealous, and women too masculine. Of course, it will be said such things ought not to have been so. Surely, but human nature must be taken as it really is and not as it might have been. Men need to be trained in manly virtues by association with men in direct work; so with women in womanly virtues. The social virtues too, those which arise from social relations between men and women can be much better developed entirely apart from the stiffness of class-room and the strong propensities for "shop talk" which there arise. The last objection to co-ordination at Colby is lack of money. This is, indeed, a real objection, and must be met by the alumni and trustees if the system, whose value may be regarded as pretty thoroughly proved, is to stand. Perhaps it was premature to introduce the system with insufficient funds to establish it firmly. At all events the trial of the new system will awaken friends of Colby to greater effort and will perhaps end in increased endowment which will render possible more instructors, more apparatus and more room in buildings; all of which are necessary for the satisfactory carrying out of co-ordination.

In conclusion, it can only be said that Colby's experience thus far has shown co-ordination superior to co-education. The only question is—can money enough be raised to carry out the system to its full development and the full accomplishment of its possibilities? Always thus far in her history Colby's needs have raised up men to supply them, and there is every reason to hope and believe that the past is only the introduction to a more splendid future. May that future demonstrate with growing brightness the soundness of Colby's management, the wisdom and insight of Dr. Small in conceiving and introducing the scheme of co-ordination, and the unwavering loyalty of all alumni and friends—is the wish of the
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