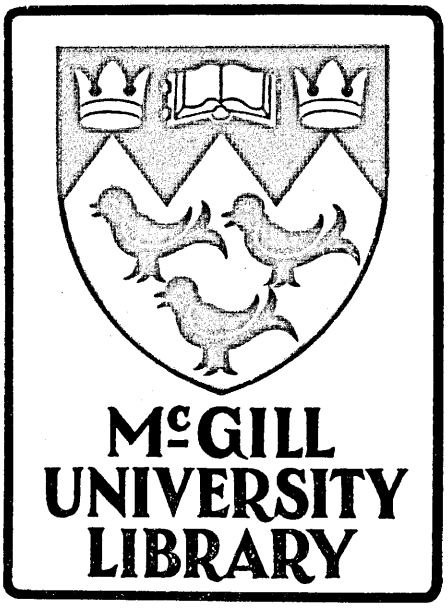

A SURVEY OF THE EDUCATION OF BRITISH WOMEN

TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY; or,

BRITANNIA GOES TO SCHOOL

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Submitted for the degree of M.A. in Education.

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PREFACE

This survey attempts to form a connected picture of the history of some eighteen centuries of the Education of Englishwomen. The phenomenal success of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in achieving the right of all girls to elementary education at least has been frequently recorded of late, for the sources are full and abundant. They are considerably less so in the case of the first eighteen hundred years. As far as the writer is aware there has been no official history of women's education written of the ages preceding 1800. Such information as has been used here was drawn from the literature of those years. Since the writer has not been able to read all the works which might have been useful, this thesis is capable of expansion, and perhaps re-interpretation, at a later date.

April, 1945,
Montreal.

SUMMARY.

One of the most striking features of the education of Englishwomen has been the continued lack of any standard fixed for it. It was always at the mercy of transient fashions and national prejudices. In the earliest stages, the Church exercised the most profound influence over it, to be rivalled in the eleventh century by French secular influence. The general decline of learning among women after the Black Death was accompanied by an increased consciousness of the necessity for educating women of origin humbler than that of the nobility. The Renaissance brought with it a remarkable burst of scholarship among women, but this impulse petered out completely during the seventeenth century and was replaced in the eighteenth by a superficial education in accomplishments. Only in the nineteenth, and more completely in the twentieth century, was the long-striven for ideal of universal education attained.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY

Of the rare notes of consistency struck in the histor of the education of women since the founding of the Christian Church, the most apparent is the never-failing, if at times rather sombre, interest of the Church Fathers in their ewes and their upbringing. This interest was less a matter of affection than of avowed policy and necessity. Even misogynists like S. Jerome were compelled to devote a great deal of their time to the problem.

Indeed the education of women seems at first to have been a growth coeval with the founding of the Church. Such is not actually the case, however. In second century Rome, women of the privileged classes were given some degree of freedom and a measure of intellectual cultivation. That this would have increased in spite of the Church is an undeniable certitud Rome, following in the steps of her greater vassal, Greece, would at some later date have inevitably awarded to its women the important role adumbrated by Plato in the Republic when he elected women to the ranks of the Guardians. In the second century, however, Plato's dream was little but an exceedingly dim possibility, the realization of which was scarcely desired by the women themselves, who had no vision of themselves fulfilling any role but that of apathetic drudges in a world which

regarded them as the distinctly inferior sex, both in brain and brawn, a verdict few of them at the time would be inclined to challenge. To the Church, then, must go the credit of lighting the gleam, and of placing before its female members, not only the possibility of education but the means whereby they were to obtain it. In so doing the Church whetted an appetite that demanded food at a rate that at times proved rather embarrassing. Ignorance is an enemy against which that institution has always had to do battle, and at no time more strenuously than when it was struggling for its very existence. What then was more natural than that it should wage particular war against the ignorance of its traditionally uneducated, most enthusiastic, most susceptible, and frailest members? The education of <u>all</u> Christian women was a matter of the direst necessity. Christianity could not be entrusted to a class which had no intellectual support to sustain the doctrines of the Church and the austerity of the Christian life against the temptations offered by a society, poisoned by an oriental luxury, and already imbued with the corruption and the pessimism that was to be realized with the breakup of the Roman Empire.

This need, so urgently felt so many centuries ago, is of no small importance to us. It was responsible for a torrent of treatises from the second century on which formed an ideal type of womanhood and have had an influence on the education of English and European girls up to the present day. As it might be expected, these treatises deal not only with the large matters of dogma, but with all the details of daily life, food, drink, behaviour at meals, at home and abroad, facial expression, gesture,

and deportment, how to laugh as well as how to pray, -- in a word, everything that came to be included in the word "manners". Because of the great sanctity of a number of the authors, the ideal set forth in these works were retained by reverent conservation, even when the original necessity had been forgotton, and they degenerated into mannerisms, petty, artificial, strangling of initiative and ambition.

The complete formula for the upbringing of the Christian girl was gradually developed. By the end of the second century, Clement of Alexandria[1] had defined the relative positions of the Christian man and woman, and had set out, step by step, the discipline of the life consecrated to Christ. In his magnum opus, Clement firmly states the truth of the social revolution inherent in the Christian doctrine of the equality of men and women as sharers of the divine promises and sharers of the responsibility for the sanctity of each of their lives. Clement rightly deemed it necessary to forearm women against the dangers incidental to their lately acquired independence. Clement realized the necessity of the Christian being readily distinguishable from his pagan neighbours through the discipline of his daily life. To this end, moderation in all things was of prime necessity. The Christian was ordered to abstain from wine as a safeguard of his self-control. Table manners were those which best set an example of consideration for others. The following dicta applied particularly to women. Immoderate laughter was to be eschewed, although a smile was permissible.

CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS; Paedagogus.

A paragraph which exercised an exaggerated influence on the education of the eighteenth century demoiselle declared that the facial expressions of the model girl should be the subject of the strictest surveillance. She was to be pure of countenance; her brows not downcast, nor her eyes too boldly uplifted; her head must not be poked forward, much less hanging down; and her limbs were to be held tense and erect and not permitted to lounge or shuffle. Clement's treatise devotes many words to the hallowing of such time-honoured occupations as spinning and weaving, the making and ornamenting of clothes, the care of the household, and the preparation of food -- all the tasks ordained by God's law of life for women.

There is more in this vein. Clement is swift and searching in his condemnation of extravagance, whether it be of dress or of dyes and cosmetics. Conjoined to these warnings are many an injunction to prayer and the virgin life. The authors of the succeeding three centuries followed more or less the standard set by Clement. Of the more noteworthy of the later writers may be mentioned Tertullian[1], S. Cyprian[2], S. Athanasius[3], and S. Ambrose[4]. These constituted a formidable influence on the education of women up to and even beyond the period of the Reformation. Thay were the staples of the intellectual fare offered to girls and women, and were as eagerly

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1) TERTULLIAN: De Cultu Seminarium.

2) S. CYPRIAN: De Habitu Virginum.

3) S. ATHANASIUS: Exhortation to the Bride of Christ.

4) S. AMBROSE: De Virginibus.

studied by them as the fashionable novels of a later date. Unfortunately, one of the saintly, self-appointed preceptors exerted a less happy and correspondingly more powerful influence on the course of female education. Jerome, in his letters to the Christian ladies of his circle is most widely quoted, particularly in the epistles to one Laeta on the upbringing of her young daughter, Paula, who had been dedicated to the religious life. Throughout, Jerome shows himself kindly and sage, an obvious lover of children, Yet his suggestions, sincere as they were, probably did more to rob children of joy in education for many decades than did any other single agency. He was severe in his condemnation of all the joys of the senses, thus unwittingly striking a blow that discounted woman's contribution to art for centuries. Embroidery was the only branch of art left for their talents, when Jerome's pruning shears had finished their work. True, his denunciation of music was disregarded to a great extent; nevertheless, song and lute-playing were thought of as the charming, but rather dangerous, accomplishments of the courtly damsel.

Jerome's repeated warnings of the unspeakable evils which must inevitably succeed the granting of any measure of personal liberty to the gentler sex were unceasingly reiterated by every mediaeval moralist. The latter favour an almost oriental seclusion for women, a way of thinking that even the Spanish Renaissance scholar, Vives, found it difficult to relinquish: "Forth the maid must needs go sometimes, but I would it should be as seldom as may be for many causes. Principally because as often as a maid goeth forth amongst people, so often

she cometh in judgment and extreme peril of her beauty, honesty, demureness, wit, shamefastness, and virtue." [1]

Another even more morbid restriction promulgated by Jerome -- his marked distrust of the influence of youth on youth and his provision of a rather triste duenna to fend off such rude attacks -- was adopted by the Church as a basis for sound female upbringing. A second and tremendously influential factor in the rearing of the Christian woman, which is far from being a moribund force to-day, was the character of the Blessed Virgin Mary as it is portrayed in the Apocrypha and in the host of legends arising out of these works. The earliest to take literary form is the Book of James, or the Protevangelium, written in Greek, and dating from the second century. The purpose of the legends was to invest everyday occupations with a new dignity by ascribing them to Mary. Throughout, they mirror the author's (and succeeding generations') admiration for her early precocity, her grave gesture and deportment, her sweet-voiced singing and quiet laughter, and above all, her remarkable powers of healing. These ideals are to be seen reflected in the famous women of the Middle Ages, of whom only one, Catherine of Siena, need be cited.

The art of needlework is given particular prominence in the Book of James. Mary's work was so beautiful that it was dedicated for use in the Temple itself, and she is pictured as spinning the true purple and scarlet for it in the very moment when the Angel of the Annunciation appeared to her.

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(1) FOSTER, WATSON: Vives, p. 94.

Later, when she visits the house of Zacchaeus, Elizabeth throws down the wool with which she is working to go to meet her.

Such episodes as the latter, designed to ennoble common tasks, account for the prominence, far beyond the necessities of everyday living, occupied by needlework, particularly embroidery, in the upbringing of girls. It was, in actual fact, their only legitimate channel of artistic development.

CHAPTER II

THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN UNDER THE SAXONS.

SUMMARY: The influence of France - the northern convents - women scholars of the south - the palace schools - the teaching of embroidery.

Modern scholarship is inclined to believe that Britain during the Roman occupation was not the land of fog-bound barbarism that Tacitus and Caesar depicted. Accompanying the obscurity which shrouds the history of the land during those years is a lack of any reference to indicate that there was a tradition of learning among women. There are many such blanks to be filled in succeeding centuries by inference. Our first deduction, undoubtedly pardonable, must be to assume that some tradition of education must have existed, if we are to judge from the high ideal of female virtue and accomplishment held in the neighbouring Gallo-Roman society. In France, the Roman schools were being challenged by their Christian counterpart -- the monasteries and nunneries. To the latter were often added nunnery schools for the education of young children, since the rule of S. Caesarius forbade the admitting of girls into the house for nurture, except for an occasional apt and obedient child of six or seven years, received into

the community as an oblate. This rule, however, was soon relaxed. During the sixth century a number of women saints, notably Radigund, wife of Clothaire V, and Gertrude, Abbess of Nivelle, were famed as lovers of learning and teachers of the young. French nuns were obliged to learn to read and to devote two hours each morning to this pursuit, as well as to their woolwork; the aim of the Rule of S. Aurelian was to eliminate all aimless leisure.

In view of the heavy traffic of royal wives to and from Britain and France, it is small wonder that English girls should have been brought into touch at any early date with this tradition. Gregory, in his correspondence, speaks of Ethelbert's consort Bertha, daughter of the Frankish King Charibert, as being "instructed in letters."[1] It is altogether probable that she was a product of the convent. Bede, in the Ecclesiastical History, provides us with another reason for the powerful influence of French systems of education on England. Writing of that era (about 640) he says[2] that there were so few monasteries, and consequently schools, in his native land, that English boys and girls had to be sent to convents on the Continent, particularly those of Chelles and Brie, for their upbringing. These children were, almost without exception, and for obvious reasons, the offspring of noble and royal houses.

However, the influence of French conventual life was

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(1) MASON: Mission of S. Augustine to England, (1897); p. 58.

(2) BEDE: Ecclesiastical History, ed. Bohn; Bk. III, ch. VIII, p. 121.

not confined solely to Southern England and the Kentish princesses. Oddly enough, it had little or no effect on the greatest figure of Saxon monasticism. This was the Abbess Hild, aunt of Aldwulf, King of the East Angles. Her sister Heresuid had been professed and was living in the nunnery at Chelles. It was with the intention of joining her there that Hild journeyed into East Anglia, after being converted by Paulinus.[1] But Bishop Aidan recalled her to Northumbria, where she became Abbess of Hartlepool, and one of the first religious teachers educated almost entirely under English influences. Later she succeeded to the abbacy of Whitby, in connection with which house she is most widely known. It was in Hild's day, about the middle of the seventh century, that learning was developing as an appendage to monastic life, and it was clearly realized that knowledge meant power. The ability to read, write and study was fast becoming a qualification for leadership. It was all the more remarkable that a woman should possess the highly prized adjunct of a forceful and diffuse intellect. Although Hartlepool and Whitby never rivalled Jarrow as centres of learning, the impression Hild herself made on scholars, and which they avowed, cannot be over-estimated.

Other learned men besides Aidan looked to her for intellectual stimulus, admiring her saintliness and her assured grasp of affairs. Frequently was she consulted on principles of government by those in high places who valued her advice.

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(1) BEDE: Eccles. Hist., ed. Bohn; Lib. IV, ch. 21, p. 212.

So highly esteemed was she by the ecclesiastical hierarchy that a study of the Scriptures under her regime was considered an adequate preparation for the priesthood, and even for the episcopacy. Her services to literature were no less great, for to her we owe the recognition of the poet Caedmon's great gift.

Among her nuns, Hild inspired a happy affection, and this she returned not only with an equal measure of love but with an assiduous care for their learning.

Bede would most certainly not have written of her in such glowing terms if she had not deserved his praise. Her influence at another more auspicious date would probably have extended farther, but no one would hesitate to give her foremost place among the great teachers of English womanhood, a place she well earned by virtue of her outstanding personality.

Upon Hild's death the monastery of Whitby declined, and in 731, the year of Bede's death, the centre of northern learning shifted from Yarrow to York. About this time the spark of learning was burning in a small but business-like manner in a few southern nunneries. These groups of studious women centred about the figure of some scholar anxious for their welfare. In the nunnery at Barking, it was the scholar-bishop, Aldhelm of Sherbourne, who composed for the Abbess Hildelith and her nuns a treatise, "De Laudibus Virginitatis", in which he advises them, in their search for knowledge, to read the Prophets, the Books of the Law, and the fourfold sayings of the Gospel. To these he added the study of commentaries by the Fathers, of ecclesiastical tradition and history, as well as spelling,

writing and versifying. English nuns of this period seemed to show an aptitude for Latin verse, and in this respect the nuns of Barking were well provided with an able teacher in Aldhelm, the composer of a hundred enigmas. Ten Brink expresses his opinion strongly:

"At a time when Italian clergy no longer knew the rules of classic versification, English monks and bishops wrote and English nuns read (and wrote) Latin verses beside which the verses produced elsewhere seemed almost as barbaric as they themselves beside the lines of a Virgil or a Horace."[1]

Elsewhere on the south coast, the nuns of Wimborne under the aegis of Boniface, received an education, in which Latin played a major role, calculated to enable them to go abroad and in their turn teach the pagan women on the Continent.

During the seventh and eighth centuries, it is the abbeys of Northumbria, Wessex and Kent of which we hear most, owing to a chain of fortuitous events which brought them into the historical limelight. It is with a consequent lack of a feeling of trepidation that we assume that other convents cannot have been utterly devoid of erudition.

In the eighth century, a change came over the nunneries. Court-education began to impinge on their field of education, namely, the training of girls of royal and noble birth, to such an extent that the Council of Cloveshoe (747) found it necessary to remind the Church that the nunnery was for the diligent student alone. French influence, once such a powerful

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(1) TEN BRINK: English Literature, vol. 1, p. 34.

seducer of Saxon princesses into the religious life, now pointed in another direction. Charlemagne can be credited with the initial impulse toward the founding of palace-schools. He was careful to provide both his sons and daughters with the same literary education, but insisted on the latter having the customary training in handicrafts and woolwork to keep their idle hours occupied. His interest was not confined to noble children. In 789 he promulgated at Aachen a remarkable decree, ordering the establishment of reading schools for children of free and servile status. Following hard upon the heels of this command came another -- that in every monastery, the teaching of the psalter, arithmetic and grammar should be given to all who sought instruction. This forward step was answered by another from the Church. In 797, Theodulph, Bishop of Orleans, revived the canon which required that parish priests teach all the children of the faithful in schools free of tax. Alcuin, the famous English travelling-scholar, was tutor for some time to Charlemagne's daughters, but it is not known, and doubtful, that he was able to impress upon the education of the women of his own country when he returned there, any of the innovations he had seen in France. Whether Alcuin was or was not able to accomplish a great deal may never be known, but this much is certain -- that Alfred, some sixty years after the scholar's death in 804, found enough scope and to spare for his zeal in reviving education in the Kingdom.

This versatile King established his own court as the

centre of learning for the realm, and it followed largely the lines laid down by Charlemagne. Like him, Alfred had his daughters as well as his sons given the best education available, remembering always the debt he owed to his mother for imparting to him a love of books. His youngest daughter, Aethelfrith, was taught to love them too, and to read and repeat by rote the Psalms and Saxon poems which Alfred himself had learnt.[1] Aethelfled, became foundress of the collegiate church school in Warwick, while yet a third, Aethelgeofir, following a well-established precedent, entered a convent.

Under Edward, the Alfredian tradition was nobly continued. Edward had all of his eight daughters taught to love books, and to weave and spin. The royal families throughout the tenth century exemplify the close contact maintained between court and convent with regard to the education of girls. In this century there was a revival of monasticism under Dunstan, Ethelwold and Oswald. The revival affected the nunneries and paved the way for greater strictness. Aethelwold introduced the Benedictine rule into the nunnery at Winchester, a rule formerly unknown in England. It was to be expected that with the upsurge of religious life there should be some greater interest shown in education. This was the actual case, and this century was marked by some definite steps made in the direction of general education. The Canons of Edgar (c. 960) contemplate the elementary instruction of boys and girls at the hands of the Church, since it was imperative that all

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(1) ASSER: Life of Alfred, Bohn Library, p. 51.

the faithful, regardless of sex, should be aware of the rudiments of the faith as contained in the Creed and the Paternoster.

In the literature of the century immediately preceding the Conquest there are several heartening glimpses of women at study which would lead one to suppose that the education of women was not being neglected. In Abbot Aelfric's hagiology are included many tales of female saints -- one of them, S. Agnes, best-loved of all English girl-saints, is pictured as going to school.[1]

Unfortunately, the work of Dunstan and other monastic reformers was short-lived, and a general decay of learning took place among the clergy, once their inspiring presences were removed. Before the Conquest, many priests had difficulty in reading, let alone understanding, the divine service! In the court, however, the tradition of learning was continued among members of the royal household. One of the last of the learned Saxon princesses, Margaret of Scotland, was renowned for her pious and studious habits, her devotion to and protection of the arts, and particularly for the manner in which she carefully raised her children with constant reference to the rod. Like her predecessors, she was also a skilled needlewoman.

At an early period, handicrafts had been distinguished from cooking, corn-grinding, and other labours which were looked upon as slave's labour. As their all but sole outlet for artistic creation, women seized upon their needles and with them

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(1) AELFRIC: Lives of the Saints, ed. Skeat, 1881; vol. I, homily 7, p. 170.

created all manner of beauty in a riot of colour. Ladies of the Saxon era were adepts at the art of church embroidery. The richly ornamented and lovingly stitched vestments and hangings worked by them were invariably highly prized by the recipients. In later centuries, when the descendants of these women found more ample leisure awaiting them, they too spent the long hours with their embroidery of more or less worthy objects. In the nineteenth century we see this predilection for needlework put to base ends. No one would venture to assert that the endless samplers young ladies of that century ground out had any useful, aesthetic, or even moral purpose, in spite of the pious texts which so often formed their sole excuse for being. Needlework at that time merely provided an occupation for a superabundance of idle hours. The Victorians were motivated by the principle that the devil was only too eager to provide work (probably more samplers) for unoccupied hands!

CHAPTER III.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHIVALRY

SUMMARY: The education of girls as seen in the Romances.

We have seen how the Church through the Fathers and the example of the Virgin Mary did much to mould the character and deportment of the girls and women of Christendom. We come now to the consideration of an equally powerful gospel, preached in England by an alien, but nevertheless dominant, race. The exotic doctrines of Chivalry were an undeniably potent force in advancing the cause of women, but, be it noted, only women of good birth. Echoes of chivalric teaching were to be heard centuries later among the lower ranks.

The confused ideals of chivalry in regard to women are best studied in the Romances, wherein is set down a minute code of manners for women. When their whole lives depended upon the ability to attract, is it any wonder that young girls were so carefully taught to conduct themselves with grace and charm? The Romances provided completest details of the gentlewoman's table manners, set forth rules for her deportment, and told her how best to display any advantages of face or form by singing or dancing, without attracting unsuitable comment.

Elsewhere, the code of chivalric manners was prescribed in the books of courtesy, which are an odd confusion of the ideals of the Church Fathers in some spots, and of Ovid in others. The ideal of womanhood is succinctly put by Dumart le Gallois:[1]

> Ele est de si bone acointance
> Et de si bele contenance
> Que li sage bien entendant
> Qui del siecle sunt clerveant
> Ne sevent en li que blasmer;
> Ele est encore a marier.

(She is so well informed, and of so fair a face, that wise and understanding persons who have foresight of the century, know nothing blameworthy in her. She is now ready for marriage.)

The Romance of Floriz and Blancheflur, which came to England in a rather exotic French version, was promptly shorn of much of its sentiment and luxury. The English version tells of Floriz and Blancheflur, all of five years old and already enamoured, being about to go to school to learn to read and write French, as well as certain Latin books on the subject of love. Their education begins at seven and lasts for five years. There is no doubt that co-education was part of the educational scene in France, where this particular Romance originated. We have further evidences in the Poesies of Froissart. Speaking of his own experience he wrote:

> Et quant on me mist à l'escole,
> Ou les ignorans on escole,
> Il y avait des pucellettes
> Qui de mon temps èrent jonettes.

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(1) Quoted by GARDINER, D.G., English Girlhood at School; 1929; p. 35.

(2) Poesies de Jean Froissart, ed. Buchon, 1829; p. 184.

(And when I was put to school where the unlettered are taught, there were some little girls of my own age there.)

It is tempting at this point to infer that co-education was assumed in England, as well as in France, since Froissart doesn't bother to modify or explain the text for the benefit of English readers. Another reference of interest to this thesis is contained in the Romance of Merlin, wherein the author speaks of King Ygerne's daughter, who like so many heroines of romance is obliged to prepare for the duties of her station. She "is yet at logres [London] in gret bretein at scole which lerneth wele and is right wise and connynge in gret clergye".[1]

A characteristic which recurs continually among the heroines of romance is their skilful healing (as the science of their day accounted it) of knights all but slain on the field of battle. In this instance, fiction derived from fact, instead of fore-shadowing it, for the University of Salerno, to name only one, granted several Master's degrees to women engaged in the study of medicine there.

In the Morte d'Arthur of Sir Thomas Malory, we have mentioned Morgan le Fay and Nimue, who received a training halfway between that of confidential clerk and witch. But no matter how sinister their calling, (and this is true of all Malory's witches), they had "manners might no man amend", and were usually excellent musicians into the bargain.

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(1) Merlin, E.E.T.S., Part I, p. 121.

Speaking generally, the romances paint a delightful picture of a gay and pleasure-loving existence. Such maxims as they contained were intended to make a girl a social being, and to help her draw out those gifts which would add charm and brilliance to the society in which she moved. The best possible teacher of worldly graces was a woman of the world.

CHAPTER IV

FROM THE NORMANS TO THE BLACK DEATH.

SUMMARY: Introductory - the maiden scholar and teacher - royal and noble daughters - teaching of French - training in administration - popular education.

Educationally speaking, the nunneries of the Middle Ages stood to the monasteries in the relation of pupil to guide. When the education of men was affected by the growth of the universities (Paris, Oxford) the pupil was not invited to follow in the footsteps of the guide, with the inevitable and unfortunate result that such learning as was available for women sadly decayed. Chiefly did the study of Latin, the mainstay of the convents, decline. The nuns followed rather than led the development of female education. Such feminine scholars as there were had received their training in the feudal castle, and were consequently extremely mundane, tending to cherish their emotions rather than their intellects.

Above all was this type of woman a patroness of the romance writer. For centuries after, women suffered from being regarded as the gentle and ineffective readers of romance in a world of reality. The spirit of sentimentality which nearly smothered that age was not without influence on the convents

themselves. The visible form taken by conventual romanticism appears in the tales of women-saints, which supplemented the sharper writings of the Fathers, and the lengthy hymns addressed to the Queen of Heaven.

The decline of Latin in English nunneries took place at a time when the vernacular was not at a stage to take literary form. It was replaced of necessity by the use of courtly French, which not until much later was recognized as possessing educational value. There is evidence to believe, if we judge of Chaucer's Prioresse, that Englishwomen were charmed by the language even if they did unwittingly maltreat it. Implied in the study of the French tongue and of the romances written in it, were literature, music and medicine. The latter, suggested by the romantic heroines, provided a longed-for opportunity for relieving the distress of others. Although these acquirements of the Age of Chivalry are somewhat shallow, on the other hand they undoubtedly tended to unfold the emotional and artistic nature of a girl in such a manner and to a degree which must have meant her happiness.

A rarely glimpsed pair of figures in early European literature are the little girl scholar and her teacher. Such references as there are tend to illustrate the theory that even the very charming young should be seen and not heard, particularly if they belong to the perverse sex. The attitude of the age towards children is admirably summed up by Etienne de Fougeres when he writes:[1]

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(1) Le Livre des Manieres, ed. Talbert; p. 46, l. 1189.

"Bon sunt li effant a aveir
Quand il unt et sen e saveir."

(Children are good to have, when they possess sense and knowledge.) References to female teachers are even more infrequent. Among royal or noble families, the sons would be taught by a resident cleric; the girls would be under the jurisdiction of a governess. It was the current notion that the best protectress of innocence was the woman who had fallen, and (added precaution) repented. By odd coincidence, the "maistresses" of The Phisicien's Tale are the direct descendants of S. Jerome's pallid and subfusc companion of youth.

Throughout the history of education for Englishwomen, it will be seen how inportant was the part played by the women of the royal household and the court. Edith, daughter of Earl Godwin and wife of the Confessor, provided an admirable link between the Saxon princesses and the Norman. She began her schooling at Winchester, where she spent much of her time in solitary meditation and in weaving silk and embroidering with gold thread. So well did she perform these activities that she became renowned for her retiring nature and skill in needlework.

The women of the Norman house were trained according to the best traditions of the age. William's eldest daughter, Cecilia, was reared in the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen, later becoming Abbess of that same institution. Adela, Countess of Blois, surpassed all her sisters in her accomplishments. She loved verses, and composed them herself. But the most unusual of her acquirements was the knowledge of Greek. Matilda and Adelaide of Louvain, successive consorts of Henry I, were both

known as patronesses of poets. By the marriage of Henry II with Eleanor of Acquitaine, the English court was brought into touch with the standards of literary taste prevailing in France, for Eleanor was the granddaughter of William IX, Count of Poitiers, whose court was the centre whence the Provençal lyrics of the Troubadours spread to northern France. Besides her love and patronage of the arts, Eleanor was also possessed of a cool business head, and at the death of Henry took an active share in the government of the country.

Another outstanding woman-scholar of that day and age was Marie de France, a figure of some mystery. She is now believed to have been Abbess of Shaftesbury, but of her birth and parentage there is much conjecture and little fact. This much is certain, that she was some vague connection of Henry's, and as such her writings, including the Lais, (some of the earliest of fairy tales), and the Purgatory of S. Patrick, were most highly esteemed at court and in the rest of England, which took its cue in matters literary from London. Marie de France was a woman of considerable learning as well as creative ability, since she was cognizant of three languages, English, French and Latin. But characteristically, her learning was overlooked, and the immense popularity she enjoyed was entirely owing to her written works.

With the advent of the Black Death there came a period of depression in women's education. The last royal princess to learn Latin was Eleanor's daughter Beatrice. Prior to that abysmal catastrophe there were signs of a growing curriculum. Of course, the traditional training in needlework continued

unbroken, both in court and convent. By the thirteenth century, French began to exercise the iron dominion over the education of girls in England that it continued to wield for centuries. No well-bred young lady was complete without the ability to prattle and read French. The popularity of that language continued to grow, and the Anglicized version of it continued to diverge, until Anglo-French came to be regarded, at least by Frenchmen, as a thing apart from their own language.

An extremely interesting development in the expansion of curriculum is indicated before the fifteenth century in the Paston correspnndence. Robert Grossteste, in the series of principia known as "The Rules of S. Robert", laid down the maxims of estate management for Margaret, widow of John Lacy, Earl of Lincoln. These rules were not bettered for three centuries. They presuppose some knowledge of account-keeping, and recommend that the reader should, at the end of the year[1] "take to yourself all the rolls, and one or two of the most intimate and faithful men that you have", compare them with the expenditures of the preceding year. Personal supervision is proclaimed the secret of discipline in the twenty-second rule -- "when your bailiff and your servants of lands and manor come before you, address them fairly and speak pleasantly to them, and discreetly and gently ask if your people do well, and how your corn is growing, and how profitable your ploughs and stock are; make these demands openly, and your knowledge shall be much respect".[2]

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(1) The Rules of S. Robert, - Lamond, p. 134.

(2) IBID; p. 141.

That knowledge was to be solidly grounded in the economy of the estate down to the most trifling detail. Advice is even given to the purchasing of wine and wax at the various fairs, and as a final sop to feminine vanity -- "your robes purchase at St.Ives."

CHAPTER V.

POPULAR EDUCATION.

SUMMARY: Gilbert of Sempringham - to teach or not to teach? - Parisian elementary schools - the English schoolmistress - the Church and elementary religious instruction - attendance of girls at ABC schools.

Early in the twelfth century, some pioneering was done in the field of education of those belonging to the humbler ranks of society. In this connection we chiefly remember the name of Gilbert of Sempringham, later canonized, who, after a brilliant career of study abroad, returned to England to set up schools for the boys and girls of the town in which he lived. His chief concerns were the teaching of religion and Latin -- subjects which would best fit his charges for the conventual life. His schoolgirls were probably the daughters of the townsfolk among whom Gilbert lived, and did include the daughter of his landlord. She, with six other girls fired by his teaching, entered a cloistral dwelling adjoining his church, and provided by him. Poor girls of the neighbourhood fed the recluses and became lay-sisters. In such a manner was established the Gilbertine Order of Sempringham, an offshoot of the Cistercians. This Order is of interest because of the influence it had over

the education of women and girls in England. The regulations governing admittance into the house throw some light on contemporary standards of knowledge. No girls were admitted below the age of twelve; none received the novice's robe till she had attained her fifteenth year; none was professed until eighteen. This prolonged period of probation and preparation was in marked contrast to the practice of other orders. Gilbertine nuns were obliged to learn the canticles, psalter and hymns by heart, and apparently they knew enough Latin to be able to use it conversationally, since the Order forbade the use of the Latin tongue except when convenient occasion arose. Girls were offered the choice of becoming lay-sisters or of quitting the convent if they should prove incapable of learning their letters. The Rule forbade all music, singing and chanting, "for we will that like the Blessed Virgin they shall say the psalms in a monotone in the Spirit of humility."[1] Pains were taken to acquaint the nuns with the content of the various services so that they might participate intelligently in divine worship. This last-mentioned factor, the extensive learning by rote (because of the lack of books), and the study of Latin, are all matters bearing on the standard of education for girls outside the convent.

All over England there were orders of nuns who, unlike the Gilbertines, were also schoolteachers. But they were frequently exhorted to abjure the profession as one which was too distracting to their sacred calling. "Ancren Riwle" put the matter forcefully: "Ancre ne schol nout forwarden scol-meistren

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(1) ROSE GRAHAM: S. Gilbert of Sempringham, 1901, p. 31.

ne turnen hire ancre-hus to childrene scole".[1] Schoolteaching, the Riwle continues, should be left to others, but the nuns' handmaids might teach any little girls too shy to learn among the "gromes".[2] The implications of this last injunction are, first, that the children's schools contained both boys and girls; second, that even if girls might be too nervous to go to mixed schools, they were by no means forbidden to do so; and third, that even as early as the twelfth century, the office of schoolmistress was a recognized one.

From the beginning of the eleventh century in Paris there were little elementary schools, most of them for boys, but under Philip the Fair the number of these schools for girls greatly increased as well. The census for Paris in 1292 records only one woman keeping a children's school, a certain Madame Tyfaine, but the census of 1382 records some twenty-one such schoolkeepers in all quarters of the city.[3] They were authorized by the "Chantre" of Notre-Dame, and swore an oath wherein they vowed obedience to him and to the statutes of the corporation to which they belonged. In return they were permitted yearly to keep school, teach young girls the alphabet, and train them in good manners.

There was nothing so formal as this recognition of the village school mistress in England. Certainly the elements of religion were taught to woman and girls by the Church, and by

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(1) Ancren Riwle, - Camden Society, 1853, p. 422.

(2) IBID.

(3) JOURDAIN, CHAS.: Memoire sur l'Education des Femmes au Moyen Age, p. 127.

the majority this was considered sufficient. The absence of evidence pointing towards the existence of the accredited schoolmistress seems to indicate, at least, the presence of the accredited schoolmaster. In this welter of conjecture, so much is certain, that while in France the Church denounced mixed schools, in England they were not only tolerated but upheld by ecclesiastical authority.

The Church had always insisted upon keeping elementary instruction in religion presented to all the faithful, men and women, girls and boys. At first there were only two essential prayers, the Creed and the Paternoster, which were obligatory for admission to the sacrament of the Eucharist. But in 1281, Archbishop Peckham added to these the Ten Commandments, and later the Ave Maria. Some time afterwards, the devotions which had been appendixed to the Psalter were gathered into a single manual known as the Primer, including the Paternoster, Ave, Credo, and the Ten Commandments, as well as the Graces to be said before and after meat. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, this was set in the form of an A.B.C., which with the Psalter, formed the basis of instruction in the so-called A.B.C. schools.

Now the question arises, If little girls, for the salvation of their souls, had to learn to recite the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, where did they obtain such knowledge? In a great many cases, of course, they were instructed by their parents and godparents. Then they might easily learn the prayers from the pulpit, since informal oral instruction continually proceeded thence. When it comes to deciding whether or not

girls attended the A.B.C. schools, the issue is confused by conflicting modern theory, and the fact that usage obviously varied from one parish to another.

The A.B.C. and song schools were for all the youth of the village, not merely the choristers. Since the parish priests were frequently enjoined to instruct their flocks, what more simple expedient could there be than to gather all the children together in one school, apart from general information imparted in Church? Parochial schools may have been influenced by the gilds, which established many schools for the children of the area served by the gilds. One of the remarkable features of those admirable organizations which may have been extended to the schools, was the equality of women with the male members, an equality which was based on religion. There are many records of gilds hiring priests for various services and for the keeping of schools at a stipend. Among the records of Chancery is the description of a priest's school in London. It relates how in 1500, Sir William Barbour had a school of thirty children, among them Elizabeth Garrard, the eight-year old daughter of a tradesman. She was taught her Paternoster, Ave and Credo "with ferther lernynge".

A fifteenth century will ordered that at the testator's death there should be in the choir, presumably to sing the service, not only the choristers but other young children of poor parents, both girls and boys.

There is more evidence in favour of girls attending the A.B.C. schools in these lines of Piers Plowman:

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE BLACK DEATH TO THE REFORMATION.

SUMMARY: General characteristics - Lollard women - books of courtesy - business ability - the influence of the court - the Lady Margaret - women and books.

The period following the Black Death is one of great interest to our study, although we still have to complain about the scanty details which are available, and which concern the education of women. As in other fields, the latter was tremendously influenced by the external events of pestilence and civil war. Most of the changes made were directly caused by those social upheavals rather than by any intellectual stimulus. During the century there were no great women scholars to equal the fame of Duke Humphrey, the Earl of Worcester, or the renowned cleric Grey of Ely, but women did at least show themselves as consistent book lovers. The Lollard women especially displayed a depth of piety and thoughtfulness, and numbered among them one who avowed herself to be unlettered and was yet a profound mystic -- Juliana of Norwich.

There were no female figures comparable to Prior Selling of Canterbury, who endowed his cathedral library with Greek and

"I grette wel his wyf, for I wrot hire de (the) bible,
And set her to sapience and to hire psauter i-gloset,
Lo! logyk I lered hire, and al de (the) lawe after,
And alle Musons in Musyk I made hire to knowe". 1

These words, spoken by Holy Church, seem to suggest that knowledge of the Bible, the Psalter, and the modes of music, are woman's special province of study!

To sum up the evidence, then, it would appear that girls did at least attend the lower divisions of the A.B.C. and song schools. There they learned the essentials of their faith by rote, even if they did not learn to read. As it was, the children were sent so early into the fields or the drudgery of spinning, that even those who had learned to read were able to carry very little learning into their lives.

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(1) Piers Plowman, ed. Skeat, A IX, 128.

Latin manuscripts, or to his pupil Linacre, who introduced Greek into English schools. But if such enthusiasm was stirring in the monasteries, surely it would not be amiss to suppose that the same spirit of revivification was making itself felt in the nunneries too? Otherwise, how are we to account for the astounding scholarship of the nunneries' intellectual descendants in the Tudor age? Following the confusion and dismay of the terrible epidemic, many important linguistic changes were made. Anglo-French was abandoned as the language of the schoolroom when the English language was revived and used by all classes. Social changes affected the classroom. Hitherto, the grammar schools had been for children of free but non-gentle birth -- but the changed status of the villein caused him to want his sons educated also, while the Apprentices Act of 1406 ensured him the liberty to educate his children of <u>both</u> sexes wherever he might choose.[1] Unfortunately, a corresponding decrease of schools accompanied this widespread desire for increase in knowledge. This circumstance owed its existence to the fact that the Black Death, causing the death of many priests, made others turn their backs upon their plague-stricken villages to seek the safety and companionship of the large towns. Many village schools were consequently put out of commission, thus lowering the scanty store of learning available to girls. What types of schooling were open to girls? First in order came the nunnery schools, which were traditionally for those of good family. In addition to the village school, there was

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(1) 7 Henry IV, c. 17; <u>Statutes of the Realm</u>, ed. 1816, II, 157.

the lay equivalent of the nunnery school -- that is, the opportunity of being placed "at borde and scole" with some family, preferably of greater distinction than one's own. More often than not, this expedient simply meant a domestic servitude under which there was no pretense of instruction. This "placing out" was the forerunner of the later boarding-school. Within narrow limits, then, girls were prepared in their own or another's house for the outstanding interests of their lives -- the practice of their religion, the attainment of an advantageous marriage, and the supervision of their households.

The knowledge of courtesy, an indispensable part of the feminine curriculum, became an object of national pride under Richard II, and increasingly so following the Wars of the Roses. This was prabably due to the fact that civil strife had killed off many knights and scattered the members of their households into more humble abodes. Even the nunneries, last stronghold of gentility, were forced by poverty into admitting townsmen's and yeomen's daughters, as anyone who reads of the Miller's Wife in the Reeve's Tale will know.

One of the outstanding features of the Lollard movement was the great number of women actively concerned in it both as learners and teachers. The marriage of Anne of Bohemia to Richard II had forged an important link between English Lollardry and the Continental movement. Anne herself was highly educated, and besides being a charming woman was also noted for the depth of her religious feeling. The long and bitter struggle for freedom to study Holy Writ unreproved was marked by the passionate eagerness of the Lollard women for enlightenment. They were

drawn chiefly from the artisan and agricultural classes, to whom their teaching was also directed. With the invention on printing and the subsequent cheapening of books, it became possible for many more of them to possess Bibles and to learn to read, but the old custom of learning by rote still prevailed, and it was in this manner that many Lollard women learned favourite passages of the Bible and the essentials of their faith before teaching others in the same fashion.

The moral standards and the general paths of thought laid down for the instruction of fifteenth century English girlhood are best represented by a book of courtesy which enjoyed an immense popularity both in England and on the Continent. "The Boke of the Knight of La Tour-Landry" was written to instruct that gentleman's daughters in the way of chaste and admirable womanhood. It is interesting to note that he deals with those same questions of morals and religion that exercised the mind of S. Jerome, but, reflecting the contemporary disintegration of feudalism, he deals with them in a manner at once more sophisticated and less idealistic. There is a distressing strain of commercialism in his attitude towards religion. For example, he avers that the paramount religious duties of women are prayer, confession and fasting, since to hear many masses and to pray unceasingly may be turned to profit both in this world and the next. The devout maiden is rewarded by the attainment of a rich and powerful husband! Virtues such as charity are to be practiced towards all men, and particularly towards the poor, but only because one will be admired for so unusual an act of benevolence.

Stress is laid upon posture and demeanour, "for there is no beauty nor nobleness that is peer to good manners, sure and firm behaving and countenance".[1] The impertinent minx, often admired in the Romances, is now completely ostracized by the good knight. The qualities desirable in a marriageable girl are redolent of modernity. One of his illustrative tales tells how the ambassadors of Spain sent into Aragon in search of a royal bride demanded that she should be able to "play the game" quite literally! The two princesses concerned sat down to play with the two knights. The eldest, rather a shrew, berated her partner when he lost, scolding him sharply. Her sister, however, who had also had misfortune in the game, "made no semblaunt of her losse, nor saide nought, but made as good chere as she hadde wonne."[2]

Towards the close of the Boke is a very short passage dealing with the literary education of girls. "Young maidens should be put unto school to learn virtuous things of the scriptures, where-through they may better see and know their salvation, and to eschew all that is evil in manner."[3]

While the Knight was thus presenting his rather sketchy and diluted programme to girls of the knightly class, two other English writers were appealing on much the same lines to girls of humbler origin. "How the Good Wiff taughte her doughter", was a poem written about 1420, which concerned itself with

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(1) Boke of the Knight of La Tour-Landry, E.E.T.S., 1868, pp.16-17.

(2) op. cit., p. 19.

(3) op. cit. p. 117.

precepts of conduct, the duty of church-going and the correct demeanour while within the walls, and the duty of wifely submission. Diplomacy was advocated in the handling of a difficult spouse:

"So maist thou slake his mood
And be his dere derlynge."[1]

Composure of face and gesture was recommended. The good wife permitted no horseplay, over-loud laughter, or over-wide yawns. Her daughter was free to go where she pleased, providing only that she was circumspect in the town and did not indulge too freely in the tavern or attend wrestlings or cock-fights. Neither was she to counterfeit riches she did not possess. It was accounted worthier to meet and pay debts honestly.

This same matter-of-fact code was contained in a North Country rhyme,"The Thewis [manners] of Gudwomen." Both these works were probably rhymed so that they might the more easily be committed to memory. The author of the latter poem displays traditional distrust for the idle woman, and recommends constant occupation, and even on holidays "to reid bukis or lere wefynge."[2]

This was a severe course for very young girls, but the author was evidently persuaded of the efficacy of a mistress who knew good manners and respected the value of the rod in the upbringing of the young.

There is much evidence in the fifteenth century of feminine activity in business matters, apart from the elementary ones of handicraft, weaving, and the selling of such commodities.

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(1) How the Good Wiff taughte her Doughter, E.E.T.S., Babees Book, p. 38, l. 42.

(2) Thewis of Gudwomen, E.E.T.S., 1870; p. 108, l. 3769.

as ale and fish. This activity implies considerable mental alertness as well as mental training.

Nevertheless, there was no definite instruction in commerce, or the meaning of legal terms, or in the keeping of accounts, open to girls at the time. The first text-book written in commercial French was the "Manieres". It supplied model forms showing how to draw up indentures and obligations and the like, for the instruction of traders' children. The highly successful merchant silkwomen of London, and the feminine wool-merchants of York cannot have remained long ignorant of that book without prejudice to their prosperity.

Women were also frequently placed in a position where they had to manage estates. There are many instances of women, the daughters and widows of noblemen, who were bequeathed estates and ran them successfully. The most luminous of them all was Margaret, Lady Paston, whose vigorous mind and versatility, which she bent to the management of her husband's estate during troublous times are well illustrated by passages in the Paston Letters.

The influence of the court during this troubled century was less than it had ever been, by reason of the dynastic changes which had occurred. The older notions of education for kingship had become invalid when the succession was not assured. The most frequent notices attest to the cultivation of music during this period. Henry IV. and his immediate family were passionately devoted to it; the Issues of Exchequer record the purchase of harps for Henry V. and his Queen. At the same time there is evidence that this same taste was being cultivated by all other classes.

Richard II's succession of foreign consorts, Anne of Bohemia, Isabella of France, her sister Katherine of Valois, and

Marguerite of Anjou, and their respective retinues, must have introduced some changes into the English court. They at least helped to keep it in touch with the language and literary developments in France. Through the interest of the Earl of Salisbury, it came into contact with the works of Christine de Pisan, the famous poetess-scholar and protagonist of intellectual liberty for women. She was invited to the court more than once, but she consistently refused because of her abhorrence of Henry IV's behaviour to Richard II. Her works, however, were read by Englishwomen.

The family of Edward IV's Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, had pronounced literary tastes. A brother, Anthony, Earl Rivers, translated "the Dictes and sayings of the Philosophers", and had it printed by Caxton in 1477. The Queen herself possessed and could read many books.

Naturally, needlework still held a foremost place in the affections of the royal ladies. Apart from the teaching available in nunneries and from apprenticeship in the profession of embroideress, the art was continued and learnt from hand to hand from Saxon times. The taste for this type of art was shared by all Englishwomen.

This essay would not be complete without some mention of the woman who most powerfully influenced the intellectual advancement of the day. She was Margaret, Duchess of Richmond, mother of Henry VII. and through him of the line of princes noted for their mental stature. She belonged to a period of transition, and in consequence united in herself characteristics of the preceding and subsequent ages. Her gifts of intellect owed little

to external circumstances, for her education was nothing out of the ordinary. She had an extensive knowledge of French, could read and write English, and was a clever embroideress. Like Shakespeare, she had little Latin, of the lack of which she frequently and bitterly complained.

The encouragement she gave to Caxton is too well-known to need repetition. In her choice of book she betrayed the age in which she was born, for her favourites were always the Romances. Many works, among them Gower's, Chaucer's, Froissart's, and Boccaccio's were to be found in her library. Her family and friends, knowing her fondness for books, kept giving her more.

Among her own literary labours were the compilation of "Ordinances and reformations of apparel for princes and estates, with other ladies and gentlewomen, for the time of mourning", and the rendering in 1507 of the "Mirroure of Golde for the sinfull soule" from French into English.

The services she rendered to literature and learning were far greater than any of her predecessors had been in a position to give. The Queens before her had been patroness of learned institutions; the Queens of the Red and White Roses, Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville, jointly founded Queen's College at Cambridge; ladies of lesser degree had been bountiful to poor students. But the bounty of Lady Margaret exceeded all of these. In 1496 she founded Jesus College at Cambridge, where her name is still mentioned in the prayers of the Masters and Fellows. At the same University in 1505, she founded Christ's College. There is no doubt, that as Professor Foster Watson says: "the Countess Margaret was probably the most accomplished

lady in academic knowledge in England in the Middle Ages."[1]

A search through the wills left in this period throw some interesting light on the state of women's education. One remarkable characteristic stands out clearly. The bequests of books to female relatives grow apace. Now, although possession of books may not guarantee an ability to read, it seems safe to assume that in those days of few and cherished volumes, the women who were chosen as recipients must have been known to care for books, and were not merely attracted by the gorgeous bindings and filigree work that adorned many of them.

Women of good position were generally cognizant of more than one language. The book of devotion, the volume of romance, and the great history, were all familiar tomes. The most frequent bequests made were of books of devotion and romance, mirroring the two chief interests of women. The legatees who were destined for the life of religion received the hagiographies and devotional books, while those marked down for court-life were left the romances.

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(1) FOSTER WATSON: Dictionary of Education.

CHAPTER VII.

PLACING OUT.

SUMMARY: Apprenticeship - placing out - the last age of the nunnery school.

Before discussing the practice of placing girls at "borde and scole" as a means of educating them, it might be advisable to mention one other type of education for girls and boys which was in many respects similar to the first. The apprenticing of children began as early as the thirteenth century, and continued until displaced by the industrial revolution. From the earliest times, women were admitted on the claims of family into the gilds, but otherwise an education in some craft could only be obtained by girls from some other woman independently practicing an art. In this case a girl would only be bound by the more general ordinances covering apprenticeship in her district, and would gain far less from apprenticeship than a boy. For it was not for them a step on the way to civic enfranchisement and esteem. The ambition of girl apprentices was always to manage a business of their own.

There are a great many instances where a jealous mistress, sensing a future rival in some too-apt pupil, was careful

to ruin the latter's career before it had well begun. However, these cases formed a very small percentage of the whole number, for skilled apprentices were usually highly prized, as the number of statutes protecting the crafts from the seduction of their best apprentices by rivals will attest. Undoubtedly the relationship between apprentices and masters and mistresses was a pleasant one for the most part. Many were the bequests made to apprentices upon the deaths of their erstwhile masters.

During the fifteenth century, the most widely recognized system of education whereby girls might better their position in life was the custom of placing-out. Two course were open to them then -- either to become religious, or to marry advantageously. If they were destined for religion, the education of most value to them was to be found in the convent itself. The placing-out of girls to be educated in their stations for a fee, very often differed from going into service only in the presence of indentures. Children were placed out at a very early age, which fact caused visiting Europeans to censure the narshness of English parents. This form of apprenticeship lasted anywhere from seven to nine years, and included all classes of society. Very often the children, girls particularly, did not return to their homes upon completing the term, but being on the verge of marriage were married from the home of their master. Frequently, the children who were boarded out were bequeathed to various relatives by their parents. There can be no doubt of the fact that education of the youngsters was expected of the guardian, but the latter in many

cases found it more convenient to place the orphan "at borde and scole" with a stranger. Unfortunately, this practice of bequeathing children was often coupled with business arrangements which not infrequently led to abuses. In lieu of payment, the child's small fortune might be placed at the disposal of the guardian, to be used by him on lawful occasions, until the ward should have reached years of discretion. Naturally this was a practise opening up many avenues of opportunity for the unscrupulous, and the records of Chancery contain many instances of guardians being prosecuted for misuse of their wards' inheritances.

Occasionally of course, the education of their charges was undertaken directly by the guardian himself, but generally they were sent to the grammar or village school.

Girls of noble family were often boarded out in France, in order to learn to speak French fluently and correctly. One of the more luckless products of French education was Anne Boleyn, who went to France at the age of seven in the train of Princess Mary, sister of Henry VIII, and consort for twelve days of Louis XII. Anne was an observant and imitative child, and was retained in France after Mary's return to England, by the latter's successor, Claude de France. At the French court she learned to sing and dance, to sound the lute and other fashionable instruments. It was to be expected that she should be taught as well a knowledge of good manners and courtly etiquette, in addition to the usual needlework and housewifery. These were the acquirements of girls placed out as gentlewomen in some lady's household. In large households, the girls had plenty

of company with companions of their own age. Younger children requiring more care and oversight, like Anneys Loveday, who was boarded with Lady Paston until a mistress could be found for her, were paid for. Lady Pole received 26s 8d. for boarding troublesome Elizabeth Paston in 1458. The relationship between mistress and gentlewoman depended on the temperament of both and the size of the establishment, and was further complicated by homesickness. The main occupation of such households was needlework. The amount of sewing accomplished by the retinue of gentlewomen in a large household was almost unbelievable.

There is one further item of interest in the placing-out of girls, and that is, that if marriage took place in early youth, as it frequently did, the responsibility for the further education of the young wife rested with her husband's family.

The practice of boarding out girls was not superseded until the growing popularity of the boarding-school, its successor, finally drove it from popularity.

Before the Dissolution, the most widely favoured institutions for the placing-out of girls were the nunnery schools. Ironically, the most active phase of these schools occurred in the period immediately preceding the Dissolution. This burst of energy was due to the influx of new blood into the schools. The break up of feudalism caused by the Wars of the Roses left many women and girls homeless. The obvious refuge which suggested itself was the nunnery -- either as a permanent refuge, or as a temporary haven until marriage. Although educational standards were advancing elsewhere during

the latter half of the century, we can only guess whether or not the curriculum of the nunnery school advanced with the times. Forced into competition with other types of schooling, the nunneries had extended themselves to admit, not gentlewomen alone, but the daughters of tradesmen and yeomen as well, so that at the Dissolution both nuns and pupils differed in social position from that held by their predecessors a century before.

There is not a great deal of information available to tell how the convent pupil spent her time. In the "Boke of Phylyp Sparowe", Skelton describes the attainments of little Jane Scrope, who is a pupil at Carrow Abbey. She has embarked upon an enormous sampler, can read, write and spell, and has an extensive knowledge of romantic literature, both sacred and profane. The works with which she is familiar include "The Canterbury Tales", "Sir Gawaine and Sir Guy", Judas Maccabeus, and the exploits of the Homeric heroes.

"I am but a yonge mayd
And cannot in effect
My stile as yet direct
With Englysh words elect....

But for my Sparowe's sake,
Yet as a woman maye,
My wit I shall assaye
An epytaph to wryghte
In latyne playne and lyght."[1]

The internal evidence of these few lines correspond with the accepted formula of girls' education -- reading and writing, good manners, needlework and music, even the little Latin.

Inherent in a discussion of the nunnery schools in the

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(1) SKELTON: E.E.T.S., The Lament of Phylyp Sparowe, p. 295.

question about the teachers provided for them. Were the nuns themselves the only teachers, and if so, how were they equipped for that office? Girls "at borde and scole" in the homes of others were taught by visiting masters -- what was the state of affairs in the convents? In general, the nuns of this period were required to have reached a certain standard of attainment before admission. About 1432, Bishop Gray made it compulsory for all nuns at Elstow to be taught in song or in reading and all other things requisite (viz. the memorizing of certain Latin formularies), before admission. If not so learned, the nuns were obliged to be capable of instruction within a short time.[1]

The taste and skill for fine embroidery persisted throughout the fifteenth century as strongly in the convents as it did in the outer world. As far as Latin is concerned, it is unsafe to assume that it was compulsory, or even widely known, after the thirteenth century. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries it was a diminishing factor in the nunnery schools. Boys were taught it at their grammar schools, the religious were taught it in their convents, and since girls attended neither it is small wonder that the knowledge of that tongue should tend to dwindle among them. The only Latin required of them was a knowledge of the rule of the house, and an ability to sing the services. Even this smattering, however, was more often than not committed to memory rather than learned.

Anglo-French showed a tendency to linger on in some

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(1) Visitations of Religious Houses, (Lincs.), ed. A.H. Thomson, vol. I, p. 53; (Canterbury & York Society, 1915).

nunneries, But even here, after the fourteenth century it was gradually abandoned because the wealthier classes from which the nuns were drawn were acquiring by degrees the habit of sending their daughters to France for education in that language.

Since children who were set apart at an early age for the religious life cannot have been expected to have reached the standard of attainment of those professed later in life, they were provided with a nun-schoolmistress. The question which we have propounded to ourselves still remains without an answer -- were the nuns the only teachers? They were undoubtedly capable of lessons in piety and nurture, reading and embroidery, even writing and French.

In some convents at an earlier date individual nuns taught pupils privately, both girls and boys, but the desire thus engendered of profiting personally by this type of tuition was thwarted by the provision that fees so earned must accrue to the common fund.

Another question to which there is no definite answer is this -- were nuns licensed as schoolmistresses by their Bishop as Schoolmasters were? This question is raised by a notice of 1527 which reaffirms the concession of Elizabeth Cresner, Prioress of Dartford Nunnery, to receive young ladies and to give them a suitable training "according to the mode heretofore pursued". [1]

Apart from quite elementary teaching, instruction in

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(1) Arch. Journal, vol. 39,(1882), p. 177.

special subjects like music was given to girls in laymen's houses by visiting teachers. Whether they were permitted to teach in nunnery schools is not definitely known. If we take as evidence the tremendous social importance of music during the Tudor period, we may give tremulous assent to the problem. It is known that schoolboys in monastic houses were taught music by visiting masters, since at Glastonbury in 1534 we have reference to a certain James Rennynger, a singing-man, who was hired by Abbot Whiting to teach "six children in pricke song and discaunts and two of them to play on organs." [1]

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(1) GAUDNER: Letters and Papers, vol. 7, 1056.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RENAISSANCE EDUCATION OF ENGLISHWOMEN.

SUMMARY: Introduction - the Humanist and the education of women in the arts - Vives - the Humanists.

The Renaissance in general represented not so much the birth of new ideas as a re-adjustment of contemporary thought, which had become over-formalized and obscured throughout the Middle Ages. It had to be accomodated anew to broader notions of life, to the greater liberty, harmony and clear vision to which the literature of the classical ages had attempted to give expression. Insofar as the term Renaissance applied to the education of women, it was, an all actuality, a re-birth. During the early Christian ages, the feminine pre-disposition to piety was exercised completely under Christian discipline, which scarcely accorded much recognition to the claims of the intellect. The Humanists, on the other hand, tried to unite to the Christian viewpoint the Platonic theory that virtue and wisdom may be acquired through learning. The acceptance of the humanistic dogma meant the speedy adoption of the Platonic corollary that the very absence of learning, particularly in frail woman, was a source of great evil in

itself. Upon them knowledge had a fortifying effect, both of will and intellect. "This [want of education] is the only cause why all women are for the most part hard to please, studious and most dilligent themselves, marvellers of trifles, in prosperity proud and insolent, in adversity abject and feeble; and for lack of good learning, they love and hate that only the which they learned of their unlearned mothers." [1]

The many differences between the women of the Chivalric age and those of the Renaissance did not resolve merely upon a quantitative aggregate of book-learning. The character of the latter is sharper and nobler in outline. The Renaissance woman had a self-reliance and personal dignity utterly lacking in her predecessor. Instead of being an incumbrance to parents and relatives, constantly requiring surveillance and protection, the educated woman became a desired companion. Owing to the timly invention of printing, laymen were more concerned with sharing with their kinswomen the great thoughts of preceding ages. This change, however, was only effected gradually, and the shining example of Sir Thomas More's family was an exceptional one. The cleavage between the thought of the preceding age and the "new" thought was marked, and made itself bitterly felt in many a household, as this excerpt from the works of Ascham, written by Lady Jane Grey, will show. "When I am in presence of either father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing, or doing anything else, I must do it as it were ... even so perfectly as God made the world, or else I am so sharply

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(1) FOSTER WATSON: Vives, p. 200.

taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently with pinches, nips and bobs and other ways which I will not name for the honour I bear them, so without measure misorderd, that I think myself in hell till time come that I must go to Mr. Aylmer, who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such faire allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing whilst I am with him." [1]

In support of their arguments in favour of educating women, the Humanists brought into the light the fact that in legend at least, women were responsible for the existence of the arts, and quoted the Muses, the Graces, Minerva, Cassandra, the women saints, and a whole host of female innovators. They quickly forsook this rather infirm terrain to set foot on securer historical ground. Here they were allured by the simplicity of the education of Roman maidens, and recommended it on behalf of the modern European miss. Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, held foremost place in their portrait gallery of the ideal woman. She was admired, not only as the exemplary mother of sons, her chief title to fame, but, by the Humanists, for her love of letters, her conversance with Greek literature, her own model epistles, and her patronage of the poets and philosophers. They also delighted in Pliny's pleasure in his young wife Calpurnia's literary tastes, while her musical ability made an even stronger appeal to that music-loving age. On the subject of dancing, Vives preferred Roman opinion to Greek,

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(1) Ascham's Works, (1761), p. 222.

citing Sallust's remark that Sempronia sang and danced more cunningly than was necessary in a virtuous woman.[1]

This new outlook on the education of women came to England from Italy via Spain in the person of Catherine of Aragon. Her education began at the tender age of four. She was still a child when, after an exchange of Latin love letters, she was betrothed to Prince Arthur, the son of Henry VII, in 1494. Eight years later, after the death of Arthur, she became the bride of Henry VIII. Erasmus testifies to the universal esteem in which the English court was held during the early years of the new reign, under the rule of a King "singularly endowed with all princely excellences and a queen most like unto him" -- and also does he pay tribute to the qualities of those they gathered about them, chiefly the Spaniard, Vives, and the brilliant Sir Thomas More.[2]

Ludovico Vives was born in the year of the discovery of the western continent. Educated for the greater part at Valencia, he later attended the University of Paris, where he first began to imbibe the humanistic views of the Renaissance. It was at Louvain, however, that he made the acquaintance of Erasmus, then lecturer at the latter University. In 1522, the famous Spanish scholar dedicated his edition of the Augustinian "Civitas Dei" to Henry VIII.; the following year he was invited to England by Wolsey. Oxford was not slow to recognize his

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(1) FOSTER WATSON: Vives, p. 102.

(2) (ERASMUS: Epistolae, ed. 1642, Liber 2, Ep. 24.)

merits, invited him to lecture, and made him a D.C.L. Shortly afterwards, the Queen and Linacre chose Vives to be the tutor to Princess Mary. Before his death in 1524, he had written two treatises, both dedicated to his countrywoman, Queen Catherine. One of these was "The Instruction of the Christian Woman"; the other was entitled, "Plan of Studies for a Girl". A few years later, the "Instruction" appeared in Castilian, but it made no appearance in England until 1540, when it was translated by Richard Hyrde, a tutor in the household of Sir Thomas More. The latter, of course, was of necessity interested in the question of female education, but his brood of motherless girls responded very well to his theories and the practical application of them. The problem of educating girls graduated from the lowly status of an idle speculation to become a subject of almost passionate enthusiasm on the part of the finest scholars of the day. The results the Humanists obtained well rewarded the effort they had expended.

Vives, Erasmus and More represented together truly international views, and in spite of differences of outlook and temperament differed little in the broad outlines of their studies anent the education of girls. Vives and Erasmus express their very decided opinions forcibly enough, but they were prevented from giving their theories practical application. On the other hand, More's idea was to build up in his own home (where there was no lack of raw material!) an exemplary school for the training of Christian character. Although in many respects More was an innovator, there was a curious atmosphere of almost cloistral severity in his home. Vives, being a Spaniard,

was influenced to a great extent by the rigidity of the monastic ideal, and was consequently less radical than More. In Spain, the spate of educational pamphlets, unlike England, formed a rather cautious bridge between the new and the old ideals. Erasmus, homeless cosmopolitan and bitter critic of outworn ideals, had no personal contact with the question either, and because of that fact had no bricks to build with except old ones. He was further hindered in his forward-looking by a fundamental mistrust of women, a complex many male educationists seemed to suffer from.

Apart from these differences, the work of the three reformers is closely inter-related. One factor they all agreed upon was the importance of marriage in the Christian community, implying the education of girls to enable them to make the right choice of a husband, and to take a worthy place at his side in the making of a home. All three place much emphasis on character-building, which they conceive of as a life-long process to be achieved only by the persistent development of all powers of intellect, soul and body. And again, all three lay stress on the husband's role as teacher, and on the need for surrounding the child with influences which will tend to attract it towards the virtuous life.

Vives advocated a fairly stern upbringing for girls, as well as boys, and thought it unbecoming in a woman to teach school. If, however, no man could be found, he relented to the extent of permitting a "holy, well-learned woman"[1] to teach.

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(1) FOSTER WATSON: Vives, p. 54.

The Humanists had an entirely new conception of the role of woman in the community. Their aim was to develop human personality for life in this world and in the next. To further this end, the formerly restricted range of studies for women was extended, and classical literature as a formative and lasting influence came into its own. Vives conservatively thought that "grammar, logic, histories, the rule of governance of the commonwealth, and art mathematical" should be left to men, and he deprecated displays of oratorical skill among women. Nevertheless, Margaret Roper was acquainted with some philosophy, astronomy, physics, arithmetic, logic, rhetoric and music. She had a complete mastery of Greek and Latin, and had some knowledge of moral philosophy; this latter was included as an ingredient in the building of character, to strengthen the deficient virtue of self-control. The Spaniard intensely disliked poetry and imaginative writings; the romances were as deeply distrusted by More, Erasmus and Ascham, who would have banned them entirely. The works of Jerome, Ambrose, Cyprian and Augustine were still regarded as the staple diet, unrelieved by the frivolity of "light reading". To the curriculum of the Renaissance girl was added a new field of research -- that of natural science and research, for the study of which Princess Mary was much admired. Vives allotted no place to modern languages at all, but admitted the importance of vernacular studies.

The Humanists also had decided views on the physical welfare of their female charges. Bodily health could be acquired too, or at least encouraged. Erasmus soundly berated the folly

of heavy clothes for girls, and pointed significantly to the many forms of exercise obtainable around the household, while pointing just as meaningfully at the grave moral danger of dancing. Domestic science and handicrafts were advocated anew, and in "Utopia" girls were even given an agricultural training.[1]

These views were never given universal acceptance because of the too heavy demands they made on the average intellect, but they did produce a most extraordinary group of women. More's daughters, marvels of Latinity and of beauty of character, were the centre of that group.

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(1) THOS. MORE: Utopia, Everyman Library, p. 50.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TUDOR BLUESTOCKINGS.

SUMMARY: Introduction - Elizabeth - two generations of ladies-in-waiting - the italianate gentlewoman - Mulcaster's model.

Other Englishmen in high places were encouraged by More's practical example to educate their daughters, many of whom had inherited exceptional ability. Parents and elders now began to exhibit a grave confidence in their daughters' power to learn which is almost as amusing as their former terrified protests against its existence. Learning had become a fashion which culminated in a blaze of glory in the person of Elizabeth herself. However, the first of the Tudor paragons was Mary, the youngest daughter of Henry VII. whom we have already mentioned as having been very briefly the consort of Louis XII. of France. The children of her second marriage to the Duke of Suffolk were as carefully educated by her as she herself had been in French, Latin and Greek, of which she was completely mistress. The study of those three languages was the key to the Scriptures, and the continued study of them by women absorbed the latter into the religious controversies of the day as they never had been before. Katherine Parr and

Anne Seymour were both keen students of religion, as indeed were all of the famous women scholars of the day - Mary (under whose aegis Nicholas Udall translated "The Nobylytie of Women"), Margaret Roper, Queen Mary, Elizabeth, Lady Jane Howard, Lady Jane Grey and her sisters, Arundel's daughters, and Somerset's daughters, who were particularly concerned with polemical works and wrote copiously with the sole aim of ridding the country of Catholic doctrine. But it is Lady Jane Grey who appeals most to us. She was a phenomenon characteristic of the Renaissance, a curious blend of humility and dignity. Latin and Greek were to her as her native tongue, but she was also skilled in the liberal sciences and philosophy, while others again attest to the fact that she was fluent in French and Italian, and had even imbibed some Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldee. The multitude of her attainments and the enthusiasm she had for learning reflected great credit on her tutors.

Few notices concerning girls' education appear in Mary's troubled reign, but during Elizabeth's there are a great number, the majority of which concerned the prolific learning of the Queen herself. Discounting the rather exuberant flattery of these, the fact remains that the testimonies still point to the remarkable body of learning she had attained. She had a natural aptitude for study which led her to a life-long devotion to intellectual pursuits and to the study, at times incomplete, of an amazing number of languages. During a girlhood which was constantly menaced by the axe, her education was supervised by a certain Mistress Mildred Ashley, later dismissed upon suspicion of intrigue. Elizabeth was then permitted to share

the classical studies of her brother Edward, whom she overwhelmed during the lessons by her vigour. Later she had a tutor of her own in the person of William Grindal, later superceded by Roger Ascham, who faithfully served his royal pupil and also admired her greatly, particularly for her almost masculine powers of concentration, and her love of"true religion and the best kind of literature." Elizabeth had the further virtue of being able to make her learning serve her office after her accession. It was her firm belief that rulers should be above average in their accomplishments, not the least of which must the science of ruling itself. Accordingly, she drew upon the philosophy of the ancients and Machiavelli's "Il Principe" for her guiding principles of government. Of great practical account was her ability to address the French and Italian ambassadors in their own language or in Latin. In these languages she was undoubtedly fluent, if not musical.

In Elizabeth's court there were two generations of waiting-women. The older group, reflecting some of the austerity of Katherine Parr's court, were much occupied in needlework and in reading continually the Scriptures and histories of England, France, Scotland and neighbouring Continental countries. When not occupied by these pursuits they were writing original works, or translating the works of others into Latin or English. These elderlies were also skilful in the distillation of herbs, and in such surgery as was possible. The younger element, however, was more frivolous. It gave its leisure to music, practicing lute, cithern and prick-song. But both young and old were endowed besides with a sound knowledge of Greek and Latin, and

were generally conversant with French, Italian and Spanish. With the partial settlement of the religious problem during the Elizabethan reign, there was a consequent abatement of controversy, followed by a certain slackening of interest in the classical languages. Elizabeth read the classics assiduously until her death, and her example did carry a great deal of weight, but Greek was studied less and less, owing in part to the banishment under Mary of many scholars and learned clerics, and in part to the dispersion of the libraries. It is not surprising that the vogue for ancient learning should decline and yield place to other occupations. However, neither in the sixteenth or in the subsequent century did it completely die away.

Ten years after Elizabeth came to the throne, the floodgates of English poetry burst, and the English world of fashion became italianate. Englishwomen remained virtually unmoved by this new tide of scholarship, and were content to serve as inspiration to their poets, no mean task in its way! A few indulged in creative writing, among them the excessively learned Lady Falkland who wrote fragmentary verse and a drama entitled, "Tragedie of Mariam, Faire Queen of Jewry". The Countess of Pembroke was known as a translator.

The prejudice of educationists like Ascham and Cheke against sending young Englishmen to complete their education in seductive Italy did not affect the sisters of the grand-tourers, of course, but neither was it proof against Castiglione's "Il Cortegiano", which laid siege the fashionable world in Sir Thomas Hoby's translation in 1561. Scarcely less admired than the

courtier himself was the picture of the perfect gentlewoman. The more severe Renaissance studies had yielded to subtle Italian. The new pattern of womanhood was "a sight in letters, in musike, in drawinge or peinctinge, and skilfull in daunsinge and in divising sportes and pastimes."[1] In the new paragon there was a revival of chivalric manners, but in her there was less "cunnyng" than sweetness.

We have spoken exclusively in this chapter of the daughters of the nobility. Elsewhere in England girls of other classes followed no such brilliant or easy path, although fervent souls like Richard Mulcaster eagerly enjoined their education. To champion such a cause was to cast oneself straight into the teeth of formidable opposition in the shape of furious fathers loudly protesting that the education of their sons was of prime importance, and that education for girls represented a waste of time, energy and resources, since all right-thinking females should expect to marry and keep house, an occupation obviously requiring no training of the intellect. Despite these fulminations, Mulcaster proposed a course of studies designed to set golden precepts before girls. His curriculum consists of reading, writing, music and sight-singing. Needlework and house wifery were thrown in partly as a sop to the irritable fathers, and partly because Mulcaster would never dream of divorcing those two subjects from his table of studies.[2] If

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(1) CASTIGLIONE: Il Cortegiano, (ed. Hoby), pp. 220-1.

(2) RICHARD MULCASTER: as included in D.G. GARDINER, English Girlhood at School, pp. 192-3.

the girl-pupil were to show any marked ability, then languages and drawing (to enhance the needlework) might be added to her intellectual diet. But said Mulcaster in effect, women have not the mind to grapple with geometry or mathematic, and since they have no leisure for philosophy, are not suited to be lawyers, physicians or preachers.

"Is not a young gentlewoman thoroughly well equipped who can read distinctly, write neatly and swiftly, sing sweetly and play and draw well, understand and speak the learned languages as well as the modern tongues approved by her time and country, and who has some knowledge of logic and rhetoric besides the information acquired in her study of foreign languages? If in addition to this she be an honest woman and a good housewife would she worth wishing for and worth enshrining?"[1]

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(1) Mulcaster; as included in D.G. GARDINER, English Girlhood at School ; loc. cit..

CHAPTER X.

THE BEGINNINGS OF BOARDING-SCHOOL.

SUMMARY: Dissolution of the nunnery schools - refugee schools - the woman teacher.

After the dissolution of religious houses by Henry VIII. the disappearance of the nunnery school was not long in making itself felt. Many pleas for their restitution were made, for this type of school had firmly established itself in the esteem of parents as a place where "young maydes might be godly brought up".[1] It was universally admitted that the nunneries were generally conducted with sanctified good sense and with the blameless ambition of inculcating a knowledge of religion and manners. The foundations of Elizabeth and Edward, numerous though they were, failed to supply the loss adequately. The lack of schools resulted in attention being focussed less upon the learned sprigs of the nobility than upon the general education of girls. Grammar schools continued to mushroom into existence, but these naturally did not admit girls. Added to these disadvantages was the fact that there was an overwhelming

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(1) THOMAS BECON: Catechism, (Parkes Soc., vol. II, p. 377.)

prejudice in favour of home-education for them, either in their parents' or another's household. Despite the black appearance, changes in the supply of schools were to be quickly effected, chiefly by means of the influx of foreign teachers who found refuge in Britain from religious persecution in France, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands.

Although the attitude of the reformers under Mulcaster was generally benevolent, the actual alleviation of the shortage of the machinery of education was due, not to their sympathy, but to practical necessity. The great emigration from the Continent resulted in the break-up of many family units, and the elder refugees were set the problem of making some provision for their children while they themselves were at work. In the records of the Huguenot Society are to be found many notices referring to aliens, men and women, French and Dutch for the most part, who kept schools, and there are also references to schools where trades were taught. It can be imagined with what joy the parents in southern and eastern England seized upon this type of school for their own daughters. Another feature of the refugee establishments was that they were often co-educational. Banbury[1] School, it is true, admitted a fixed number of girls, but none were permitted to remain beyond the age of nine. This may have been simply an interim measure while other accomodation for girls was lacking, but it contains oblique proof of the fact that girls were in the habit of applying for

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(1) FOSTER WATSON: The Old Grammar Schools, p. 116.

admission to the common schools, otherwise why would the Rules of Harrow expressly forbid the admission of girls?[1] In fact, the first outstanding boarding school, Christ's Hospital (1552), was a co-educational haven -- erected to house, feed and educate tne children of the poor.

Any reference to the growing demand for girls' education involves some mention of her teacher. In this period one finds few references to that figure, and the reasons for that scarcity are not far to seek. For girls educated at home, the obvious instructress was the mother or the mistress. Book-learning, however, was the man's province, particularly the cleric; with the nunneries disappeared most of the potential teachers who were women of comparative leisure (a necessary attribute of the intelligent teacher) and of superior attainments, especially religious knowledge.

It would be thought that any attempt to systematize girls' education was almost bound to result in a more efficient standard of education, but in actual fact, the process was an extremely slow one, and for many a year intellectual attainment was the last requisite demanded of the would-be teacher. Meanwhile, the field was open, and women began to look to teaching as a means of earning a livelihood, and to attract attention, at times unwelcome, for they were often regarded as interlopers. It had been the custom of the Church to license schoolmasters from the earliest times, but women teachers were not given such

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(1) FOSTER WATSON: The Old Grammar Schools,

official recognition -- proof indeed of their insignificance.

It might, of course, have been advisable during the days of religious controversy, to supervise women teachers as closely as men, for they were just as likely, if not more so, to hold heretical opinions. When the body of women teachers was increased by religious refugees and potential heretics, there was still no official licensing of women, although the refugees exerted considerable influence, opening small schools, holding classes in language, music and handicrafts, and entering private households as governesses.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PROGRESS OF THE BOARDING-SCHOOL

SUMMARY: Some seventeenth century girls' schools - criticism of the boarding school.

The disappearance of the nunnery school was a source of anxiety to the ecclesiastical authorities too, but for a less altruistic reason. Roman Catholic families were now sending their children to be educated in seminaries on the Continent, where there were numerous houses established by Englishwomen until, as they hoped, the nunneries should be restored. The possibility of such a restitution, coupled with the two factors just mentioned, gravely alarmed the established Church, which desired to see the convent replaced by protestant schools. The ready supply of capable and non-catholic teachers available in the persons of the refugees gave added impetus to the creation of the new schools, one of the first of which, a girls' "public school", was the Ladies' Hall at Deptford. This school was patronized by daughters of the nobility and gentry. Another school founded at the same time was kept by a certain Mrs. Freind, whose name is probably the anglicized form of the Huguenot l'Amy.

The neighbourhood of north London recommended itself to parents and guardians because of its salubrious air. So many

girls' schools appeared in Hackney that it became known as the Ladies' University of Female Arts. Mrs. Perwich's school[1] was a larger and more flourishing establishment than most, so we may mention it at greater length because in its somewhat more ambitious way it was typical of other schools of the same sort. Between 1640 and 1660, roughly the period of the Protectorate, it"handled" some eight hundred girls, and at one time a hundred girls together. The pupils came from the four corners of the Kingdom, and brought their own maids with them, as the custom was. Music and dancing were the chief concern of the curriculum. Apart from these, the young misses gove much thought and concern to their apparel, to adorning their visages with patches, and to reading romances to their heart's content. Instruction (such as it was) was given by visiting masters, several of whom were well-known musicians. It is clear that the standard of music was high. One pupil, Susanna Perwich, who was also the daughter of the headmistress and owner, was so proficient in the playing of the "Lyra Viol" that she attracted the attention of Henry Lawes. Besides playing the lute and harpsichord, Susanna could sing too, and later became a highly prized addition to her mother's teaching staff. The pupils of this school were forever practising chamber music. Led by Susanna's violin, they even advanced to the point where they formed an orchestra of lutes and viols accompanied by organ and harpsichord. The inexhaustible Susanna was also called upon to lead the dancing,

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(1) FOSTER WATSON: Dictionary of Education; art. Education of Girls.

both the country variety and the French. She had also acquired (and was therefore doubtless obliged to impart) "all other parts of excellent well-breeding" -- that is, calligraphy, housewifery, cookery and, of course, embroidery, besides a swarm of minor and fashionable handicrafts in silver, straw, glass, wax, gum, all distinguished by being highly useless. We have referred to Susanna as inexhaustible. The adjective is inaccurate. This paragon died in her father's house before reaching her twenty-fifth year, doubtless of a surfeit of accomplishments.

Hackney remained the fashionable site for schools for a century, and was then displaced in popularity by the river-side. One of them, a girls' school kept by Josias Priest, a fashionable dancing-master, earned reflected glory as the scene of the first performance of "Dido and Aeneas", after Priest had persuaded Nahum Tate and the composer Purcell to collaborate. The schoolgirls played it on many occasions before audiences composed of their parents and friends.

The literature of the age has many references to country-bred girls who went to town to be "finished", but it was not always to London they went, for there were by the early seventeenth century many schools established in country places.

Although public schools for both girls and boys continued to appear in great numbers, they unfortunately developed in a way that earned them public distrust. Probably the frivolous character of the curriculum was responsible for the prejudice on the part of grave Puritans against the schools. Then too the boarding-schools shared the general deterioration of

manners which took place during the Restoration. In contemporary drama they were frequently held up to ridicule as models of snobbery and inefficiency; certainly they afforded no sound moral teaching against the corruption of the day, and on this score alone merited the continual chorus of rebuke aimed against them until the close of the eighteenth century.

It must not be supposed that there were no efforts to promote schools in a serious, if not religious atmosphere. One reformer proposed Protestant colleges for women, which closely resempled nunneries in the opportunity provided for cloistered study. Mary Astell's "Serious Proposal" (1697) contained such an idea. In that work she expressed no great objection to the boarding-schools, but was chiefly concerned in remedying the shortage of teachers by the erecting of a foundation to be known as "A Monastery or Religious Retirement." This establishment was to be a kind of hatchery whereby the kingdom might be stocked with pious and prudent teachers. Daniel Defoe, the contemporary of Mary Astell, objected strenuously to her proposal on the ground that it would impose too great a restraint on the natural levity of youth, and put forward another plan in his "Essay on Projects". Defoe's Utopian academy differed very little from existing public schools. Some of the features of his plan include good discipline without spying (a sore point with so frequent a debtor as Defoe!) or supervision; his school buildings were to be arranged so that "the Eyes might at a Glance see from one Coin to another."[1] In the third place, the curriculum was to consist largely of music and dancing "which it

(1) DANIEL DEFOE: Essay on Projects, (1697), p. 282 et seq.

would be cruel to bar the Sex of, because they are their Darlings". Defoe was inclined to sneer at modern languages such as French and Italian, and considered that the vernacular should occupy more study than it did. The one essential was to promote "the graces of speech and all the necessary Air of Conversation which our common Education is so defective in that I need not expose it." [1] There is really no advance made in Defoe's proposal, and yet he did champion equal opportunity for women in the way of education, judging it a barbarity to deny them learning. However, it was left to the Quakers to provide for their children schools, some of which were co-educational, and which gave instruction in languages, science, industrious exercises and literature.

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(1) DANIEL DEFOE: Essay on Projects, (1697), p. 292.

CHAPTER XII.

EDUCATION DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

SUMMARY: Introductory - educational opinion - adverse criticism of the boarding-school - prejudice of Cavalier and Puritan - the educational opinions of women - home training - the teaching of religion - schools for the people.

A study of the field of education during the seventeenth century reveals a number of complex factors which influenced its development. The influence of Elizabeth was strong, but two generations after her death little was heard of an extensive classical training for girls, because the ideals of the Humanists had been swallowed up by the zeal for religious reform which absorbed women into a study of the Bible rather than of Plato. A second division was to be seen in the conflict between the Renaissance ideal expressed in "Il Cortegiano" and the neo-platonism of a society already prepared by the French refugee-schoolmasters, and strengthened by the arrival of a French Queen, Henrietta Maria. Through the three media of her entourage, the refugees, and the written word, the influence of the Précieuses through the writings of Mademoiselle de Scudéry became even more powerful in England. True, the peculiar Gallic gift for conversation could not flourish in the England of the Commonwealth, but Englishwomen particularly excelled in the writing of belles-

lettres.

The political and religious cleavages in the realm were mirrored by another in the case of girls' education. The boarding-schools with their light-minded curriculum trained Cavalier daughters, while young Puritans were brought up at home were they imbued with Bible-study, domesticity, and practical philanthrophy. The result, similar to the effect produced by the schism in politics and religion, was to be found in hybrid types of women characteristic of this period, in whom the conflicting ideals were constantly at war.

Generally speaking, the level of culture continues to rise during the century. The novel, which first became popular in the preceding age, continued to retain its interest. But poetry, drama, history and philosophy stimulated English minds as well. It can be asserted that the teaching of music to girls went forward, and women artists, authors and dramatists became more numerous. Not only that, but they began to state for the first time their own educational needs and their wishes for the education of their children. One of the more notable of the articulate female reformers was Mrs. Bathsua Makin, under whose aegis an attempt was made to revive the more solid type of education of Tudor times.

These few paragraphs have referred once more to the upper and middle classes. Among the lower strata there was still the opportunity for apprenticeship. The number of charitable schools increased substantially, and as one might imagine, the stress in them was laid chiefly on religion, Bible-study,

the elements of reading and writing, fortified by an over-whelming amount of plain sewing.

With the publication of Bacon's "Advancement of Learning" (1605), the keystone of educational history in the seventeenth century was firmly established. From then on there was a possibility, not immediately realized, of teaching becoming an exact science. Bacon's theories were indirectly given to England through the writings of Comenius, an admirer of his. The essayist advocated equal opportunity for girls and boys, and a new policy of gentleness towards the learners rather than violent compulsion. Another feature new to the art of teaching was the use of "sensibles" -- that is, the presenting of visible things to the sight, audible things to the hearing, tactile things to the touch, and so on. These were ideas enthusiastically welcomed by Mrs. Makin and other reformers.

Both Cavalier and Puritan looked askance at the erudite woman, and were inclined to think Latin a vice rather than an adornment to that sex. "Kinder, Kirche, Kuche" was the byword, although an exception was made by the Cavaliers in favour of the French language and its culture. If possible, the Puritans were even more reactionary, holding up shocked hands at the sinful singing and dancing in the boarding-schools, and jealously keeping their daughters at home. Even the Lady Protectress had no interests beyond the circle of her own home and housewifely duties. In spite of this, it is not quite fair to lay Milton's neglect of his daughters' education at the door of Puritan prejudice, and even the celebrated attack on Eve,

"Out of my sight, thou serpent, that name best
Befits thee with him leagu'd, thyself as false
And hateful -- " [1]

was used by writers of the eighteenth century to attest to the depths of contempt with which women in general had come to be regarded. Bunyan, in spite of his scorn of the pleasure seeking woman, places music on a superterrestial plane, and he depicts several of his female characters as playing the virginals, the viols and the lutes.

The educational opinions of women, which we have mentioned once, deserve closer attention. The female reformers expressed a great many differing opinions in a variety of ways, chiefly through letters and biographies, but also through the more militant treatise. Mary Browne, who became the wife of the diarist Evelyn at the age of thirteen, received most of her education from her husband in the best tradition of the Humanists. She read a great deal, spoke French accurately, understood Italian, and had a nice sense of discrimination in her own language. In spite of all this learning, both she and her daughters, who were almost as brilliant as More's own, displayed an engaging modesty. Mary wrote: "Women were not borne to read Authors and censure the Learned, to compare Lives and judge of Virtues, to give rules of morality and sacrifice to the Muses.... We are willing to acknowledge all time borrowed from Family duties is misspent: the care of children's education, observing a Husband's commands, assisting the Sick, relieving the Poore

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(1) MILTON: Paradise Lost, Bk. X. l. 867.

and being serviceable to our Friends, are of sufficient weight to employ the most improved capacities amongst us. If sometimes it happens by accident one of a thousand aspires a little higher, her fate commonly exposes her to wonder but adds little to esteem.... A Heroine is a kind of prodigy; the influence of a blasynge starre is not more dangerous or more to be avoyded." [1].

At the independent end of the argument was Bathsua Makin, through whom the writings of Comenius, the disciple of Bacon, became known. Mistress Makin was governess to Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Charles I, during the exile in France. The young princess was considered the reincarnation of Tudor Elizabeth, for she could read, write, and even understand French, Italian, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. The governess was no mean linguist herself, and came of an intellectual family, being the sister of the famous mathematician, John Pell. More important to this discussion, however, was her acquaintance with the learned Dutch woman-scholar, Anna à Schurmann. The latter was a paragon to rival the most precocious produced by the Renaissance, having taught herself Persian and Arabic in addition to the usual languages. She was a poetess of no slight worth into the bargain. One of her treatises was translated into English in 1659 with the title, "Whether a Mayde may be a Scholar", a question to which she gave a most emphatic "yes" as answer, at the same time defining a scholar as one who is "given to the study of Letters, that is, the knowledge of Tongues and Histories, and all kinds

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(1) JOHN EVELYN: Diary, (1819), vol. 2, p. 300.

of learning." [1]

Some twenty-five years later, Bathsua Makin paid the famous Dutchwoman the compliment of including most of her arguments in her own work entitled an "Essay to Revive Antient Education of Gentlewomen" (1673). As with More and others of his way of thinking, her aim for education was to form character and set forward true religion. It was not enough, she opined, to teach girls to dance and adorn their bodies to the best advantage. She would have them taught grammar and rhetoric, logic, which was the key to all the sciences, languages, especially Greek and Hebrew for their better understanding of the Scriptures, and the arts, represented by music, painting and poetry. Throughout the treatise, Mistress Makin insisted upon the capacity of girls for learning, their right to be taught, and above all, the social and individual importance of their being properly educated.

We come again to the question similar to the one we have already mulled over in discussing an earlier age. During the seventeenth century, if the Royalist boarding-school was distasteful to large sections of the populace, as it indubitably was, what other kind of schooling was available? For wealthy Protestants, of course, there were the foreign academies in France and Switzerland, but by far the greater part of English girlhood received its training within the bounds of the island and within their parents' home. The practice of boarding-out for an education in manners was still resorted to, particularly in the case of unfortunate orphans and young gentlewomen in poorer circumstances,

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(1) ANNA A SCHURMANN: Whether a Mayde may be a Scholar, (1659), p. 48.

but still the ordinary usage was to educate girls at home. This was not quite the confined process it had been in Tudor times, since it was more usual now to have visiting women teachers for special subjects such as French and music, while dancing was often taught by visiting tutors. The resident governess meantime would restrict herself almost exclusively to needlework. Generally speaking, the learned languages were unpopular, and only rarely do we hear of girls being taught either Greek, Latin, or Hebrew. One such excéption was Susanna Evelyn, whom her doting father records as having read "most of the Greek and Roman authors and poets." [1]

One of the few constant features in the curriculum of home or school was the emphasis placed upon handiwork. One remembers the chair of state in Solomon's House of the New Atlantis, which was "curiously wrought with Silver and Silk of divers colours ... and ever the work of some of the daughters of the Family." [2]

Drawing was given a high place only because of its connection with needlework, but it attained great popularity among the pupils in the curriculum. A rather ridiculous phase through which the arts passed at this time, the responsibility for which may be laid at Bacon's door, resulted in a multitude of works in straw, wax, rocks, moss, bugles, and shells, not to mention the japanning of innumerable useless little boxes.

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(1) EVELYN: Diary, vol. II, p. 36.

(2) FRANCIS BACON: The New Atlantis, (1902) Newnes; p. 196.

Music was pursued as diligently at home as at school, but in one study, girls who were brought up at home had a practical advantage over the boarders, and that was in "physic", a science which came to the fore through the desire of Sir Thomas More to have his daughters learn it. It is known that there were women physicians in that century, many of whom gained fashionable reputations of the Harley-Street variety, and they even took apprentices. John Evelyn mentions having supped "with a gentlewoman called Everard that was a very great Chymist,"[1] while country villages nearly always had their female practitioners, who were generally herbalists as well.

Throughout the Reformation period and immediately afterwards, great emphasis was laid on the teaching office of the clergy. Many and frequent were the episcopal injunctions to parish priests to teach the children to read and write. These injunctions often represented an ecclesiastical sanction of the increased popular desire for knowledge which followed in the wake of the invention of the printing press. Unfortunately, the religious upheaval and the long years of doubt left a deep wound. The demise of Queen Elizabeth marked the beginning of the decay of learning among parochial clergy, and as a natural consequence, the neglect of rural education. There was an appalling lack of knowledge of the very rudiments of religion, a condition which was aggravated during the Commonwealth because of the emphasis laid by the non-conformists on preaching, to the

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(1) EVELYN: Diary,(1819), vol. I, p. 246.

exclusion of all else in the divine service.

After the Restoration, the Church resumed its policy of closely surveying all schoolmasters, and now it took into its ken all public mistresses of schools, instructors and teachers of young girls or women. It seemed that the necessity for instruction was realized everywhere, even if the instruction were to be a narrow sectarian view formed by an intensive study of the Bible and Foxe's gory Book of Martyrs.

Even in those schools whose paramount goal was to equip its pupils for the social whirl, religion was not neglected, since the French professors of language, having suffered exile for their religion's sake, were serious men who imparted a serious tone to their lessons. An alarming feature of the deep but narrow teaching of religion was the woman-preacher, a type of amazon highly repugnant to their compatriots, male and female. There are many disparaging references throughout seventeenth century literature to "she-clerks", even from the Puritans.

Education, like everything else, suffered degradation under the Restoration. For this, French influence, this time in decline, was again responsible. Life near the Court was characterized by a complete lack of decency or self-restraint, but by contrast with London, the upbringing of daughters of the country gentleman did not suffer; if anything, it became even more circumspect, and religious fervour burned more brightly.

Poor Law legislation during the successive reigns of Elizabeth, James and Charles, resulted in the establishment of a system of training for poor children, not only paupers and

orphans, but as well for others whose parents were living. In the case of the latter, some slight fee was charged, but the main charge was borne by the parish. Public financial responsibility for education seemed to be realized for the first time in 1649, when Parliament granted £20,000. for the purpose. Education provided by public funds was largely technical, and was, for the most part, intended for children under the age of nine, since before that age they could not be apprenticed. For girls, such education was confined to domestic service, or to unskilled trades like pin-making, and ribbon- and linen-weaving. Doubtless patterned on the trade-schools begun by the foreign immigrants, were the many handicraft schools for children under nine, where they were taught spinning, knitting, and lace-making. In the larger towns, the bridewells nearly all had a department for industrial education of some sort, while hospitals were set up for the relief of orphan children of poor citizens.

CHAPTER XIII.

GIRLS' CHARITY SCHOOLS

SUMMARY: Origin of Charity Schools - one typical school - the teacher - the placing-out of Charity School girls - criticism and advance.

During the reigns of the Tudors and the later Stuarts, particularly Anne, there were two extremely active periods of educational development. Under the latter sovereign there was a concerted effort to provide poorer girls in the country towns and villages with education. This remarkable burst of philanthropic endeavour had its beginnings in the reaction against the debauchery of the Restoration. In 1678, a group of young churchmen founded the Religious Societies in London and Westminster, after having been roused by the sermons of certain London preachers. Thirteen years later originated the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, which were composed of both churchmen and non-conformists, and were greatly encouraged by the piety and bounty of Mary II. A common enthusiasm led from this to the founding of the famous Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, whose first efforts were directed at the provision of free day schools for poor children, where they might learn to read and write, and repeat with understanding the Church catechism. These were the first Charity Schools

in England. In spite of the frequent displays of petty self-importance and righteous snobbery on the part of the guardians and trustees, the tremendous worth of the Charity Schools was recognized during the eighteenth century, and even more so during the nineteenth. It would be a grave injustice to condemn them en bloc for the sins of the trustees, and overlook the genuinely pious and generous motives which had fostered the schools.

The typical Charity School for girls boarded and clothed between twenty and sixty girls at a time. The curriculum included reading and writing, spinning, knitting and plain sewing. The school day lasted from seven in the morning until noon, and from two to five in the afternoon in summer; but in the winter the hours were from eight until noon, and one to four. There were frequent church parades of the entire school in processions led by the Marshal's men to clear the carts off the streets. At least it cannot be claimed that the children were not well and truly versed in religious knowledge! On Thursdays, there was a general half-holiday, geginning at 3 P.M., and on Saturdays, by way of domestic training, the scholars helped to clean and refurbish the school-house in the best "winder"-cleaning tradition of Wackford Squeers, that Dickensian horror. Otherwise, the children were given the usual liberties at Christmas, Easter and Whitsun, and were only requested to come to school clean, well-brushed and curried.

The management of the Charity Schools came in for a great deal of adverse criticism, particularly in the countryside. Here, it was stated, "the committees consisted largely

of those who had axes to grind, and were composed of men of no education, position or sense, with the exception of a few staunch churchmen.

Charity Schools throughout England had a variety of origins, and were by no means confined to those organized by the S.P.C.K. For example, estate owners might frequently endow schools for the children of their tenants and labourers. In cathedral towns like Salisbury and Canterbury, there were schools under the Dean and Chapter, while Oxford had a school for girls in S. Michael's Parish.

Everywhere, however, the Charity Schools were dependent for their existence upon voluntary offerings. Opportunity for donating to the cause was given at the church door, while many benefactors left legacies to them. Some schools demanded a fee of their pupils, but owing to the indigence of the latter, it was never more than a purely nominal sum, something like a shilling a quarter.

On the whole, these schools were quite progressive in their methods. Greenwich School (founded 1700) disciplined by appealing to the better instincts of the pupils, rather than by cowing them with threats. Extreme punishment was seldom necessary. At a school in Oswestry, a shift was hung up for the best spinner, a head-dress for the best sewer, and stockings for the best knitter. The best reader and writer received a Bible and copy-book respectively. At Blewbury in Berkshire, the children were given an allowance of 6d. per week for forty weeks of the year, and had a penny deducted for each day of

absence.[1] The selection of teachers for the schools rested with the governors, and their choice had to be approved by the local clergy. Chief among the qualifications demanded of the Charity School teacher were an open affection for the reigning monarch and the protestant succession, and a firm grounding in Christian principles. A meek, humble disposition and superhuman powers of self-control were also compulsory. The ability to teach, write a good hand and understand arithmetic, were desirable but seldom actually expected of the female teacher. She at least was capable of teaching her pupils to knit, sew and spin. The remuneration for such a lowly position was correspondingly meagre, and the supply of teachers of any ability was never abundant. There was a concerted effort to keep up the standards, particularly in the country schools which used to send their own teachers to London for training when they were unable to entice London-trained teachers into the country.

Since the destiny of the majority of the girl-scholars was to be domestic service, it is small wonder that handicraft grew to occupy a place so important that it virtually excluded all other subjects except a little reading, the most elementary of arithmetic, a little writing, and some stereotyped religious instruction. The practical philosophy of the eighteenth century thought it a shame that there should be so many "idle" and unproductive hands in the country. The hours spent in academic learning were represented as so much lost time. This criticism

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(1) An Account of the Workhouses in Great Britain, (1732), p.48, Quoted by D.G. Gardiner, English Girlhood at School, p. 311.

resulted in the eventual absorption of the Charity Schools by the Poor Law System. In 1689, the Corporation of London provided a workhouse in Bishopsgate, an institute that was duplicated throughout London and in the country within the next few years. In each workhouse, the outstanding feature was the provision of some type of industrial occupation for the inmates. The trade varied from one locality to another -- for example, Buckinghamshire specialized in lace-making, while the workhouses in Norwich made yarn for the weavers. Child-labour was thus provided, plentiful and cheap and constantly supervised. So many advantages recommended it highly to local tradesmen, and employment never failed. The workhouse maintained close connection with the Charity School, which purported to give at least the rudiments of an education. Very frequently, both establishments were annexed. The latter arrangement was considered a very sound one for the children, because the money saved in rent by holding the school on workhouse premises enabled them to be put to good trades. In many districts, the fruits of the children's labour were so successful that they entirely relieved the rates of their charge.

The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge regarded as its prime duty the placing of children in trades best suited to them. For girls, this usually meant seeing them safely established in domestic service, or apprenticed in a household in return for maintenance. There was not a great deal of difference between these alternatives. The S.P.C.K. had less authority behind it than the Poor Law, but its scholars

were generally preferred because of their excellent training in housewifery. It was careful, too, in its selection of employers for the children, since in company with all enlightened opinion of the age, it believed that "placing-out" was another form of slavery, and preferred to send the girls directly into service. The practice of placing-out still continued, with many abuses; and even the notorious cases of Francis Jouveaux, who ill-used and starved some seventeen girl-apprentices to death, and Mrs. Brownrigg,[1] who murdered several others after prolonged torture, failed to arouse public opinion. However, the defenceless state of these girls was recognized in 1747 by an Act which declared that any apprentice might make complaint of ill-usage to two justices.[2]

At the beginning of the movement for providing charity schools there was much adverse criticism. One of the favourite complaints of the detractors was that a too liberal education would inevitably engender exaggerated notions of self-importance in the pupils. This argument was met by the custom of employing them in industry. But those who opposed the establishing of the schools were then unable to see why any education at all was necessary. Surely these children had no need of the learning which their more fortunate brothers and sisters in the upper and middle classes regarded as their due. It was fortunate that the accusations of philanthropists became so insistent towards the end of the century that they entirely drowned out this petty chorus of rebuke.

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(1) M.D. GEORGE: London Life in the Eighteenth Century, (1925) ch. V. pp. 231-5 et seq.
(2) ibid.

Accompanying the gradual conversion of the Charity Schools into small manufactories went a danger that was too often succumbed to. The master or mistress of the school was expected to take over the proceeds of the children's earnings, and after paying the expenses of the school was permitted to keep the balance as profit. There were frequent instances when the temptation to sweat the children and undernourish them proved irresistible.

Despite the disadvantages and abuses of the Charity Schools, which are more lurid and attract more attention than the advantages, the benefits conferred by generations of these schools were neither light nor insignificant, since the endowed schools could not hope to meet the educational needs of the region. By the middle of the century, however, it was obvious that something greater was needed in the way of mass education, and the time was now ripe for such experiments as those of Robert Raikes, Mrs. Sarah Trimmer, and the More sisters. The inauguration of Sunday Schools for those who could not be spared from the plough on weekdays met with a great deal of bitter opposition both from ignorant parents and jealous farmers, who feared lest their labourers should know more than they. In spite of these protests, however, the work of the reformers went forward.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BOARDING SCHOOL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY [1688-1740]

SUMMARY: Introduction - the governess - country boarding schools - refugee schools - drama in school - Erasmus Darwin - physical training and the care of health.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century we find the boarding school the centre of a rather paradoxical situation, for although by this time well-established, it was everywhere held in disrepute. The best one might hope was that its influence was negligible. Where that was not true, the influence of the boarding school was actually corrupt, and its products were marvels of either insignificance or viciousness, in consequence of having spent long years in the study of the foibles and delirious insipidities which were supposedly recognized as education by the beau monde. The literature of the period abounds in satires depicting the ridiculous graduates -- one need only mention Mrs. Malaprop. Most of the boarding-schools aimed merely at producing in their pupils a veneer of fashionable manners, but there are always exceptions to a situation, no matter how desperate. Even when the state of the school was at its most hopeless, there were serious women interested enough in the education of their own sex to propose reforms in currucula

and text books. Some of the keenest ridicule of the subjects taught in school, and of the craze for French in particular, is to be found in the Spectator,[1] but even the keen-minded editors of that paper did not attempt to formulate a better plan.

A factor contributing enormously to the solid position of these schools was the wave of commercial prosperity which affected many trades-people and farmers of little or no education. In these it too often implanted the desire to send their daughters to school to be "polished" or "finished". Having been subjected to several years of snob-education, the daughters would return to spend their days in carping criticiam of their ambitious parents, in reading trashy novels, and in general making themselves and anyone within their ken miserable. In spite of the painful experiences of many such parents, fashion decreed a boarding-school education, and a continual demand for that type of establishment led to an enormous increase in its numbers.

One might have expected that the importance of the teaching-staff would have increased with the waxing fortunes of the boarding schools, but such was not the case. In fact, if anything, their teachers were far less carefully selected than those of the Charity Schools, and the calling was regarded as the last refuge of the poverty-stricken and feckless gentlewoman, the ignorant adventuress, or the out-at-elbows lady's maid. With such directors, it was only natural that the supervision should be deplorable. The very safety of the pupils

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(1) Spectator, no. 36, (April 11, 1711).

was often disregarded, if the many references during the century to elopements, not always willing, from school are to be regarded.

By this time it was an almost universal custom to leave the responsibility for all actual teaching in the hands of the visiting masters. The governess meanwhile was to superintend manners, and impart to the young ladies her own ornamental accomplishments. This system was a vicious circle, for incompetence could only breed such a glut of superficial wives and well-nigh illiterate governesses that the progress of education was held up for two or three more generations.

Naturally there were some good boarding-schools, particularly in London, but for the most part they were as we have described them above, the very worst of the ilk being found in country districts. The latter schools were usually based painstakingly and often comically on the London model, but in their slavish imitation they were as far removed from their pattern as they had been under the Restoration. The masters were the worst that could be had, if we are to credit contemporary literature -- "a strolling-player for a dancing-master and a deserter from Dunkirk to teach French", sneers Richard Flecknoe, and proceeds to tell how girls learnt "to quaver instead of singing, hop instead of dancing, and rumble the virginals, scratch the lute and rake the ghitar."[1] But even in the country the sober type of boarding school still remained, although in small numbers. These academies, where learning was paramount,

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(1) RICHARD FLECKNOE: Aenigmaticall Characters, (1665), p. 86, Character 57.

were often kept by émigrés who filtered into every department of eighteenth century life in England, especially after the Revolution of 1789. The fugitives represented all walks of life, -- some belonged to the nobility, others to the Church; some were adventurers, others scholars, but all in their necessity benefitted the country of their exile, even if it were unwittingly in some instances; and were a far healthier influence on the education of girls than the distorted mould of Gallicism into which they were being forced.

As soon as the Puritan ban on children performing even on a mimic stage was removed, an inherent love of acting immediately began to find scope in the boarding-schools. The Abbé Fenélon, of whom we shall hear later, suggested that history could be made more real by being dramatized. Some English schools were more ambitious, and presented whole plays. Dryden's "All for Love" was not omitted -- but the amorous passages were suitably expunged, and there was no embracing on the stage. In spite of this desperate expedient, there was still much criticism of the impropriety of the plays chosen for presentation. Dr. Erasmus Darwin, a celebrated reformer of girls' education, devoted a section of his "Plan" to the reading of plays in school. He thought Sheridan might be read "without injury to their morals or much outrage to their feelings," but hesitated to allow the girls to act themselves, because "the danger consists in this, lest the acquisition of bolder action, and a more elevated voice, should annihilate that retiring modesty and blushing embarrassment to which young ladies owe xxx much of their powerful

external charms"![1]

Fénelon's "Traité de l'Éducation des Jeunes Filles" exercised a profound influence in England, and by no means the least part of it was concerned with the teaching of the care of the health to girls, and entirely new development in their upbringing. The abbé knew the interdependence of mind and body, and asserted that ill-health was the result of a lack of virtue or courage. To promote good health, he advised simple food and drink, and a regular diet well-chewed. His girl-pupils were to be enured to weather and hardship, although not violently, in order that they might acquire strength and vigour. Regular and moderate exercise in the open air, such as walking, riding, dancing and singing, were also recommended by him. More important to the hysterical type of girl produced by the boarding-school, he suggested that the imagination should be taught self-control, because it was more often than not the cause of prevalent nervous diseases, and that instead the reason should be fortified. Despite such sane advice, which was enthusiastically seconded in England by the philosopher Locke, fashionable practice was still quite the reverse. False standards of beauty and false notions of worldly success persuaded many mothers in the quest of a fashionable outline or complexion to submit their willing daughters to processes which were nothing short of torture. Tight-lacing, (which seems to have been a particularly English vice), starvation, and perpetual physicking, could only produce an anaemic, neurotic daughter. The schoolmistress was only carrying out the wishes of the

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(1) ERASMUS DARWIN: Plan, part XIII, p. 32.

parents when she had her pupils do their lessons while strapped to a backboard, not much different from the stocks reserved for felons, except that it presumably induced an upright posture.

"When a girl is safely brought from her nurse, before she is capable of forming one simple notion of anything in life, she is delivered to the hands of her dancing-master; and with a collar (iron) round her neck the pretty wild thing is taught a fantastical gravity of behaviour and forced to a particular way of holding her head, heaving her breast, and moving with her whole body; and all this under pain of never having a husband if she steps, looks or moves away."[1]

Darwin cited examples of girls who dieted at school, later starving themselves into emaciation and leading "diseased and comfortless lives." Throughout the century, however, the study of hygiene remained non-existent, or at least in a very elementary stage. To offset the pale little countenances and general listlessness he incessantly saw about him, Darwin urged greater activity, particularly games like shuttlecock, dancing in the open air during the summer, skating and swimming. He fulminated against strait-lacing, hard corsets and tight bandages, and rejoiced when they disappeared temporarily upon the introduction of Grecian dress. An enquiry into the physical welfare of the girls led Darwin to give attention to the typical school dietary, which he found insufficient. He insisted fanatically and most unreasonably that the milk should be unskimmed! Altogether, his ideas on the subject of food were quite in accord with modern thought, if we exclude his accep-

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(1) STEELE: Spectator, no. 66.

tance of a ration of small beer. Ripe, fresh fruit were recommended to replace sweets, and he also very wisely counselled the deletion of water-gruel as a punishment for school-girl peccadilloes, since it was the foundation of debility.

Summarized, then, Darwin's regime comprised abundant food and fresh air. The inhalation of the latter was further encouraged by the lucky chance that, as well as having been recommended by Fenelon and his disciple Locke, gardening was also a favourite pastime of the popular Queen, Mary II. Here, then, was an exercise not merely beneficial, but actually sanctioned by royalty, and consequently fashionable. Once the taste had been implanted it was further strengthened by the publication of Rousseau's "Emile", which again stressed the usefulness of gardening as a school subject, and induced many boarding schools to encourage the girls to possess and cultivate their own plots of ground.

Walking was highly thought of as an exercise, while some writers[1] were even so enlightened as to object to the crocodile. Girls in some schools were also taught to ride, but Samuel Richardson, who exercised as much power as Tamerlaine at his most despotic, frowned on the sport, because the attire demanded of women seemed most unmaidenly and masculine to him. Such a reason was enough to damn the sport during his regnum.

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(1) THOMAS GISBORNE: quoted by D.G. GARDINER, English Girlhood at School, p. 358, ft. 3.

CHAPTER XV.

EDUCATION OF GIRLS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1688-1740)

SUMMARY: Introduction - Fenelon - Watts - some characteristics of the period - Mary Astell - the serious women.

The question which agitated society educationally in the eighteenth century was, to whom is education due? The answer came back pat: to those who belonged to the classes in which education was already regarded as a prerogative. It was not at all certain that the borders of education should be extended. The sentiment contained in the hymn,

> "The rich man in his castle,
> The poor man at the gate,
> God made them high and lowly
> And ordered their estate",

amounted almost to a religious conviction, so intense and ingrained was it. The idea of educating the children of the poor did not even occur to a sympathetic person like Isaac Watts, who composed the lines quoted above in all sincerity. It had already been admitted, however grudgingly, that women were due some measure of education. The problem now resolved itself into the question of whether it might be extended to impecunious females or not.

Society in London and in the larger towns had not yet fully recovered from the blight of the Restoration. The essayists

undertook the benevolent censorship of morals, and proved invaluable in their condemnation of contemporary foibles. Educational writers were blasting frivolity in the schools, and especially its evil effect on the girl-pupils. Virtuous citizens, through the Charity Schools, were doing their best to pull destitute girls into respectability, but young gentlewomen were more neglected than ever, chained as they were to the inexorable chariot of ridiculous fashion. During this century, the court, by way of compensation for its former sins, was a valuable influence for good. Queen Anne was celebrated because of her efforts in the interests of charity, while even Sarah Jennings, in spite of her foul temper, could not be reproached for leading an irregular life. The second Mary, too, set an almost saintly example of piety, and was everywhere warmly admired.

We return now to discuss a figure who has already been mentioned. The Abbé Fénelon, one of the foremost educational reformers of the century, had plenty of opportunity for observing the psychology of young girls, since from 1678 to 1688 he was Superior of the Community of the Madeleine de Tresnel and of the Nouvelles-Catholiques, a group of daughters of recent converts from protestantism. The "Traité" mirrored his own personality very aptly. It is urbane, kindly and persuasive, if it were not altogether able to convince. The defects in girls which his predecessors had ascribed to their naturally perverse and illogical natures, Fénelon lays to the charge of faulty education. He deemed it idiotic to suppose that a girl

who had not been exposed to solid matters in youth would apply herself to them upon arriving at years of discretion, and warned that her insatiable imagination, denied sane nourishment, would turn inevitably and desperately to vain and dangerous objects, and seek satisfaction in the over-stimulating romances of the time. In mentioning this, Fénelon put his finger on one of the most frequently mentioned and ignored tragedies of the age -- that of the undisciplined imagination.

The good abbé felt that among the first things girls should be taught were frankness and ingenousness, two virtues they could scarcely be expected to display after centuries of dependence and servile education. He very often referred to the disabling effect of dissimulation, for example, pretending to like the works of certain authors one detested, a foible girls especially were prey to.

He was a staunch advocate of the play-way in teaching, and was all for letting the children act out their histories and literature. When the teacher was reading, said he, she should permit her voice act with the characters in the book. In this way, learning would become a pleasure and leave a pleasant taste in the pupil's mouth. Fewer formal lessons, attractively illustrated books, and above all expert and well-instructed teachers, were among the innovations he proposed. At the close of the "Traité" there were fifty maxims for the guidance of teachers, which represent the underlying principles of the art of teaching in any age. He demanded no extraordinary attributes, simply good sense, humour, true fear of God, good

character and temper. In England, it was more than a century and a half before this sound advice induced any systematic attempt to train governesses. There must have been at least a few good schoolmistresses before that date, with a genuine liking and ability for their calling, but they were not sufficient to redeem it from the small esteem, negligible training, and inadequate remuneration which characterized it.

In his "Treatise on the Education of Children and Youth", Isaac Watts set forth the essentially English point of view. Fénelon had envisaged the education of young gentlewoman alone, but Watts at the outset states his convictions quite frankly -- "Persons of better circumstances in the world should give their sons and their daughters a much larger share of knowledge than meaner persons can or ought. But every ... child hath a right to be taught by its parents, according to their best ability, so much as is necessary for its well-being both in body and soul, here and hereafter."[1]

This treatise formed a valuable and thoughtful contribution to the literature devoted to the improvement of the education of girls. Its model curriculum included mathematics in all its branches, algebra, geometry, geography and astronomy, for them as well as boys; it advised their acquaintance with good poetry, singing and playing of instruments for those of musical tastes, drawing and painting, and even dancing as an accomplishment. Like Fenelon, Watts warned strenously against

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(1) ISAAC WATTS: Treatise on the Education of Children and Youth, Works, (1810), vol. V., p. 358.

books which make "a deep and frightful impression on tender minds."[1] One particular book he had in mind while writing that statement was Foxe's "Book of Martyrs", which he greatly desired to cast into limbo. Watts' final concern was for girls who remained idle after being "educated". He was perturbed that they should be faced with starvation if their parents should die and leave them helpless. To remedy this situation he suggested that some of the lighter and more suitable occupations, like the making of female apparel, should be left entirely free for women. In conclusion, the reformer painted an extremely telling picture of English education for girls in a dialogue between two mothers, Antigone and Phronissa. Antigone had been severely brought up in a seventeenth century Puritan household, where she had been subjected to an extremely dour and colourless existence, spending six hours a day at her needle, reading nothing but the Bible and dry sermons, "but", quoth she, "I shall teach my children politer lessons out of plays and romances, that they may be acquainted with the world betimes.... We were taught to play the good housewife in the kitchen and the pastry and were well instructed in the conduct of the broom and duster; but we knew nothing of the mode of the court and the diversions of the town. I should be ashamed to see these young creatures ... so awkward in company at fourteen as I was at four-and-twenty."[2]

The results of Antigone's reaction were even more

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(1) ISAAC WATTS: Treatise on the Education of Children and Youth, Works, (1810), vol. V., p. 380.

(2) WATTS: op. cit., p. 401.

unfortunate than her own education had been, for her daughters became feather-brained little socialites who treated their admiring mother with scorn and neglect. Phronissa, on the other hand, was better able to keep the balance between Puritan severity and Georgian license. She taught her daughters to sew plainly and elaborately, and while they were so occupied, one of them would read to the group, so that needlework never became a chore. While they were scarcely more than babies, she set them to learn "pretty passages" from the Bible, so that they were able to read at the age of six. They were accomplished in song and dance and could converse agreeably and dress well, but they were managed so unobtrusively and with such reason and love by their mother that they seemed to know "nothing but liberty."[1]

Such precocity as that of Antigone's daughters was by no means confined to a few. It was so widespread as to evoke much criticism. Another feature, no doubt the result of a too-early introduction into society, and which was universally condemned, was the impertinence of the youngsters towards their parents and elders. A couplet which was given wide currency rhymed it thus:

"Now little Miss in Hanging-Sleeves knows more
Than formerly her Grandma at three-score."[2]

The corollary of both impertinence and precocity was a miserable illiteracy among gentlewomen. It was even impossible for them,

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(1) WATTS: Treatise on the Ed. of Children and Youth, Works, (1810), vol. V., p. 402.

(2) Chickens Feed Capons, (1731), p. 17.

according to Steele, to read without mispronouncing words, or in any other tone but a tiresome sing-song. To be able to do otherwise almost verged on pedantry.[1]

Perhaps the most outstanding example of illiteracy in high places was Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, who for many years was the most influential woman in England. She gloried in being thought learned, and had in her library the works (suitably autographed) of all the great authors of her day. She affected the fashionable taste for Italian music, but knew no language but her own, and even that she could not spell. Although she had had no training in arithmetic, she worked out for herself an efficient, if involved, method of computing her own finances.

Olympian critics like Steele, Swift, and the Marquis of Halifax impartially condemned fashionable education and its products, and reinforced the old arguments that women were creatures of little reasoning ability, who delighted in idleness and in the pursuit of vanities. Their attacks met few defenders from the ranks of women themselves. Butterflies do not make good warriors! But there was one notable exception in the person of Mary Astell, who was fortunate in having had her great ability recognized in early youth by an uncle who trained her in philosophy, mathematics, logic and Latin. Her most striking work was "A Serious Proposal," which was addressed to women with the object of raising their sadly declined self-

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(1) STEELE: The Ladies Library, (1714), p. 17.

respect, and of making them believe themselves capable of nobler things than "pursuing butterflies and trifles."[1] Women had grown to develop as poor an opinion of themselves as the rest of the world had, and it was Mary Astell's self-appointed task to show them that they were not incapable of learning. Her theory was that their first, if not only defect, lay "in a mistaken education."[2] "Ignorance", said she, "and a narrow education lay the Foundation of Vice, and limitation and Custom rear it up." The remedy she proposed was the foundation of a monastic college, where women might teach themselves and a younger generation of children.

The unfairness of public opinion, represented by the essayists, lay in the fact that while it was swift to condemn the ignorant woman, it had even less taste for the learned one. The greatest fear under which the serious woman of the eighteenth century suffered, was that of appearing learned, since the word had the connotation of oddness or affectation. Mary Astell had to publish her "Proposal" anonymously, and addressed "my darling Obscurity, which I court and doat on above all Earthly Blessings," so ardently because of the instant prejudice which would have been created by the name of a female author. Women were out of favour with society.

One very potent reason for the distrust of the learned woman was her incursion into new fields of study represented by natural science, philosophy and mathematics, which for a

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(1) MARY ASTELL: A Serious Proposal, Part I, p. 108.

(2) loc. cit.

time rivalled and even vanquished singing and dancing, French and Italian. In quiet country places there was an atmosphere more conducive to study, and it is here that we find women pursuing their studies. Anne Baynard, who died of a wasting fever at twenty-three, and who wrote an "Essay on Human Understanding" championing the philosopher Locke, had studied Greek, Latin, French and Italian from books in her father's library. Far from the turmoil of the town, we also find Elizabeth Elstob, who, encouraged by her brother and Dr. Hickes, Fénelon's English proponent, became the first woman scholar of the Saxon tongue. Among her works were the "Rudiments of Grammar" (1715), the translation of the Homily on the Birthday of S. Gregory, and the transcription of hymns and canticles from ancient manuscripts in Salisbury Cathedral.

The two Queens, Anne and Mary, had spent seven years of their childhood under a tutor, Dr. Lake, who had been appointed by the Bishop of London. Lake well knew what was expected of him, and performed his task so efficiently that both princesses remained steadfast churchwomen, even when their position involved them in much controversy -- Anne through sheer obstinacy, Mary for more spiritual reasons. The unassuming piety of the latter won her the whole-hearted love of her subjects, even if it could not make them keep Sunday holy. Religion was the absorbing interest in her life. Bishop Burnet spoke of her "amazing Understanding in matters of Divinity." She loved and was an excellent judge of poetry, read much history and attempted philosophy and mathematics, "but

She stopp'd soon."[1] Mary's hobbies were "Architecture and Gardenage", which, when they proved expensive, she said she hoped would be pardoned her, since they employed so many hands. At court she set such a constant example of industry that it became as fashionable to be busy as it had formerly to be idle.

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(1) GILBERT, BISHOP OF SALISBURY: An Essay on the Memory of the Late Queen, p. 79.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.
(1740-1762)

SUMMARY: Samuel Richardson and the cultivation of sentiment - French treatises - contribution of the Bluestockings - the eighteenth century curriculum.

The rather oppressive atmosphere of the first four decades of the eighteenth century which we have drawn was changed between 1740 and 1762 by the overwhelming personalities of two men, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Samuel Richardson. At the mid-century, the standard of attainment for both sexes in England was at its lowest ebb. Travesties on married life abounded on every side, and the only honour accorded to marriage was given it by Time, for now it had become the subject of ridicule on the part of young women as well as men. True, a sense of disquiet did prompt some feeble interest in the education of women, but the idea was generally scoffed at by them, and almost universally by men. Men of scholarly habits, as Swift complained, had to remain unmarried, or marry women so hopelessly ignorant that they could scarcely esteem them.[1]

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(1) JONATHAN SWIFT: Works, (1825), vol I., p. 233.

Into this scene of coarsened moral sense and undernourished intellect stepped a most curious reformer armed with an unusual but most effective weapon. Samuel Richardson's success as a novelist can not easily be understood to-day, but it came about in this way. Interest in the drama had waned, and women of "genteel" ambitions found themselves with an overabundance of leisure. The Charity Schools had taught an entire class of girls to read, thus vastly increasing the reading public, but -- there was very little to read except for the old-fashioned romances.. Upon this unsuspecting but eager throng burst the figures of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison, harbingers of an entire new race of fascinating heroes and heroines. A whole nation of women lived vicariously in the emotions of Clarissa, and even the critical Lady Mary Wortley Montague had to admire Richardson's power to charm, and wept scandalously over his works. In objective criticism, she offered Fénelon's plea for the protection of the uncontrolled imagination from overexcitement, but it is clear that Richardson regarded himself as the reformer of a decadent society rather than as a menace.

In Clarissa he created a new and appealing type of heroine, a creature of mind independent and principles unswerving. To the reformer's role he added that of sympathetic champion of womanhood, whose disrepute he was kind enough to suppose was rooted in their lack of youthful training. Apart from this Fénelonian opinion he was rather inclined to be conservative in the matter of women's education, since he portrayed

Pamela, who had received an education above her station from her dead mistress, as bewailing the fact. She would have preferred to learn to bake, sew and scour, than to dance, sing, and learn artful embroidery. Pamela even had a completely useless taste for versifying, and certainly her letters show no lack of facile penmanship. Harriet Byron learned French and Italian before she was fourteen, but no Greek or Latin. By way of restoring the balance, she was a charming singer. Clarissa, too, was greatly admired by her friends for her deep reading and her skill in needlework, in addition to her undisputed moral superiority. Even in his own day, Richardson's heroines had "old-fashioned" virtues! But he followed contemporary preference in his desire that they should not pursue learning at the expense of their distinctive charm and elegance. Unlike his brother-wielders of the pen, Richardson blamed women for burying their talents for writing. He was "no enemy to the distaff",[1] but thought the pen as becoming as the needle in a woman's fingers.

The eighteenth century vogue for things French -- manners, domestics, dress, or dancing -- was completed by the craze towards the fifth decade for French treatises on education. These, like all the other borrowings, underwent an almost instant process of degallicizing. Throughout the remainder of the century there was a spate of didactic writings directed to the improvement of the mind. They were frequently in letter form,

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(1) SAMUEL RICHARDSON: Correspondence, vol. II., p. 81.

addressed to the sex most in need of improvement, represented at times as a real person, at others as imaginary. They gave close moral support from the cradle to the grave and had tremendous influence in their own day, cramped though they were in a common frame and containing advice which had been repeated so often as to have become stereotyped.

One of the more interesting of the didactic writers was the Reverend Wetenhall Wilkes. He is interesting because of the differences, not the similarities, between him and the others. Unlike the majority, he favoured learning in women at all times, and further expressed the novel opinion that women have as much reason as men. He looked back wistfully in his "Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady" to the time when ladies gathered herbs for the relief of the ailments of the poor, and did not spend their time yawnfully shuffling a pack of cards. He strongly urged the avoidance of the studied fashionable motions of the head, such as oblique glances, ogling and winking. Again looking backward, he cited the Spartan attitude towards self-control as being admirable, and professed himself equally averse to the sensibilities.

Successor to the "serious woman" of the earlier part of the century, a new phenomenon appeared in the persons of the Blue-Stockings, who in the amount of their learning can only be compared to the Tudor paragons. The Bas-Bleus set out to reform society altogether, and their service to English women was social rather than intellectual. Like the queens of the seventeenth century French salons, they valued intel-

lectual activity, not for its own sake, but only as it enhanced social activity. A few, like Elizabeth Carter and Mrs. Montagu, were phenomenal scholars, but the talents of Mrs. Vesey, the "Sylph", were more characteristic of the whole group. She was familiar through the impression she made on her contemporaries, Horace Walpole, Dr. Johnson, and Laurence Stern. By them she was praised as the perfect hostess, and for her ability to put everyone at ease, not for her considerable mental powers or her love of books, or yet for her membership in the Carter-Montagu coterie. Mrs. Montagu had one foible, that of holding undivided sway over a circle of admirers, often to the chagrin of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was a formidable rival in that respect. For fifty years, Lady Mary was the object of much unwilling public admiration. Her erratic genius led her to become that rare creature, the independent female traveller, and her love for this type of pastime was reflected in her extremely cosmopolitan domestic staff. Her example created a healthy zeal for continental travel among Englishwomen.

Although the Bas-Bleus were devoted to intellectual society, there is an interesting recrudescence during their reign of the conventual idea. Sarah Robinson, later Mrs. Scott, influenced by Mary Astell's "Serious Proposal", describes in her own work, "Millenium Hall", a community of ladies living together in a country house and devoted to philanthropy and education. The origin of the idea was in the pity Mrs. Scott and her boon companion, Lady Barbara Montagu, felt for poor gentlewomen, "genteelly" educated, unable to maintain themselves,

and dependent upon the bounty of insolent relatives. To these, providing their characters and dispositions were suitable, was granted admittance to Millenium Hall. The rules of the Hall provided that all private fortunes were to be pooled, a feature which calls to mind the dowry of the mediaeval nun. Each of the inmates had her own bedroom, but shared an eating-parlour and drawing-room with the others. Books and music were provided, and the charges of sickness were paid by the generous patronesses. Anyone who did not fit into the community could be evicted by a vote of three-quarters of the other women.

The writers of improving letters provided an excellent picture of the eighteenth century curriculum sanctioned by current opinion. In every scheme proposed by the didactic reformers, religious and moral instruction of a reasonable nature played some part, the size and colour of which depended on the author's own doctrines. Mrs. Chapone, one such moral writer, advocated the teaching of history, ancient, mediaeval and modern, to girls. She particularly favoured English, Scottish and French history, and was a firm believer in the efficacy of memorizing chronological data. Naturally, the moral aspect of history was of the first importance. It was she who first realized that social history might be of far greater interest to girls than long series of battles and sieges. The study of natural history and philosophy filled a need which had long existed in the education of girls. They were first taught as adjuncts to religious training, a fact which caused some confusion during the later Darwinian furore.

Botany was extremely popular, not only because it was healthful and amusing, but also because it had the added advantage of being fashionable. From the study of these sciences it was but a step to chemistry and mineralogy. It is doubtful if these subjects were universally popular, but the public was so amazed at the spectacle of Mary Somerville studying stars at her bedroom window and mastering intricate mathematical formulae, that it forgot, for once, to sneer.

In matters poetical, Mrs. Chapone included the historical plays of Shakespeare in her list of books, and she liked Milton, who had been re-introduced to women by Addison's criticism in the Spectator. It was typical of the day to snub Latin, and of course Greek, against which there was a terrific prejudice. Fanny Burney took a Latin lesson every morning from Dr. Johnson, but frequently wondered why she spent so much time on acquiring something she would "always dread to have known."[1] All writers emphasized the value accruing from a careful study of the native tongue. To read aloud well, now became the first article in a young lady's education, for well-trained and sympathetic readers were in constant request, thanks again to Richardson's novels. An equally indispensible part of a study of the vernacular was the art of letter-writing. Schools now gave much attention to clear handwriting, and nearly all favoured "a fair round-hand". The letters of Pope, Pliny, and above all of Madame de Sévigny, were recommended as

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(1) FANNY BURNEY: Diary, vol. I., p. 204.

models. This was one art in which girls were easily superior and carried off the palm.

This period witnessed the spectacle of needlework and embroidery falling from the dignity of a full-time drudgery to a position well-nigh contemptible. From that time forward the needle occupied an unimportant position as a school-subject.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (CONCLUDED) (1762-1800)

SUMMARY: Introduction - Rousseau's influence - Thomas Day - Mary Wollstonecraft - the end of accomplishments.

The reigns of the first two Georges re-introduced into England some of the worst features of the Restoration which Anne and Mary had offset to some degree. During the long ministry of Robert Walpole, men and women alike feel victims to a sordid greed for gain which was exploited to the full by George II. and his first minister. Corruption was rampant, and once having lost their self-respect as citizens, people began to cast about for some other basis for their self-esteem, and found it in the emulation of the luxury, vice and pleasure-seeking which they saw about them. Such was the social background of the educational writers we are to consider now, women like Mary Wollstonecraft and Catherine Macaulay who attacked the training in ornamental accomplishments which were regarded as the only preparation for a successful marriage.

In 1762, George III. ascended the throne and Rousseau published his "Emile". We must examine the latter work because

of the powerful influence it had in England, and because it evoked the righteous indignation of the women reformers we have already mentioned.

In formulating the ideal man in the person of Emile, Rousseau was unfortunately led to the formulating of the ideal woman, for he had been incautious enough to affirm that marriage was a necessary part of the well-rounded human existence. Unhappily, Rousseau could only think of women in relation to men, and was consequently convinced of their inferior position. With this belief it was only natural that he should deny that they need be carefully instructed. It was better that they follow their natural perverse inclinations, in enumerating which Rousseau betrayed his fundamental distrust of females. He dreaded the merest suspicion of independence for the traditionally dependent sex. Since they were lazy and indocile, wariness and industry had to be forced upon them by some means or other. No teachers were necessary, however, since they would tend merely to reproduce types rather than individuals. In matters of religion, Sophie was to be taught by example, for Rousseau would not have her learn set prayers. He favoured Greek methods of moderate, healthy exercise, and abhorred tight-lacing. But despite all this individual attention to Sophie, he made it perfectly clear that in his opinion, the study of womankind is mankind. She is only importance in relation to Emile.

"Emile" was a great deal more acceptable to Englishmen than to critical Englishwomen, and there was a prodigious

number of Sophie-like heroines appearing in the next few years, all created by men, and depicted as transparently sincere and malleable, and altogether womanly! One of the more interesting of the works inspired by Rousseau was the experiment of Thomas Day, author of "Sandford and Merton." Convinced that he was too unfashionable a figure ever to attract a wife, ready-made as it were, he resolved to catch one young and train her into perfection. To this end he took a twelve-year-old orphan girl with flaxen hair from the Foundling Hospital, and proceeded à la manière Rousseau to put his plan into operation. The little victim did not co-operate, and refused to be made over into a Stoic. She quite naturally winced when hot sealing-wax was dropped on her arm, and screeched loudly when Day fired pistols at her skirts. Nor could she resist the temptation to relay pretended secrets told her by him to the servants. Eventually the author gave up his plan of marrying her, and with it a great part of his faith in Rousseau. The little foundling was sent to a boarding-school, where she soon became an amiable and exemplary young person who later married some one else. Day himself married (crowning jest!) another product of the boarding-school, Esther Milner. Both she and her husband's orphan maintained the most cordial relationship with him, in spite of his efforts to re-educate Esther. This episode is in sharp contrast to Rousseau, who detested his own children.

In Englishwomen, however, the only sentiment aroused by Rousseau was one of boundless indignation. They saw the

small victories gained by the Bluestockings about to slip away from them again, for Rousseau was tremendously influential in re-stating the old tyrannies and contempt, insisting upon the inferior intellect and pettiness of soul in women. The cudgels were immediately taken up by Mary Wollstonecraft, that prophet and evangelist of women's rights. She was the daughter of a spendthrift drunkard, and knew from bitter experience in her own family of the misery which derived from submissiveness, and of intellectual and domestic degradation. Her first occupation away from home was that of companion to a tyrannical old woman. Then she became a teacher, a post in which she was an upper servant with more work than the menial ones; and then she was governess in the household of Lady Kinborough. Through her translations of foreign works, she gained entrance to a literary coterie by which her gifts were given recognition, even if it found her too forcible and clever for a woman. In 1792 she gained European fame through her "Vindication of the Rights of Women." In it she set down her own youthful experiences in a style so passionately sincere that to-day it often seems turgid and offensive in its rhetoric and flights of fancy. Her book contained nothing that had not been heard before, but she re-stated the case with such vigour that her presentation could not fail to be beneficial in the long run.

Mary Wollstonecraft and others arrived at the close of the century dissatisfied with the ornamental accomplishments. Earlier in the century, smatterings of French, drawing, dancing and music, were the necessary furniture of the gentlewoman's

education; but very soon they became common property, and then the wealthier classes were reduced to establishing another monopoly, that of expensive masters, which did not prove satisfactory for very long. These accomplishments were not only becoming vulgar, but obsolete, and small wonder! They had no educational value. As preparation for life they were worse than nothing, for such ill-taught bits and pieces were forgotton as soon as the pupil left school. They had only lasted so long because of the ambitions of both parents and children. From dissatisfaction with the existing subjects, it was natural for many reformers to consider suitable books for women. It will be remembered that Richardson made Lovelace provide Clarissa during her captivity with a lady's library, the contents of which were well calculated to deceive the heroine as to his villainous intentions. The collection included South's"Sermons", Fenelon's "Telemachus", the plays of Steele, Rowe, Colley Cibber and Shakespeare, besides the Tatlers, Guardians, and Spectators, and the works of Pope, Addison, and Swift. These works, then, must have been commonly read in addition to the romances. Towards the end of the century the practice of instructing girls in the elements of science and sociology was greatly aided by such books as Mrs. Marcet's"Conversations"on Chemistry, on Political Economy, Natural Philosophy, and Vegetable Physiology. Before she died, amny of these books had become text-books in hundreds of schools. Mrs. Marcet had a host of imitators, who produced mountains of small books giving swift and superficial views of all types of subjects. The age of accomplishments

was succeeded by one in which girls were expected to know a little of everything, a situation which constituted in improvement over the earlier one only in that the pupils now knew a little about much more.

POSTSCRIPT.

The end of the eighteenth century represented a rather bleak prospect for the nineteenth in the field of education. But the succeeding century and a half was responsible for unprecedented advances in that department. As much progress has been made in these last hundred and fifty years as had been accomplished in the preceding eighteen hundred. From the date of the first Education Act, the educational lot of English girls ran parallel to their brothers'. In the nineteenth century it was finally realized that the bulk of the population had to be enlightened, if national prosperity were to survive and increase, and to that purpose educational measures were directed at providing elementary instruction for the entire populace.

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