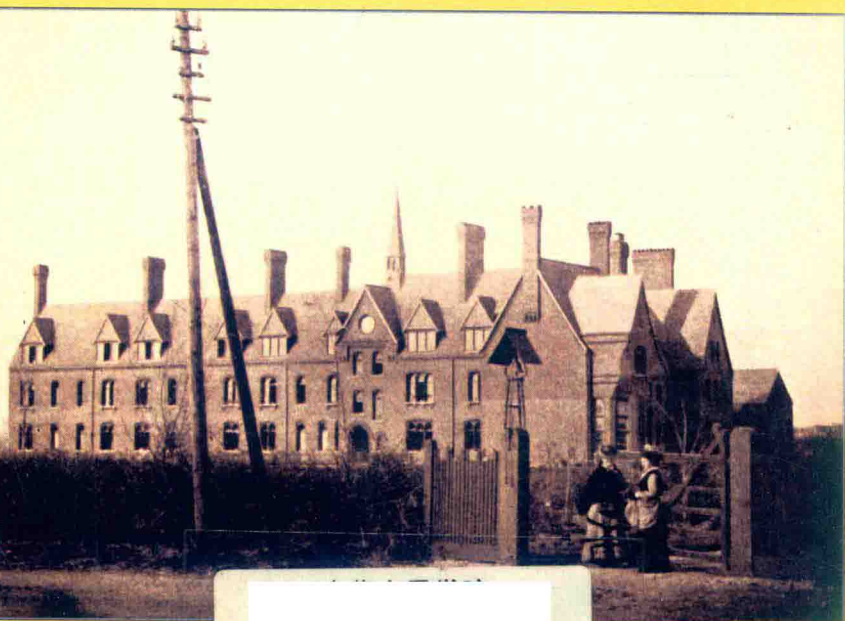


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SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS AND COLLEGES FOR WOMEN

A HANDBOOK OF FEMALE EDUCATION
CHIEFLY DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF
PERSONS OF THE UPPER MIDDLE CLASS

CHARLES EYRE PASCOE



CAMBRIDGE

Schools for Girls and Colleges for Women

*A Handbook of Female Education Chiefly Designed
for the Use of Persons of the Upper Middle Class*

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The author of handbooks that reflected the Victorian emphasis on bettering one's prospects, Charles Eyre Pascoe (1842–1912) addressed the topic of female education in this work of 1879, at a time when the Cambridge colleges of Girton and Newnham were in their infancy. 'Chiefly designed for the use of persons of the upper middle class', the guide aims to assist parents in making informed choices about their daughters' education. The coverage extends from kindergarten through to university, before focusing on career options for women in the late nineteenth century, in fields such as teaching, the arts and medicine. Throughout, Pascoe's recommendations are based on consideration of the breadth of the curriculum, the qualifications of the teaching staff and the results achieved in examinations. For higher education, details of entrance examinations are provided, together with information on the subjects and lectures that were open to women at that time.

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A HANDBOOK OF FEMALE EDUCATION
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TOGETHER WITH SOME CHAPTERS ON
THE HIGHER EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN.

BY
CHARLES EYRE PASCOE

AUTHOR OF 'A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK TO THE PRINCIPAL SCHOOLS OF ENGLAND';
'A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK TO THE PROFESSIONS,' ETC.



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SCHOOLS FOR GIRLS AND COLLEGES FOR WOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE purpose with which I have undertaken the preparation of this little work has not been altogether devoid of self-interest. Like many other parents of limited means, I have reason to know, that not the least anxious moments of a father's life are those when the time has come for making choice of schools for the children. The word "children" I use advisedly, believing, in common with others, elementary education to be the common basis of intelligence and culture, and demanding, therefore, as earnest consideration from heads of families as education in the higher form, when the children have grown to be young men and women. In a book recently published, I ventured to direct attention to the Foundation benefits within reach of boys at our greater Public Schools. The attempt was therein made to point the way by which a clever boy, conscientious, painstaking, and apt to learn, might both become a present help to his parents by relieving them, in a measure, of his school expenses, and afterwards advance himself to, and at, the University. It

has not been without some mistrust of my ability to deal satisfactorily with the subject of Girls' Schools that I have entered upon the present work. In the case of the boys, I had the irreproachable testimony of centuries of splendid tradition to guide me to the selection I made of schools which were entitled to the confidence of parents. In the present instance no such ample authority was at my command ; and I have had to rely, almost wholly, upon personal inquiry and research to establish the claim of each school to its place in the following pages. If such an attestation of the value of the facts herein collected be worth anything, I may be permitted to say, that this handbook will be my own trusty counsellor and guide in planning and furthering the education of my own children. Already—while, indeed, I was engaged in writing its first chapter—the book has proved of service ; for it has led me to discover that the Primary Schools of the State, with their numerous appliances, trained teachers, and system of independent inspection, offer to the children of the humbler ranks advantages which those above them in the social scale cannot command. What the precise result of this will be as regards the coming generation it would be venturesome to predict ; but one effect must surely be—unless, at least, new vigour can be infused into our voluntary educational machinery—that the foremost places in the battle of life will no longer belong to those whose birth used to be supposed to ensure their position. The recognition of this in the case of the girls is less general, perhaps, than in that of the boys ; but happily there is a livelier and increasing interest being shown in the whole matter of female education by women themselves, which indicates that they are awakening to wants which must be attended to and supplied.

How immediate and pressing is the necessity for some

well-devised and comprehensive scheme of Elementary and Secondary education for the daughters of persons "to middle fortune born," may possibly be gathered from a statement of my own experiences in searching for primary instruction for a little girl. I happen to reside in a populous western suburb of London, whose inhabitants, for the purposes of my story, may be classified as follows:—(1) the wealthy, who live in very noticeable mansions on the hill-side; (2) the well-to-do, consisting of prosperous professional men, merchants, and others, occupying comfortable villa residences on the plain; (3) a subordinate class—in point of numbers far exceeding the other two classes put together—composed of thrifty tradesfolk, clerks, and their fellows, striving hard, and mostly with gratifying success, to pay their way, and, we may surmise, looking forward hopefully to promotion to the hill-side by and by. Occasionally, while strolling about the thoroughfares of this outskirt of London, I have ventured an opinion with myself as to where the younger members of the families of these people are educated. At holiday seasons I have not unfrequently noticed the natty hat and well-cut jacket of Eton and Harrow in the neighbourhood of the mansions, and, therefore, conjecture that their owners, so far as their sons are concerned, support the Great Schools of England. At times I have thought that I could trace something of the youthful athleticism and sturdy independence of Rugby and Marlborough in the aspect of the lads whom I meet in the vicinity of the villa residences of the plain. And from a daily experience of some years in travelling to and from town, I can testify to the countenance given by my neighbours, the thrifty clerks and liberal-minded tradesfolk, to the excellent public day-schools of London, whereof King's and University College Schools offer very sufficient examples. So far, I feel able to give fair account of the

place of education of the boys of my neighbourhood ; but when I turn to the girls I am, figuratively speaking, nowhere. I take it for granted, however, that the mansions on the hill-side shelter competent governesses, and therefore pass them by. The owners of the villa residences, doubtless, also find suitable means for the daily instruction of their daughters. My curiosity, not to say wonder, is excited to know where the girls of the less prosperous inhabitants of this populous western London suburb procure their education. If the experiences of these good people in seeking for an eligible school has been anywise like my own, then I fear my curiosity is destined to remain unsatisfied, until such time as public opinion shall have pronounced in favour of systematized education for girls of the Middle classes, and a public school shall have been founded in my neighbourhood as the natural outcome of this beneficent and much-to-be-desired action.

Statistics being wearisome to the generality of readers, I guard myself against employing them here. In their place, I must ask the reader to accept of the assurance that I have been at all needful pains to confirm the truth of the following statement. In the suburb where I reside there are not less than a thousand persons, able, and doubtless willing to pay for a good Day-school for Girls, who are at present without one. Under existing circumstances, all these good people are thrown upon the resources of the neighbourhood for their daughters' education ; and these failing are driven to seek for instruction for them elsewhere. An opinion of the nature and extent of the available means for female education within reach of the Middle-class inhabitants of my district, may be formed from a consideration of the following few particulars gleaned from prospectuses of existing day-schools within its boundaries. At present there are eight

such schools offering education to persons of the Middle classes. Their respective proprietors (with one exception) claim, each one for her school, first, that it is "Select," and therefore of special value or excellence in the true meaning of the term; and next that it is an "Establishment" set apart for the education and bringing-up of "Young Ladies." Let us show no disposition to quibble about words, but at once admit these expressions to mean, in a scholastic sense, that only the children of persons of reasonable propriety are acceptable to the several Head-mistresses of these—I may be pardoned for using the phrase—elegant receptacles of learning. We will now proceed to consider the advantages the schools offer to girls in the way of education.

School A "provides a sound English education." It gives instruction in "English literature, with special attention to composition, and reading, ancient and modern history, physical geography with mapping, English grammar and analysis," to day-scholars for eight guineas the school year. Drawing, music, Latin, German, and calisthenic exercises are charged for extra; and a parent who indulges in these subjects of study for his daughter must pay an additional six guineas a year, and some ten guineas more if she venture upon the luxury of "Finishing Masters."

School B "bestows the utmost care on the cultivation of the minds of its pupils," and to this end finds it desirable to divide its scholastic year into four terms. It asks the scarce remunerative sum, one would think, of four guineas per annum for the instruction of day-scholars, and charges extra for "pianoforte," singing, drawing, "use of the globes," German, French, painting, and (very properly) for instruction in "the art of moulding flowers out of wax." A matter of 10*l.* per annum would, however, cover the expenses of instruction in all these desirable accomplishments.