

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers*, May 30, 1891 to February 6, 1892)

## Male Teachers Versus Female Teachers

It has been said often enough that possession of the schools guarantees the future of a nation and not less frequently has it been asserted "As is the teacher so is the school." In view of the prominence given to the teachers personality and these sentences a careful unprejudiced consideration of the question "Who really has the school" is of great importance.

A heavy majority of female teachers is one of the most pronounced peculiarities of the American school system. The part allotted to the male teachers of the actual teaching in American public schools is very small indeed. According to the report of the National Bureau of Education there were in the United States in the year 1888 & 89 124,929 male and 227,302 female teachers consequently 65 per cent of the latter, but this statement is misleading because not only teachers teaching the full school year were counted, but also those, who, as is the custom in country schools, teach merely a few weeks. These ephemeral pedagogues however are generally males.

The proportion of the female teachers as compared with the number of male teachers according to statistical reports from twenty four of the larger cities in the Union, exceeds by far the ratio given for the entire country. It is 10 to 1; the cities being Baltimore, Boston, Brooklyn, Chicago, Cincinnati, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Columbus, Ohio, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Little Rock, Memphis, Milwaukee, Newark, N. J., Pittsburgh, Portland, Me, Portland, Ore, Providence, New Haven, Cleveland and Denver. The greatest favor to male teachers is shown in this city, where twenty per cent of all the teachers are males, while in Philadelphia and in Chicago the female teachers count ninety-six per cent. One male teacher to twenty four female teachers is the proportion in several of the largest cities of this country.

Just recently a rule was passed by the Board of Education in the City of Brooklyn, providing for only one man in each school and still more disadvantageous is the proportion of the male teachers as regards their actual and active employment as instructors and class officers. Where men are employed in elementary schools and to some degree in grammar schools, they generally are in charge of the whole school, as principals or supervisors but only very few are class teachers.

In Chicago there are no male assistant teachers both in Primary and in Grammar schools and the principalships are about equally divided among both sexes. Until a few weeks since, the German Department of that city outnumbering all similar bodies in this country, was made up of over 200 ladies and one gentleman as

supervisor. If it be taken into consideration that 75 per cent of the pupils of all schools are in the Elementary schools and that 20 per cent belong to the Grammar schools is evident that a great many children pass through our educational institutions, without receiving a share of man's influence as a working teacher and educator. At present the words of a nativistic admirer of the existing state of affairs hold good indeed. He said: "the future of our society is in the hands of our female teachers."

Until recently as a rule school boards gave preference to female teachers and consequently the number of male teachers decreased. In some places this is even now the case and perhaps to an alarming degree so that examination announcements are addressed distinctly to female candidates. Sex is as much a requisite as intellectual and moral capacity. By what right can such a distinction be made in respect to applicants for positions in schools kept for the benefit of both sexes.

If female teachers have a right to positions in the school system, have not man the same claim provided they are fit for the duties. To foist the motto: "no man need apply" upon the school system, is as radically wrong as it would be to exclude for example, female scholars from certain grades in the schools. No matter how great the usefulness and interest of women is in the education of the growing generation, how essentially and unreplaceable feminine influence is in the bringing up of boys and girls from childhood to manhood or womanhood, the way to reach the best effects in education is joint labor, the co--influence of man and woman. Certainly if the school, as is unfortunately too often the case, is regarded as a mere knowledge distributor and wisdom radiator, as an institution the principal object of which is to stuff the mind and employ the hand, when the main duty of educating and molding the character is ignored, then it matters little whether, a male teacher or a female teacher does the instructing or a machine gives out questions and collects the answers.

However the public school should look to the most extensive and far-reaching development of the youth of both sexes in Physical and moral direction besides the intellectual training. It must aid the boy to become a complete man and lead the girl to develop into the true woman. The characteristic peculiarities of each sex, as far as they are commendable and desirable, should be fostered and developed; at the very least, they ought to be considered. Yet what one does not possess, one cannot give.

The qualities of a man's character will never be taught a boy by a woman, just as little as a man through his masculine leadership can make a girl the picture of womanliness. The female soul unfolds itself fully only to the sympathizing and sensitive sex mate, who may understand and appreciate well enough the peculiarities and traits of the male character but will hardly be able to bring out

these qualities in the future man, the boy.

Goethe, who ascribes to the influence of his father his appreciation of the earnest sides of life, has to thank his mother for the finer traits of mind, the poetic spirit and the joyous temper. It is he, who in "Elpenon" remarks:

"On woman's love the child is fed,  
The boy had best be trained by men."

No one denies that the example, the bearing and the whole being of the educator makes as vivid an impression if not more so as the teaching itself. Therefore peculiarities of character must have an influence not to be underrated. In the admirable work *Der Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, Benecke mentions as the fundamental and distinctive quality of the male sex strength and firmness, attributing on the other hand to the female sex vivacity and sensitiveness. He says: "We find in the male a slow but deeper development, a predominating of the Powers of observation, hence of the reasoning faculty and of reflection, producing occasionally an unnatural tendency to Pedantry and brooding; greater stability and self reliance which in turn may degenerate into stubbornness, gruffness and narrowness; strong passions, the circumspect and careful weighing of cause and effect which fit for a successful activity in the outer affairs of the world, a uniform earnest seriousness sometimes becoming dejectiveness and hypochondria, greater fearlessness and a more energetic power of opposition and resistance.

With the female sex the development is generally more rapid, but less deep. The emotions have precedence over preservation and perception. Consequently great impulsiveness and sympathetic nature sprightliness but less stability, more affectation and less passion, less self reflection, yet quickness of judging other people or hankering for supremacy and still ease of subordination, love and sacrifice; prevalence of joyous and happy humor, but not unfrequently fickleness and changeable moods. Faint heartedness; as a rule a quick subjection to suffering and even wrong, though also in reaction a trace of slyness and underhand play; great versatility and levelness of expression and motions and finally readiness and cleverness in the finer and more delicate, if less multifarious, occupations."

These utterances of a Philosopher who is counted among the foremost in matters pertaining to Pedagogy, furnish an answer to the question as to the causes which have especially in this country brought about the predominance of female teachers in the Public Schools. Nobody will think of reflecting upon or discrediting the reputation of woman as teacher and educator, on the contrary, the mother is the first and natural teacher and educator of the boys as well as of the girls. The child robbed of the self-sacrificing, gentle and holy influence of a mother in the early periods of life, is indeed to be pitied. Hence the kindergarten

is and ever will remain an undisputed field for woman's work, and so will man be content to yield to woman as an employee in the lower grades of the elementary schools.

In these grades female teachers may boast of having obtained excellent results in teaching and in training. This is attributable to the nature of womanhood. Depth of feeling, warmth of sympathy, devotion to and tenderness for others, buoyancy and sprightliness of temper, easily aroused compassion, a sense of what is proper and beautiful, and increasing diligence and devotion even to the details of work are not to be underrated as factors in the school organism; and are not these qualities the share of woman in the highest degree?

Moreover the average head of an American school welcomes female subordinates because they, on the whole are more submissive and docile, if only apparently than male assistants. Good reason of theory and practice speak in favor of the extensive employment of female teachers in the lower grades for boys as well as for girls. A crowding out of male teachers from the higher grades is to be judged differently when the child begins to feel itself be it as a boy or a girl, then education ought to make use of the joint influence, the co-operative labor of manly fortitude and womanly tenderness, and opportunity should be given to the pupils to feel the influence of the character traits of both sexes, especially as the modern age in its demands of the most exacting attention of the father to the cares of business, leaves home education almost entirely to the mother. But Schiller's lines hold good for both school and home;

“When the Strong in the Mild are pairing,  
The Manly with the Tender sharing,  
Then is the concord good and strong.”

After the pattern of a man should the boy be educated to become a man, not enough that he possess a clear head and an enlightened mind, he must also acquire firmness, determination, courage, willpower and self-reliance. These prove the true man, and education has fallen short of its purpose, if the grown boy lacks in those manly qualities. Unfortunately there are not a few effeminate men and on the other hand, only too many man-women, whose abnormalities should under no circumstances serve as models. For what is despicable in man, if not the absence of decision, of firmness in convictions, of independence and courage. What is to be admired in woman but moderation and modesty, attention and adherence to social and moral dictates and demands, love for children, and an ideal view of life in its entirety coupled with a practical readiness for the many small requisites of everyday life. What one sex lacks, lies in the nature of the other, as Longfellow so beautifully expresses it.

“As unto the bow the cord is,

So unto the man is woman,  
Though she bends him she obeys him,  
Though she draws him yet he follows,  
Useless each without the other.”

Just because the boy is under woman's influence during the whole period of his development and properly so, it is essential that he should also be put under masculine training. So with the girls, in their case teaching and educating may principally be left to the female sex, but occasionally the nature of man should be permitted to act upon their mind, their feelings and views, again a poet may be cited in an argument. Goethe who understood woman as few others have done, in *Die naturliche Tochter*” lets the duke speak as follows when he hears the news of the misfortune that befell Eugenie.”

A woman's guidance had she long outgrown,  
How foolish to entrust such treasure rare  
To weak and yielding care of womanhood,  
No firm command to lead my darling's will  
Or curb it by the bridle of obedience.”

The readiness and the ease with which a female teacher frequently governs her class has been noticed and the fact is often stated as one of the reasons for advocating women assistants. Let it be remembered however, that the boys of today and of this country seldom submit from a sense of duty. Were it the case a male teacher would hardly find greater difficulty in the maintenance of discipline than the female.

The female teacher is favored by the spirit of chivalry and gallantry, displayed by young and old toward the weaker sex, a spirit which leads the half-grown boy to submit to female rule and prompts him to leave many an act undone because his teacher is a lady, all due respect for the achievements of noble femininity in home school and society. Woman has labored honestly and sacrificingly to bring all mankind nearer to the attainable state of happiness and her efforts are like the old saying “never done.” With all the question remains whether or not some undesirable and detrimental elements have made themselves felt in the total results. Possibly the indecisiveness and vacillation, which lurks in the character of the male American of today may as well be charged to the withdrawal of man from the work of teaching, as the over self-consciousness, petulance and pettiness by which in spite of all amiability and nobleness American womanhood is once and awhile tinged. Teachers conventions and school authorities in this country and abroad have quite often concerned themselves with the discussion of the subject involved. As early as 1873 the yearly report of the school authorities of the State of Massachusetts says: “It is clear that from the whole body of teachers one eighth are male and seven eighths female, a decrease during the year of 25 male teachers and an increase of 233 female teachers. For

the last thirty years this decrease of male teachers and increase of female teachers has been noticeable. But the time must come, if it is not here yet, when it will be necessary to consider whether the demands of education do not necessitate a change.

The "National German-American Teachers Association" has committed itself by endorsing the following resolution: "The National German-American Association declares the equal representation of both sexes as teachers in public schools a necessity and protests positively against the crowding out of male teachers as being detrimental to the interests of schools."

There is no possibility though there may be a desire to ignore the growing importance of the question. Even in Europe male teachers are losing ground. An educational paper recently stated that in Sweden of late years the appointment of female teachers had outnumbered those of males in the ratio of four to one. From across the ocean have come inquiries in reference to the state of affairs here. The joint education committees of Wales and Monmouthshire has requested from the United States Commissioner of Education answers to several pertinent topics. They wish to know: "How far are women successful in giving intellectual training; in maintaining discipline and order?" Dr. Harris replied: "Women, I think, as a rule, succeed better than men in getting work out of pupils of all kinds. The intellectual training which they give, therefore, better, up to a certain point, than that given by men. They also maintain better discipline and order than men, and with less corporal punishment. But there is a drawback to the intellectual training and discipline of woman in the fact that their training is more like that of the family and less like that of the State. It is evident the child needs both of these kinds of training and therefore he should have instructions from male as well as female teachers. Another query reads: "Does their work under any of the foregoing heads require supplementing by that of men?" On this point Dr. Harris' opinion runs as follows:

"The work of women in any of the grades from the primary to the college does not need supplementing by men for any reasons of scholarship, but it is generally believed that the young should have the personal influence of both men and women as teachers. As a class the women are apt to be minute and exacting, and this, when it develops into a fault, takes the form of petulance in manner and mechanical precision in methods. The men are more apt, as a class, to discriminate in regard to essentials, and to teach their pupils to discriminate in regard to principles and essentials, and to lay less stress upon mechanical details. This tendency often degenerates into a carelessness in discipline and instruction which permits pupils to neglect details that are of great importance."

In presenting the subject no reference has purposely been made to one reason for the frequent employment of female teachers. This is the question of salary, a

question which however ought to count as nothing in matters of education. An entire book might be filled with the opinion either favorable or adverse expressed by prominent pedagogues.

Horace Mann forcibly has stated his belief in "the relative efficiency of the female sex in the Ministry of civilization and the value of female services in education of the young." The Superintendent of the Milwaukee schools in a congratulatory letter to a champion of women's supremacy in the school room, a few years ago spoke of the "brutal force of man" and claimed that mainly female teachers were imbued with the spirit of Pestalozzi, Froebel and Arnold D: [ ] on the other hand, while acknowledging that "well schooled woman may fitly teach little girls and some even little boys, stoutly claims that "only a few are able to cope successfully with the education of older school-girls." Leistener declares that women are only in exceptional cases equal to the office of teachers and believes that "female teachers ought to be employed as instructors of handiwork and special branches, but not as regular class teachers."

Another authority Eisenlohr wishes to see women excluded from boy's schools and seems to take it for granted that they should in every case work under the superintendency and guidance of a male teacher. Be this as it may; the Practicability of employing female teachers has been demonstrated, but still the claim holds good that just as in the family and home man's influence and woman's influence are jointly expended in the training of the children, so should in every school male teachers be represented alongside of female teachers and furthermore especially in boy's classes, in mixed classes of the higher grades, there should be a preponderance of males as class teachers to balance the more extensive service of females in the elementary department. The saying "The future of society is in the hands of our female teachers" is a perversion of the just claims and rights of man to be an educator and should certainly be corrected so as to read: "The future of society is in the hands of our teachers, the female teachers and the male teachers."

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