# ADDRESS

TO THE

# Students of Radcliffe College

**Delivered January 17 1895**

BY

S. WEIR MITCHELL M.D. LL.D.

Harvard and Edinburgh



CAMBRIDGE, MASS
1896

PRESIDENT, DEAN AND STUDENTS OF RADCLIFFE: —

One unlucky day your Dean caught me in an amiable mood by reason of my having seen an old friend whom I had been weak enough to advise to come hither to be the shepherdess of this flock. I was told of her wish that I should give you of such wisdom as I chance to have. I am, like other men, disposed to say "yes" to any woman I like, and generally to all women, because of my conviction that, as they have had knowledge of good and evil longer than men, they must, on the whole, know what is best for us.

I did urge as a trifling difficulty that I had nothing to say, and did not possess the art of saying nothing so as to seem to say something, and so what could I but re-coin mere platitudes. My friend replied at once that what she most desired of me was such platitudes as I was likely to furnish. Now this is the hardest task you can set a man, — to hearten up maxims of common sense, give them wings and make them seem angelic counsellors whom you had better make haste to entertain.

To be able to do this with efficiency is one of the hall-marks of genius. The world needs no more wisdom; what it wants is the men who take the commonplaces of social life,— the average sense of man, or the much worn words of Christ, and breathe into them fresh life sending them forth anew so clad that we welcome the familiar thing, which, after all, is but an ancient arrow refeathered for a new flight, and winged from a bow of power. Then men hear, and wonder, and obey, and say these things are indeed of the gods.

But for such triumphant power of speech a man must be Phillips Brooks or John Ruskin. I, alas, am no such messenger. Never-

theless, I earnestly want to win your attention, and even your trust to-day, for I deeply desire that you go hence thoughtful if not convinced.

As a test of my good will to you, and of the view I take of to-day's duty, I have asked leave to talk to you and to you alone. I hope, then, it may be agreeable to you to hear what I came so far to say. Some of my thought will be serious, and some as trivial as questions of talk or dress. Yet it may please you to turn your mind from such learning as scares me to think upon, and hear awhile the wisdom of a lower world reported in the tongue of common mortals.

To-morrow is always wise with *l'esprit de l'escalier*, and thus it was not until the next day that I knew how, and how prettily I should have answered my friend's request.

There is a burlesque play on the Princess in which the shy Prince asks his fairy godmother what on earth he shall say to the learned Princess and her ladies. Fairy wisdom answers:

> "My Prince, just strike an attitude,
> And talk some pleasant platitude;
> 'T will surely fetch you gratitude
> Because, you see, equations
> Are their very mildest rations:
> And a lot of mathematics,
> And the learning of the attics
> Do make mere insipidity
> Accepted with avidity"—

which is why learned ladies are apt to marry dull men.

What I did say further was, that to talk platitudes so near to the city which closely resembles what St. Paul described Athens to have been, was — well, somewhat of an adventure. I may also have reflected that I was rather an intellectual tenderfoot in this neighborhood, where everybody's wits are like the fire-engine horses,— ready to jump at the smoke of a passing pipe.

With these thoughts in mind I propose to talk to you; and to satisfy my medical and social conscience, I shall cover more

ground than your Dean desired. I shall speak of: The woman who wants the higher education; the life while winning it; the life after it.

First, let me state my creed. I believe that, if the higher education or the college life in any way, body or mind, unfits women to be good wives and mothers there had better be none of it. If these so affect them that they crave merely what they call a career, as finer, nobler, more to their taste than the life of home, then better close every college door in the land. In thus speaking I do not refer only to the married life. A vast number of women who do not marry come to have, at some time, charge of households or of children not their own. This surely is *the natural* life of woman. I say the like of men. It is their natural place to meet the outside cares of life, and whatever of dissipation, mistakes, or indolence unfits them to endure and to labor in their proper sphere is as much to be deprecated as is anything which makes a woman hate the duties of home, or renders her, as she may think, superior to their claims.

And now as to my task. It is rather a large question I am asked to deal with. I could talk of many things, but I fancy that I am expected, as a physician, a man of science and of letters, to say whatever may be helpful to you as to work, play and habits in your college life. I am perhaps less unfit for the task set me than some might be who are outside of my profession. I have seen in my long medical career a great number of women, and men too, who have been prevented by ill-health from being in life either useful or pleasant to themselves or to others. Very often these failures have been due to neglect of or inattention to obvious matters of diet or exercise, to lack of correct self-estimates, tendencies to gauge endurance by the standards of more vigorous people. I see women fall into ill-health, too, from self-devotion unintelligently guided, from emotional causes such as rarely injure the lives of men, from lack of willingness to yield to the just demands of their own physiological conditions, from such defects of character as make it hard to set aside with decisiveness worry and the frictions of life.

As to the larger part of these failures of character which work so much ruin, let me say a word in passing. They begin in childhood, and are usually the fault of want of intelligent discipline. To teach children habitual decisiveness, thoughtful patience, self-restraint, kindness, endurance, is not hard at the plastic age. These qualities do not need high intelligence. They are moral characteristics; if won in youth, they assist much in making the later and large use of the mind easy and safe, and are vastly protective when we come to face the inevitable shocks and disasters of existence. It is not study nor mere work which cripples. Mere intellectual labor, guided by intelligence and gauged by personal standards, and, too, by some regard for implacable physiological requirements, is never a cause of ill-health in those who to begin with are wholesome in mind and body.

To return to my creed. I am for independence as a human right. I want women to be free to be and to do what they like. I want no "paucity of alternatives." But with this freedom to choose, and this human right to select, I, personally, no more want them to be preachers, lawyers, or platform orators, than I want men to be seamstresses or nurses of children. I want freedom within the noble limitations of sex. I do not want you to say as they do at — I came perilously near an indiscretion — "Until we can abide in our work by the standard of man we have not reached the ideal of true womanhood."

I believe that most women would be wiser, better, and therefore happier, for larger intellectual training. Is it to be desired for all women? By no means; nor for all men. Just what it should be is another matter. For most women, who are to live the ordered and usual lives of women, it should be such as cultivates tastes which bring intelligent joys into the midst of any life whether its lot be care-filled struggle, or ease and luxury, whether its fate be to live single, or to marry.

But before we go further, let us pause and reflect. You come here, and for what? To acquire knowledge? Why? What we have not, what is hard to get, what few attain, is apt to be overvalued. Is it not De Quincy who says that Greek is so much

thought of because of its difficulty, and that few who acquire it get out of it more than the joy of wrestling with accents? I have found many young women, and some men prone to over-rate the uses and the joy to be had out of the mere knowing of what others do not know. This idea becomes a sort of possession; that is, it owns you, not you it. That is what possession means.

It is sometimes a sad mistake. There are for whom all this acquisition of dead tongues and mathematics is needed food; for the rest, it does no good, and leads on to less than does a liberal knowledge of German, French and English.

Knowledge is to be desired for joy, for use, and for the training the method of its getting gives. For joy! Let us in this connection think of that difficult study Anglo-Saxon, with its sea tongue, and then think of it, as its makers were driven inland, all its resounding ocean language pitched aside on to the kitchen middens of disuse,—the dust heaps of a changeful tongue.

Are you seeking this knowledge as a real means of learning how from this interesting baby talk of a great people the better to love and appreciate what thereafter has been written in the adult tongue of our race? That is good use of knowledge. Have you won this language so as to be able to read the great riddles of Caedmon, and the sea songs of our fathers? That is knowledge for joy, for the sweetening of life, for help of noble company in sorrowful hours, for increase of the delights of leisure; but—and this is a large *but*—to know any foreign language to such perfection as to enjoy (not to pretend to enjoy) its poets is, believe me, rare. To this day I cannot get out of French verse what I should, and yet to read it is as English to me. I have much distrust of this excuse for the learning of Greek or Anglo-Saxon. If you crave these because they are difficult to acquire and few win them, you may as well get a book of charades and exercise your mind on them. You are no better off. This hunger after the riddles of learning, this avarice of knowledge only because it is knowledge, has no sympathy from me. It is neither for honest joy nor for real use.

I go a step further. Knowledge, with power to use it for the begetting of other knowledge, has its evils, or may have. If it become an overmastering passion, even in genius, it may be satisfied at a cost beyond its worth. Would you see what it can do? How in one with a really splendid intellect it can destroy happiness, obliterate the moral sense and substitute for love of family the extreme of selfishness and even contempt for the decencies of existence? If so, read the story of Sonia Kovalesky, and remember it is not needful to be a genius in order to be morally hurt by the greed of learning. I wish only to call to your minds the danger which may arise out of the excess of a relatively good thing.

If you can learn any branch so as to liberalize your soul and give to joy fresh wings, well and good; but to do this through acquiring a language as dead as Greek or Anglo-Saxon is a task beyond the possibilities of most folk. I want you, therefore, to be clear as to what you want and why you want it. Are you to be a teacher? That is one thing. Are you to have a home life which involves no use for the sharply defined knowledge which is to be in turn a source of knowledge? Then think a little of why this or that science is desirable.

"It is of no moment to her own worth or dignity that a woman be acquainted with this science or that; it is of the highest moment that she be trained to habits of accurate thought; that she should understand the meaning, the inevitableness and the loveliness of natural laws." It is no less of use that history should broaden her sympathies, and sociology enlighten her conscience. If the character is dulled in the seizing of learning,—nay, if it be not built up, confirmed and enlarged, then give us for this world's use the nobler heart and the less tutored brain.

Let then the woman while training her mind use for this such knowledge-getting as may help her thereafter to enlarge her views of life, such as may give to existence

> The strength which is of sweetness born,
> The sweetness born of strength.

And I could tell you how to do this, and what to study; but I resist the temptation, and turn anew to my task with but a line from one whom you, I dare say, know better than I.

"The greatest clerkes ben not the wisest men."

I have dealt, and but too briefly, on acquisition of knowledge for technical employment; on knowledge for enlargement of the joy of life; and I have mentioned knowledge for the training of the mind. The phrase is undescriptive. Whether you want to acquire this or that for joy or for use, the mode of getting it is important. The most of our education does not train the mind with certainty so as to give it swiftness, dexterity, alertness and capacity to observe. You may learn a world of things and remain as untrained, save as to memory, as when you began.

I have small leisure to particularize. But, suppose that in learning English literature you learn the names, dates, rythms and works of the poets; who wrote this or that, and when, and perhaps where they wrote, and so on; well, that is what is called education. I have heard such questions asked. I have seen college themes which rose no higher, and went no more deeply into that great fact, the coming and going of a poet.

But let an imaginative teacher deal with such a subject, and the result will be both acquisition of knowledge and mental training. A month of the Shepherd's Calendar is to be taken, or a book of the Fairy Queen; for the best of study, a poet must be studied at first a little at a time.

The words he used are learned, and which of these he made or altered or revised. You learn the amazing fact that English was more or less fluent then, and not as now crystallized, and that a man could make a word at will and be free from imprecative critics. The imagination is set free to wonder if in their every day life Sidney and Shakespeare coolly manufactured words at will, mere infants of the moment; even genius no longer has this privilege. Out of the anonymous democratic gulf we now and then get a new word. The royal word mints of English are

forever closed. Look at our conscious poet's list of words at the close of each month of his calendar. "Glosse" he calls it. You can find such in the Elizabethan editions of Chaucer. Which of the words are dead? Which live?

Once master of his vocabulary, his rhythms and methods, you begin to look for the man in his verse. How much of his character is there by design or chance writ strong for after years? You ask why he wrote and where? Nine years the twelve books of the Fairy Queen lay unpublished; Sidney never published a line. Was this wealth of thought and fancy quite unused all this while? The question opens wide the peculiarities of the literary and social life of the time.

You must lack wings if on such a track you do not come at last so to use fancy and imagination as to image out what he but hints at or describes. The history, the politics, the loves, the hates of history are here. This poet is the secretary who writes dispatches as to the turbulent Ireland of his day. His religious convictions are clear to be read and set forth with such frankness as Shakespeare sedulously avoided. Verse so read, so studied, gives delight of knowledge and trains the mind; but this is far away from what in the schools is called the study of literature.

And for the general result of your life here, what as to that? Where does it all carry you?

Character is after all the true business of life. If we are here for any visible purpose it is this. And so comes up the question as to whether you can get the silver and not let fall the gold. In a word, what perils does the woman run who at the time of maturity breaks away from home to live among strangers and acquire knowledge? I do not say that ill *must* come of it; I do say that it *may*, and it is your business to be sure that it shall not.

Now, let us go back to my question. The young woman wants to have the higher education. And here the discussion brings me face to face with a difficulty. It is impossible to speak frankly as to certain matters. I never could, and never will, lecture medically to women, and so I must talk as best I can, and you must read unspoken wisdom between the lines.

A man at college gets contact with men, larger views, acquaintances, education (either general or special), training for law, physics, business, engineering,—what not. Possibly many of you have the desire or the urgent necessity to be able to teach, to study medicine, to do some form of literary work. Take care. This seems to release you from obligations as to home duties and cares, from household vexations, the looking after children, those of other folks or your own. But this is not so in the life of fact. Few women of those who do not marry escape the need to assume some of these natural functions. Most folks think vaguely of home as meaning marriage, husband, wife, children; but for me, its foremost and most beautiful human necessity is a woman; and, indeed, this is of her finest nobleness, to be homeful for others, and to suggest by the honest sweetness of her nature, by her charity, and the hospitality of her opinions, such ideas of honor, truth, and friendliness as cluster, like porch roses, around our best ideals of home. It is instinctive, and civilization kills our instincts. Man has none left; woman yet has, and natural duties also; he has none which are implacable.

I wish all women, before they go to college, to have a sensible competency of common household knowledge, and of all a house needs where means are small. As to this, the French are more wise than we. Their training for the work of teaching is most severe and systematic, but these foolish people ask some curious questions of women before they will examine them at all as to the science required for admission to the École Normale. Why should not we too insist upon these preliminaries? The primary and grammar schools demand a certain amount of knowledge as to sewing, cooking, etc., and these are elaborately set forth in the programmes. These matters are much insisted upon in those who enter the Écoles Normales.

In these higher schools are taught care of the house, heating and lighting, care of furniture, of stuffs, of linens, the art of washing and ironing. Cooking is most elaborately dealt with, and a host of other such things; bookkeeping as applied to the household,

hygiene, and care of the injured in the minor accidents of life. Finally, there is the hygiene of the nursery, care of children, and again sewing and the making of garments. As for the scientific studies which occupy the rest of the time, I have read them with thankfulness that I am not a girl in an École Normale.

I shall speak of this further when we come to discuss the college life. Some college graduates do marry. I saw last year three unhappy men; two at least were gentlemen of unusual attainments. All married sweet girl graduates. None were rich men. All three were uncomfortable because their wives had no more idea of household management than they. One declared, in fact, that he had to run the house himself. His wife did know the romance literature, and was a fair Grecian. The wife of another found no interest in the care of an economical house, and said: "Where was now the good of her mathematics: she had not time for them." I could not tell her, nor could he. As a fact her lack of time was due to lack of knowledge.

Of a hundred men of eighteen years, almost all will be fit to stand the trials of college work; of a hundred women far fewer. How many cannot I do not know. I have often stopped women who wished to go to college, thinking them physically unfit. It is very rare that I have to give a similar verdict as to young men. If I had my way, every college for man or woman should follow the example of Amherst: an entrance examination as to physical conditions should be inexorable and complete. I should insist on records of height, weight and measurements. I should know thoroughly the condition of the functions, notably of the heart. I should learn all I could as to habits of mind and body. Above all, I should desire to know fully the state of the eyes. Many times have I seen people confess failure after a year of college life when it was because some slight, unguessed defect of vision was teasing the ganglia into states of permanent tire. The eyes do not suffer directly. The head aches, or is full, or feels queer, or gets tired. Generally it is the eyes which are then at fault. When all this is set down, and more besides, I should then put small groups of students in care of tutors, as is

done at Johns Hopkins. These become health watchers, guardians, advisers as to conduct and studies. And for all pupils the hours of gymnastic work should, as at Amherst, be held to as strictly as the lecture or the recitation.

You understand that I now speak of both sexes. I do not mean that because in man or woman the heart is unsound, or the eyes abnormal, or the general health below par, that such persons should be excluded. Far from it. I would shut out but a few. My plan would only insure that fore knowledge and after thoughtfulness which make for success and prevent disaster. Indeed, the regular life of college for the student who accepts the rational consequences of imperfect physical conditions is often a source of improved health and not of disease.

And now the student takes up the life of systematic study. What then? How is she to get the best out of the training, and keep or better her physical health?

First of all, do not conclude that the whole mass of you can assume the man's standard as to what you do in the way of mental labor. It will be at your peril. Some of you can. There are days for most of you when to use the mind persistently is full of danger. You are women, not men. She who forgets it is foolish; she who persistently and intentionally ignores it is worse. The debts of despised nature roll up with interest, and at last here is an inexorable creditor. Your very goodness betrays you. Women have terrible consciences and decline to waste time as so many young men do and have done; this present preacher among them. Hence women at college work harder than men; out of their eagerness arise disregard of physiological limitations, the tendency to shirk play and exercise for study, the cutting short of meal leisure, and the robbing of sleep to add to the hours of the day.

I was asked to talk platitudes. I think I am coming up to your Dean's requirements.

You will say that at Wellesley, Bryn Mawr, Vassar, and elsewhere the rules prescribe hours of exercise. Careful teachers and even doctors watch over women at these colleges as nowhere are

men so watched and cared for. I shall be told that at the colleges where the students live within the walls these mistakes cannot be made. I know better. The popular collegiate standard as to work is, or is wished to be, that of men. You make rules in vain; opinion rules. Men break such laws, or have no physiological need of some of them. The man yearns for exercise; he gets it at all cost, and gets hunger with it. Women do not so eagerly crave it, and have their way. Nor can they violate the laws of health which are good for both sexes, and not suffer more, and longer, than men. Trust me, I am right. Do not try to be men when you are women. Keep your honest pride of sex. Be regular as to hours of sleep. Dismiss the day-work and do not lie thinking it over. If you are feeling your work, get a rest at dusk, and after the mid meal. Above all, be punctual at meals and do not take a book or the thought of work to table, or talk shop there. This is a first class platitude.

I find in some women that afternoon tea is a serious evil. Girls go from one pleasant room to another, and by and by are really tea tipplers. Be careful as to this excess.

There are certain symptoms which tell any watchful worker that something is wrong in the method or amount of his or her work. The brain-slave is beginning to rebel; you are tired at midday; you cannot get to sleep at night, or you wake too early, or are restless and wake and sleep, and wake again. Take care. These are Nature's first signals of alarm. Stop and think — there is need. Do not delay and fight it out; get more rest. Shorten the work hours. Take milk or soup between meals and at bed time. If these simple helps fail, stop. Quit work. Get some physical labor. I would rather be a healthy waiting maid than Professor Minerva with a yellow skin and a lazy liver. There are times when if a tired woman does not lie abed and read a novel she is a goose, and will howl for it some day, if geese can howl. I have seen many, many breakdowns of college women, and always it was from being primarily unfit, or else it was from after disregard of wise regulations and the working too long when unfit for work.

The mid-day meal is the one slighted. I recall a great naturalist who broke down and could work no more. I went with care over his habit of life. Craving time, he had given up eating lunch. A glass of porter, a chop or two at noon daily, cured him. You see even men can be foolish, and great men, too.

As to exercise, if you are wise, get that regularly and with regard to personal peculiarities. Let it be what you like, the walk skating, bicycle (with a proper saddle), dumb bells (not too heavy), night and morning. I have known people, one great scholar, who found out that work was only possible if broken several times a day by exercise, short and smart, too. For him a brisk walk, before bed time was needed. Parkman, who was never strong, regulated his work by the sleep he got. If he slept well he worked longer. He went into his green-house and fussed with his flowers between every two hours of work, and you know what he did. My earnest belief in the need for this regular, sensible appreciation of personal defects and of what they ask is why I thus illustrate my proposition. Gauge yourselves. Accept frankly your disabilities, else you lose health or vigor, and then where is the good of it all.

Also be careful the first year. You will gain every month if you do as I desire.

Again there are times when, as at examinations, you will feel the anxieties and worries competitions engender. Take care; this is a season which presents me with emotional neurasthenics, with hysterical breakdowns in health. Even in childhood the examination time furnishes an increase in the number of choreal cases. I rather incline to think that I would have no examinations, except the final one, in my ideal college; perhaps not that. Examinations such as I hear of are cruel and destructive.

As to methods of study I have a word to say and not an easy one. I must begin by an illustration which will not be without direct value. I want to speak of what, for lack of a better descriptive phrase, I must call tension. A clever woman wrote a bit of a book on this matter. It has good points, and much that is open to critical comment. Many people, when they walk keep their shoulders stiff, or in a state of needless tension. That

means waste of force. If in chamber gymnastics a man lying flat lifts both legs in extension and slowly, he makes his neck and chest tense; but he may learn to do it without tension of muscles other than those below the chest. Other than this is waste. When some people write, they are apt to keep the neck stiff, and this again is useless employment of muscles not wanted for the purpose; or the hand is held stiffly; and out of this comes early fatigue, etc. Let this answer for all partial exercise.

And now, to apply my illustration. When using the mind, get the body into easy positions, so as not to waste force. But this is not all. It is possible in study to use the mind so as not to put it in a state of needless tension. If a question seems unmanageable, a little rest at ease often enables that mysterious instrument, the mind, to dispose of it readily, and in ordinary mental labor you may effect your purpose by excess of painful attention, or gain it by no more than is needed. I wish I could make this clearer. It is true, and easy to realize in act, though most hard to state in words. There can be a state of wasteful mental tension.

Again, some think well afoot; some in repose. If I am troubled by a problem in science I must write it, to clear my head, and sometimes must write it over and over. The records remain and are helpful.

Yet one word more. There is a quality of mind not directly cultivated in college life. It is the power of habitual and at last of almost automatic attention to minutiae. It is valuable and adds largely to the interest of out door-life. This wide awakefulness some have as a birthright, but any one may acquire it. The naturalist has it, but too often it is with him only applicable to technical uses, and brings no such enjoyment with it as any one who loves the works of the mighty artist, Nature, may get out of it. I have wondered in walking with young people to see how rare is this gift. It is a pretty mind-play to set out on a walk with the senses alert as to color, leaves, trees, trunks, stones, and general effects. If you can draw, that is good; it trains attention immensely. If not, always take a note book on your

holidays and select bits, as small as you like, for observation and record. I call this "word-sketching." I have not time to dwell upon it.

In a volume of essays of mine called "Doctor and Patient," is a fuller account of it. This I hope you will look at. A book might well and pleasantly be written on this art of seeing and recording what else one trusts to memory, or never sees at all. I have dozens of books full of these word sketches. For folks who scribble, they are invaluable; for others, they are useful, and in days to come interesting. They fix attention, teach minute observation, are lessons in the value of words. Long, gentle effort to see with care at last results in automatic record of things to which at the time you did not actually attend. In natural study, in chemistry and physics to acquire this quality of mind is invaluable, and in daily life it has its uses. In my own profession it is often of vast service, and yet few of my brethren have it. During active attention they see, hear, notice, and are led to think. During the inattentive state they cease to be wakened up by the presence of trifles, which of a sudden arouse in others every faculty.

Most people waste their natural chances. These are they who read in cars daily. Never do that on short daily journeys. Use your eyes for a world of things too lightly regarded. I hope that you comprehend what I mean. The senses get sharp under such discipline, and become watchful sentinels.

Perhaps I have not yet made clear that even sharp attention to see and hear well is not all of this matter. Attentive use of the senses is not in the truest sense observation. Learn to use the senses so that the new thing seen shall at once be made use of to recall like things, and lead to analogies and inferences. This is to observe, and is an essential of that training of which I spoke as the real object of education, which is, in fact, a useless business unless it teach dexterity of mind.

I have just said that after years of such disciplined watchfulness the senses are never off duty, and here is an example.

I stood in a French custom house last year. It was dimly

lighted; we were weary with a two-hour waiting, and were walking up and down. As we passed a certain point I smelt something, felt I did not like it; then, memory acting, I knew what it was. I said, "Do you smell anything?" "Yes, I do, since you call attention to it." "Small pox," said I. A lady's maid apart on a bench was sitting alone. I caught a glimpse of her face as I looked, sat down, and after a question or two sent her home a bit scared, to get herself helped. You see, that although I was weary and inattentive, my nose was on guard. I know a very similar story of my father, and could tell you a dozen.

Will you think it queer if I say a word as to dress from a man's standpoint? If you want to see ill-dressed people, the worst are women-doctors, platform ladies, college professors (men), and the folks generally who are over-valuers of learning. In the effort to dress the mind, I pray you not to forget the body. I never saw a professional woman who had not lost some charm. There comes a little hardness, less thought as to how prettily to do or say things; affected plainness of dress; something goes. It seems to me a duty for men and women to seem as well as to be gracious in dress and manner. Are the women who become learned necessarily in peril of partial loss of what makes the social life agreeable? I do not know. American men are the worst dressed in the world, and I do not want to see our women fall away as to this because they are too intent on mere learning. As to all these matters I may be talking folly; I do think there are some such risks.

And now as to your idle hours. Keep them sacred. Guard the seventh day as free from work. Cut off brain labor an hour before bedtime. Read verse then, or a novel. I do always, and have read every endurable one ever you heard of, and many not worth reading at all. A fine brain-clearer is a novel which captures attention, and almost as good as a cold bath to sweep out the thoughts of the day. If you work in summer, let it be an hour or two after breakfast and no more.

And here are some more platitudes for your Dean. In no college in this land is there care enough given as to the careful

cultured use in talk and letters of our noble English tongue. Where are men or women ever taught to read aloud agreeably? I see this lack among trained nurses, who have been first educated for teachers. Scarce one can read well. It is a delightful art, and for a nurse most useful; nor is it hard to acquire. I know a very remarkable preacher who now and then disturbes me by incorrect use of English, or by mispronounced words. I saw last year two not well-dressed women who had won honors, no matter where, in literature studies and what not,— chemistry, I think. They both made errors in grammar, and one had a voice like — my comparisons fail me. She knew the Elizabethan dramatists as I never shall, and corrected me as to the date of the death of the poet Duke Charles of Orleans.

The French do better. First, last and always every educated French woman must know how to speak and write her own tongue with ease and grace. No matter what else she acquires or wants to learn, this demand is inexorable. For a woman to know Greek, Physics, Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Mathematics is all well, or may be, but I like to feel that what she has to say of them has the charm of a quiet voice with many tones, and the loveliness of distinct and simple English without provincial peculiarities, or those mysterious inflections which at once betray want of breeding.

It is not my desire to say here how English literature ought to be taught. I am sure however that there should be two chairs which do not now exist in the form I would have them to assume. First, literature for its charm. This is a chair of appreciation. It is meant to please and give happiness. The science of delight this would teach. I have said how I would conduct this study.

My second chair would concern itself with what I may call the conventional literature of every day life, talk, reading aloud — even proof-reading — letters, notes. This last chair is greatly needed. I once heard a remarkable debate between students of two famous institutions. It was, as to matter, admirable; as to oratory, good; as to choice of language, notable. It was, save as to one man, sown with provincial forms of speech or pronunciation:

Phuldelphy, umbarella, South Ca'lina, af'noon ; the "ing" mercilessly cut off, the sound of "wh" lost, and so on. How easy to correct all this.

Again, and this is for all Deans of women's colleges. Why not teach the application of science to domestic life. A college graduate, and a clever one, too, was telling me once how complete was their drill in chemistry. I said, "Yes, and do they teach you why we boil rice?" She said any one knew that it was to make it soft. "But how is this effected," said I, "and why?" How many of you know why the moth likes wool and not linen, or a host of such things which make housekeeping interesting and scientific? And do you not need this knowledge? The rule of thumb suffices you will say. But here we are on a higher plane, and should want to learn the science of the familiar. A lawyer at a law-school gets not alone the knowledge of how to conduct a case, but the great science which lies behind it and justifies its method and results. Is he the worse for that? I think not.

You ought to want to be reasonably learned, but you should as eagerly desire not to forget what makes life agreeable ; nor should you fail to keep touch of its practical aspects.

Very learned folks run some risk of undervaluing what is outside of their own studies. This is what we mean when we say they are narrow minded. But the narrow who lose touch of the wide activities of life are uninteresting, and no one has a right to be uninteresting.

If you take knowledge as a means of training, and of enjoyment for what it gives, and what it makes of you, how can you become uninteresting or contracted? I hold that even Darwin would have been greater, and surely happier, had he not shrunken into a first rate scientific machine. When he ceased to care for Shakespeare I, for one, believe he put in peril qualities which the higher science cannot let slip and lose nothing. May I say in verse and as to this aspect of the matter what I think?

> Unwise are they
> Who scorn the large relationship of life.
> Yon restless sea, the sky, the bird, the flower,
> The laugh of folly, and the ways of men,
> The woman's smile, the hours of idleness,
> The court, the street, the busy market-place,—
> All that the skies can teach, the earth reveal,—
> Are wisdom's bread. Alas! the common world
> Hath lessons no philosophy can spare;
> The tree that ever spreads its leaves to heaven
> Casts equal anchors 'neath the soil below.

You leave college, study medicine, teach, do this or that. An increasing number do none of these, and are more and more of the easy class. Here again for you are home, mother, father, sisters and brothers, duties, pleasures, cares.

For many women, as for men, the learning won at college goes for nothing. With a man it has been a mind training for life work. For this class of women it is — shall I dare to say it — useless. The freedom of college life is gone. Here are restrictions, simple duties. The result is, and I have seen it over and over, discontent. The man goes out into a larger life; yours narrows to home functions. This is what I so much fear. I talk to a girl (and this is a true case) who says all the rest (sisters and brothers) are married or gone from home. She is alone with her parents, but her physics or her chemistry, which she loves, is wasted; after six months of *ennui* she worries her people into granting her permission to go on with her work. The two old people sit at home alone. It is this break in home life I dread; for the boy it is natural, for the daughter, no. A woman is *born* to a profession; a man is not.

And here, too, comes in the wild craving for what girls call a career, and if these women do or do not marry, the result is the same,— neglect of duty, ungratified ambitions, discontent; and so what was meant to make life fuller ends in lessening the sum of happiness.

This is not always so; nor need it be. I am told that a smaller portion of college graduates marry than do women not so culti-

vated. If this be true, there is something wrong; for surely the completeness of life for man or woman is in marriage. Is it that men do not like highly educated women? Or is it that these fail to attract, not from this cause, but owing to some of the other reasons I have mentioned. Is it not true that some college graduates are inclined to think of marriage as of a thing beneath them? If so they have lost something of the naturalness of the truer life.

One word before I close. You are here in competition with men. I do not like that. The professor expects of you virile standards of work and results; you are, therefore, as I think, in an atmosphere of peril, and unless you live as reason counsels, for some of you life here will leave you certain regrets.

The exceptional successes and vigor of the rare few serve but to lure the mass of women into the belief that the continuity of work of the man can be imitated with no more risks than are his. Time, I know, will teach a larger wisdom in work. The higher education will, I trust, be more and more available. The college, the ideal college, will hereafter be a group of well regulated cottage homes. I am absolutely hostile to these bee-hive colleges for young women. I could tell you why I do not think this massing of young women wise or wholesome. I decline the task. I hope Radcliffe will never build this kind of a college. I hope it will say to its pupils more and more that life is not all mere learning of this or that tongue or science; that it will try to prevent disaster by due regulation of work, play, diet, exercise, and the inhibition of mind-labor when physiology and reason forbid it; but, come what may, the best of the higher evolution of mind will never safely be reached until the woman accepts the irrevocable decree which made her woman and not man. Something in between she cannot be. A club of men and women was proposed in London a few years ago. It was made up of the advanced women and of men. It was, in an unhappy moment, called "The Middlesex Club"; that killed it. I do not fancy a middle-sex; neither fish, flesh nor good red herring.

I hope I have not been extreme or brutal. It is so easy to criticise, and yet I have said no word which is not the outcome of a rather sad experience of the disorders of women too ambitious to be thoughtful as to health, too eager to compete with men, to remember they are women. I see the wrecks come ashore to sail the seas of success no more. Is it any wonder I wish to warn those who are sailing or about to sail on treacherous seas?

I hope, my dear Dean, and you, ladies, that no wreck from these shores will be drifted into my dockyard. Sometimes I can refit the ruined craft. Alas! sometimes I cannot. I thank you, and leave you these reflections for what they are worth.