

standing; and the graceful ivy, clasping the oak that supported it, would be a whole in which strength and beauty would be equally conspicuous. Alas! husbands, as well as their helpmates, are often only overgrown children; thanks to early debauchery, scarcely men in their outward form; the blind lead the blind, one need not come from heaven to tell us the consequence.⁸

Many are the causes that, in the present corrupt state of society, unite to enslave women by cramping their understandings and sharpening their senses. One, perhaps, that silently does more mischief than all the rest, their disregard of order.

To do every thing in an orderly manner, is a most important precept; women, who, generally speaking, receive only a disorderly kind of education attend to with that degree of exactness that men, who from infancy are broken into method, observe. This negligent kind of government for what other epithet can be used to point out the random exertions of an instinctive common sense, never brought to the test of reason? merely because they did it yesterday.

This contempt of the understanding in early life has more baneful consequences than is commonly supposed; for the little knowledge which a kind of strong minds attain, is, from various circumstances, of a more durable kind than the knowledge of men, and it is acquired more by sheer observation on real life, than from comparing what has been individually obtained with the results of experience generalized by speculation. Led by their independent situation and domestic employments more into society, what they do is rather by snatches; and as learning is with them, in general, only a necessary thing, they do not pursue any one branch with that persevering industry necessary to give vigour to the faculties, and clearness to the judgment. The present state of society, a little learning is required to support the character of a gentleman; and boys are obliged to submit to a few years of discipline. But in the education of women, the cultivation of the understanding is always subordinate to the acquirement of some corporeal accomplishment, even while enervated by confinement and false notions of modesty, the body is prevented from attaining that grace and beauty which relaxed habits and limbs never exhibit. Besides, in youth their faculties are not brought forward by emulation; and having no serious scientific study, if they have any sagacity it is turned too soon on life and manners. They dwell on effects and modifications, without tracing them back to causes; and complicated rules adjust behaviour are a weak substitute for simple principles.

As a proof that education gives this appearance of weakness to female we may instance the example of military men, who are, like them, ignorant of the world before their minds have been stored with knowledge or furnished by principles. The consequences are similar; soldiers acquire a little superficial knowledge, snatched from the muddy current of conversation, and continually mixing with society, they gain, what is termed a knowledge of the world; and this acquaintance with manners and customs has frequently confounded with a knowledge of the human heart. But can the crude and casual observation, never brought to the test of judgment, formed by com-

parison and experience, deserve such a distinction? Soldiers, as well as we, practice the minor virtues with punctilious politeness. Where is the essential difference, when the education has been the same? All the difference that I can discern, arises from the superior advantage of liberty, which enables the former to see more of life.

Understanding from my present subject, perhaps, to make a political comparison, as it was produced naturally by the train of my reflections, I shall not attend to it any farther.

The same may be said of the education of the army; it is not that the army contains men under the discipline of machines, but they will seldom contain men under the influence of strong passions, or with very vigorous faculties. And as for the education of the army as amongst women; and the cause, I maintain, is the same as may be further observed, that officers are also particularly attentive to persons, fond of dancing, crowded rooms, adventures, and ridicule.⁹ The business of their lives is gallantry.—They were taught to dance, and they only live to please. Yet they do not lose their rank in the army of sexes, for they are still reckoned superior to women, though in reality their superiority consists, beyond what I have just mentioned, it is only in the discovery.

The great misfortune is this, that they both acquire manners before more than a knowledge of life before they have, from reflection, any acquaintance with the grand ideal outline of human nature. The consequence is that they are satisfied with common nature, they become a prey to prejudices, and they submit their opinions on credit, they blindly submit to authority. So that, if they have any sense; it is a kind of instinctive glance, that catches upon the surface, and decides with respect to manners; but fails when arguments are to be made below the surface, or opinions analyzed.

Is it not the same remark be applied to women? Nay, the argument may be carried still farther, for they are both thrown out of a useful station by the same distinctions established in civilized life. Riches and hereditary rank have made cyphers of women to give consequence to the numerical and idleness has produced a mixture of gallantry and despotism into which leads the very men who are the slaves of their mistresses to neglect their sisters, wives, and daughters. This is only keeping them in the same state, it is true. Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and it will be an end to blind obedience; but, as blind obedience is ever to be feared by power, tyrants and sensualists are in the right when they want to keep women in the dark, because the former only want slaves, the latter a play-thing. The sensualist, indeed, has been the most dangerous of tyrants, and women have been duped by their lovers, as princes by their ministers, whilst dreaming that they reigned over them.

Some principally allude to Rousseau, for his character of *Sophia*³ is, undoubtedly, a captivating one, though it appears to me grossly unnatural; whom they are allied.

³ *Sophie ou la Femme* is the title of Book v of *Emile*, Rousseau's blend of educational treatise and novel. Having tracked the development of *Emile*, his imaginary pupil, up to age twenty, Rousseau invents the character of *Sophie* (*Sophia*)