

## A Girl Student Addresses Her Sisters.

Editor, The China Press.

Dear Sir: In my opinion, Miss Kwei's article which appeared in your paper, accusing foreign education of destroying happiness in our homes and country, is one sided. First I must say that I am not trying to defend the students or returned students. As I am a returned student's wife myself, I come into contact with many students and hear about their domestic troubles. I naturally sympathise with my sex, yet one should be fair in judgment.

Now what causes this discontentment in the homes? We must first discover the causes and try to apply the remedies. Is it because a member of the family prefers foreign clothes to Chinese, speaks English instead of Chinese and acts like a foreigner instead of using the old Chinese manner? I am sure my readers will agree with me that the above could not bring disaster to the home. The "grand gentlemen," who possess these "symptoms" are living in a transitional stage, and will adjust themselves in time.

Miss Kwei has emphasised strongly the students' duties to parents and homes, and especially our Chinese ways and customs, without any consideration, whatsoever, whether our customs are beneficial or injurious I am happy to say that our Chinese have awakened to the fact that many of our old customs as women's bound-feet and idol worship. But few have realised that the evil customs practiced by all classes of Chinese have wrecked more young lives and homes than modern influence. Why do parents engage their beloved sons and daughters when they are just wee babes and before they can say anything for themselves? Because it is an old Chinese custom. Why do they marry their children when they are in their teens, knowing little of life and less of its responsibilities? Because Chinese parents, especially the mothers believe in the old custom, that one must have daughters-in-law and sons-in-law in order to be considered fortunate or privileged. Therefore they are too impatient to wait for their daughters and sons to grow up. I am just as sorry for the young men as for their wives. They are both victims of these old customs. Let us co-operate in the future to abolish childhood engagements and early marriages so as to insure peace and happiness in the homes of the coming generation.

There are few students who think themselves superior to their fellow countrymen, because they secured their diplomas from colleges at home or abroad. In any case, I believe that foreign education is not entirely to be blamed. Those students may have been born selfish and conceited and education only served to make them haughtier.

A student who openly breaks his engagement made by his parents or separates from his wife may be guilty, but he is at least not such a coward as the young man who outwardly submitted before his parents' choice and secretly married another. If China only had a law to stop concubinage! For thousands of years, our Chinese have been living under "man made-law." I expect our women will have a voice in the government in the near future.

Fortunately, those students who alienate themselves from their wives and families are very few in number, compared with the returned students who march gallantly back to their old homes and families, with high ideals and hopes to change the ways of living in their homes and reform the whole country. Of course they must begin with their own homes and first of all their wives. Many have met disappointment right from the start and many more had been led back to Chinese ways. It is a pity to

see these educated young men idling away their time by playing "sparrow," or indulging themselves in "flowery feasts."

Why have some students failed to make happy homes? Their wives ignorance of the English language is the main reason, some people think. Far from it! The truth is that most of our Chinese girls know very little of good house-keeping and responsibilities as wives and mothers. It is not their fault as they have had absolutely no training at home or in school for that purpose. I do earnestly hope that the Chinese girl students will give this matter due consideration. For the girl students of to-day will be the wives of the students of to-morrow.

We all know that a husband's efforts alone cannot make a happy home. It takes two self-sacrificing and loving souls to accomplish such a desirable result, and the wife has more than half of the share as far as the home is concerned. A woman must make her home sanitary and comfortable; see to it that the food is clean and digestible; be able to attend to her own children, and furthermore to entertain her husband's friends at home. I am not going into details about other wifely duties which may be just as important, but in order to guard her husband's and children's health as well as her own, she must bear in mind the above facts. There's no doubt that good health leads to the road of happiness and happy homes are made up of healthy people.

There are always exceptions to the rule and I am certain we have many ideal wives in China. But could we have more? Let me ask the following questions and see how many can answer them:

How many Chinese women care to keep their homes clean or comfortable? Most of them leave that to the servants.

How many girl students can cook or understand anything about food values?

How many young mothers know that an infant should have a bath once a day and are willing to attend to their children personally?

How many young men are permitted to entertain at home? I am sure many prefer that to the noisy restaurants. But their wives' unwillingness to act as hostesses has driven them from home.

Our missionary friends have done their very best to educate our girls. But we must remember that most of the principles and faculties of all the missionary schools are "bachelor-girls," therefore many of them fail to see the necessity of establishing a course of domestic science or home economics.

Our young men and women should co-operate and open a school where young women could learn to cook, not foreign pastry or fancy deserts, but simple, wholesome Chinese foods, for children as well as grown ups, and to study economics which apply to our way of house-keeping.

Wake up sisters; Let us realise the important part we have to play in the home and for our country and let us shoulder the tasks bravely. China has been a weak nation because our women are dependent. Do not waste your valuable time in smoking cigarettes, or playing sparrow and put the blame on foreign influence, but try to improve yourselves and progress with your brothers.

I sincerely hope from now on our young men will adopt only the best there is in western civilisation and help their wives to build "home, sweet homes."

A Returned Woman Student.