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**Cambridge: A Factory of Mediocrity.
Maria Komornicka's Reportage "Youth's Paradise" (1896)**

Summary

In 1894, a young Polish writer Maria Komornicka comes to Cambridge to study in all-female Newnham College. Her stay there is later commemorated in a series of reportage published in instalments in *Przegląd Pedagogiczny* [Pedagogical Review] in 1896. The title of this reportage, "Raj Młodzieży. Wspomnienia z Cambridge" [Youth's Paradise. Memoirs from Cambridge], is an ironic one, as the late-nineteenth century England described by her is far from idyllic, especially when seen from the perspective of a suffragette. In this work, Komornicka criticizes gender relations among the English youth, and poses herself in contrast with female students in Cambridge, whose emancipatory zeal she sees as not radical enough; in contrast to Slavic souls like herself, Komornicka claims, English ladies are opportunistic and bound by conventions. Thus, Cambridge becomes in her eyes "a factory of mediocrity," and only after six months abroad she decides to return to Warsaw. The paper below presents a detailed analysis of this series of reportage, complementing it with a commentary which examines Komornicka's harsh criticism of her English contemporaries.

Keywords: comparative literature, late nineteenth-century literature, Maria Komornicka, Cambridge, reportage, suffragist movement

Słowa kluczowe: literatura porównawcza, literatura końca wieku dziewiętnastego, Maria Komornicka, Cambridge, reportaż, ruch sufrażystek