

qualities? Are they produced by the domestic theory, *per se*? It furnishes us a good housekeeper; but this does not meet the case. The idea that in the humbler ranks of society the cooking of dinners and the mending of clothes, and in the wealthier classes the art of ordering a dinner and studying the fashions, the receiving of company and "shining" in society, the usual round of so called accomplishments—that these constitute the true sphere of woman or indicate superior excellence is an opinion stupidly false but painfully prevalent. This theory cannot guarantee those qualities of mind and heart that produce our "domestic sunshine."

The *Social Theory* exhibits woman in her social capacity, presents to us gifted women who know how to make home a centre of intellectual and kindly intercourse—the *artiste*, the woman of letters, the philanthropist. This many-sided theory at once suggests illustrious representative examples. Mrs. Somerville and Rosa Bonheur have shown what women can achieve in science and art; George Eliot, conspicuous among novelists; Mrs. Browning and others, in the domain of poetry; Mrs. Coutts and Florence Nightingale, in benevolence and humanity; our Patis, our Nills-sons, and our Princess Louise—all illustrate the possibilities of talent and culture in women.

The most elaborate, and I think the most extravagant, theory is that of Comte. Discarding the physical and domestic ideas, he carries to excess the social; places woman where she is excluded from art, science, and even the work of education, and makes her the object of a humiliating worship.

Neither of these theories, in itself, offers a sphere generally applicable to woman, nor a suitable field for the development and exercise of her natural abilities. Could we select the real, the good that is in them, we might satisfy the demands of our matter-of-fact age by a union in woman of their excellences.

Supposing every woman inherently to possess these qualities, and that to every such woman our ideal home were really assignable, we might, perhaps, define the *sphere of woman*, and confine our attention to the means necessary for the education of these latent powers.

In our present social condition, however, we must face the fact, that there are many women naturally gifted who have to depend on their own exertions; that while man in self-complacency asks "what can she do for me?" from many a woman we hear the honest, thoughtful enquiry, "what can I do for myself?"

Let those who lightly treat such questions as the higher education of women, the efforts of women to enter industrial pursuits and professional life, bear in mind that these questions are no mere contention for woman's rights in the abstract. Voices are heard which we cannot disregard; and if the hour of earnest thought is the precursor of the hour of action, the hour of action is near at hand. This brings us to consider briefly

II. WOMAN: HER ACTUAL SPHERE, AND HER PRACTICAL DISABILITIES.

Or, which may be preferable, her actual condition in the many spheres of daily life, and the hindrances to her highest success in special spheres of action.

For obvious reasons we do not attempt to confine man within any very limited sphere, and we shall find the task practically as difficult in regard to woman. To construct any special theory and rigorously adhere to it, to form a mould of certain shape and arbitrarily try to fit woman into it, would be assuming that she is formed of some plastic material that can be manipulated at will to suit our cherished theory; that we have only to make round holes, and woman will grow round to fill them, or square, and they will become square; while man, less pliable, formed of more stubborn material, cannot thus be forced into any position our fancy may suggest.

An appeal to facts will prove that any such assumption is unwarrantable. We find, for example, that the majority of women are provided for by parents or husbands, passing their lifetime in domestic routine, with no special concern as to the necessity for independent effort.

It teaches us also that there is a very respectable minority who, otherwise unprovided for, are engaged in some honest calling to gain a livelihood or secure a competency.

It shows, moreover, a third class who, not of necessity but from choice, from their love of knowledge, an ambition, it may be, to gain a distinguished position in literature or science, or in some professional career, are claiming the right of participating in all the advantages of a higher education.

These three classes are distinct, and cover the entire ground, yet

there are certain questions on which they unite in common. For example, women display a long list of property disabilities to be relieved; social wrongs to be vindicated, and political grievances to be redressed, involving the solution of some of the deepest problems in social and political science—an undertaking quite foreign to the purpose of this paper.

I shall simply mention those positions that are attainable through what we term the higher education of women, and the principal obstacles in the way of their attainment.

These *positions*, in a word, are found in educational and literary pursuits, and in medicine, law and theology. The *obstacles* are founded on prejudices as to the natural fitness of women for any professional career whatever; from a reluctance on the part of universities to rearrange their machinery and open their doors to women.

III. THE ADJUSTMENT OF IRREGULARITIES.

At the outset I take this position. If it can be shown that a university education, or any similar form of higher culture, will satisfy the just claims of women, and result in their elevation as it promotes man's elevation, this privilege should be cheerfully accorded to them.

The reasons which lead me to take this position are:—(1) The enlargement of woman's sphere has a pressing cause, because there is an increasing number of women who have to support themselves. (2) If one class of the community, as men or women, be placed at a disadvantage, the other suffers proportionately. (3) The assumed intellectual disparity between men and women is due more to controllable circumstances than to any innate difference. (4) Even if it could be shown that the practical advantages arising from a higher education were the exclusive right of men, it cannot be denied that women, in common with men, should share in those personal enjoyments that arise from a highly cultivated intellect.

But how can it be shown that the educational privilege desired would meet the case? For the time assuming the *onus probandi*, allow me to suggest that the evidence will appear on referring to the history of the movement, and noticing what has been already accomplished by women of culture.

Such women have occasionally been conspicuous in all ages. Profane history furnishes many examples, from Homeric times to the present. We read in the *Iliad* (xi. 739) of women employed in the science of medicine; in the *Odyssey* (vi. 227) also Homer speaks of women thus officiating. Euripides bears similar testimony. Sappho seems to be the only woman in antiquity whose productions by common consent stand on the same level with illustrious poets of the other sex. Many Athenian women, not aiming at professional distinction, set about making themselves fit companions of the most elevated and illustrious among men. They accordingly studied all the arts, became familiar with all philosophical speculations, and instructed themselves in politics. We need refer only to Aspasia, wife of Pericles. Her home was the resort of all the great men in Athens; and Socrates, in his "Memorabilia," acknowledges her as his teacher in philosophy. These were exceptional cases, for historians assert that the debased condition of women generally had much to do with the decay of Athens.

This abnormal state of things was long perpetuated and tolerated in many lands; but we have reason to believe that the days of wasted activities and subjected intellects are about numbered throughout the civilized world. This principle asserts itself with the early rise of universities, soon after which women began to claim equal educational privileges with men.

Let us take a short survey of this movement, first in continental Europe. As early as 1235 we find two women graduating at the University of Bologna, and, subsequently, lecturing on the Institutes of Justinian. Another graduate in medicine became, in 1400, a professor in her own university. In 1564 a legal graduate was appointed to a chair in the University of Cordova; in 1557 another took a professorship in learned languages at Padua. In 1855 the Empress of Russia, in order to promote the higher education of women, opened 186 schools for girls, modelled after the gymnasien of Germany. So eagerly was this privilege appreciated that in a short time 23,400 pupils were enrolled. The medical schools were opened to women, but soon closed, on account of the jealousy of regular practitioners—driving many ambitious women to Switzerland, where fourteen graduated. At present, however, there are 423 female medical students in St. Petersburg.

Italy, as if mindful of her old renown in arts and letters, is found in the front rank of nations progressive in this movement. The