

drudgery, but would encourage constant effort at a mastery of the subject, and as a consequence be more gratifying to the teacher. An occasional move in this direction has been productive of the happiest results—is it not worth trying further?

### THE PLACE OF WOMAN IN SOCIETY.

THE fact that the women of the present day are aspiring to a higher education than it has been customary to allow them has caused considerable comment, and recently a fear has been expressed that the result of this progressive movement will be to drive the men from those professions which they have hitherto regarded as their exclusive right.

Though it is clear that there are no grounds for such an apprehension, and though it seems ridiculous even to entertain the idea of the possibility of such a result, yet, since there appeared in a recent issue of our JOURNAL an article on the subject which put the course of woman in rather an unfavourable light, it is perhaps advisable that something should be said on the other side of the question. The question is argued upon a very narrow, though practical basis. It is proper, no doubt, for economists to reduce everything to a "bread and butter" basis, still we must recognise that to make a living is not the highest end of man, but only one of the means, leading to a higher and grander result. We shall, however, regard the question first in this light, but we must in the beginning rectify a mistake which the writer seems to have made concerning woman's work. The other side of the question has been fully considered. Man in all grades of society, from the miner to the minister, has been placed before us, and his hardships and cares commented upon. Woman has been represented as a veritable "Jersey Lily," a creature of fair face and fragile form, weak hands and tender feet. This is not a true picture of the buxom matron of the farm, whose hands are hardened by the performance of her multifarious household duties and, who if need be, can handle the pitchfork and the shovel almost as well as the farmer himself, and much better than most of the young men who sit in academic shades. If women may not be found in coal pits and engine rooms, they are found in factories and sewing establishments where, shut out from pure air and sunlight, they lead a life far more taxing to the nervous system, and exhaustive of the energies than a man leads who is occupied in the open air, and in many cases the paltry pittance which these poor operatives receive is by no means proportionate to the expenditure of energy.

The world, looked at from a business standpoint, is one of demand and supply. In the lower grades of labor physical strength and manual skill are demanded, and those who possess these qualities in a high degree have the advantage of the weaker and less skilful. The recom-

pense which men employed in these lower walks of life receive, is generally proportionate to the waste of the vital forces.

If woman were more capable than man of performing those tasks which require such extraordinary strength of muscle the world would recognize her superior ability, and she would, no doubt, gladly avail herself of the opportunity of obtaining more pay than she now receives for the time she spends in lighter tasks. That she does not attempt to oust man from his position seems to prove conclusively that she is not able. In the case of the higher positions which have been accorded to man, not in compensation for the more arduous tasks which he performs, but because the general impression was that his superior mental powers fitted him better to supply the demand, if it can be shown that the world has been mistaken in its estimate, and that women are more fitted for these positions, it is time her true worth and ability were recognised. If she can give proof that her "slender form" is worthy of the lawyer's gown; if in spite of her "shrill voice" she gives evidence of being more familiar with the precepts of Blackstone than the generality of the stronger sex; if her "compassionate hands" can administer the healing potion with more efficacy, and handle the surgical knife with more skill than the male disciples of Hippocrates evince, if we forget the frailty of her fists, and look merely to her earnestness and eloquence as an expounder of the Truth; if in all these instances woman is superior to man her ability must assert itself, and she will oust the usurper from those positions for which nature has fitted her. That she has not done so seems to show that she has not the necessary ability. That nature has fitted woman, generally speaking, for a different sphere, is an undoubted fact. The most intellectual women, when compared with the most intellectual men, are very much inferior, but at the same time very much superior to thousands of the common herd of mankind. Woman possesses the same mental faculties as man, and it is just as important that she should be left as free as man to employ her powers in the way best adapted to her abilities. There are scores of incompetent men in the professions: there is no law to prevent them from entering, but the world which does not tolerate incapacity soon sets their value upon them, and they are forced to rank below their abler brothers. If a woman is a bad lawyer, an unskilful physician, or a poor preacher, she will soon find her level. If she is inferior to the best men, but superior to the less talented, the world receives the benefit of her talents, and no body has a right to complain if she sees fit to devote her life to a profession. No hard and fast lines should be drawn to prevent any woman who is capable and desirous of entering a profession from doing as she desires. A very slight knowledge of the facts of the case would show that such is not the desire of woman as a class, and never will be. At one of the London Universities there are nine hundred young men and three hundred young women attending, the aim of the ladies al-