

WOMAN AND HER MASTER

Is the somewhat quaint title of a new work by Lady Morgan, in which the equality of woman with "creation's lord," is asserted with dignity and talent,—and, at least as far as the fair authoress is concerned, fully and unequivocally proved.

The question as to the equality of the sexes, in the abstract, we should conceive to be one by the discussion of which very little indeed will or can be gained. It seems to us at variance with the express commandment, which bids woman, in all things obey her lord; nor can the position of woman be changed without detriment to herself, and to the world. We allude to that position which, in all civilized communities, she occupies, as the friend and counsellor of man—his equal in excellence, virtue and piety—his superior in gracefulness, delicacy, beauty and affection; but inferior to him in the attributes, which make the difference between the vigorous and weak—physical and intellectual—although, with equal advantage of education, we know that many instances exist, and have existed, of equal mental endowments: nay, woman has at times assumed the purple, and swayed the sceptre as regally and vigorously as more robust, adventurous and daring man; but in such places she shines least. Her reign is not for the tented battle-field, or the arena of war and strife. Her empire is one of gentleness, and by the power of her winning grace, and affectionate kindness, should she sustain her rule. Lady Morgan, however, is in the field as the champion of her "privileges." She argues the point philosophically and calmly, except when she becomes warm with her subject, when the pent up romance and enthusiasm of woman's nature speaks out in the "Wild Irish Girl." Were the standard of intellect measured with hers, and such as hers, and placed beside the miserable efforts which are hourly made to "win a name" by the many unfledged wittlings and would-be authors of the opposite sex, assuredly she would wear the palm. But it would be unfair, to award it upon the *ex parte* evidence of one so much interested in the result.

But apart from the argument altogether, the work is one which is deserving of a perusal it will well repay. Much that is new and beautiful will be found in its pages, and "old facts" from the dress they wear, have assumed the form of new. We have not, however, either room or space to do that justice to its merits which it deserves, and we merely add to our passing notice, a brief extract from its pages:—

"When fable passed away, history states that Athens owed her first glimpse of freedom to a conspiracy, of which woman was the soul and the depository. It was the mistress of Harmodius who wreathed the dagger with myrtle, that freed Athens from the tyranny of her "*Jove-descended kings*." Worthy of the great cause by which her name is immortalized, she proved that a woman knew how to conspire, to be silent, and to die.

"The wars of Megara and the Peloponessus were instigated by a woman's passions, and carried on at her suggestions. The Thebans and the Phocians called their ten years' war "sacred," (as other unholy wars have since been deemed,) of which a woman's wrongs were the sole cause; and if the wife of an Asiatic despot armed Persia against the liberties of Greece, the triumph of the free was in part attributed to the influence of the Corinthian women with the god whom they implored. The heroic achievements of the Argive women are equally commemorated for their important consequences; and it is an historical fact, that the most inspired of their poetesses was the bravest of their champions, and the most devoted of their patriots.

"The female genius of Greece was, indeed, always found on the side of the free. It was not to follow Phaon that Sappho fled to Sicily; but, having engaged with him in the confederacy against Pittacus, they were banished together. It was for this that the coins of Mytilene bore the impression of her image; and that her patriotism and her poetry became alike immortal.

"In all the great public events of Greece, the influence of the female mind may be detected, even where, under particular institutions, her presence was forbidden. When Pythagoras, in his desire to make proselytes of the ignorant, and extend the influence of his sect, opened his first school of philosophy in Italy, the 'friend of wisdom' was accompanied by female disciples. His wife and daughter taught in his classes; and fifteen other women, of high capacities and attainments, his pupils, gave grace to his stern truths, and became the persuasive missionaries of doctrines which preached restraint over the passions, and the supremacy of reason in all things.

"But the women were not only admitted into the schools of philosophy; the philosophers sometimes attended upon theirs. Aspasia, who improved the eloquence, while she perverted the politics of Pericles, lisped her atticisms in the ears of Socrates, till she became rather his teacher than his disciple. The