

ing evils demanding social reform, I think I do not exaggerate the need of a higher and wider scope of thought.

Women think by their indifference and feigned humility they win admiration and affection, which is all many of them seem to require. They are not conscious of the intense selfishness that makes them shut their eyes and seek only to live and let live. For it is undoubtedly selfishness and indolence that oblige them to forget how many hundreds of women are struggling for maintenance. They call them sisters—the family likeness is not very great—and these “sisters” have their bread to earn, but also nothing to earn it with, they have been brought up to no profession, apprenticed to no trade, yet they are bound “somehow,” and few care how, to rough it in the dreariest sense of the word and to support themselves and often their families.

And yet we are told there is no need for women to adopt any calling!

Does it not show that reform is much needed when so many of us are determined to face opposition, and to shock society by entering the professions?

It is not nice and pleasant to shock people, as some seem to think it is. On the contrary, it is very disagreeable, and a woman requires to be quite confident that she is doing not only a right and good thing, but *the* only right and good thing under the cir-

cumstances. It is far from pleasant to be called names, and to be treated with contempt, and it is still more trying for others to think that we hold ourselves superior to all around us. We do not consider ourselves justly open to this charge; true, we are forced by the very condition of things to be self-assertive, but we do not wish to be conceited.

Others who do not care to march abreast with us in our movement, may have as great or greater stores of learning, but I must say that such knowledge is of very little value unless it is made use of. It seems to me time thrown away to study sciences and arts assiduously, but never to make any account of them, and I have often wondered at men and women whom I have been told have read a great deal, and yet talk nothing but the veriest small talk. What have they done with all this acquired knowledge, I ask? But that is never discovered, till one cannot help solving the riddle by being tempted to believe that their researches have begun and ended with the titles of the books.

I shall wait impatiently for your next letter, after which I have more to say on this subject.

Till then digest this sentence from Montaigne, *à propos* of what I have just now said:—“Learning is in some hands a sceptre, in others a rattle.”

Your old school-fellow,

AGNODICE.