

us," those words of Othello's seemed merely natural. Their thought was, not that woman should have her fair chance with man in the battle of life, but that she should be shielded and sheltered from that rude battle, if possible, altogether; that man should fight it for her. But, if we are to "change all that" then those who enter into the conflict where cuffs are going—man or woman—must be content to be cuffed, and to cuff back again; and the age of chivalry and chivalrous courtesy (so far as woman is concerned), with all which that courtesy did to make life noble and beautiful, must indeed be held finally to have passed away.

But such words may seem too sentimental and somewhat out of place. Well, then, as a professional man to a professional audience, though not without thought of the non-professional many whose attention this address (just because it is your President's) may be expected to command, let me lay before you my reasons for replying in the negative to the question proposed. I think that it is *not* for the good of the human race considered as progressive, that women should be freed from the restraints which law and custom have imposed upon them, and should receive an education intended to prepare them for the exercise of brain-power in competition with men. And I think thus, because I am persuaded that neither the preliminary training for such competitive work, nor the subsequent practice of it in the actual strife and struggle for existence, can fail to have upon women the effect of more or less (and rather more than less) indisposing them towards, and incapacitating them for, their own proper function—for performing the part, I mean—which (as the issue of the original differentiation of the sexes) nature has assigned to them in the maintenance and progressive improvement of the human race. For bettering the breed of men, we need and claim to have the *mothers of men*. This "higher education" will hinder those who would have been the best mothers from being mothers at all, or, if it does not hinder them, more or less it will spoil them. And no training will enable themselves to do what their sons

might have done. Bacon's mother ("choice lady," says the biographer, and "exquisitely skilled," as she was) could not have produced the *Novum Organum*, but she—perhaps she alone—could and did produce Bacon.

Such, stated briefly is my contention. I proceed to set forth more fully the facts and arguments upon which I found it; but, before doing so, let me, at the threshold of my subject, disclaim all covert intention of proving that women are unfit for the practice of *medicine*; for, if my question be answered in the affirmative, I see no reason why an exception should be made in favor of our profession. Nor need we, in that case, fear the result. Music, painting, poetry, literature and cookery, have been as free to women as to men; and yet a Beethoven, a Titian, a Shakspeare, a Bacon, or a Soyer has never yet appeared in their midst; and we may rest assured that the day is far distant when a Hippocrates, a Harvey, a Haller, or a Hunter, will adorn the ranks of the lady doctors. Be this as it may, we are citizens first, and medical men after; so that whatever is proved to be for the greatest good of the greatest number we, as true philanthropists, will cheerfully acquiesce in, even to the sharing of the practice of our profession with our sisters.

What we put before us, then, is the progressive improvement of the human race, the bettering of the breed of man. As Mr. Herbert Spencer (*Education*, page 146) reminds us, "The first requisite to success in life is to be a good animal; and to be a nation of good animals is the first condition to national prosperity." We may add that, to be a race of good animals is the first essential of human well-being. Now, how striking is the contrast when, with the way in which, in the case of the human animal, conjugal and parental unions are left to the haphazard of individual fancies we compare the persistent painstaking care bestowed upon such unions by the breeders of the inferior animals. . . .

Mr. Youatt speaks of the principle of selection as "that which enables the agriculturalists not only to modify the character of his flock, but to change it altogether. It is the magician's wand, by means of which he may summons in-