

prisms" were coming, but you murmur instead—womanly modesty, womanly virtue. Can a woman keep these divine attributes when she goes out into the world to fight her way and to win fame and position? I ask, why not? Are seamstresses and charwomen less virtuous and modest than their neighbours, because they have to fight their way and win their fame (such fame as it is) in the struggle for bread? Are the Turkish women, veiled and secluded as they are kept, more virtuous than those of European nations? Are we the worse for going out for a walk, when we are told to "put our virtuous indignation in our pockets," and submit to be regarded as pictures on exhibition? Are we the worse for reading, our Bibles or our Shakespeares, or must these and all books written before this ultra-delicate nineteenth century be Bowdlerized before being placed in our hands? Is our innate modesty so small a thing, of so frail a material, that it will bear no contact with externals? If you admit it is, I answer that I deny that a woman possesses either virtue or honour who cannot without harm read and live and work as good and holy men have read and lived and worked. Bear in mind, too, that the women who enter into public competition with men, go armed with a higher education, mental, moral and physical, than those have whose thoughts never soar above the contemplation of a comfortable home and plenty of excitement.

You think the movement is a new-fangled idea, interesting to me, perhaps, because of its novelty. Are you aware that our old friend Plato calls upon "both sexes indifferently to associate in all studies, exercises, offices and professions, military and civil, in his republic?" This is even rather farther than we go, for at present (whatever the future may give us) our physique is hardly capable of un-

dergoing the hardships of a soldier's or a sailor's life. Montaigne affirms "that males and females are cast in the same mould; and that education and custom excepted, the difference between them is not great," and a modern poet sings,—

"Female and male God made the man:
His Image is the whole, not half;
And, in our love, we dimly scan
The love which is between Himself."

It is ridiculous to hear people exclaiming, do you want to see women in parliament? do you want to have women as judges? and the like.

We want to fit ourselves for any office; whether we shall be called upon to fill those positions is quite another question, and one thing is quite certain, that no woman is likely to be raised to any high office unless she is eminently fitted for the place. At present what women have to do is to cause their standard of education to be raised. When this has been done for some generations, then will be the time under the new *régime* to inquire what posts of importance they are capable of filling. We do not demand of a boy the strength and power of a man, or wonder why with all his potentiality of force he cannot rival at once the wisdom of an ancient, and yet the question is constantly put (with the belief that women expect all this of and for themselves), whether they do not desire *now* and *at once* to undertake work requiring intimate knowledge of the laws of political and social economy? You think, perhaps, I underrate the education of to-day. When I see hundreds of women who might vote and who do not, who might work and who do not, who have talents but hide them in a napkin, and candles, but bury them under a bushel; women who do not want to be represented in the parliament of their country, who are perfectly indifferent under the discussion of the most cry-