

part of a general impulse in the direction of the higher education of women. In such institutions as Queen's College, London, the Ladies' College, and Girton College, we have seen a large body of female students going through a course of study on the same methods, in the same subjects, and even taught by the same professors, as in similar institutions for young men, and they have stood the final test and taken academical degrees. This good example has been followed in South Australia, and it is with pleasure that we quote the language of the chancellor at the recent University commemoration in bestowing her degree on Miss Dornwell:—"No graduate of this University has ever taken a more distinguished degree . . . In your distinguished undergraduate career, and in the manner in which you have taken this degree, you have not only done honor to this University, but have vindicated the right of your sex to compete on equal terms with other graduates for the honors and distinctions of the University." But the advance could not stop at this point. Graduation at the universities is in most cases only a step preliminary to the entrance on professional life. In some instances the female candidates might be content, to quote the words of the Chief Justice, to "vindicate their right to compete on equal terms," and to assert the capacity of their sex to enter on that wider range of intellectual pursuit from which they had been long debarred. But having in this way stood the preliminary test, it was inevitable that some of them would desire admission to the duties and a share in the emoluments of professional life. Into at least one of the learned professions they have successfully made good their entrance. There was at first a strong prejudice against "women doctors," which to the English understanding had a touch of Americanism about it; and Americanism suggested the Bloomer costume and other absurdities. There seemed, too, a sort of immodesty in the necessary anatomical and surgical training required for perfect competency; though it is not easy to see why the familiarity with the organs of the human body which a man may acquire without



loss of personal modesty should necessarily become immodest when the student happens to be a woman. No such objection had been urged to the employment of women as nurses, and yet the duties of the nurse are often such as would be trying to modest-minded women but for the supreme consideration that they are engaged in the relief of human suffering: If they were fit to be employed as the assistants of doctors it was not surprising that they should wish to qualify themselves for the healing as well as for the nursing art. In the case of sensitive patients of their own sex the very modesties of feeling which stand in the way of the disclosure of symptoms to a man have perhaps in not a few cases interfered with the cure of disease, and it is conceivable that to such patients the intervention of a woman doctor may increase the chance of cure.

Whether on these considerations or not, the admission of women to the medical profession is now an accomplished fact. Telegraphy has opened to women resolved on self-help another kind of occupation for which they are naturally well fitted. Many have entered as art-students, and either as artists or as assistants in decorative art, have found for themselves a means of earning their own livelihood, and even of rising to eminence. Of course the question of their admission to the franchise at elections was sure to



come up, and in this no new principle is involved. As Mr. Davies has pointed out, in England "women may vote for vestrymen, for guardians of the poor, for members of school boards. They may be guardians, and they may sit on school boards." In his opinion "the franchise also will not long be withheld." In this colony a first step has been taken in even this direction. Dr. E. C. Stirling has upheld the claims of women to the franchise, and if he excepted married women he frankly acknowledged that he did so merely from prudential considerations, not because he thought they should be excluded, but because a good many other people thought so. There is much reason for doubt as to the propriety and wisdom of this last proposed measure; but as respects the other signs of advance in the position of women, most people will now admit that the changes have been in the right direction. Mr. Davies has offered a reply which we think pertinent and telling to the objection which on a recent occasion took this form—"To educate young women like young men and with young men is a thing inexpedient and immodest." He quotes this with some amusement, and proceeds to observe—"Let us imagine St. Paul to come and see us as we now are. Let him be introduced to a large dinner party, and observe the ladies, young and old, in their fashionable evening dress, and watch the dishes and wines going round. Let him afterwards look in at a ball, and see the young women dancing with the young men. Then let us suppose him to see what has been already put in practice, or even all that the most ambitious advocates of women's intellectual and civil advancement have ever dreamed of in the way of common lecture-rooms, examinations, or political functions. If he hears that there are those who cheerfully acquiesce in the dinner party and the ball, but denounce the mixing of the sexes in study and civil duties as immodest, is there not some risk that he might be reminded of those who strain at the gnat and swallow the camel?" This is well said. If there is something slightly comical in the idea of St. Paul going to a fine London dinner party, or looking in at a ball, it should be remembered that the *reductio ad absurdum* is often the most convenient way of dealing with statements in themselves absurd and extravagant.

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