

## A LAW FIRM OF WOMEN

BY LAURA GROVER SMITH



THE great progress of women has ceased to be at all surprising in this country, and in many of the States women are represented in the various professions, particularly that of law. Mrs. Myra Bradwell, of Chicago,

who was recently admitted to practice in the United States Supreme Court, ably edits the "Legal News," and Mrs. Phœbe Cozzens, of St. Louis, is a well-known lawyer in the west. Miss Lavinia Goodale was the first woman admitted to the practice of law in the State of Wisconsin. In 1875 she appeared before the Supreme Court of the State asking permission to practice in that court, and her brief proved that she had at least the essential mental qualifications. The motion was denied by the judge at that time, who held that "womanhood is moulded for gentler and better things." Miss Goodale maintained, however, that women could never have full justice in the courts until properly represented, and that the union of delicacy, refinement and conscientiousness of woman with the firmness and vigor of man was necessary for the proper administration of justice in our courts. Also, that in excluding women, free and wholesome competition of the best existing talent was prevented, and that it was unjust to banish so large a portion of the community from a field for which many have taste and ability.

Since that date Miss Goodale has been admitted to the bar, and is now one of the eight

she, with her three daughters, went to Madison, Wisconsin. She took a house and "kept the home" until she and her daughter, Kate, were graduated from the law school of the State University. The two younger daughters were in the high school at the time. Going to school with one's mother, Miss Kate assures one, was a great improvement on the usual way. In speaking of the invariable kindness shown them by members of the legal profession, Miss Kate mentions only one case of direct partiality. The young men of the law class were in the habit of making a record of the ages of its members and registered Mrs. Pier at twenty-six and Miss Pier at eighteen.

After the graduation of Mrs. and Miss Pier they returned to Fond du Lac, but came to Milwaukee the year following, where they have since practiced their profession. These ladies were instrumental in the passage of two laws in the Legislature, viz., that a married woman is capable of acting as an assignee, and that a married woman who is an attorney at law may be a court commissioner. Last September Mrs. Pier was appointed court commissioner, and is the only woman holding a position of that kind in the United States. These women have good standing among lawyers, and are not considered unequal adversaries. Their practice is general, with the exception of criminal cases. Most of their cases are corporation, real estate, or probate. Mrs. Pier takes charge of the office and Miss Kate usually appears in court. She has already had ten cases in the Supreme Court. The firm is extremely modest in speaking of its members, but as a matter of fact they all are considered successful lawyers. Perhaps one reason for their success lies in their steady and conscientious application to their work.

Mrs. Pier is a handsome woman; her face



MRS. PIER



MISS CAROLINE PIER



MISS HARRIET PIER

women lawyers in the State of Wisconsin, of whom four are the subjects of this sketch, Mrs. Kate Pier and her three daughters, Kate H., Caroline and Harriet. They are all members of one law firm in the city of Milwaukee. They are all interesting, "feminine" women, if one may use the expression; apparently they have lost none of their womanly qualities, but gained so many privileges that one is reconciled to a progress, which twenty years ago many thought threatened the destruction of home life. It is not probable that any one of these young ladies is unfitted for a home because she has identified herself with an unusual calling for a woman. Only a few years ago, if a woman found it necessary to work for a living, as she often did (apparently suffering both the curse of Adam and Eve) there was no career open to her save school-teaching or dress-making. Now, as a progressive woman says, "she can do anything where her petticoats do not catch in the machinery."

Mrs. Pier, after the death of her father, was left in charge of his estate. She became interested in the questions that arose, and possessing a keen and brilliant mind she directed it to the study of law. There are many women upon whom devolve the responsibilities of an estate who may appreciate the motive which led Mrs. Pier to become her own lawyer. About six years ago

indicates a strong and sweet character, which would temper justice with mercy. Miss Kate is very beautiful. She is tall and slight, her face is refined, and her deep-blue eyes are true Irish eyes, and full of expression. She wears her long black hair in braids which hang nearly to the ground. It may be of interest to feminine readers to know that Miss Pier wore, when she plead and won her first case at Madison, a pretty black silk dress, brightened with a bit of color at her throat. It must have been a strange scene, when five most "potent, grave and reverend seigniors" listened to a slip of a girl as she plead her case, and plead it well and with convincing power.

About a year ago the younger daughters, Caroline and Harriet, finished the law course at the University, and are now associated with their mother and sister. The firm is a busy one and each member does her part. The junior members are not very active as yet, but following the precedent of mother and sister, they will have their opportunities. They are also pretty girls, at whom one gladly looks twice.



MISS KATE PIER

The firm now includes the names of Kate Pier, Kate H. Pier, Caroline Pier and Harriet Pier, and its members are demonstrating most clearly that they are qualified to rank with men in the learned and honored profession of law.