

The Woman of the Nineteenth Century.

(See two-page Frontispiece.)

IN contemplating the woman of the nineteenth century we are apt to imagine that great concessions have been made to her; that she enjoys privileges her sex never enjoyed before; that colleges have suddenly opened their doors to her, and the editorial sanctum admitted her; and, in fact, that "the world's before her where to choose" in the way of employment, education, and amusement, and all this for the first time in her history.

Is this really so? Look back as far as the old Jewish times. The women did not disdain spinning and weaving and cooking and tending the flocks; the men themselves, even princes, worked in the fields and attended to the cattle. At the same time, there were women, like Deborah that mother in Israel, who was a lawgiver; and there were prophetesses, like Miriam. There were women who "looked well to their households and eat not the bread of idleness;" and there were women who appeared to be "business women," like the one alluded to in Proverbs: "She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She maketh fine linen and selleth it. She delivereth girdles to the merchant." Those wise old Jews did not think it strange that this woman should be in business for herself, nor did they honor her any the less because she chose to be self-supporting, and in the matter of maintenance called no man master. Later we find a woman, Priscilla, teaching a purer doctrine to Apollos, and it was not thought strange that she should be thus engaged.

As far back as the time of Zenobia women knew all that the colleges can teach them now. Zenobia herself understood the Latin, Greek, Egyptian, and Syriac languages. She was as brave as she was learned, and ruled with wisdom when on the throne.

In Greece, too, while the women spun and embroidered, and did not disdain household avocations, we hear of the daughter of a King winning a prize at a chariot race, and Corinna five times bearing away the prize from Pindar.

The Italian universities as early as 1209 conferred degrees upon women. Betisia Gozzadini was made Doctor of Laws. Maddalena Buonsignori was professor of laws at Bologna. In 1733, Laura Bassi was professor of philosophy at Bologna, and Maria Agnesi was professor of mathematics in 1750, while Clothilde Tambroni was professor of Greek in 1794. Anna Mazzolini understood anatomy well enough to take her husband's place when he was too ill to lecture, and made quite a name by her ability.

In art women distinguished themselves long ago. Samberini was the assistant of Raphael, and Properzia Rossi was famed as a sculptress. Other women attained distinction in art.

Editorial work is not a new departure for women. In 1702, Elizabeth Mallet edited and published a paper in London. Margaret Craper, Anna Franklin, and Clementine Reid, 1772, Elizabeth Timothy, 1773, and Sarah Goddard, 1776, all edited and published papers. There were women engravers, too, who executed admirable work, of some of whom history makes mention; and there were women who set type.

Even during the days of chivalry, when women were supposed to be merely the inspirers of men's warlike deeds and the objects of their fond idolatry, the ladies learned the healing art, and their hands it was that applied the remedy to the wound. They studied surgery, too, that they might be more useful. Some of the ladies of Queen Elizabeth's court did the same.

In looking back to the past we find women preaching, occupying chairs of philosophy and law and medicine, teachers of men, as were Hypatia and the young lady who expounded the laws of Justinian at Bologna. They were learned in the languages, as was Mary, Queen of Scots, who understood six, and Elizabeth, who was proficient in Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish. Woman had the vantage-ground then—how was it that she did not keep it?

The Greeks personified wisdom by a woman, and it was women that pronounced the oracles. The Romans had their sybils, the Hebrews their prophetesses, the Druids their priestesses, and the Germans their priestesses and women warriors. Plato thought that man had no natural superiority over woman excepting in physical strength; and Voltaire thought them equal in all things but inventive power. Cornelius Agrippa wrote a book in 1509 entitled the "Nobility of the Female Sex and the Superiority of Woman over Man."

Yet we find the women at one period finding their chief pleasure in spinning and knitting and making lace and doing the family sewing. They went to market, and gave a supervision to the cook, if they did not actually take her place; they minded the baby and they taught the children. Their amusements were battledore and shuttlecock and "the graces," played with two hoops and four sticks. Their music was some little love ditty sung plaintively to the guitar, at the request of the friend who called; and when they visited, it was in company with the husband or brother. This was pre-eminently the domestic age—the age that made the oak and the ivy simile possible. The age when man was willing to be leaned upon, and woman was willing to lean. The plate very graphically shows this era.

Then came a revolution. The oak rather repudiated the idea of the ivy twining, as of old, around its sturdy limbs. Then it was that, with her needs, woman awoke to the consciousness of her own powers that had been sleeping so long. She remembered what Plato had said about her, and what Voltaire declared. She thought of those Italian women of old, the women lawyers of Bologna, and the women doctors. The old ways of woman's work came back again, and, strange to say, the world knew no better and called them new. Necessity opened again the barred doors, and the result is shown by the artist in our second picture. More physical strength was required for her work, so a different style of amusement came into vogue—something health-giving and vigor-inspiring.

The woman of the nineteenth century is not walking in a new path; other women have walked there before her. She may never utter oracles or prophesy, but she will rise to a high altitude. The sewing machine has shivered her needle, so she grasps the pen and the graver's tools, and across the wide chasm of time she shakes hands with the women who set her the example that, followed, leads her to independence and happiness.

Suggestions.

THE CHINA ROOM.

THIS being between the two rooms is not so light, and half a dozen water colors brighten the walls. First of all, the back of the book-case, which forms the partition between the two rooms, serves to display china plates resting against a light-red and gold paper, which is pasted there to finish the cases. At the back of the piano a chintz curtain hangs, and above it is a row of plates. The side-board, which is bright with glass and china, is an old-fashioned bureau cleaned and polished and finished with new



A. BERGHAUS. DEL.

THE WOMAN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

PLATE 1.

See page 32.



PAINTING



FOXHUNTING



ROLLER SKATING



ARCHERY



TELEGRAPHING



DRIVING



OFFICE

BOOKKEEPING



LAWN TENNIS



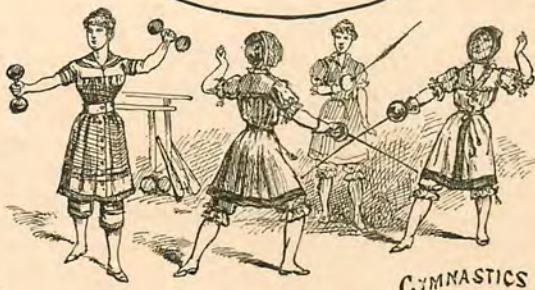
ENGRAVING



EDITING



PHYSICIAN



GYMNASTICS



ROWING



MUSIC

A. BERCHAUS DEL.