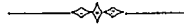


Hence *the principle of self-adjustment* is called for. And, remembering that as a branch of the living Church she has the power of the keys, remembering our Lord's promise that He will inform and teach her by His directing, selecting Spirit; recalling, too, her past secular activities in reforming and re-settling her affairs in still more troublous times, the Church out of very shame and agony and distress will (it is my confidence) yet find her voice and recover and use the power of self-adjustment.

CHARLES HUMPHRY MINCHIN.



ART. III.—THE SOCIAL POSITION OF WOMEN AS AFFECTED BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION MOVEMENT.

AT this moment, after twenty years of sowing, the advocates of the Higher Education of Women are enjoying a well-merited harvest of success. The triumphs recently won have silenced sneering critics, and almost disarmed the antagonism of opponents.

To understand the wonderful progress of the movement in England, or rather among the English-speaking race, one must look back half a century and inquire into the causes that made such an advance desirable and distinctly beneficial. As women whose lives are filled with the blessed cares and duties of home-life have little leisure for study, and are not so directly affected by the new learning, we may be pardoned if we consider it in its bearings upon the position and happiness of those of their sex whose home claims absorb only a small part of their energies, keeping in mind that what benefits even the minority must in some way react upon the rest.

The position of single women fifty years ago was more depressing and discouraging than it had been at any period since the Protestant Reformation. Before that event, convents had offered a refuge for the poverty-stricken and the desolate. Life in a convent may not have been ideally happy, and doubtless many hapless victims were forced to accept it against their will; but that the convent offered to many friendless women protection, the necessaries of life, employment and congenial society, not to speak of the halo of sanctity which surrounded such supposed self-abnegation, few will deny. Whilst we must rejoice in the clearer views of truth which have withheld from celibacy the undue honour which it had usurped at the expense of married life, we are apt to overlook the fact that a considerable section of the community lost by the change.

Still, for two centuries or more the single woman had not much difficulty in finding a sphere in which she could be useful and happy. Machinery had not wrested from the hands of the women of a household the arts and industries that made the "spinster" a valuable contributor to the comfort of a home. There was no want of occupation for women, whether married or not, and the tedium of a useless existence was less often felt, perhaps, than the drudgery of household work. The age of steam arrived, and changed this state of things. It brought in its train results that could scarcely have been anticipated. It took the distaff out of the hands of women, and so infringed upon their monopoly of housekeeping arts as to render their services less indispensable than formerly to the personal comfort of men. At the same time the increase of wealth in the hands of some produced a more costly style of living even among those who did not share the general prosperity. Owing partly to these causes, and partly to the growing disproportion of the sexes brought about by emigration, the percentage of women who had the opportunity of marrying decreased, and seemed likely still further to diminish. Then came the era of the discontented old maid, who became more than ever a favourite butt for ridicule; she might reasonably have claimed a large amount of compassion. Her ignorance and narrow-mindedness were her legacy from a previous generation; her uselessness and incapacity were the result of the triumphs of her own; the mischief-making propensity which was charitably attributed to her was, if it existed, the manifestation of energy that had been refused legitimate outlet.

The profound dissatisfaction with which many women regarded their lot was not long in finding utterance. It amused some and shocked others to hear women asserting their claim to educational advantages, and to equal political and legal status with men. The clamour for "Woman's Rights" could not be silenced like the old Hebrew cry for freedom with the words: "Ye are idle, ye are idle; get you to your labours." Those very labours were performed by others, and would never again be restored to the empty hands. Yet it was not strange that the claim grated harshly on the ear, for, with a few brilliant exceptions, women had not as yet vindicated their claims by success in any department requiring profound thought or even concentrated energy.

When one thinks of the changes that have taken place within the last twenty years, and notes the marvellous revolution in public opinion, one is tempted to wonder whether since the world began any period has been so fruitful in surprises. After so many centuries, the "Dark Continent" of woman's intellect has been explored, and it has been found to contain

heights and depths that were not dreamed of. In a poem by a contemporary writer, the wife of the hero is represented as saying :

I, too, have thoughts  
Fit to be women to his mighty men.  
And he would love them, if he led them to the light.

There has been a "leading to the light" of many deep thoughts for benefiting their sex. We see the result in our great high schools and colleges, where girls are receiving an education which can stand the same tests that are applied to the studies of boys. We see women practising as doctors, and enabled by their knowledge and skill to enter the homes of their sisters in distant Eastern lands, and bring to them the breath of health and hope. We see hospitals re-modelled and re-organized by women whose training in the work of nursing has been raised to a fine art. We see in the revival of deaconess houses and of sisterhoods the charm which community life assuredly possesses for a certain class of minds, and also the wonderful results that have been attained by such consecrated co-operation. We find women taking a distinguished part in every philanthropic and educational movement. A new-born sense of power, and of responsibility for its exercise, has created a new and high ideal in the minds of thousands of women, and has given dignity and happiness to their lives.

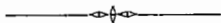
It is a critical time; for the position of women in countries where this educational movement has had free course is at the present moment very remarkable. In no age or clime has the lot of woman been so enviable. She has not yet descended from the eminence where chivalry placed her (more, perhaps, in theory than in practice), and while her achievements in the way of academic, literary, or artistic success are applauded to the echo, her weaknesses are respected, and her failures passed over with leniency. It will be otherwise ere long. When the competition between man and woman grows keener, and the race is to the swift, and the battle to the strong, and no element of courtesy tempers the contest, the time may come when woman will sigh for the consideration which shielded her from criticism, and the gallantry that yielded the palm.

In another generation we shall see the solution of problems that are puzzling us. We may safely predict that no academic, or political, or legal privilege will be withheld from the female citizen on the ground of sex. What these changes may effect in the final issue it is impossible to foresee. The vigorous in mind and body will doubtless reap great advantage, the weak may sink under the added burden. It is the dream of some enthusiasts that a few generations of culture will sweep from the earth the shallow, vain, heartless trifler whom the novelists of the day depict as the peerless Queen of Hearts, and replace

her by a woman more after the ideal so finely drawn by Spenser, Shakespeare, and Wordsworth. Those who look deepest beneath the surface see opening out for women new paths of usefulness and not of rivalry. They see in what a wonderful way the hand of God has been leading women through leisure into the paths of knowledge. They do not doubt that the womanly instincts are strong enough to be proof against the temptation to undue self-assertion and self-confidence. They believe that we are drawing nearer the time of "purer manners, nobler laws." That as the dream of the poet's fancy in "The Princess" has been realized and found no chimera, so, too, his prophecy will receive further fulfilment:

The man be more of woman, she of man,  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music set to noble words.

C. M. BIRRELL.



#### ART. IV.—THE UNITY OF THE VISION OF ISAIAH, THE SON OF AMOZ.

IT goes without saying that every reader of the Bible finds himself irresistibly attracted by the writings that claim the name and authorship of Isaiah. Among the "goodly fellowship," the diadem of "beauty and glory" has in all generations been awarded to this prince of the prophets. The recorded utterances of Jeremiah may occupy the first place in position in some manuscript rolls of the Jewish Scriptures, but in the Jewish mind Isaiah ranks second only to Moses, the legislator of Israel. The contents of the book involve questions both of the prophet's day and of futurity that are of the greatest moment to all generations, so that the thoughtful believer is fascinated by a forcible attraction from which he has neither the power nor the will to escape. The pious reader finds a strange light like the twinkling of the morning star scintillating on every page, and the man whose mind is alive to the charms of poetry is entranced by the rhythm of these ancient musings, and by the music (which even a translation cannot reduce to silence) of these sweet and silvery cadences. This last feature, it cannot be doubted, has made Isaiah to the reader of the Old Testament what the Gospel of St. John is to the New Testament readers. Certain it is that this intrinsic beauty of thought and utterance, this harmony of mind and matter, has enlisted and enrolled a larger band of devout students than any other portion of the Old Testament that lays claim to a single authorship. There is no need to linger over the allurements