

act process of the creation of the world. Hence, if she applies for admission to Harvard, Harvard can offer its most humane denial in the name of Physiology. If she applies for an introduction to some of the privileges and responsibilities of English politics, England, speaking by the mouth of her latest philosopher, replies in the name of Psychology: "So that, if any change is made, we may make it knowing what we are doing." If it is a question of medical education and recognition, from the high authority of his scientific pinnacle, Prof. Huxley announces that he finds no evidence in proof that superior women are the equals of superior men, yet they are clearly entitled to compete with inferior men. Prof. Goldwin Smith, drawing his conclusions from two continents, and speaking for the benefit of both, also discusses the question from a purely practical point of view. The opinions of our scientific countrymen, generally as fragmentary as the bird-like tracks in the Connecticut sandstone, have to be determined by comparison and inference. Apparently they have not reached unanimous conclusions.

The editor of the *Popular Science Monthly*, com-

paring John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer as philosophers, refers to the unlike methods of these two eminent thinkers in their treatment of the Woman Question. Prof. Youmans claims that Mr. Mill might have written his treatise on *The Subjection of Woman* two thousand years ago, while Mr. Spencer has grounded his conclusions on principles of modern science which were beyond the reach of past generations.

This criticism seems to be entirely just. But it must be remembered that these two investigators belonged in reality to two different generations. By education and acquired habits of thought, Mr. Mill was as old as his own father. It is the more remarkable, therefore, that, using the older, speculative methods, he yet reached conclusions of a modern type; while Mr. Spencer, by modern scientific reasoning, has succeeded in grounding himself anew upon the moss-grown foundations of ancient dogma.

Yet it is to the most rigid scientific methods of investigation that we must undoubtedly look for a final and authoritative decision as to woman's legitimate nature and functions. Whether we approve or disapprove, we must be content, on this basis, to

settle all questions of fact pertaining to the feminine economy. In these days, science is testing every thing pertaining to this world and even reaching out towards the next. In physiology, in psychology, in politics, in all forms of social life, it is to Nature as umpire—to Nature interpreted by scientific methods, that we most confidently appeal.

But science has not yet made the feminine constitution and its normal functions a prolonged and careful study. No investigator has attempted conclusively to determine the relative energy or endurance of the sexes from sufficient and carefully recorded data. Science possesses no body of facts quantitative or qualitative, upon which it can be entitled to make an estimate with any assurance of its correctness. Thus, when physiologists discuss the influence of sex in education, they make no attempt to indicate a related series of organic and functional differentiations such as would necessarily lead us to the conclusion that the same kind and amount of study will be more injurious to one sex than to the other. So far as appears, this conclusion is based on nothing more sure than a "great probability" or preconception.

Current physiology seems to be grounded on the assumption that woman is undersized man, with modified organs and special but temporary functions, which like all other more or less abnormal activities are a direct deduction from the normal human energy. When this being, so varied from the masculine type, has been studied as to these variations, then all that is over and above these is simply man—nothing more; but something less, as an exhausted potato is less by every sprout which has grown and been rubbed off from its dozens of germinal centres.

A *psychology* based on such a *physiology* can be no more scientific. It is not likely to rise even into the higher regions of psychological theorizing. It accepts the traditions which are allied to its authority. In the case of Mr. Spencer, even his ruling tendencies as an evolutionist have not been able to carry him a single step beyond. He accepts the popular, traditional estimate; but by masterly philosophical explanations, the philosopher dignifies the tradition; planting it firmly upon what he claims to be an unshaken scientific basis.

Mr. Darwin in his line of thought has done the

same ; he also has come by a fresh pathway to the old conclusion, and, building upon a mountain of evidence over which he has faithfully toiled in defence of another hypothesis, he announces authoritatively : “ *Thus* man has ultimately become superior to woman.” He adds with delicious sympathy : “ It is, indeed, fortunate that the law of the equal transmission of characters to both sexes has commonly prevailed throughout the whole class of mammals ; otherwise it is probable that man would have become as superior in mental endowments to the woman, as the peacock is in ornamental plumage to the peahen.”

When these two illustrious names, eminent in science, both thinkers who have more profoundly influenced the opinions of the civilized world than perhaps any other two living men—when these two, endorsed by other world-wide authorities, are joined in assigning the mete and boundary of womanly capacities ; and when the physiologists assume to interpret physical limitations, announcing authoritatively to the world that the weaker sex is unfitted constitutionally for persistent work, physical or mental, it is time to recognize the fact that the “ irrepressible

woman question ” has already taken a new scientific departure. Woman herself must speak hereafter, or forever holding her peace, consent meekly to crown herself with these edicts of her inferiority. She must consent to put in evidence the results of her own experience, and to develop the scientific basis of her differing conclusions. Doubtless this must involve also her consent to meet criticism, and to meet, if she must, the evidence of her incapacity, and of her unfitness for the work undertaken. If Nature has so decreed, she must consent to see her positions annihilated ; and even to feel herself humiliated for her presumption.

But there can be no humiliation ! A thinking dog might or might not over-estimate the capabilities of canine nature ; but no humane being could respect him the less for attempting to vindicate the capacities of his kind. Humanity could not visit him with added scorn because of his too ambitious claims to respectful consideration.

A belief in the more rapid and subtle action of the feminine mind, as a balanee to the massiveness and weight of the sterner masculine type, is a spontaneous

growth from modern culture. Few persons may be able to offer sufficient evidence of its truth; thousands may accord to it merely a courteous but unmeaning significance, yet the fact remains: that woman's intuitional, affectional, and moral traits are rapidly approaching par in current general estimation.

It was authoritatively decreed from time immemorial that man is the superior, physically, mentally, legally, and by Divine ordinance. This position remained unshaken in the early days of brute supremacy and dominant muscular strength. Now it is universally controverted. The higher the grade of culture in any community, the more nearly does woman gain recognition as the equal and peer of man. Mr. Herbert Spencer has very effectively used the argument of a presumptive evidence against any opinion which arose in an ignorant and barbarous era; but which is called in question in more enlightened times, and discredited by evidences accessible to us only after the race has made very considerable progress in science and philosophy. Nothing, therefore, but the most thoroughly sifted and undeniable scien-

tific evidence, can now make us cling to the old dogma of feminine inferiority. The old theory of a righteous vassalage of one sex to the other, must be shown to us endorsed by the clear sign-manual of Nature herself; else we must continue to believe that equal halves make the perfect whole.

When Dr. Clarke's first educational treatise was published, the Ladies' Benevolent Associations began to devise the most feasible and humane schemes for importing the providentially waiting Chinamen, with the view of transferring to their masculine shoulders the duties of child nurses, cooks, washwomen, and housekeepers! They comprehended that girls reared under the new regimen might become mothers; yet it would be hopeless to expect them to sustain the unremitting burdens of domestic detail! Now this movement is arrested, since Dr. Clarke, in his "*Building of a Brain*," concedes to the average woman the possibility of continued good health while engaged in the unremitting duties of ordinary home and school life.

Fortified by this significant change in recent opinion, I venture the more resolutely to suggest that

all the learned authorities who have decided the intellectual inferiority of Woman from scientific data, will yet find that their conclusions require modification from the introduction of unforeseen elements into their premises.

There is no adequate Psychology of Womanhood. If Mr. Spencer had completed his entire *Sociology*, it is not probable that he either would or could have brought together sufficient data to enable us to determine whether, in all ages and nations, the aggregate amounts of masculine and feminine energy actually expended have or have not been equivalent factors. The woman of the past is little known in history. Her mental life has left almost no record of itself. The motives and influences under which she has acted can only be inferential. Even the present woman must be tested more by *physiology* than by *psychology*. We cannot directly compare mind with mind. Nor can we fairly estimate the intellectual work of men and women in comparison, unless we first determine that the work was done under equivalent conditions equally favorable to each. But such conditions do not exist; they have never existed

hitherto. Therefore the earliest solution of the question must probably come through quantitative physical data. The mind works through the body. We must first establish estimates of the relative amounts of energy expended in thought, in feeling, in muscular action, and in reproductive functions, and must approach some standard of comparison as to the characteristic differences of male and female in all these respects; and we must reach some estimate as to their relative powers of appropriating and of using force, before there can be even an approximate basis for scientific comparison either of the physical or of the psychical characters of the sexes.

One theory is, that man is and always has been the superior; the other, that woman is and always has been man's full equivalent. He has always largely used and economized his powers as a thinking being: she, fettered by conventionality, has largely suffered hers to run to waste. Whichever theory is true, science can have no right to announce as "physiological truth," that because "women exhale smaller quantities of carbonic acid relatively to their weights, than men do," therefore that, "the evolution of

energy is relatively less as well as absolutely less," unless it is prepared to show that there are no other modifying influences which can be fairly supposed to affect the result. Physiology must embrace the aggregate of physical characters in its estimate; Psychology must embrace the aggregate of psychical powers, and the real complexity of the question must be fairly apprehended. This will be done in this generation or in the next.

THE END.