



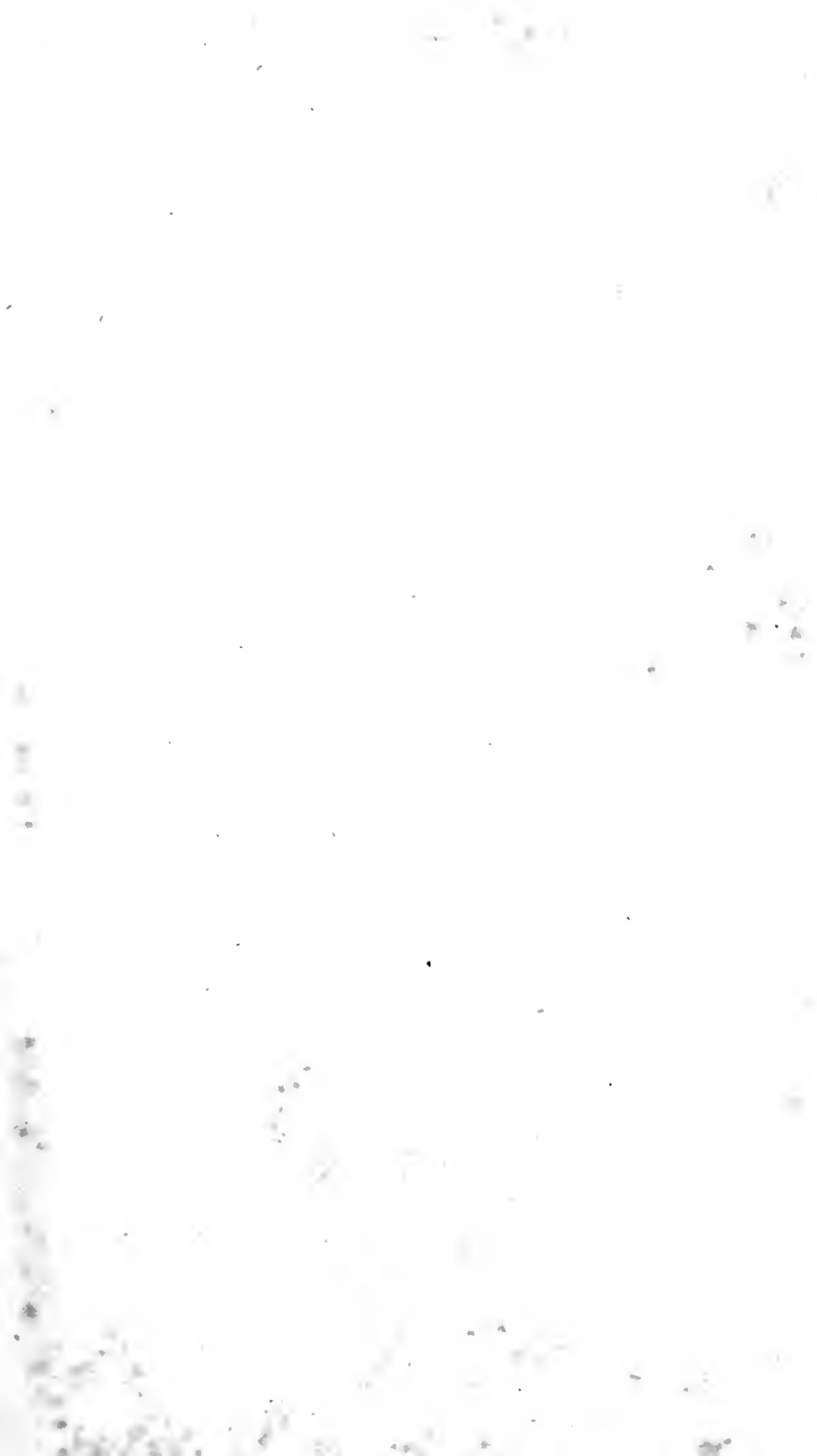


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THE LIFE OF SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE

*By the same Author*

MONA MACLEAN

FELLOW TRAVELLERS

WINDYHAUGH

THE WAY OF ESCAPE

GROWTH

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*Samuel Laurence Jones*

*Emerald Lake*

*Sophia Jax-Blake*  
*at the age of 25*



THE LIFE OF  
SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE

BY

MARGARET TODD, M.D.  
(GRAHAM TRAVERS)

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1918

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TO ALL THOSE  
MENTIONED IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES  
OR PASSED OVER  
FROM IGNORANCE OR WANT OF SPACE,  
WHO LENT A HELPING HAND  
TO A BRAVE AND UNSELFISH FIGHTER,  
THIS BOOK IS  
GRATEFULLY DEDICATED



## PREFACE

THERE are several reasons why it has seemed worth while to write the life of Sophia Jex-Blake at some length.

1. She was one of the people who really do live. In the present day a woman is fitted into her profession almost as a man is. Sixty years ago a highly dowered girl was faced by a great venture, a great quest. The life before her was an uncharted sea. She had to find her self, to find her way, to find her work. In many respects youth was incomparably the most interesting period of a life history.

2. S. J.-B. has left behind her (as probably no woman of equal power has done) the record of this quest. She was a born chronicler: almost in her babyhood she struggled laboriously to get on to paper her doings and dreams; and she was truthful to a fault. We have here the kind of thing that is constantly "idealised" in present day fiction,—have it in actual contemporary record,—with the added interest that here the story begins in an old-world conservative medium, and passes through the life of the modern educated working girl into the history of a great movement, of which the chronicler was indeed *magna pars*. The reader will see how more and more as the years went on S. J.-B.'s motto became "Not me, but us," till one is tempted to say that she *was* the movement, that she stood, as it were, for women.

3. That, so to speak, was her "job"; but she never grew one-sided; never forgot the man's point of view.

No woman ever took a saner and wider view of human affairs.

4. In spite of the heavy strain thrown by conflicting outlook and ideals on the relation between parents and child, the reader will see in the following pages how that relationship was preserved. This is perhaps the most remarkable thing in the whole history, and it is full of significance and helpful suggestion for us all in these critical days.

5. And lastly, it proved impossible to write the life in any other way. When S. J.-B. was a young woman, Samuel Laurence was asked by her parents to make a crayon drawing of her. After some hours' work, he threw down his pencil. "I must get you in oils or not at all," he said.

Those words have often been in the mind of the author of this book.

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*PART I*

OUR great interest in biography is due to the desire to see that the "child is father to the man"; in other words, to see how, from boyhood to manhood and from manhood to old age, through all change of circumstances and all widening of intellectual and practical interests, we can detect the same unique, individual nature, and link each new expression of it in speech and action with that which preceded it.

EDWARD CAIRD.

## CHAPTER I

### CHILDHOOD

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE was born on the 21st January, 1840. "How happy I was with my Baby this time two and twenty years ago!" writes Mrs. Jex-Blake on the 21st January, 1862, and, if she had greater cause than some mothers for the plaintive note that one seems to hear through the words, she was the first to rejoice in her great compensations.

Certainly no baby ever had a warmer welcome into the world. At the time of her birth, her father, Mr. Thomas Jex-Blake, a proctor of Doctors' Commons, was living the life of a retired gentleman with his wife at 3 Croft Place, Hastings. Both parents, though no longer young, and in some ways older than their years, were devotedly fond of children, and a number of disappointments had shadowed their married life. In January, 1840, their son, Thomas William, was eight years of age, and their daughter, Caroline, a staid little maiden of six. The home was crying out for a real baby, and all were prepared to treat the newcomer as a little queen.

And most royally did the little queen step into the position lying at her feet. There was no doubt at all that *she* meant to live. She was vital to the finger-tips, a thoroughly wholesome little animal, with a pair of great luminous eyes, too mature for a baby, though they retained the child look for three score years and ten.

The Baby came of an excellent stock.<sup>1</sup> On both sides she was descended from well-known Norfolk families, whose

<sup>1</sup> Appendix A.

lineage will be found in Burke's *Landed Gentry*. Her father was the son of William Jex-Blake of Swanton Abbots, and her mother the daughter of Thomas Cubitt of Honing Hall. It sounds old-world and picturesque, like Trollope's novels or a landscape by Constable.

On the other hand, the Baby—as in later years she never tired of saying—“came in with the penny post.” New ideas were surging up on every side. When one thinks of her parentage, her heredity, and the tendencies of the world outside, one can scarcely imagine a more varied lot of elements from which to build up a life. Of the fairies who came to her christening, some brought great gifts, and some great opportunities, and, when the cradle was full, one can almost hear them say,—“What now, little girl, will you make of that?”

Of all the gifts we know well which she considered the greatest. “No child ever had better parents than I!” “How I wish you had known my Mother!” Such words were constantly on her lips. Throughout life, when she was making holiday, she loved to go back to old Hastings, to point out to some intimate friend the house where she was born, the church—St. Clement's—where she was baptised; to wander about the old castle, and note the very rocks which had afforded the most delightful scrambling-ground when she was a child. There was a special point in some country walk associated with the picture of her Father bending his tall figure to hold her hand, while he talked to her of “the terrible things people were doing in France.”

“No one ever had a happier childhood than I.”

In many ways she was extraordinarily fortunate in her parents. One cannot go through the long series of carefully preserved letters written to their youngest child without feeling tempted to say that better people never lived. Absolutely upright in all their dealings, devoted and unselfish in their affection, single-heartedly religious, regarding themselves strictly as stewards of the wealth Providence had bestowed on them, they really were the fine flower of old Evangelical Anglicanism. One seldom sees a husband and wife so entirely of one mind as to what are the things that matter.

And if the Mother—Maria Emily Cubitt—was the one to bring to the union the keen wit, the happy humour, which her children inherited and loved to recall, her husband was the first to acknowledge and rejoice in her gifts. He was her proud lover to the day of his death. Family tradition made it a matter of course that they should have a luxurious home, and that all the appointments of their life should be good, but the note of self-denial was always telling resolutely and unobtrusively. It was her younger daughter's boast in later years that Mrs. Jex-Blake "would have made a splendid poor man's wife;" and the vulgar criticism was significant of their whole attitude towards life, that "the Jex-Blake's carriage was as fine as any in the place, but *there was always a poor person in it*".

What made this attitude all the finer was the fact that neither husband nor wife was ever tempted to undervalue social distinctions. It was *noblesse oblige* always,—the *noblesse* of family as much as the *noblesse* of Christ.

Surely better people never lived, and yet, as human standards go, the world which they built around them was scarcely a spacious world. "I have learnt far more from my children than they ever learned from me," Mrs. Jex-Blake used to say with characteristic generosity in her old age, and hers was one of the minds that grow and develop up to the last: but in some ways the Evangelicalism of her middle life—even with the advantage of her most gracious representation of its tenets—was a cramping thing. While Caroline and Sophia were still in the nursery, their parents had resolved, from the best of motives, to deny them the social advantages which their mother had enjoyed before them. Dancing and theatre-going were wrong; novels were mainly trash; *Punch* was "vulgar". "Christ's kingdom" was the one thing worth considering—Christ's kingdom as represented by the popular preachers of the day. "The mission field" was the great object of enthusiasm. After reading much contemporary correspondence one is tempted to say that the making of pen-wipers and book-markers for missionary bazaars was the work fitly to be expected of a Christian gentleman's daughter.

From her cradle the elder sister seems to have accepted this view of life. Her fine and massive intellect bowed to the limitations imposed upon it. Her strong character asserted itself in many ways, but never so as to give her parents the proverbial "hour's anxiety".

And, for better or worse, into this atmosphere Sophia Jex-Blake was born. One can scarcely wonder that she came as a little queen. "Brother" was already at school, his foot on the first step of a brilliant career; "Sweet Carrie" was all that loving parents expected her to be; the new thing came as a complete surprise. The freshness, the wilfulness, the naughtiness of her were as the wine of life to these staid, law-abiding people. It took their breath away sometimes, but it was all on so small a scale, and were not all the forces of religion in reserve to check any undue waywardness as soon as she was old enough to understand?

The earliest samples of her handwriting are two letters addressed to her brother,—undated, but written laboriously in "half-text" between double lines. The quotation and punctuation marks are added by another hand.

"DEAR BROTHER,

Your note was much 'amiss,'  
But as you sent sixpence,  
I pardon the offence,  
And kindly send you this.

S. L. J. B."

and again :

"DEAR BROTHER,

I must say I think you very impertinent, however I condescend to write to you. If you write a word more nonsense your head shall be off. I am your humble servant grand mogul."

"*Entirely* her own composition" is the postscript added in her father's handwriting.

No doubt they spoilt her, and she must still have been very young when her audacity and wilfulness began to cause her parents real anxiety. In January, 1847, her Mother writes:

"DEAR SOPHY,

I am very pleased with your marker, I think it nicely done for you. I wish you many happy returns of your birthday—now

you are seven years old I hope you will pray for the Holy Spirit to keep you from sin, from disobedience, and from violence of temper. I send you as a text for your birthday 16 Proverbs 32, and I trust you will try hard to act upon it. . . . I hope you take all the care you can of dear Papa—he says you are very good. Brother sends love.

I am your affectionate Mother,  
MARIA EMILY JEX-BLAKE."

A day or two later she writes again :

"I am very glad to hear you had such a happy birthday—how kind in Mary to give you that nice tea-pot. I hope you remember to thank God for giving you so many kind friends. Be sure to take all the care you can of dear Papa, and if he takes you for a walk do not let him talk.

I miss Papa's nice explaining God's word every morning at prayers, you must tell me what it has been about.

We like Brighton and I think I am stronger, but we shall be very glad to be home again. I hope Mary takes care about the poor people's broth and the puddings for the sick children. I long to see all my poor friends again, but I trust some one visits them and that they do not miss me. Papa must go and read with Mrs. P. when he is able and with Mrs. C. . . . Ask Mr. Maclean to bring you back with him in his pocket, when he returns on Monday. Show him how quiet you can be."

It is clear the teaching of religion had already begun, if indeed there was ever a time when it had not,—the teaching of such genuine heartfelt religion!—under symbols that never were suited to the mind of a sensitive child. So it is not surprising that she was not always the Grand Mogul, poor little soul! The next papers that survive are in a totally different vein. They are written when she was seven or eight years old, and the handwriting, though far from beautiful, is much better formed.

"DEAR MRS. BLAKE,

I wish you would be so kind as to come and see me every night in Bedfordshire at least tonight on Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday and next Sunday after tomorrow. I require an answer to this note (letter) even if you do come tonight. There are now so many railroads that you can get to Bedfordshire in one minute. Please send 'Madam Mary' with this and then come up.

GRANDAFLORES."

The true inwardness of this request appears in a private paper probably of an earlier date, folded up and labelled on the outside, "A Prayer to be Said After an unhappy Night."

"Oh Lord I beseech Thee take away my fears of a night, for Thou alone knowest what miseries I this night have suffered. O Lord, I beseech Thee this day enable me to behave as I ought. O Lord, I beseech Thee to make me a Christain child . . . take away my doubts and fears. . . ."

In the next letter—endorsed by her Mother, "7th May, 1848"—she says,

"I want to tell you that I feel so much less fear of a night. . . .

"I will never say again (as I fear I often have) that God does not hear my prayer or that I do not derive comfort from it. . . . Please (for you say please wins everything) do not show this to anybody not even to dear Papa.

S. L. B." <sup>1</sup>

Clearly the child at this time was learning to read and write. Of any formal teaching no record has been kept, but, if anything of the kind existed, it can have made no great demand on her brain power, which began at this time to find expression in a somewhat unusual way.

In common with most children, she dreamed dreams, but her dreams were not the random visions of an hour. They were singularly coherent and consecutive, aiming at nothing less than the construction of an ideal state ruled by a "despotic emperor" in some wonderful islands lying in an unknown sea. She was unable to throw the creations of her brain into anything like literary form, but numberless papers have been preserved, varying from large official-looking blue foolscap sheets giving the "constitution" of the state, down to tiny scraps about the minutest detail connected with it.

There are many maps of the islands, of which the largest, Sackermena, gave its name to the group; and these are supplemented by numberless poems in which she strove to give expression to the feelings her Utopia aroused in her mind. Poetry never came easy to her, dearly as she loved it.

<sup>1</sup> The paragraphs and brackets are the writer's own.



She begins gallantly many times : (We all know the experience.)

“ See how pretily the sunbeams dance  
Upon the fair waves of Speed-the-lance  
See the Waters of Gold ! ”

and again,

“ See Lord Grandaflova brave  
Fighting his country and life to save. . . . ”

and again,

“ See how gently Mordisca rules  
O'er Sackermena and her pooles . . . ”

or is it “ foomles ” ?—The writing is very bad.

On the whole the most delightful stanza is the one that was probably the first,

“ Sweet Sackermena and her isles  
See how many yards and miles  
It takes to go round Sackermena ! ”

No, poetry never came easy to her.

When she tackles the constitution of the state, however, her work is on a totally different level. She gives us the officers, “ Military, Civil, and Judicial,” the standing army, standing navy, Men of War *and* frigates, and vessels “ in rest, ready to be raised.” From this we go on to Prisons, Castles, Laws, Parliament, Guards, etc. The population varies greatly in different schemes. In one, by a stroke of genius, all innocent of that terrible Woman Question in which she was to play so prominent a part, she says :—Men, 7,000,000; Women, 5,000,000. Truly an ideal state!

There are many codes of laws, drawn up to meet one contingency after another. The following are picked out almost at random :

“ The Despotie Emperor has authority that none may dispute and none may appear in his presence without his gracious permission save his sons and Lord Field Marshall, also the chief general the high Admiral the high Treasurer, high Chancellor, Secretary of state and the Chief Justice.”

“ Succession to the Crown. It is at the option of the Reigning Despotie Emperor to name his successor but if he dies without

making any choice it descends to the eldest son but if he has no son the crown is placed on the head of the eldest daughter unless 12 *strong* reasons can be urged to the contrary and accepted by Parliament. If he has no offspring it does not descend to the next relation but it is in the power of the parliament to give it to whoever it pleases."

"Robery shall always be punished by the culprits restoring four-fold or if utterly unable to pay this as many days imprisonment as there are shillings in the forfeit."

"Intentional murder and personal injury shall be punished by injuries precisely similar."

"If any man conceals the persons mentioned in the preceding laws he is punished half as much as the offender."

"That every English or Scotchman that is travelling with a passport shall be supplied with provisions cost free. And every Frenchman shall have things for half and every Dutchman quarter price. Any one infringing this law is liable to be forced into the army with the possibility of advancement or to be imprisoned for two years."

"No judge shall ever condemn a man to death without the knowledge of Lord Trican. An infringement of this law shall be visited by confiscation of all his estates except (if he have it) 250 to his wife and 300 to each of his children; besides his being degraded from office and receiving 30 stripes in the public square of St. Anhola."

"All disobedience to officers shall be punished by flogging. 1st offence 20 strokes, 2nd. 34, 3rd. 40, 4th. imprisonment 4 months, 5th. 14 months, 6th. Death."

"If any sentinel be found asleep in the camp he shall be shot with blank cartridges and imprised 15 months. The second offence he shall be shot really."

"Spirits or strong drink not being allowed in either army or navy any person having any shall be shot with blank cartridges and the second offence he shall receive 20 strokes and 1 months imprisonment, 3rd. 32 strokes and 4 months imprisonment. 4th. Death."

"In time of war when the standing army is not sufficient to resist the enemy's forces 350 soldiers and 4 captains and 10 lieutenants shall be sent to raise the ready militia to the amount required; if this is not enough every man above 20 and under 80 compose the Possibles which is raised in great danger, but 2,500,000 must be left (all able bodied men) to take care of the kingdom."

In many respects this state was a primitive one. When certain announcements were to be made, "a large bell is rung which is heard to the distance of 23 miles," or "an enormous.

bonfire is made in the palace gardens of Mt. Gilbow [!] which is perhaps seen to a greater distance."

This is fine :

"The Despotic Emperor is the grand Law-giver General Judge Sage Physician and in short the Father of his vast dominions."

In spite of the mass of prosaic detail as to dress, provisions, etc., there is sometimes a hint of the supernatural about the whole thing. The dotted lines between the islands in one of the maps indicate "invisible bridges", and in a request to "VICTORIA and PRINCE ALBERT" that a governor may be sent from England to "controll the foreigners who wilfully destroy the peace and comfort of this happy and well-governed realm," we are told that "if this wish is complied with, the Most Gracious Despotic Emperor, PHRAMPTON OMAIL GRANDIFLORA,<sup>1</sup> will stand the friend of your kingdoms on earth and admit 20 of your subjects to his unearthly Kingdom."

A great impetus to the whole conception may possibly have been given by a tour which the child was fortunate enough to make with her parents and sister to Warwickshire and thence to Scotland in June, 1850, a tour of which further particulars will be found in the next chapter. In the course of her very conscientiously kept diary, she says, "We read the Lady of the Lake aloud," and she herself is reading "Ivanhoe, one of the Waverley novels."

There is no proof, however, that any part of her Utopia was sketched after this tour, and a great part of it was certainly written before.

On the whole, perhaps, the most remarkable thing in connection with "Sackermena and her Isles" is the staying power shown by the writer in developing her idea, and her determination to get everything down on paper. In this more than in anything else the child was father of the man.

S. J-B. was a born chronicler.

As regards Sackermena, the idea certainly afforded no lack of scope and variety. What with drawing maps, writing

<sup>1</sup>Note the similarity of the name to her signature on p. 5. Many a little girl has loved to imagine herself a fairy princess. It would be interesting to know whether any other ever dreamed of being a "Despotic Emperor."

poetry, framing laws, adding up the totals of her army and reserves, devising for the soldiery "A dark red long coat with silver falcons, and thick leather buskins studded with iron," and many another guise equally picturesque,—she certainly did not suffer from monotony in her self-chosen occupation. And the above examples by no means exhaust its possibilities. On a stray slip of paper we come upon a formal complaint from a "justice," who, "passing in disguise through Pe," was supplied with a loaf deficient in weight; and a tiny booklet (laboriously stitched together by the writer's hot little hands) has the following title page:

THE SACKERMENEE'S  
POCKET BOOK ;

*Containing many Little Accounts  
of their Customs*

PUBLISHED BY S. L. BLAKE & CO.  
Hastings 1848

Jan. 1850

The two dates seem to indicate that *Sackermena* flourished for perhaps two years; but the Pocket Book itself was not a hardy plant. The big foolscap sheets were clearly more stimulating to the imagination.

The thing is child's work throughout. From first to last it bears no trace of grown-up criticism; nor is there then or afterwards any note by her parents, teachers or friends, referring in even the most distant way to the faerie region in which the little girl must have spent so much of her time.

Another thing strikes one incidentally—considering the atmosphere in which the child was brought up—as rather curious. There is no mention of clergy at *Sackermena*, nor of any form of church. We are not even told that nothing of the kind existed.

Note again that the Despotic Emperor was the grand Law-giver, General, Judge, Sage, Physician, and, in short, the Father, of his vast dominions.

## CHAPTER II

### SCHOOL LIFE

"You often say how happy you were as a child," an intimate friend remarked once to Dr. Jex-Blake, "but you never talk of your school life. I expect you were a terrible pickle?"

"Specs so," was the laconic response, and the subject dropped.

There is no getting round the fact that she *was* a terrible pickle. If we bear in mind what the state of girls' education was in those days we shall see that it could scarcely have been otherwise. If she could have gone to a boys' school and enjoyed its boisterous give and take, the little "despotic emperor" would soon have found her level. One loves to think how happy she would have been in the modern Girls' High School: if she had but found the education of women in the condition in which she left it, the difference in her whole future would have been very great, but women of the present day would not owe her the debt they owe her now. "The breaker is gone up before them."

As things were, she had, in a sense, got the upper hand of her parents before she went to school at all. She was simply overflowing with energy and vitality, and they found themselves, while she was little more than a child, confronted with a personality which ran right athwart their preconceived notions and theories of life. They had not the right weapons with which to meet the outbursts of her volcanic temperament, and it must always be borne in mind that "when she was good, she was very very good," immeasurably more attractive than the average child.

The one effort of her teachers, of course, was to repress her, to induce her to be "ladylike," and, most unfortunately of all, to make every childish act of disobedience, every outburst of passion, the text for a homily on the necessity of "coming to Jesus." One cannot read the long series of letters referred to above without wondering how it came about that the germ of religion in the child's heart was not worn away altogether; and indeed its survival only becomes comprehensible when one bears in mind the genuine goodness of many of those who watched over her, and also the "unknown quantity,"—that elusive unsearchable factor that is present in every human equation.

The earliest references to her education are two letters from her first governess, Miss B., to Mrs. Jex-Blake, of which the first is dated November 24th, 1848:

"Sophy is a dear child, shewing daily advancement in her studies, and often delighting me by a rectitude of principle emanating, I trust 'from the Father of lights'. A little native wildness (and that gradually softening down) together with the want of promptitude in setting about her duties, are the chief obstacles that could be picked out from a much longer list of things most prized by an earnest teacher. I have often thought of your wish that she should learn the Latin grammar, and quite agree with your view of its probable advantage; but I am afraid of breaking down in the long and short syllables. . . . For the next few months it appears to me nothing will be lost by our present system, in which I find parsing to be generally a subject of interest.

I trust the time is not very distant when your little girl will successfully strive to be both a help and comfort to her parents."

The second letter is nearly two months later:

"Your kind letter with its agreeable suggestion reached me too late for a reply by return of post. It would have given me a feeling deeper than pleasure to continue the instruction of your very promising child, but I have already engaged with one daily pupil and have a half prospect of another, in addition to which God's high dispensation seems to allot to my keeping, as soon as He graciously gives me the means, the eldest of four children belonging to my Brother. . . . With our best love to Sophy, I am, dear Mrs. Blake,

Yours in the Lord,

MARY B."

The first arrangement having fallen through, Sophy was sent with her sister to Belmont, a school kept by Mrs. and Miss Teed. The following letter seems to have been written on the day they set out :

“ 29th January [1849].

DEAR LITTLE SO,

I hope you had a comfortable journey ; I fear the cold wind must have increased your cold. Now, dearest child, you must be always going to Jesus for grace to overcome self-will and the desire to be conspicuous. Strive to be a gentle child, in reality esteeming others better than yourself. You cannot learn anything to any purpose till you are obedient and have some self-command. Try to be a comfort to dearest Carry, she has her trials, depend upon it,—do you be obedient to her and thoughtful of her comfort, without making a fuss about it. Carry likes kindness quietly done. Do not give needless trouble to Miss Towers or anyone. Try to deserve Dearest Mrs. Teed's good opinion. Jesus will be sure to help you whenever you ask Him. I forward a note that arrived from Aunt Taylor. Papa sends best love.

I am your affectionate Mother,

MARIA EMILY JEX-BLAKE.”

Mrs. Jex-Blake's health never was robust, and at this time it was causing her husband and intimate friends some uneasiness.

“ Do you know, darling Sophy,” she writes on March 27th, “ it is sometimes quite a trial to me to write *one* letter to each of you, and I should hardly do it, did I not know how ‘ nice it is ’ (as you say) to hear from home at school. I so much like you to send me the heads of Mr. Parker's and of Mr. Taylor's sermons. The one on 23 Jer. 29 must have been very beautiful. . . . Papa has just come in and says thank dear little *So* for her letter and tell her I am *particularly* pleased with the clear way in which she sent me the heads of the sermon. . . . I send you a few of our violets.”

And again,

“ Be much in prayer, my sweet one, for grace to be obedient and gentle. Hope whispers great things for our next meeting if God grants us one.

I am comforting myself with the hope that you are waging constant war against *self-will* and *disobedience*. You can hardly believe how happy you will be when through God's help upon your earnest endeavours, you can obey *at once* and give up your own way. I send my darling child a text which I wish her to learn and pray

for grace to live up to. It is 1 Peter v. 5. I wish you to learn it perfectly and make it part of your *daily* prayers. Tell me when you write that you have done so. Bear it in mind all day long, and try hard, very hard, to live up to it. I often fancy you all at morning prayers and wish I could be there.<sup>1</sup> God gives you great privileges, dear child, that you may live to Him."

All the letters are in this vein, and all were read by the recipient many times and carefully preserved.

In June, 1849, she went with her parents, brother and sister to spend a long holiday in the Lake District, and one is glad to think of her as being much in the open air, collecting plants and stones, "shooting a good deal with bow and arrows," riding on the coach, and being allowed to drive for a few minutes herself.<sup>2</sup>

Her holiday diary is as well written and as dull as that of the average adult, and one is almost startled when one comes upon such entries as "Played at horses and pretended I was driving the mail"; and again, "A very wet day. I had a very nice game with Papa and Carry, and another with Carry in the afternoon and afterwards another alone with Papa very nice indeed and I enjoyed it *very* much."

On the other hand there was no lack of church-going, and the texts are always carefully noted down:

"July 29th Sunday. Went to Keswick church in the morning and the text was James 4. 8. Brother went to church at Thornthwaite. Papa, Brother and Carry walked off to the Vale of St. John's, but there was no sermon—only prayers. Went to Keswick church in the afternoon and the clergyman took his text from Ps. 119, 96."

"Aug. 5th. Mama was very ill and I stopped at home both in the morning and afternoon with her. Papa, Brother and Carry went to Brougham-hall to church but there was no service. They went again in the afternoon to Brougham-hall—no sermon. I went in the evening to Penrith church and the text was Luke 16. 8."

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<sup>1</sup> She would probably not have elected to be there on the morning when some imp induced Sophy to tip over a bench on to the row of girls kneeling in front of her.

<sup>2</sup> She used to say that her intimate familiarity with the details of harnessing and all stable matters was due to the fact that when they were spending a holiday in the country her father allowed them to have a pony and trap on condition that, with the exception of actual grooming, the children managed it entirely themselves.



*She* never seems to have drawn a blank, poor little soul!

A previous entry is even more characteristic of the world she lived in :

" July 23rd. . . . Had a walk with Papa and Carry in the afternoon, and afterwards bought tracts (for 6d.) with Carry."

" 24th. A rather wet morning. Went out with Papa and gave away some tracts."

Yet her Father was an excellent playfellow and at this time her most indulgent critic. In the spring of 1850 he writes—" It is a real pleasure to me to hear from you, and I hear such pleasing accounts of you from others that I am very glad "; but it must be admitted that this note of congratulation is rare.

There is an amusing little joint note from her parents, probably of an earlier date :

" DEAR SOPHY,

I send you the 1s. and I hope the yellow paper. I do not know what you want of paste-board, therefore I fear I cannot send it. I send the gingerbreads, and hope to do so on the 11th again. Your affectionate Mother."

Then follows in pencil :

" Dear child, I have got *all* the things for you and leave them with 2 pounds of gingerbread. I think you want more than one shilling for your purpose so I enclose 2s. for you.

Your affect. Papa,

T. J-B."

But it must not be supposed that her parents were ever otherwise than of one mind concerning her. Like all well-constituted husbands, Mr. Jex-Blake was quite prepared on occasion to demolish the child who made his wife uncomfortable. And it must be confessed that little Sophy had rather a knack of making people " uncomfortable." She was so keen about everything : she staked her equanimity so often on things which it might have been wiser to regard as trifles, that those about her learned to live in a state of some anxiety, never knowing when the eruption might come.

The remedy for it all is painfully obvious as we read. More

scope, more physical exercise, more fresh air ; but, as already pointed out, the girls' schools of those days provided none of these things ; and, when the child came to her dearly loved home, the Mother's excessive fragility made it necessary that her daughter should live the life of a grown up person.<sup>1</sup> The most devoted mutual love could not devise a *régime* suited to both. The lovely ailing Mother could not stand noise and excitement. Sophy was often riotous, excitable, "rough" yet always very loving with it all. On one occasion when walking demurely along the pavement in a *queue* of well-behaved girls, she caught sight of her father, and, without a moment's hesitation, deserted the ranks, and took a flying leap on to his back !

No wonder that a contemporary friend of the family describes him as saying very often, "My dear Sophy ! My dear child !" in tones of absolute bewilderment.

In the summer of 1850 Sophy made the tour referred to in the preceding chapter, and a liberal education it must have been. In April Mrs. Jex-Blake had written,

"I hardly allow myself to look forward to the treat of going to Scotland ; it seems almost too much pleasure,—and we shall be sure to find people who love Jesus and love the Bible there and that will add so very greatly to our pleasure. . . . Papa thanks you for your letter, he is surprised and pleased to learn that you are in Reduction. . . . Use daily as a prayer the substance of 1 Peter v. 5."

"18th June. Left Belmont at 20 minutes to 10 with Miss Teed, and met Papa and Mama at the Euston, and went to Rugby to pick up Brother." So Sophy's own diary begins, and an excellent conscientious piece of work it is. They visited Leamington, Warwick, Kenilworth : thence to Edinburgh, Stirling, Glasgow and the Lochs, Callander and the Trossachs, stopping at York on the way south.

A pretty piece of doggerel shows the happy relations between Father and daughter at this period. It is scribbled in pencil

<sup>1</sup> "I must tell you my experience," writes Mrs. Jex-Blake to Dr. Lucy Sewall a quarter of a century later, "not my own practice, it was not the fashion of my day (and having lost my three eldest I was very anxious and fidgetty) :—Where children are trusted and have a good deal of independence, and their tempers not fretted about *little* things, they grow up more open, confiding and trustworthy."

on the back of a hotel-keeper's note. The Father begins in his scholarly handwriting :

“ My little child, You're very wild,  
 Could you be still, And yet not ill,  
 Then, little So, This I do know,  
 You'd be a blessing, Worth possessing.”

Whereupon Sophy comes hobbling on :

“ My dear Father, I had rather  
 You'd believe me, And relieve me,  
 When I say, As I may,  
 That I'll be good, As I should.”

Of course it is she who recommences the game :

“ My dear Papa, Aha, Aha,  
 Send me a letter, Then you can better  
 Tell when we go, Off to Tarbet Oh !  
 And all your wishes, With many kisses.”

And the scholarly handwriting closes the page :

“ I kiss you ! Why if I do  
 I kiss a wild, And teasing child.  
 But this short note, Papa has wrote  
 To say at ten, We start again.  
 Henceforth you should Be very good.”

In autumn the two sisters returned to Mrs. Teed's school, and things resumed their chequered course. I am told by a schoolfellow of Sophy's, who had an excellent influence over her at that time, that Mrs. Teed managed the little girl extremely well : and in any case she remained at Belmont for two years, when Mrs. Jex-Blake removed her—evidently to the child's regret—on the curious ground that she was being “ extinguished.” The truth is that the younger pupils were rationed according to age, and, as Sophy was physically as well as mentally in advance of her contemporaries, she was reduced to eating raw acorns to appease her hunger. But Mrs. Jex-Blake was not aware of that detail till long after.

In the meantime, the former teacher, Miss B., had settled at Ramsgate with the pupils already referred to, and Sophy was sent back to her. A more devoted and conscientious

teacher one can scarcely imagine, but the arrangement was in some ways a very unfortunate one. At home—and probably also to some extent at Mrs. Teed's—the religious atmosphere was tempered by a sense of humour as regards the ordinary affairs of life; but of this quality worthy Miss B. seems to have possessed no trace. Henceforth the child lived in a religious forcing house. One hopes that at times she escaped to Sweet Sackermena and her Isles, but the moral atmosphere at Ramsgate was not conducive to such pagan wanderings. Her brain was pronounced excitable, and she was to have but little head employment, but she was taken to church several times a week, and encouraged—or instructed—to write out the sermons to send home to her parents. Here is an example of her work: (Miss B.'s trifling corrections are omitted.)

“ Mr. Dunbrain. John iii. 3.\* April 2. 1851.

We live in days of deep interest,—the common topics of men are thrown aside and everyone seems to be utterly absorbed in religious controversies. The torpor which had overspread the church has entirely dissolved, and now all around we hear nothing but the perpetual strife jar and clamour of religious disputes. It is a storm and a strong one too, but many think it precedes the blessed peace and quiet of the Millennium. Like every storm it did not come all at once, but it has been long in gathering; it began with what men call trifles and rose gradually, gathering strength as it rose, etc., etc.

Those marked \* are Wednesday evening lectures.”

We are left to guess whether she wrote out the lecture after supper the night it was delivered, or lay awake “ remembering it ” till next morning.

Memory altogether was a faculty assiduously cultivated. It was the custom for the family to gather round the fire on Sunday evenings, and for one after the other to repeat a sacred poem. When they had been separated for a time, special interest attached to the items each had added in the interval to his, or her, repertory. No doubt the custom began with the learning of hymns, but they seem for the most part to have been good hymns, and round this nucleus there gathered an extraordinarily varied collection,—fine passages from Isaiah and the Psalms, poems by Trench,

Dean Alford, Longfellow, Wordsworth and many more. It was said of the younger daughter in her later life that, if she had been shipwrecked on a desert island with nothing but pens and paper in addition to the actual means of livelihood, she could gradually have provided a priceless library from memory alone.

A few of her letters at this time have been preserved.

[1851].

“DEAR DADDY,

A most extraordinary thing happened this morning; the crew of a Portuguese ship put up in the masthead figures representing Pontius Pilate and Judas and exactly as 10 struck on the pier clock they thumped them down into the sea! Now was not this Popish trash? A respectable English jolly tar told Miss B. all about it and added how happy we were to be taught better; now I think that's a right good English spirit. The first grand steamer has just come in. I have a very bad cold and have not been out. Miss B. brought me some licorice for my cough and I am to have treacle posset tonight so I could not possibly be taken more care of and no doubt it will be quite well before 30th. You musn't think Miss B. had *anything* to do with my talking about tractarianism, indeed afterwards she forbade it,—it was all my fault. I'm writing a history of our family entitled 'History of the illustrious family of Blakes from 70 B.C. to 1080 A.D.' Dear Daddy how I *do* love you, if I could 'climb those knees and kiss that face' I'd be happy enough, indeed I'm very happy here but home sweet home is better than anything else.

S. B.

Do send me a *large* seal of your crest.”

Her Mother, however, is always her main confidant.

“I'm in a scrape just now Mama,” she writes on April 5th, 1851, “I long to be at Home, home sweet home there's no place like home, no person like Mummy and no kiss like Mummy's cuddle and no knees like Papa's and no player at Prisoner and Judge Selling or any other game in the world like Papa, no one that can put me in a good humour like Daddy and Mummy! Oh! nothing like what everything is at home *anywhere* else, in all Europe Asia Africa and America no place is like home, sweet sweet home. . . . Love to dear Papa and yourself 3000000 kisses. I always kiss the envelope. Please write very soon. I am your affectionate and I *hope* dutiful Sophy.”

We know how fervently the Mother “*hoped*” the same!

The child seems to have spent the first weeks of May in her beloved home, and the following letter from Miss B. gives us a graphic sketch of her return to school :

“ MY DEAR MRS. BLAKE,

Dearest Sophy has laid her letter before me, and such a burden of grief I can scarcely bear to send—but you will look at my view of the picture likewise. The tears shed in writing that were very nearly all we have had ; for soon after parting from her Papa the heavy clouds passed away, and, when established in the fly I was glad to hear, ‘ Well, I am not quite so sorry as I expected to be,’ and then ‘ Mummy says the air of Ramsgate will almost make amends for the parting.’ We got home and found dinner ready, but dear Sophy could only take a little rhubarb. . . . At tea she seemed surprised at being able to express herself as ‘ hungry,’ though the appetite was soon satisfied, and she is now sitting reading in the garden, which she says is ‘ delicious’. Dear Mrs. Blake do not think I will tax her head with anything beyond beneficial employment. It will be my study to get rid of that *thin look* which I could scarcely have attributed to so short a change (!). I ought to tell you that Sophy meant to say that she felt better when she got into Ramsgate than for some time, but grief swallowed up all other news.”

A week or two later her Father asks her in a rash moment if she can tell him “ Why it is wrong to oppose Papal Aggression ? ” adding, “ If you can’t, I will tell you.” The question was a mere conundrum, but she takes it very seriously :

“ DEAR FATHER,

I am *very very* sorry to hear that dearest Mother is so unwell (or I should say *ill*). I send her a marker as *I* have not many flowers that will press well.<sup>1</sup> Please tell her that she must not give it away to anyone. I am quite enchanted at Boy’s getting *two* poetry prizes ; it is charming.

Well, about the question, ‘ Why it is *wrong* to oppose the Papal Aggression ? ’ I really don’t see how it *can* be wrong and must think it quite right. I can’t see how it can be wrong for any zealous servant of God to oppose with *all* his might that which dishonours God and his word, which (when the Bible says ‘ none *can* come unto the Father but by *Me* ’) says that we *must* come by the Virgin and the saints etc. People might say ‘ We must not oppose it for it is God’s will ’ they might also say that ‘ temptation was put before the Jews and *that* was God’s will ’ but they were told to put the

<sup>1</sup> She had her own little garden at Ramsgate.

accursed thing far from them and destroy it utterly and *I* think the Papal Aggression is put in *our* way to try us and see if we *will* oppose it unto death. But of course you know more about it than I, so please tell me why it is wrong to oppose it."

One can imagine that her Father was almost ashamed to confess that the question was only a joke.

"Now for a word about the 'bowing,' he says in another letter. 'It is of *no* importance in itself, and therefore I never tell my children or servants either to bow or not to bow; but particular circumstances may render it important, and if good and kind Miss B. thinks that at Christ Church, you may honour God rather by doing as she and others who are with her do, than by being singular on this point, I not only wish you to obey her, but to do it with a willing and ready mind, cheerfully, as a plain matter of duty. Which it is. It is for her to judge, and for you to do, *gladly*, what she tells you."

Miss B. had the greatest admiration for her pupil's gifts, and in particular she considered her a budding poetess. These are some of the effusions of the period :

"Oh Mother! thou that broughtest me forth  
 My sins gainst thee none, none can tell  
 For these alone I ought in sooth  
 To be e'en now in lowest hell.  
 But oh! my God still spares me on  
 To be a comfort to thy years  
 God grant I may e'er the sun goes down  
 Seal thee this promise with my tears.  
 Ne'er ne'er again what [e'er] betide,  
 (In Jesu's strength alone I trust)  
 I'll vex my mother, who did guide  
 My years of infancy now past."

Another time after expatiating on her Mother's virtues and unmerited affection, she goes on to inform her that there is One—

"Whose love surpasseth thine as far  
 As Sol excels the falling star.  
 My Mother ONE request I make  
 That thou wouldst pray for Jesu's sake  
 That he would break this heart of stone  
 And mould it like my Saviour's own."

Was it all mere humbug and "patter"? The question can best be answered by quoting the following letter to her Father. It is written impulsively in pencil on scraps of paper,—the questions and answers being on different slips. The wording of the questions has sometimes been altered and corrected, so presumably she drafted them herself. The little sheaf has been thrust "anyhow" into an envelope (addressed to *Mrs. T. Jex-Blake*) which bears postmark "Ramsgate, Ap. 21. 1851," and *Mrs. Jex-Blake* has quaintly endorsed it "very nice."

"MY DEAREST FATHER,

I fear you are very uneasy about me for I have indeed manifested no visible proof of a new and clean heart, but I think much of my soul too much for me to speak even to you of it. But I cannot *talk* so whenever anyone tries to talk to me of it I always turn it into jest but I must write (I cannot speak) to you about it so I have written some questions down and endeavoured to answer them as *before God*. So do believe *each word*. S. B.

1. If you died this instant what would become of you? And could you face death unflinchingly?

I know not what would become of me but I fear I should go to eternal torments. And do not think I could face death unflinchingly for this reason.

2. What would be your first emotion when you found yourself in the presence of the Judge of quick and dead?

Fear I think but yet I think that I should claim Jesus' promises to lost sinners.

3. If Christ came this night and asked you 'Lovest thou me' what would be your answer?

Yes Lord although I am very wicked and cold and dull yet I could say without hesitation I do love thee very much I often feel my heart warm towards thee and something tells me that one day I shall love thee far better than I do now.

4. Could you before God say truly 'I strive to live as I hope to die'?

No I fear I could not although sometimes I do try to do things to please Jesus.

5. Do you really in your heart know your religion to be a mere form or do you really feel its life-giving influence on your heart?

I know I often say far more than I really believe, I even have been tempted so far as to doubt in my heart the existence



of a Diety but yet I have had a few bright moments in which I could sincerely say Yes I *know* it I know that Christ is mine and I am his but a deep gloom is generally over my spirit.

6. Do you in your heart believe yourself to be a new creature ?

I know not but I fear not although at times I have been fully convinced that I am God's child.

7. Do you earnestly desire to be such ?

Most earnestly whenever anything touches that chord in my heart and sometimes I could weep bitterly but generally I feel awfully indifferent as to my soul.

8. Do you think you have ever known what true prayer is ?

Most certainly and have sometimes obtained very gracious answers.

9. Where will you be 200 years hence ?

In heaven I humbly hope and trust for I think the Lord has *begun* a good work in me."

Gallant honest heart !

Is there a single word in the whole confession that the most devoted parent would have wished different ?

## CHAPTER III

### SCHOOL LIFE—*Continued*

“ I THINK the Lord has *begun* a good work in me.” Is there in the words a—very human and pardonable—suggestion of St. Augustine’s “ *Timebam enim ne me cito exaudires* ”? In any case, though doubtless the good work went on, it cannot be denied that the tares flourished abundantly with the wheat.

It happened most unfortunately at this time that the child’s physical health fell into a very unsatisfactory state : we hear of great digestive trouble and functional weakness of the joints. Modern hygiene would probably have made short work of both complaints. As things were, the weakness was “ tinkered at,” and the child was encouraged to live the life of an invalid. We are startled to learn incidentally that she is going out in a bath chair !

Good Miss B. took her up to town to see a consultant, and sent the parents long detailed reports on the child’s health. We are not surprised to come upon the following under date July, 1851 :

“ You must not suppose, dear Mrs. Blake, that I overlook the *self* that you have rightly so much at heart. I see it too well, and it is commented on to Sophy so frequently that I sometimes check myself, . . . but the punishment that I might inflict on another I hold back in Sophy’s case, not only from my own knowledge of her character, but because Mr. S. cautioned me if possible never to disturb the even tenor of her brain. . . . Her case is peculiar and such must be the ends to meet it : they will require patience and may be long in showing fruit, but we will not despair.”

The next vacation seems to have been disastrous. The child had grown more indolent and self-centred, and no

doubt the parents were unable to deny her the sweetmeats which she loved and which the supposed weakness of her joints made it impossible for her to "work off" as healthy children should. Moreover, few houses are large enough to contain two chronic invalids.

"I received your letter," writes Mrs. Jex-Blake when the child is gone, "and very glad we were to hear of your safe arrival,—but, my own child, I could have cried over your words. They were nice and affectionate, but *the very opposite of your acts*. . . . Either my child means what she writes or she does not. Your conduct completely contradicts your assertions. More sad and foolish behaviour than yours it is difficult to imagine. You behaved so ill that I doubt if I could have borne it another day without being laid on a bed of sickness, and I might never have recovered. Your ever being with us again for three weeks at a time is *quite out of the question* till you have the good sense to understand (as other children of your age do) that to be happy and comfortable and to enable me in my weak state to have you at all, you must be *good*. When you seem really to feel how ill you have behaved, we will some time hence have you home for a week, and if I find you keep your word (which you do not now) we will have you home very often; and Papa says that he shall then think that he can never do enough to make you very very happy; but you now destroy your happiness and my health, and the medical men will *not allow* us to be together. Think of your great folly and sin, my dear child. Pray to God for grace, and He will give it to you for His dear Son's sake. . . .

When you have read this letter, I *wish* you to tear it up."

As ill luck would have it, this most unusually severe indictment found the poor little culprit seriously ill in bed. Her penitent reply is not forthcoming, but five days later, her Mother writes again :

"MY OWN DARLING CHILD,

I trust this will find you much better; if you want me to be happy you must make all possible haste to get well, and write to tell me you are well. . . . I quite believe, my darling, that you are sorry, and will, in God's strength, take pains that the same shall never happen again. I do particularly wish you to tear up my last letter *at once*."

She didn't tear it up: she never could tear up "Mummy's letters." She tied the two together with a piece of red wool, and slipped in with them a Sunday School "ticket"

bearing the words, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord ; for this is right."

By the same post as the second of these letters her Father writes :

"MY DARLING CHILD,

We have been so grieved to hear of your illness, and do hope that before you receive this, you will be much better. It will please you to know that dear Mummy *is* much better for the quiet and Norfolk air. Everybody is so kind and trying to get her quite strong, and they all enquire so kindly after little Sophy, whom they call 'little Sophy' still, everybody saying what a very sweet and darling child you were six years ago ; and I do trust that, when you see them next, they will find you a more darling child, and more loveable than ever. God grant it be so, dearest, for I want you to be *very* happy."

The next letter from Miss B. that has been preserved is dated September, 1851, and is addressed to Mr. Jex-Blake. "I ought not to express sorrow at the sudden removal of your child, hoping and believing that it is 'ordered by the Lord.' She bears away with her my affectionate love and prayerful interest."

No record has been kept of the precise steps that led to the "sudden removal."

For the next two years the child went to a boarding-school in Brighton, where her parents had now gone to reside, and there are, therefore, practically no letters of the period. Two of her schoolfellows, however, have been good enough to contribute their impressions of her. For better and for worse, they call up a very vivid picture. Miss Lucy Portal writes :

"Being the junior of Sophy, as we always called her, she and I were not much in touch, though I never forgot her, for she had a strong personality, and was so clever—in fact, far above our school-mistress in natural intelligence, and she made a lasting impression on those with whom she associated. Whenever I heard her name in after life the vision of a young capable girl who asked questions that bewildered her governess rose before me.

One day when we were walking on the 'Downs' with [an assistant governess] in the rear, Sophy saw a large stone by the wayside and seated herself on it. 'What do you mean by this?' said the governess. 'I am tired and must rest,' replied Sophy. 'Get up at

once,' said Miss . . . ; 'Do you suppose we are all going to wait your pleasure in this way?' 'Impossible to do what is beyond one's capacity,' was the rejoinder, and threats had no effect. At last Miss — lost her temper and said 'Sophy, distinctly understand that if you do not get up, I shall leave you here, and send a policeman to fetch you.' 'Ah,' said Sophy, 'that is a kind thought. I am sure he would prove of great assistance to me. But could you manage to procure *two* policemen, for I don't believe one would be able to carry me, and two might do so.' I need not say that the battle of words was soon over after that."

Knowing as one does how anomalous was the position of an assistant teacher in those days, one can but admit that the child must often have inflicted far greater suffering and anxiety than she had the least idea of.

On the other hand, Mrs. Gover, widow of the late Canon Gover of Worcester, writes :

"Sophie set us a good example at school, and I shall always think of her as one of the most truthful girls I have ever known, the *only* girl I ever knew who would not allow her drawings to be touched up by her master. I had a very great respect for her high character."

But nothing can show more clearly the futility of the educational methods of that day than the following letter from the headmistress herself :

"June, 1852.

DEAREST SOPHY,

I cannot tell you with what a feeling of anguish I heard the door close after you on Saturday when you departed, and I had not *kissed* or *blessed* you. . . . I saw you afterwards in the street, tho' I was unseen by you, and I could not stop you, my dear child, lest the past should be renewed. On my return I saw your present of fruit, it was not as gratifying to me as the *scrap* of paper, which contained my Sophy's acknowledgement of her fault.<sup>1</sup> Yet I thank you for the kind thought, as I hope you know me too well to suppose that any little gift *can bribe me* to forgive;—without that scrap, my Sophy, I should have turned away from *receiving* your fruit. The same afternoon at a friend's house I read a portion of your favourite Scott, and could not but think of you while I read the account of the 'evil and good' *trying* for *Mastery* in Harold the

<sup>1</sup> Her brother had called at the school, immaculately dressed, and had behaved to the schoolmistress so charmingly that poor Sophy felt herself quite left out in the cold, and had doubtless responded with positive rudeness. What sort of visit was this from a beloved brother ?

Dauntless' heart, remember his first act of *forbearance* was noted as a step towards heaven. Beloved child! do I beseech you remember the *duty* of a child, be *gentle* and *tender* to your dear Parents, then the Lord will love you, and some day the Lion will give place to the Lamb in your bosom. Dear Mary Bayly's has turned to whooping-cough. I hope yours is better. Until I find where to send her, I cannot leave home. God's will be done."

For a year and a half Sophy remained under this lady's care, and then one or two equally unsuccessful experiments were made. Meanwhile Mrs. Jex-Blake remained so ailing that it was not possible for her to have the child at home for the long vacation, and a "dear kind" lady invites the refractory young person to visit her for part of the time. Mr. Jex-Blake writes to inform Sophy of the fact, and adds, "Now have we not in this great cause of thankfulness to our kind God and Father who never forgets us?" This was perhaps asking a little too much of the homesick child.

The truth is that the parents at this time were not growing younger (as many parents do), and certainly they were growing more staid and set in their ways. It was becoming increasingly difficult to them to adapt themselves to this riotous child. "Avoid excitement which is your great enemy," writes her Father, unaware perhaps that his own weakness was a tendency to be rather too fussy and precise. With hearts full of love they were demanding of her a standard of excellence which for her was wholly artificial, and in the half-hearted, or at least intermittent, effort to attain it, she fell in the breach. And parents and child were not the only factors in the difficult problem of home life. So long as Sophy could by any stretch of charity be reckoned a child, it was comparatively easy for her brother and sister to put up with her volcanic ways. But from a schoolgirl one expects some conformity to recognized standards, and Sophy's elder sister had been such a pattern in this respect that the contrast was necessarily acute.

"I really don't think you would enjoy [a visit from] Carry much at school even if we could spare her," Mrs. Jex-Blake writes in reply to an eager request for this privilege. "You would be tempted to be odd and excitable, and then Carry

would be *vexed* and all would be uncomfortable " and no one who knew the elder sister can doubt that such demonstrations of affection would probably have "vexed" her more than most. On the other hand "Brother" was now a young man, and if his main desire for the child was that she should grow up like the sisters of other men, he only shared the attitude common at that time to the overwhelming majority of his sex. One can see that his younger sister must have tried him a good deal. The idea that she was plain and even ugly had been firmly impressed upon her: the exhibition of vanity in matters of dress had been discouraged on every ground: and it was natural to her boyish temperament to be careless of such things. When, in addition to these shortcomings, she added a propensity for making people "uncomfortable," one can quite understand that her brother did not feel specially proud of her, and the strength of her character probably made it difficult for him to influence her through the passionate affection and admiration she had cherished for him all through her childhood. In any case the relation between them became somewhat strained, and it is not surprising if she sometimes attributed the strictures of her parents to his influence and representations.

It is delightful to record that, in spite of countless differences of opinion and much plain speaking on both sides, a fine loyal camaraderie existed between the sisters throughout life.

I don't know whether it ever occurred to the child to compare her brother's education with her own. If she had done so, the reflection might well have made her bitter. In athletics as in the schools he was bearing off laurels at every turn, while she was being curbed and thwarted to meet the requirements of pious and half-educated schoolmistresses. From the best of motives her parents refused for her the outlet for the "excitability" they constantly deprecated; in other words they simply sat on the safety valve. In the summer of 1854 she begged—probably not for the first time—to be allowed to have riding lessons. The father replied:

"I like to do anything in reason to please my own child, but you are so very excitable and have at present so lamentably little self-command that I should fear riding for you very much. It would

do you no good and might be injurious to you in many ways. When will you prove to me that my hopes and expectations of you are not in vain? . . . You don't know how the hearing you censured goes to my heart, and the not being able to place the most unbounded confidence in you is very trying to me and the dear Mother, —doubly so to her in her weak state."

Of course it is easy now to see that he was wrong as regards the riding. Apart altogether from the physical exercise involved, the discipline of it would have been excellent. Big emergencies always braced her. She never lost her temper with a horse, nor her presence of mind in an accident.

Meanwhile the series of loving reproachful letters goes steadily on.

"Do you think, darling," her Father writes, "that by divine grace you are less self-willed day by day? How earnestly do I desire to see you a loving happy child. Everybody seems to deprecate your presence—as that which will spread discomfort all around. . . . God bless you and help you and give you His Holy Spirit to guide you continually."

"Everybody" was an overstatement. At no time was the child without her own little circle of admiring friends. A schoolfellow with whom she remained on terms of intimate friendship throughout life says,—“At our house she was always good and happy, and a very welcome guest. My father thought very highly of her.”

A fortnight later Mrs. Jex-Blake writes :

"I rejoice at the nice accounts I have of you from school, and I hope (against experience) that you will when we see you again, be a pleasant child, the comfort you might so easily be to me."

"Day and night," her Father writes, "you are on my heart. You know how I love you. Why will you thus be your own enemy?"

The faith and perseverance of the parents is astounding : not less so the fact that at bottom the affection and filial piety of the child never flagged.

One has to remind oneself constantly—what the daughter never forgot, though small trace of it appears in the letters of this period—that Mrs. Jex-Blake had a keen sense of humour.



When she and Sophy were together, they had many a good joke in common. It was when the mesmerism of the child's presence was removed that the sense of responsibility asserted itself in full force. It is impossible to read the long series of letters without being profoundly convinced,—1. That the parents were devotedly attached to their youngest child ("Sophy was the favourite," was the elder sister's deliberate comment some sixty years later). 2. That their affection was returned with an intensity of which few children are capable. 3. That the warning that she was injuring her Mother's health and must therefore be kept away from her dearly-loved home did not provide a motive strong enough to make the child run in harness like other people. The inference is that no motive would have been strong enough.

Did she ever really make an honest effort? One comes upon many impassioned scraps of prayer for grace to resist temptation. "Oh, that when a word irritates me I may remember how often I have said more unkind things and been forgiven." "Oh, Lord, punish me, reduce me to submission in any way Thou seest fit, but oh, let me not alone, abandon me not despite my wickedness." And, although these prayers are apt to run into conventional exaggerated language, it is impossible to doubt their sincerity. Her tiny booklets and papers were always kept with the strictest secrecy, and it is all but certain that no eye but her own ever saw them before her death.

Here is an isolated scrap of diary, recording probably a time of special effort.

"Feb. 26th, 1854. Oh, keep Thou my foot when I go up into Thy house of prayer. O how difficult it is to fix the mind for even that short time! Miss X. will treat me unlike any other human being, but that is no reason for transgressing the commandment of my God. She says she does not like to hear me name the name of Christ for I do not depart from iniquity, she thinks I had better not hold conversations on sacred subjects.

A complaint having been made of rudeness from one of the girls, Miss X. said it was just like one of Sophy's tricks, heaven knows with what ground. All these things have aggravated me, and I fear I have sadly given way to temper and pride, not remembering Him who bare the contradiction of sinners against Himself though

He never offended in word or deed. If sometimes unjustly spoken to, how often have I escaped my desert and how few are the faults the strictest find compared with an all-seeing God. Oh, for the charity that beareth all things. . . .

27th Monday. I must expect trials this day, humiliating to my pride and trying to my temper. . . .

Nothing special, though I gave way sadly at different times and again sinned in sending a letter to Mama [? Maria].

28th. Again, more and more against light, got sweets. Miss X. in her prayer speaks *at* poor Agnes who is just come. She prays that all may be kind to her, remembering the Fatherless and Widow are His special care, etc. How could she harrow up poor Agnes' feelings so! The poor child was weeping under the infliction. . . . And in the prayer she announced her intention of expelling anyone who would make the others unhappy. O I could have knocked her down, and after prayers she really spoke kindly to me about beginning March afresh and any other time I could almost have promised to try. As it was I could not kiss her even. Oh how much I think of that which might and probably did proceed from a pure motive, and do not consider my unkindness often which I know does not do so.

March 1. Whole holiday. Gave way to passion to A. and B. tho' perhaps they were provoking I should better have striven to retain my temper. Alas from my feelings since it seems as if it were the letting in of water. O preserve me from being so awfully passionate as I was. Overbearing and ordering in the afternoon. Oh for the Charity which 'is kind' which 'is not puffed up' 'seeketh not her own' and above all which 'is not easily provoked'."

She had no lack of self-control in other ways: why should she have failed so conspicuously in this? When all due weight is given to the reasons already assigned one is still forced to the conclusion that there was something elemental in her nature over which she not only had little control, but of which she was to a great extent unconscious. As a mere child she expresses her thankfulness in a letter to her Mother that she is less "irritable," and at rare intervals all through life she would speak to intimate friends of the intolerable way in which the blood rushed to her head at times, making it all but impossible for her to weigh her words. But from first to last she was far less conscious of the moral aspect of the defect than one would have expected anyone of her sane judgment and essential humility to be. The severe self-

analysis of the above extracts are on the whole exceptional. From childhood on, the thought that she had failed those she loved or had caused them anxiety and suffering, *in a way that she understood*, was a source of almost intolerable pain and compunction; but she seems to have rarely and inadequately realized the extent of the suffering she inflicted by her wilful ways and passionate temper.

"And yet there was always something loveable with it all," a childhood's friend reiterates. "She came bounding into a room, bringing with her an atmosphere of gaiety and glee that is indescribable."

Nor are we as regards the judgments of contemporaries confined to the possibly idealized picture of later years. Fortunately for the accuracy of the picture, Sophy seems about this time to have originated in the school a practice of character-writing, in which the critics were encouraged to be absolutely frank. This is what she brought upon herself :

"Sophy is very affectionate and has more good in her than people think, she is truthful and can be trusted. She has an immense amount of self-conceit, self-sufficiency and pride. She will not be led by anything but affection, or a desire to make much of herself, and make herself well thought of. She has great talents and is very clever. She wishes to be thought an out-of-the-way character and is so. She lacks gentleness of feeling and manner."

"Sophy is certainly excessively clever but unfortunately knows it, and makes a point of showing it off upon every possible occasion. She is truthfulness itself and can really be trusted. Very passionate but very penitent afterwards. Affectionate."

"Clever, passionate, affectionate. Many bad habits but tries (lately at least) to get the better of them. Might be made a great deal of. Rather too fond of her own opinion. I think true."

It is rather staggering to find how much wiser the young folks were in those days than were their elders !

Again Sophy propounds the question whether A. or E. is "the greater pet." The discussion goes on in writing, and finally the originator ends it by saying :

"At any rate A. is the only friend I have got, and I don't want to lose her."

To which D. responds :

“ You are wise, but she is not the only friend you *might* have.”

And Sophy all too proud :

“ There are only one or two others I *could* have as a friend.”

And finally M. :

“ As to your friends, I quite agree with D. I think you might have had many. I know you might have had me long ere this, had you tried.”

Of another schoolfellow under discussion Sophy explains that she finds the young lady personally “aggravating,” and adds :

“ But I think she is very ingenuous, and would own to a thing, even to a little one, which is a great thing considering her pride.

That is what I do admire so ardently.

SOPHY.”

## CHAPTER IV

### SCHOOL LIFE—*Concluded*

It will surprise no one who has read the extracts from Sophy's diary on page 32 to learn that, at the end of the summer term, Miss X. announced her inability to keep her any longer in the school. The culprit evidently declined to manifest any proper sense of sin or even of humiliation ; and the distress of her parents may be imagined. They recognized no other standard by which to judge her than the standard by which poor Sophy had so egregiously failed.

In any case their kindness never faltered : they could not face having the child at home, and for some months they did not even see her ; but some " kind ladies " were found to take charge of her until she could be put temporarily in the care of her old schoolmistress, Mrs. Teed.

Very soon a reassuring report came to relieve the anxious parents. On July 10th, 1854, Mrs. Jex-Blake writes :

" I delight to think that my dear child is availing herself of this great opportunity of redeeming her character. The past is so sad, so disappointing, and the thinking of it is so sure to make me ill, that I endeavour with my utmost power to forget it. I will not dwell upon it, but look forward to a bright future when my own dear child . . . will see that determination and self-willedness *can only* cause misery and discomfort to herself, and wellnigh shorten, certainly embitter my old age.

I do feel greatly comforted by Mrs. Teed's giving a favourable account of you. She would like you to be less idle. Why do not you write out some papers about your natural philosophy subjects and zoology ? "

" Well, darling," her Father writes (July 17th), " I was very glad to get your letter, though I should like you to write more wisely.

I don't at all mind your writing about 'unkind lectures' for I *know* I never am and cannot be unkind to my own child; but I do earnestly wish that you saw (as others do) how exceedingly foolish your conduct has been, and that by nothing but a complete change can you ever be comfortable."

Meanwhile arrangements were being made for the child to go to another school, and one is thankful to record that it was at least a great improvement on its predecessors. On July 21st, 1854, Mr. Jex-Blake writes :

"We have had a letter from Mrs. H. this morning, and it is now settled that G.W. you go to her the beginning of next month and Mrs. T. will take you and kindly give you the benefit of her introduction. You will go under the most advantageous circumstances possible, and it will be solely and *entirely* your own fault, my darling child, if everybody about you does not love you."

A month later he writes again :

"MY SWEET CHILD,

I have just read your letter to the dear Mother. . . . Your letter gives me great pleasure, it is so sensible, and the tone throughout so like that of a dear dear child, who will never knowingly again give a minute's pain to the very best of Mothers, that I felt I could not be happy without writing to my darling at once to tell her how I look forward to her being a real comfort to dearest Mummy, and a constant 'sunbeam' to me. . . . I believe the happy feeling of confidence she has about you now is doing more for her than all the doctors in the world."

A fortnight later he paid the child a visit, to which she refers in the following letter :

"11th Sept. 1854.

DARLING FATHER,

You know what immense pleasure I had on Friday. I often think of it even now it is past, I feel so glad to have seen you; but Daddy I am so sorry about the boat. I cannot forget it and I am very sorry,—will you forgive me?

Do come down tomorrow just to say goodbyc. You know you can come down by the omnibus you took on Friday and just sit for an hour or so and then go back. You can be back by luncheon time or nearly and it would be such a pleasure. I cannot get an answer to this by letter but hope to secure one by ocular demonstration. I saw Miss B. and gave your message, but I fear unless you do as I hope you will that its fulfilment will be rather distant. We could just go in the Crescent Gardens or even sit still together in the

drawing-room for one hour (just one) and it would be so enjoyable. I have so many things yet to say. You know we had so much walking and eating and shopping to get through on Friday that I was not able to tell you half the things I had to say.

If you have arranged for me to come home in 3 weeks time I will try to reconcile myself to not seeing you if it is really impossible or *very* inconvenient in joyful hope, but in that case I shall hope for a nice long letter (but even then I should not be sorry to see your darling face for an hour or so) on Wednesday. If not (but I hope no 'not' will be in the question) I think you will yourself think that considering that I have not seen you since about Jan. 26th, except for 3½ hours and should not see you till Christmas that really one hour would not be lost on your youngest little one. I am hourly experiencing the comfort of your last visit (I am now writing with some of the paper and a pen of your gift) and your face was like a sunbeam in the way. I want to feel your rough cheek once more, though I hope your Missis won't let you come so unshaven and unshorn as you did last time. I did delight in your beautiful flowers which are even now on the chimney-piece—one flower I prized above all the rest—I could almost fancy Mother picked it—a little tiny bit of jasmine (I don't know if that's spelt right). It is so nice. Will you remember to bring some stamps tomorrow.

Darling Father I am so anxious to see you again. About 11½ I shall be on the tiptoe of hope. You won't disappoint Sody? You didn't say it was impossible to come, and if it is possible you will. Do bring a few more flowers please. Those stones of Cousin Jane's were lovely. Oh, I was so delighted with them.

Hoping very very soon to see you, I need not write a very long letter but please give my best love to my darling darling Mother.

I am just taxing my small brain to make up a story of a martyrdom in Pagan Rome,—a sort of martyrdom at least; it is meant to be very affecting, but I don't know if it is. I will show it you tomorrow I hope.

Best best love,

SOPHY.

If you have got leave for me to come home it will be *so* much more if you come by yourself to tell me, and if not, if not it will certainly need all your presence to comfort me."

Among other little gifts, on the occasion of this visit, her Father had given her a tiny note book, which she utilises at once as a diary:

"Went to sleep with a sore throat . . . and a bit of mignonette on my bosom. Darling Mother, how I treasure her flowers.

15th. Knew all my lessons better to-day, and kept my place as 2nd. . . . Had a note from Carry. Hurrah, people don't know how nice it is to get a note at school. Done all my algebra for Mr. R. It strikes me we can do those problems in Kavanagh by equations."

The joy of this discovery! "Problems" became her passion: she begged friends to send her some to solve, and took a mischievous pleasure in sending them herself occasionally to those who had not been so fortunate as to find the master-key of the "unknown quantity." Sister Carry writes:

"Many thanks for your letters and numerous sums; I think the latter are rather overwhelming to me. I think I ought to have a little more instruction when you come, so please don't send me any more at present."

The diary continues:

"Did Cousin Jane's equation and am very glad I have got such a sensible cousin. Made one to send her, and then couldn't answer it myself."

As cricket, tennis and hockey were unheard of in the girls' school of those days, and as the child was not allowed to ride or to dance, it is scarcely surprising to learn that she was again troubled with weakness of the joints. Mrs. H. took her to one "Professor Georgii" and the school doctor met them at his house. The patient's account of the interview is interesting in view of later developments:

"Then he went into another room which was rather dark. Dr. L. said, 'I suppose I may come too. I am the physician,' and G. said, 'I suppose so'!"

The two men examined her spine—the headmistress, of course, being present—

"and after about ten minutes I was allowed to dress with the 2 men staring at me. I think they might have let us retire. . . .

The room for exercises is hung all round with prints of skeletons and flayed human beings, tho' for a mercy they were covered with sort of curtains and only partially visible."

She was condemned to an hour's remedial exercises every day for six weeks, and as it took double that time to make



the pilgrimage to and from the "Professor's" house, three fatiguing hours were taken out of her working day.

And all for want of a few games in due season.

The "sheer stuff of life" was proving educative enough at this time, for Mrs. Jex-Blake and Sister Carry were both alarmingly ill, the latter with some contagious fever, the nature of which is not specified. It is touching to see the Father's letters to his schoolgirl daughter: the handwriting has all at once become shaky and feeble, like that of an old man.

"I write in the dear Mother's room," he says in November, 1854, "in which and in sweet Carry's I pass the greater part of the day. They have both been *very* ill, but I think I may say that now both are beginning to mend. . . . From the beginning of their illnesses they have never been able to see each other. . . . Oh, my darling child, I must not conceal from you the danger the best of Mothers has been in. God give you to value her more than ever, and keep you from ever, by disobedience of any kind, hurting her feelings and giving her pain."

Two days later he writes again in answer to her eager enquiries,

"If, darling, I *can* buy anything with your money that I think Mummy or Carry will be pleased with, be sure I will."

And again, three weeks later,

"My dear child,—Your letters give me great pleasure, but, great though it be, I will most willingly give it up to dearest Mother and Sister when they are well enough to read and write letters."

On Dec. 5th, 1854, his mind is sufficiently at ease to write a truly delightful letter, though the handwriting is still shaky:

"First and most substantially (if not principally) the "plum pudding" plan. It is really a capital one—'The Crimea Army Fund' or some such title it bears, and subscriptions are pouring in to it from high and low—donations of hundreds of pounds down to sixpences. It does not in *any way* interfere with the sending out of what you rightly enough consider are things of still greater importance; and which (much later than it ought to have been) the government and the public are now despatching to the poor sufferers. The intention is to send out vessel after vessel as quickly as possible,

not only with materials for plum puddings and brown stout, but to help our poor soldiers, officers and privates, to get through the great hardships and privations of their severe winter campaign, as far as that can be managed. Warm extra clothing, flannel shirts and waistcoats, stockings, gloves, leather of various kinds, needles and thread, tea, tobacco, sugar, preserved and potted meats, *raisins*, sugar, wine, *porter* and a hundred other things in large quantities—enormous quantities—for at least 40 or 50,000 men.

Noblemen are sending deer from their parks, and game to be potted and preserved and sent over, and some have offered their yachts to convey the good things; and tradespeople have come forward to give liberally from the stocks in their shops and warehouses. So I shall enclose 1s. and think you cannot do better than give it as your mite in the good cause. There are as you say 'such hosts of things to subscribe to,' and I am very thankful for the privilege God gives me of being able to help. It is one of the greatest luxuries we can enjoy, depend upon it, my own darling. . . . There is no literally 'war news,' this week, but there have been terrible disasters among the combined fleets in the Black Sea. A most furious storm there the middle of last month has sadly damaged many of the ships, and destroyed several—one went down laden with the intended winter store (in many articles) for our whole army,—forty thousand specially warm great coats, and numerous other things in proportion, which cannot be replaced instantly, and it is feared that very great suffering by thousands for some weeks must be the consequence. The loss of that one vessel and cargo is estimated at £1,000,000. But, worse than all the money loss, many hundred people perished in that and other vessels. Your cousin Robert, whom I don't know that you ever saw even, embarks tomorrow for the Crimea. He is a young lieutenant in the 18th foot.

I think if we keep of the same mind, we can manage a backgammon board when you come home, cups and all; only, as I am an old hand at it—having played, I should think almost half-a-century ago—you will expect, please, to be soundly beaten if we engage together. I have read 'Patronage'—about the same period, perhaps, as when we played that game of backgammon, but I do think novels in general are very so-so things, and some so wondrous foolish that it is worse than waste of time to read them. . . .

There was a good deal at Worthing<sup>1</sup> that was very pleasant, my sweet Sophy, and I can recollect it with satisfaction. If there was anything otherwise, it never even crosses my mind, I assure you; and do you get rid of all thoughts of it too. I have not the smallest doubt that, by God's blessing, you will be a great 'comfort' to me.

<sup>1</sup> There is no other reference to the visit to Worthing.

I have said so a thousand times, and you won't prove Daddy a false prophet I know. I have nothing to 'forgive' my own child—*nothing whatever*, darling. You have had childish faults enough, I daresay, but they were 'the faults of a child' certainly, and I *could* not remember a single one of them.

I won't get a sore throat if I can help it, even for the sake of Sody's black-currant jam; but, if I do catch one, I know I may have a whole jar if I want it, and I shall not perhaps like it the less that you made it. Love from all. I will not forget to come for you on the 23rd., my precious child. God keep you and bless you very much.

Your affect. Father,

T. JEX-BLAKE."

At last, on December 13th, comes a letter from her Mother :

"DARLING So,

I feel very thankful to be once more able to enjoy a letter from, and to write to you. I look forward with *great* pleasure to Saturday week, but pray try to be *quiet* in your joy when I meet you, because I am still *weak* and *soon upset*, and people will be very vexed *with you* if I am the worse. Above all I could wish that you did not get into trouble, and say and do what you *should not*, because it agitates me to hear of it. If you, my own darling child, could but once realise how trying you are by your impetuosity and restlessness, and (must I still say?) roughness, even when you are not put out, you would try very hard to conquer any outbreaking into extra roughness.

And, indeed, dear So, God has bestowed upon you much where-with you might be agreeable, and help others, if you would but avail yourself of it."

Meanwhile the scrap of a diary goes on :

"Dec. 16th. . . . Got a letter from my precious sister. She says she is nearly well, but she is so careless of self I half mistrust her account, especially as I am told by Mummy and Tom she is very thin and pale. She speaks of a chance of her being shaved. I hope to goodness she won't, the darling. . . .

Thinking of darling Dad's birthday tomorrow. I hope I shall wake early and be first to wish him joy. . . . His last day to be 64! In his 66th year tomorrow. The darling. Sody hopes she'll make him so happy yet. This day week, heigh ho! I must try and persuade Daddy to let me stay over Sunday. It will be but one lesson lost and two days gained and one a Sunday. . . .

17th. Dear Dad's birthday. Woke up once I think, in the dark, and again before it was light to wish him many happy returns."

The wishing must have been volcanic in its intensity to judge by what follows :

" While dressing, Kate, who had not got up, woke up to ask if it was not his birthday, she had been dreaming it was, and that he in consequence was playing a duet on the piano with her, but would play the bass first, not together with her. . . . Mrs. H. ill, not up all day. No Mangnall. . . . I must have walked 6 miles at least. Wonderful for me. Had a dispute about extempore sermons, I saying it meant without written help, Mlle and Sarah saying people might have notes and yet be extempore. Mlle as politely and sapiently as usual called me nobody. She has neither sense nor temper to dispute. It is foolish to entangle myself with her. My dear Dad's birthday nearly over.

18th. . . . [Mrs. H.] promised I should nurse her when I came back, and I did, and after dinner played chess and backgammon with Mrs. H. and Conny. Mrs. H. lent me Woodstock to read. Nice, but not equal to some of Scott's.

Turned out some of my letters from my pocket. Hope I have not turned out any I want of Carry's, but they are safe in my glazed box.

21st. At Georgii's had a fuss with Conny in the dressing-room because I was complaining of having only a week and asked her if she would think a week enough with her Mother. She said no, but her Mother was better than mine. I was silly enough to be offended, and gave her two good slaps on her shoulders which were convenient, as I was doing her frock, and then we had a regular squabble. . . . I said it was very ungenerous. I should not have said it if she had been my guest far away from her friends, and I don't believe I should, though my conscience smote me about Mary Bayley."

This reference to Mary Bayley is interesting, as Sophy had been at no less than three schools since the days of their companionship. The persistent recollection of some trifling unkindness is a typical instance of the compunction she suffered when she hurt anyone *in a way she understood*.

" Got such a jolly letter from Mummy as if she had half got back her mischief. Two bits of French, too, we are getting on. She certainly deserves a 'satisfaisant'."

When the Christmas holidays came on, Sophy's course of exercises from the "Professor" was not nearly over, and a week's interruption was the utmost that could be allowed. The holidays were long enough, however, to allow of another

week at home towards the end of January. Her birthday fell in this second week, and suggestion was made that the two sisters should have a party and a "Christmas" tree. The correspondence about this little event is interesting as showing something of the conditions in which Sophy would be expected to settle down when her schooldays finally came to an end. The preparations contrast curiously with what young folk now-a-days, even in a much humbler walk of life, consider necessary on these occasions.

" 13 Sussex Square,  
10th Jan.

DARLING SO,

I am so much better for the quiet I have had the last week that I think I may authorize you to ask Mrs. H. to advance you 4, or, *if* needful, 5 shillings to spend in little things for a Christmas tree. I am *very* anxious to have it if *possible*, and I think it entirely depends on the self-command *you* can exert over yourself; if you and Carry will go about it *quietly*, and you yield at once if I say I do not wish to add to our numbers, or if I object on any other point. . . .

One thing I must tell you that I cannot have a *great* many, neither do I wish *unnecessary* expense,<sup>1</sup> when the daily calls from societies where funds are failing and souls perishing for want are so numerous."

Sister Carry writes with characteristic calm and reasonableness :

" 13 Sussex Square.  
January 11th.

DEAR SOPHY,

I suppose probabilities are now in favour of the Christmas tree. I don't think it need do Mummy much harm, supposing affairs are conducted with very unusual prudence and quietness. We shall defer buying any ready-made-sweetmeat-ornaments (this is an 8-syllabled compound word) until you come home, and then I think Mummy will quite like that we should get them without her presence. I also think it will be very desirable (if possible) that we should dress up the tree without troubling her much; but I don't know exactly how far we should be up to it. However, I think the

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<sup>1</sup> From their earliest years the children were drilled in the virtue of economy. The references to the altering and letting-down of frocks, the calculation of pence for ribbon or frill, the careful computation of the length of time a pair of boots might be expected to last,—all these form instructive reading when one bears in mind the social position of the family and the large sums of money which the parents habitually gave away.

most important points of all are that a certain friend of ours should endeavour to live in, and diffuse around her, a certain atmosphere of peace and calmness; and that the tree should be quite ready in very good time, so that there should be no bustle or worry about it towards the last. . . . I mean to try to provide (with pecuniary assistance from Mummy) some supply of purses, penwipers and markers for the tree; I think a couple of cut markers such as you gave Daddy the other day, on broad ribbon, would be very good; of course I mean *them* to be made by you. I suppose I shall probably have a letter from you tomorrow or Saturday; I consider I ought to have had one. With best love, I am, dear Sophy,

Your very affectionate sister,

C. A. JEX-BLAKE."

Presumably the little festival took place in due course, but there is no further reference to it among the papers. The strain of loving parental homilies continues.

"Bear in mind that *all* our powers and faculties are perverted by the fall, but my child cannot be rid of her responsibility; if you say you cannot pray,—that is at once a subject for prayer. Down on your knees and tell God so."

"I *exceedingly* like a letter from you, and bustle down a little earlier on Tuesday morning that I may have time to enjoy it before breakfast. . . . Cousins Kate and Elinor Jex-Blake say they do not at all delight in Mathematics, they are sorry to say."

"We are very sorry to disappoint you, but indeed we cannot sanction your going to see the 'Wizard of the North.' I do hope and believe you will submit cheerfully to give up what it would make me very sleepless and unhappy to have you go to. Now get a victory and believe the disappointment all for the best."

"Though I am most decidedly better, it arises, I think, from *perfect quiet*, the least change or bustle brings on spasm or headache, or both. Carry had Punch, and thought you sent it. I don't like it, I think it a vulgar paper, and don't wish it sent. I don't at all object to the 'Illustrated News' occasionally."

Apparently Sophy declined to sit down under this condemnation of her beloved Punch, for a fortnight later Mrs. Jex-Blake writes: "I will return both the Punches in the hamper. The last was capital."

In May, 1855, a family holiday in Wales was proposed, and, as usual, the question was raised whether Sophy could

be allowed to be of the party. There is no suggestion in all the correspondence that her Father ever wished to be rid of her company *except* on the ground of his wife's health. On May 23rd Mrs. Jex-Blake writes :

"Daddy and I have a strong wish that you should see Wales, and it is truly painful to deny you such a pleasure and advantage but you see, dear, I can't help my health, and the being so easily upset and made ill by worry. Indeed I am grieved to find you can fully understand this, for you say your head aches if you get excited; but, darling, strive to go on with your different duties and don't get excited. . . . Now, sweetest, *assure* me that you will try to be controlled by me, and try to fall into our habits, not always restless and having some grand scheme of your own that *must* be carried out. . . . I do not ask you to promise, but if next week you feel you can, looking to God, *assure* me you will to the utmost try to be a comfort and not break out in these violent excitements, which not only upset me at the time but haunt and disturb me at night, . . . we are wonderfully anxious to give you the pleasure, but meanwhile don't be excited at school about it.

Shall we not be happy at Bettws-y-Coed if darling So is with us and we *all* consider each other's comfort ? "

The microscopic school diary had for five months been non-existent; the imperious demand of this glorious anticipation called a fresh volume into being.

"Thursday, May 24th [1855.] My answer was to come about Wales. When I got my letter I prayed God to help me to bear it, for I was nearly sure it would be a refusal, and I was quite prepared for it and determined to keep my promise not to worry about it. I put my letter in my pocket and ran away from them all. Then I burst it open and read, 'Daddy and I have such a strong wish you should see Wales, and it is truly painful to deny you such a pleasure.' There, thought I, but I had expected it and didn't feel so dreadfully disappointed. Then I read on and oh, I found it *was* not so, that I should go. Oh, I got so excited and half began to cry. Then came Mummy's caution not to be excited, but it was impossible. Dropped down there and thanked God. Oh, then I trust He has granted my prayer. Glory to God in the highest. Oh, I was so thankful.

25th. . . . Got a letter from Tom. How kind of him to write, it really was, and he has got a first bachelor's degree. G. told me he saw his name in the paper.

Had a great shortness and pain in taking long breaths. G. said

there was some irregularity in the heart, I believe. Laurie came in afternoon and said my heart was wrong again. Left me some medicine.

28th. Mrs. H. told me to lie down and sleep if I felt tired, but I am much better. . . . K. seized on 'Prince and Peasant' and M. on 'Anecdotes of Animals' the 2 books Miss Smith had left me. I was very cross, I had nothing to do. I seized on Anecdotes after Prayers to take up. M. was in high dudgeon, as if it was her right. But I carried it off. But upstairs I thought it was not right. 'In honour *preferring* one another.' So I took it her. But it was a hard struggle. . . . I am glad I got that little victory.

Miss C. came to G.'s for the last time. I was so sorry and so were most folks. She gave me a little parcel, or at least put it in my pocket on condition I should not open it till I got home. I thought it was some mischief but took it. It was such a lovely gold pencil case, 'from a schoolgirl.' Dear girl, it was very kind of her.

30th. Very difficult geometry problem. I doubt if I can do it. Mortimer was home, and told us some very good stories of — the nurse of his ward. Mrs. H. said in the evening she would like to be nurse there (!) She said how should I get on who so hate injustice, and I said I thought such open acknowledged injustice was not the hardest to bear. This brought down an awful storm of wonder, reasoning, etc., till at length I got off to bed so tired.

June 1st. A little fracas with Mlle at G.'s. Little Henriquez is here. It is strange to be with a Jew and a R. Catholic so closely. Con rather worrying, and I not *rather* cross. Oh, dear, 'Charity never faileth.' 'The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.'

Laurie came and left me some more medicine.

4th. Miss Teed's birthday. Many happy returns to her. Wonder if Carry remembers. . . . I want so to know Minnie's exact birthday. know it is near. . . .

Went in the gardens. K. and S. persecuted me with grass and I can't run after them. When I caught S. and whew we were indoors I gave it her rather roughly. She was very cross and would not have any of [my] jam at tea, she never will when she is cross with me. Got a sore throat.

5th. Throat very fairly bad, and very 'cheval' as M. would say. Apropos it's her birthday. . . .

Just before prayers I was in the cupboard and someone shut the door nearly on me. I threw it open again and half upset the great slate. We had been rather uproarious all afternoon as M's sisters had been here and said holidays did begin on 18th. When I came out of the cupboard I managed to tread on M's toes, and Mlle packed me off to bed. I said 'All right,' shook hands with her,



kissed S. and went off. Mlle wasn't very angry nor I very sorry and so we were all very *comfable*. Seized on K. for a kiss as she came up and she seemed forbidden to speak to me. However we had a nice hug and she wasn't very horrified.

6th. Found a handbill on my dressing-table from Mrs. H. 'for Sophy' called Telling Jesus."

This entry closes the school diary.

She seems to have remained at the Notting Hill school till Easter, 1856, and to have carried away with her the warm good will and genuine—if sorely tried—respect of her headmistress, Mrs. H., with whom she kept up a correspondence for some time. For another year and a half she seems to have attended some school at Brighton within reach of her home, but study here was discouraged, and she became the patient of another doctor—or quack?—who prescribed a course of rubbing.

"Under the new regulation of no study," writes Mrs. H., "I suppose you have plenty and to spare of the *dolce far niente*. I smiled at the 'few lessons,' and wondered in what occupation you might possibly spend your 24 hours. . . . Be assured, dear Sophy, that so much trifling and frivolity is culpable in the sight of Heaven. It is an unworthy waste of God's gifts, and you are capable of something so much better!"

That life, even now, was not all "trifling and frivolity" is obvious from the following letter, which was written a few weeks later:

"Monday, Sept. 8th. 1856.

MY OWN DARLING MOTHER,

This subject of confirmation has come up again, and I really must say I am positively shocked at the way it is settled and talked about. It is 'How old are you?' 'Does your Papa wish you to be confirmed?' and never, 'Are you fit to be?' or 'Do you really wish it?' It is just as if it were a history lecture to be attended. I really think it is wicked. Miss H. took it for granted that I should be and stuck down my name. I said, 'No thank you, Miss H.,' to her great indignation. I assured her you wished me to do exactly as I liked on such a subject, which she did not choose to believe at all.

But I really do wish it, Mother. I think it would help me, and I long to take the Lord's Supper with you. Will you let me be confirmed from home?—that is, spend the actual day of confirmation at home, so that I may think of something besides how I

am dressed and how good or bad an examination I passed, on the day I take those solemn promises on myself. Mother, dear, I seem less able to speak to you than anyone, but I do feel very much about it. It is just,—‘I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Thy servant, for I do not forget Thy commandments,’ I do hope. No, I *can't* write what I mean or anything else. Just write me one line by return of post. Mr. E. is certainly not the minister I should have chosen, nor Miss H.'s the place I should have preferred, but I don't think that ought to stand in the way, for it is not in respect to them I stand.

I think I should have preferred waiting another year, but I don't think I can quite expect God's blessing on His child while I defer owning myself such.

Oh, Mother, Mother, how I wish you were here, but it seems as if He had expressly left me to myself each time confirmation has been spoken of. I do not think you will refuse either the permission I ask, or your blessing on the step I take,—unless it would be too great an excitement for you,—though it need not be, for you need not go with me. . . .

Well, darling, just tell me what you mean and think. But pray, pray, don't show any of this to anyone. . . .

God bless and keep my darling Mother.

Farewell, precious.

Your own child,

SOPHY."

"I like the idea of your being confirmed very much," her Father had written some months before. "God's blessing be with you. Look to Him and be happy."

Sophy's first schoolmistress, Mrs. Teed, took a different view of the matter :

"10th Oct. 1856.

DEAREST SOPHY,

Your dear Mother tells me you are soon to be *confirmed*. When I read her letter I thought to myself,—Confirmed!—in what?—in following your own foolish ways? There needs no confirmation in that. . . .

You told me in a letter written to me on my last birthday that you hoped you were one of Christ's little ones. O dear Sophy, you know better. . . . I do not say do not deceive yourself, but I say never seek to deceive others," and so on.

Those who have read with some sympathy the preceding pages may well be inclined to doubt whether Sophy was "seeking to deceive others," or rather, perhaps, whether

deception with her did not more readily take the form of concealing the depth and reality of her religious life. Christ's lambs have not all been precisely of the type good Mrs. Teed had in mind. The real difficulty, however, is to fit the child into the categories of the pious people among whom she lived, or indeed, into any category at all. For better or for worse, she belonged to another plane of being.

If one were compelled to adopt the system of classification current in those days, one could but fall back with thankfulness on the remembrance of that "hasty image" of the Good Shepherd in the Catacombs,

"And, on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid."

In any case the stormy chequered school career had now come to a close. "I can't fancy you, Sophy, with long frocks," an old school-friend writes, "taller than Hetty, a regular grown-up young lady. Are you transformed yet? Do let me see you first like your own old dear self!"

"Your own old dear self!" One almost weeps to think of all the *unnecessary* friction and waste of energy in those school days. Those of us who have been teachers know how often the troublesome pupil proves to be the pick of the basket,—the keen student and the loyal co-worker: and perhaps more than one headmistress who reads these pages will wish that she had been privileged to have the training of Sophia Jex-Blake. Many admirable women prayed and wept over her in those days, struggled to make her all they thought she ought to be; and, if their perseverance and devotion seemed to be inadequately rewarded, this was due to no fault of theirs. They were what the Society of that day demanded, what Society made them. They were wanting only in what just chanced to be almost the one thing needful,—*the modern spirit*. Rather behind their own day, their lot was to be the trainers of a girl, who—unconsciously to herself—was far in advance of her own day,—a girl who would have appreciated to the utmost the free boyish education of our High Schools for girls, and who—had it been her good fortune to have lived under such auspices—might have written a somewhat different page in the book of life.

## CHAPTER V

### LIFE AT HOME

It is with a definite sense of relief that one takes up the thread of S. J.-B.'s life after she leaves school. She is still, it is true, a problem and a perplexity to many, and sometimes to those who loved her best: but at least she appeals now to a wider tribunal: her qualities get a chance to tell, even if they do not precisely conform to the pattern laboriously cut out by an early Victorian schoolmistress.

Her health, unhappily, still left a good deal to be desired. The doctors had much to say of the irritability of her brain. The stethoscope was supposed, too, to reveal something wrong with her heart, but this must have been functional, as no trace of it was discoverable in after life. Riding, fortunately was now allowed, and she entered into the enjoyment of it with characteristic intensity; but beyond this, in the early days of her—comparative—freedom, she certainly took no pains to improve her physique. The enterprising young women of those days had still so much to learn! It seldom occurred to them to balance their physical expenditure with their receipts.

Meanwhile it is not to be supposed that her parents had gained *greater* control over her than when she was a child: they remained quite uncompromising in the matter of dancing, theatre-going, and other "worldly" amusements, but they were unsuccessful in making her conform to the ordinary, wholesome, old-fashioned routine of English family life. Naturally her self-will in this respect annoyed both parents very much, and Mrs. Jex-Blake must often have been sorely

put to it to restrain her own impatience and to preserve any semblance of peace.

To her credit be it said that she rose to a difficult situation in a manner that makes praise an impertinence. One is glad to gather from the records that her physical health was now on a firmer basis than formerly, but that was only one element in the case. Always a deeply religious woman, she seems to have stepped now into the full freedom of her faith,—faith, not only in God, but in the essential goodness and uprightness of her wayward child. She seems to have realized fully for the first time that the stormy ways which tried her so sorely were not a mere matter of whim and wilfulness, but that they arose from a definite strain in her daughter,—a strain that caused no small suffering to the owner of that nature,—a strain possibly fundamental in character, certainly far too deeply imbedded to be easily eradicated. And, having realized this, the Mother set herself, not as before to criticise the evil, but to foster and rejoice in the good, to make life as easy as might be, to reduce friction to a minimum, and, above all, to surround her daughter with a real glow and radiance of sympathy.

How sorely tried that sympathy must often have been, we can partly understand when we compare the old-world fragrance of the Mother's personality with all that is suggested to us now by the name of Sophia Jex-Blake. "When I was young," the Mother used to say, "it was not a question of *whether* we should marry, but simply of *whom* we should marry." And to her lot fell a daughter who rarely thought of marriage at all, whose brain was teeming with all sorts of unfettered boyish ambitions, who made it clear to everyone whom it might concern that she meant to live her own life,—to "make good the faculties of herself" in the way that pleased her best.

And yet there was something in all this audacious, spontaneous life that found an answering chord in the Mother's heart. She was not a phlegmatic conventional person by nature herself. She too, perhaps, long before, had beaten eager wings against the bars. In any case from this time on the friendship between the two was a sacred thing, never

flagging, comparable with the most beautiful friendships in history.

Fortunately we have S. J.-B.'s own account of those first days at home :

" 1857. Dec. 17th. Thursday. Came home for good. For good? Who can tell? Oh, what would I give to look forward ten, aye five, short years, and see what I shall be. Just 18; half my life at school. Then 28. Dr. Moore says,—and there seems a strange prophecy in his words,—that I shall be something, something good if not great, but not in the way I hope; <sup>1</sup> that 'on a ruin of broken columns and shattered Grecian capitols, shall be laid the foundation of a temple of God.' There's something comes home to my heart in those shattered columns,—

' The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from *Thy* throne,  
And worship only *Thee*.'

Oh, that I had the strength, the faith, to pray so honestly,—but God help me! I have prayed little enough lately. I seem in such a torpor, such a prostration of mind, body, and, I fear, soul. I hope there is much physical in this.

That beautiful hymn,—'What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!' *Once*. So it is, and *now*. Never mind; I think God must have some mercy, some hope, to me when He has given and preserved to me my darling, my angel Mother. She seems a pledge of hope.

Well, shall I be a great authoress as my day and night dreams prompt me to hope? . . . Shall I ever be a happy wife and mother? Shall I ere ten years, or half ten years have passed, be *dust*? . . . I sometimes think so. (June 1st. 1869. At any rate never thought of being a sawbones.)

Dec. 25th. How awfully sentimental my first entries do look! . . . Daddy says he is sorry I have anything that 'wants a lock.' Hm, how very well he understands me and my wants! Never mind; dear old man, he is very loving and kind if not brilliant. Oh, Mother, Mother, what should I do without you? . . . Just said how earnestly I hoped never to see one dear to me die, that I may die first. 'Oh, don't think of self at all, Sophy,' she said, 'Just see what good you can do.' Right.

31st. Writing now in my own dear room, darling Mother, how every article in it speaks of her love! They have gone to a New

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<sup>1</sup>" Dec. 20th, 1859. Strange truth this: How already that hope has changed!"

Year's Eve prayer meeting at St. Mark's School,—uncommonly slow, I should think. I do think however 'good' I became,—or rather I wonder whether I ever could like such very slow spiritualities. Still there's Bishop Wilberforce and his 'scaffolding.' Don't cry 'spirit' and take away 'means,'—remove the scaffolding because its work is not accomplished."

For some time she had been writing a story based on her own school life at Mrs. Teed's,—a story that was never finished. It is very well written of course, but diffuse, and interesting chiefly for its autobiographical touches. She is intensely loyal to both school and schoolmistress, and one feels on reading her descriptions a fresh sense of regret that it should have been necessary to take her away from an atmosphere that seems in many ways to have suited her so well.

One episode is definitely autobiographical, and it is of more than passing interest. The small schoolchildren in the story, playing at "shop," have helped themselves to a quantity of "jewels" in the shape of scraps of coloured quartz, etc., from a grotto in the garden. The theft being discovered, the heroine is called up first, and, in great fear and trembling, owns to having taken one of the fragments. Questioned as to a second, and fearing to add to her condemnation, she falters, "I don't know." Due punishment follows (banishment to bed and enforced reading of the chapter about Eli's sons), then a public scene in hall and forgiveness. Now comes the point of the episode :

"But still there was one leaden weight on me,—the story I had told [Mrs. Teed] the day before. It seemed as though the forgiveness was not thorough, nor of full value while part of the offence was concealed. How easy it would have been I now saw to confess the whole offence at once, how difficult now! Remembrance, however, of the sorrow of the day before, and some innate love of truth, as I hope, urged me on, and when, after prayers [Mrs. Teed] passed away through the door at the extreme end of the schoolroom, I ran to meet her at the foot of the great staircase which she must ascend to her private rooms, and said hurriedly, 'Mothy, I think I did not tell you quite the truth yesterday. I said I did not know who picked out the bit of yellow quartz. I think I *did* know I did.'

'Thank God, my child,' she said gently but solemnly, 'that you

have told me the truth now. It is better than a thousand pieces of quartz.' . . .

Reward enough I certainly had at the time in my lightened heart from that moment, but the effort I had made seemed hardly to merit such rich recompense as it received some time after when I heard that Mothy had said that she would believe everything told her by [S. J.-B.] as if she had seen it herself.

Oh, how proud and happy was I at that moment, and the desire fully to merit testimony so inexpressibly sweet to me had, I verily believe, far more effect on the truthfulness of all my after life than any suffering or punishment could have had ; and it in great measure saved me from sinking utterly in after time into that slough of deceit into which almost all schoolgirls do fall at one time or another in more difficult circumstances and in the midst of a lower tone than that of Hertford House. And,—though many will deem, and perhaps rightly, the distinction of little worth,—though often in those after days, under less noble rule, guilty of equivocation, I do not think I ever from that day told a lie."

We return to the diary :

" 1858. Jan. 7th. . . . I must begin to write again if I don't mean to lose the knack . . . and so ought to go on with Hertford House or write something. . . . I want partly to write for the money,—now why, I wonder? Honestly, why? I have plenty of everything. In a handsome if not luxurious home, 6 servants all much at my orders, lots of rides, a most loving Mother, tender father, almost every wish gratified, £30 a year clear, and lots of presents, almost at will,—why I should write for money unless I am avaricious or spendthrift I don't exactly know. Partly for the *pride* of earning it,—of knowing myself as well able to earn my bread as my inferiors. Surely, though, I ought least of all in my list of comforts—blessing, should I say?—to omit my most happy, most snug nutshell of a room, with its handsome furniture, cosy fire, and thoroughly comfortable arrangements. How truly loving my most precious pearl of a Mother has been to me in this especially. . . .

I have conceived a rather wild idea of writing to Miss M. for counsel and sympathy. . . . But how get a letter to her? And, if I did, would she think it a bore? I think not. Send the letter to her publishers? *Sure* not to be opened? Then what to say if I do write? What do I want? Don't exactly know.

Well, leave it.

Now for the more important at least more solemn part of to-days journal. And I must make this *some* use. Just heard a sermon from Mr. Vaughan on 'Truth,'—Gehazi being the scape-goat of warning. He spoke strongly of allowing ourselves to say more on



religious subjects than we feel, calling it a dangerous deception and leading to worse. But does that include speaking a word—earnest and sincere at least—about the souls of others, tho' our own may not be safe? Often at school I have felt driven to speak very solemnly to girls about their souls when I feel I am not worthy to say a word, for mine is perhaps as lost as theirs,—and often and often have risen in my throat,—‘Lest when I have preached to others I myself become a castaway.’ Yet if I am,—oh, fearful word, I can hardly write it,—if lost (oh, God, save me!) can it, would it not console, if consolation were possible,—to know I had warned others from the pit into which I fell. And I hope I may have done some little good. . . . And how happy I have felt—and better in myself too,—if I have even for a moment led some to think of Jesus else forgotten. . . .

Dearest Mrs. Teed is dead. ‘Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.’ ‘Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!’ . . .

Dear Carry! At a moment like this I can't help thinking ‘The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.’ Oh, how far, *far* more excellent than I am and yet I have sometimes almost despised her because perhaps she has less intellectual power, for I do believe God has given me some genius,—surely there is no pride in saying so, remembering His grace, who gave thee all.

Jan. 8th. Feel very much as if I had been sentimentalizing last night. I wish I could keep in one frame of mind.

Jan. 10th. Sunday. Just been reading the ch. on ‘Happy and Unhappy Women’ in ‘Woman's Thoughts.’ The Authoress speaks strongly about a sort of repining and melancholy, and about neglected health and almost voluntary sickness,—i.e. voluntary in not taking proper remedies and safe-guards,—and I cannot but feel much she says is not more than truth.

She urges action, usefulness.

Now I cannot but consider whether it does not become me to attend to her hints, or rather to her arguments. *Well* I am not. Over mental exertion may have had, and I believe has had, very bad effects, still whether by my own fault directly or indirectly I don't make matters worse, is another question. And certainly my Father and Mother are getting wretchedly anxious about me . . . perhaps, unless I make an effort, I may find life ebbing ere half its purposes are accomplished. . . .

At all events efforts are mine, though results are God's. Yet tho' I try to draw brilliant pictures of the future, and to persuade myself life is sweet, I can't but feel that, if I were once assured of peace with God, I could be well content, nay grateful, to escape the waves of this troublesome world, and flee away and be at rest. Rest!

Surely it is hardly natural at my age to be longing for it so. . . .<sup>1</sup> But coward! take God's benefits and flee His service, His battle? It should be our's 'to *act* and to suffer, to do and to pray.' No, it cannot be right to flee rather than to overcome.

Well, to return. If I am, and ought, to preserve my health, how? Suppose I make some kind of *plan* for the day, not rigid but suggestive.

Rise, breakfast with the rest of the world. 8½.

Have for walk till 11.

Then either some master or work for myself,—writing, painting, etc., till dinner. 1.

Afternoon will be sure to be taken up with driving. Come in about 4. Then read till tea. After tea write, or read out downstairs. And go to bed with the rest of the world.

That would be rather more rational than my present programme:

Rise and breakfast at 11 or later. Dawdle till dinner.

Drive. Read till tea. Read or write till 2 or 3 a.m. Well, that does sound bad. . . .

Mother and I were talking about my marrying,—the chances pro and con. I said I did not fancy I should ever marry, for I thought I should require too many qualities to meet in the man I could think of as my husband, for it to be likely that I should ever meet such a paragon who could be willing to marry me.

Let me see; the indispensables are I think:—A perfect gentleman, a sincere Christian, a liberal-minded broad-churchman; a lofty intellect to which it would be a pride to bow, a firm will which it would be a pleasure to submit to and concur in; a nice-looking fellow,—for I *could* not be happy with one whose face I could not love and admire in beauty of expression if not of form, and one whose means combined with mine would lift us above genteel poverty at least. . . .

Had another squabble with Carry because she told me my own Hertford House, which I was looking over, was not fit for Sunday. She does meddle awfully. Still, she's a precious sight better than I am. . . . Bother her slow blood! She'll drive me mad, she and Daddy between them. Never mind, I have got my jewel of a Mother, bless her!

24th. Sunday. Talking in the evening about an old woman in Carry's district who came from the Barrack Ground, Hastings. And that put it strong into my head how I wanted to go there. I had on Saturday evening written a letter to Amelia about the

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<sup>1</sup>This longing for rest was something deeper than the ordinary sentimentality of adolescence. She always said that by nature she was lazy, and the saying was not devoid of truth.

treat, and then I thought how nice it would be to go and give the treat myself.

30th. Saturday. Seven years today since I last saw old Hastings. Isn't it strange to return that day seven years! Pouring wet day. Rather afraid of being disappointed in Hastings, I do love it so. But I seemed so to have gone over and over every part in my dreams that I could not be disappointed. I know it all so well. . . . After dinner went to call on the Andrews. I thought I would go incog. and see if they remembered me. Amelia opened the door. 'I think the Miss Andrews live here?' 'Yes, ma'am' 'Are you not connected with the Infant School?' 'Yes, ma'am.' I asked if I might come and see the children. She assented quite soberly. I couldn't stand it, jumped at her, and pinned her to the wall for a kiss. She knew me in a moment, seized my hands and dragged me in in wild delight. . . .

Then I went to No. 3 [Croft Place] and when Mrs. L. said she did not know me, I said, 'I wonder if the house does, for I was born in it.' Then she knew me instantly."

All this gives a vivid picture of the warm heart and riotous spirits that endeared her to her friends, but there are not wanting indications of the mysterious depression and forebodings—the dread of something worse than death—that are part of the heritage of gifted youth.

"26th. Friday. I am afraid I don't care near so much for—as I did,—am I changeable or is she changed? or is my standard altered? . . . I read once of a person whose physical condition was such that he *could* not love one person intensely for long,—not many years if thrown much together. . . . I sometimes fear I am similarly constituted. For even those nearest and dearest I have experienced those fluctuations. . . . It is like a frightful trance to know that I *cannot* keep a warm deep love equal; and yet in a manner the real undercurrent of love flows on even in these estrangements,—I cannot in *myself* cease to love one who has ever been the object of that wild adoring love, though in my outer mind and heart this tormenting, fiendlike malady makes me hate and shrink from them while its fearful influence reigns. God grant there is no touch of insanity in it; no words can tell how I dread and deprecate it. There is a loathsome horrible fear in my mind of its coming ever and anon. My . . . , my beautiful, whom I used to think mysteriously close to my soul, it has come on her. Oh, God pity me! I fear I shall go wild. Every action, every word of her's seems to anger me unreasonably,—I feel the fiend on me and yet the wild resistless love will not quite be swept away, and comes

back in floods of passing tenderness for a moment. And I can't tell her, make her understand, and she will lose her love for me and—oh, dear I am very miserable. God grant in pity it may never fall on my Mother! I have a horrible dread of it. I could not live without her love,—my love for her. And I feel such wild maddening love now, as if I knew it would soon be out of my power to love her.”

This, of course, is morbid, and yet here again one is forced to say that her depression is neither feigned nor wholly without reason. Many people have experienced in some degree the elemental fitfulness which she describes, and she probably understood it better than most. And yet how many can testify to her fundamental and self-sacrificing constancy! But there is no doubt that at this period she was living far too self-absorbed a life,—dreaming too much, thinking too much of herself. It was time for something to happen, and fortunately something did happen. Two breezy wholesome girl cousins—half Irish, half Norfolk—came to Sussex Square on a visit. They were the daughters of Ferrier Jex-Blake, S. J.-B.'s uncle, but it chanced that she had never met them before. She was out dining with friends when they arrived.

“When I did come home, I went to take off my things, then to the drawing-room, kissed them coolly enough, said, ‘How d’ye do, cousins?’ and sat down to *rattle*. Tried hard to shock them with all sorts of nonsense, and then carried them to see my room, and made them some coffee. They, Elinor and Sarah, knew nothing of me, and did not much admire me, I guess, that night.

By degrees, however, a very warm friendship sprang up.

“Oh, dear, those two girls!” she writes a fortnight later. “What a flood of happiness they have brought into the house. And made me behave a little too. Sarah makes me attend to my hair. Oh, dear, home is a different place since they have been here. I am so happy. All my gloom and troubles swept off like cobwebs.”

When they are gone, she writes pages of analysis of their characters, and very able analysis it is. This is how it concludes:

“I feel as if I mean to love Ellie most, and Sarah forces me to love her most. I love Ellie most in my mind, and Sarah most in

my heart. Sarah clings to me so, leans on me. Ellie walks upright beside me, a companion, a guide, and gives me a hand. There certainly is something of the angel about Ellie, with much of the woman. You don't connect the idea of angel with Sarah.

Sarah will do almost anything for me. I do not think she has refused me one thing since she loved me. She rode with me when no one on earth could get her to mount a horse; she went in a boat with me, though she never will enter one. Oh, she is so good, so loving to me. I wish I had her always.

And I am going to them at Dunham, my darlings."

When it became known that she was going on a visit to Great Dunham, a number of Norfolk relatives on both sides of the house asked her to visit them also, and the result was that for the next two months she had quite a gay time,—beginning with her Mother's elder sister, Mrs. Taylor, and going from her to the Ferrier Jex-Blakes, the Evans, the Blake Humfreys, the Cubitts and others. As a rule—not without exceptions—she captivated her girl cousins, proved very attractive to her uncles and elderly male cousins, and contrived to rub along with her aunts. "I never appreciated my old Daddy till now," she writes on one occasion, "I really believe, as Mummy says, he never said an *un-nice* thing in his life, or approached a coarse or ungentlemanly joke. He is certainly a beau-ideal gentleman, 'Chevalier sans reproche.'"

Of one family she says, "Not very quiet and not specially dutiful. Rather reminds me of us, only they are more good-tempered over it."

"Uncle Evans amused me exceedingly at lunch yesterday, giving his opinion in quite energetic style, and as if he had studied the subject, that not only I should marry, which I said I shouldn't, but very soon. . . . Heaven knows who it could be. . . . I never saw the man I would have."

At Wroxham she made the acquaintance of a cousin, Robert Blake-Humfrey, who was deeply interested in questions of pedigree, heraldry, etc., and he found in the creator of Sackermena an apt pupil.

"Hurrah! Going in for a good morning's work at the pedigree. 9¼.

Near one! well, well! I certainly have had pedigree to my heart's content. Been hard at work for 3½ hours till my back aches

and I am properly tired. Never mind, I have learned a good deal and secured a good deal. It is very kind of Robert to trust me with his valuable pedigrees, so beautifully emblazoned."

Mr. Blake-Humfrey was good enough to consider that he too derived benefit from the lessons. "Your observant eyes," he writes when she is gone, "have done good service in sundry ways towards the correction of errors, which may atone in some measure for the mischief they are well-calculated to cause in other ways."

On May 28th she visited her Mother's old home, Honing Hall, and made the acquaintance of an elderly uncle who was something of a character.

"He offered lunch, and then took us up to see the rooms. All shutters up, and had to be re-opened and re-shut. In an upstairs sitting-room I unluckily wanted to see a Family Bible, and said, 'Is that the Family Bible with the names, etc.?' 'Yes, it is. You leave it alone—unless you want to see it. I persisted I did and he took it down. Then out came Burke's Gentry and *alia*. . . . I thought I should have been eaten up the way he roared at me. I asked if he hadn't a pedigree, and he almost roared again, wanting to know what I could want better than Burke. I might have told him there were no shields, no intermarriages, etc., but I held my peace, he really frightened me. I got him to show me my dear old Mother's room as a girl, and kissed the bed and furniture. Thought of her as a girl there, her fun and her troubles, her courting-days perhaps and the letters and thought and hopes that room had witnessed. My precious darling Mother!"

In July she returned to Brighton, "much better and better-tempered" as she expresses it, for the outing. Richer, too, she was, in her whole outlook on life, and particularly in the knowledge of her girl-cousins, Elinor and Sarah Jex-Blake, and Mary Evans, with all of whom the friendship was to prove a lasting one.

A month later, to Sophy's great joy, Cousin Ellie accompanied the Sussex Square party on a holiday visit to Wales.

Primary education at Bettws-y-Coed was at a low ebb in those days, the village school being in the hands of a cobbler whose acquirements were not great, and whose idea of discipline was primitive in the extreme. Caroline and Sophy Jex-Blake became deeply interested in the children and

gradually fell into the habit of taking a class in reading, arithmetic, geography, etc. It was an arrangement that gave great satisfaction to all concerned, and one into which Sophy entered with whole-hearted enthusiasm. One is not surprised to gather from the letters of the period that she awakened a feeling deeper than interest in one of the professional men with whom she was brought in contact, but the diary makes no reference to the fact, and she may not even have been aware of it.

“To me and to others as far as I can judge,” writes Cousin Ellie about this date, “she is the warmest-hearted person ever I came across.”

And six months later, reviewing the events of an eventful year, S. J.-B. writes :

“But among the events of the old year, first and chief, my becoming friends with my darlings, my stars, and getting acquainted with the Evans and all the Norfolk folks.”

## CHAPTER VI

### LIFE AT QUEEN'S COLLEGE

MEANWHILE, in the world outside, the feminist movement was beginning to make itself felt,—if one may describe by so inadequate a name an uprising which is due perhaps as much to the men as to the women who have taken part in it. As regards the whole movement S. J.-B. was living as completely in a backwater as was possible to a girl of her position and natural gifts; but sooner or later a current from the main river was bound to come in even to her little creek.

In the spring of 1858 she had made the acquaintance of Miss Benson, sister of the Archbishop. "Henry and Ada Benson came," is the brief record in her diary. "Pleasant, jolly girl, Ada." The wanderings of that pleasant summer hindered the development of the friendship for the moment, but the thread was happily taken up again in the autumn.

"Yesterday went with Ada to the Swedish minstrels. Very strange and beautiful. . . . After concert went for a drive in the pony-chaise. Just beyond the battery a carriage and pair drove into us. Coachman got down and was very civil. Everyone said it was no fault of mine; he was trying to cut in between two. I was not the least frightened.

Speaking to Ada on Thursday night revived the idea of Queen's College. Her sister there. Wrote Friday for prospectus. Tried to speak to Daddy last night. He very impracticable, I after a while very undutiful. At last I went into hysterics<sup>1</sup> which frightened

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<sup>1</sup> It was an interesting and typical stage in the development of women when a girl found it necessary to "go into hysterics" in order to convince her father of her right to an education.



him dreadfully, poor old man. I shall certainly go, I think. Michaelmas term begins 4th prox. I should very much like a year's or even less, good work, and a few certificates.

Very good last night Ada Benson's story of the Bishop of — 'Opposed as I am to the Catholic faith, opposed, as I say I am to the Catholic faith . . .' on which a priest from the body of the meeting, — 'Which faith except . . ., etc.'

How she always did delight in a good story! The most strenuous passages of the diary are interspersed with pages of jokes, riddles, anagrams, *bon-mots*, some very good, some as she herself admits on reflection, very indifferent. She used to say that a sense of humour had been her salvation,—that, but for that, she never could have got through the many struggles of her life.

And one is glad to think how often that sense of humour must have come to relieve the intensity of that first conscious struggle for freedom, when she herself felt that in venturing forward she was renouncing a good deal,—that the life before her was an uncharted sea.

"Worst thing about Queen's College is—no Sarah till Christmas," she writes. M. brought me an invite to write for the Sunday School Quarterly. Sat up till 2 a.m. Friday to write story on 18th after Trinity. I wonder if I shall succeed, and, if so, how compatible with Queen's?

Sept. 25th. All settled for Queen's. Mrs. Williams writes very kindly. . . . Having rather hard work with Redknap, five lessons a week. Must try for 2nd class in Mathematics, and, if I can, for more.

Absurd panic at Dunham lest I should be a 'governess'! Awful phantom!"

It is difficult for girl students of the present day to imagine all that was meant by the opening of Queen's College in 1858. The plan of establishing a college for women had been much discussed by Alfred Tennyson, Charles Kingsley, and others; and the work had been warmly taken up by Frederick Denison Maurice, E. H. Plumptre (afterwards Dean of Wells) and R. C. Trench (afterwards Archbishop of Dublin), all three of whom were represented on the teaching staff.<sup>1</sup> We may imagine

<sup>1</sup> See Mrs. Alec Tweedie's interesting record of "The First College for Women."

what it meant for S. J.-B. to pass from the hands of the average schoolmistress of that day to teachers such as these.

On the 5th October she settled down to work, and three days later she writes :

“ Very delicious it is to be here. ‘ Oh, if there be an Elysium on earth, it is this, it is this ! ’ I am inclined to say. I am as happy as a queen. Work and independence ! What can be more charming ? Really perfection. So delicious in the present, what will it be to look back upon ? ”

She was “ fay ” that night, as they say in Scotland : it was scarcely lucky to be so happy. She little guessed, poor child, “ what it would be to look back upon ” her life at Queen’s. Much happiness she got from that life, no doubt, — a rich harvest of education, contact with interesting temperaments and able minds, friendships that were only broken by death. But there are some people endowed for better or worse, with the gift of taking what seem to be the side-issues of life far too intensely, of living half-a-dozen lives in addition to the one they have definitely chosen, of wringing out of an average human lot an amount of joy, of experience and of suffering that to their companions would seem simply incredible. And S. J.-B. was essentially one of these. Incidentally in the course of the day’s work she would develop fresh interests, make unusual friendships, perhaps even incur resentments that might well have demanded her whole strength and energy ; and all these threads had to be carried on in addition to the recognized work of her life.

That the recognized work was in itself no sinecure may be gathered from her report for the Michaelmas term. She has “ good,” sometimes “ very good ” reports in all her seven classes,—four of them being signed by F. D. Maurice, E. H. Plumptre and R. C. Trench. The classes were arithmetic, geometry and algebra, English language and composition, French, history, natural philosophy and astronomy, theology, and church history.

She was popular with her fellow-students, and particularly so with Miss Agnes Wodehouse (afterwards Mrs. Williams) whom she greatly admired, and of whom she made, incidentally, as profound a study as she did of her Euclid and history.

"How few ladies there are!" she concludes. "Agnes Wodehouse is thorough. So is my Mother. Few else." And again in this connection, "I believe I love women too much ever to love a man. Yet who can tell? Well, S. J.-B., don't get sentimental, for patience' sake."

Unfortunately she was not so appreciative of one of the younger women who was more or less in authority over her. The new student meant no harm, but she took playful liberties, and no doubt, as formerly at school, amused the other girls by her wit and audacity. After a good deal of sparring and chaffing, things came to an *impasse*, and it was judged better by all concerned that S. J.-B. should seek a home for herself elsewhere. This was not an easy matter in those days when hostels and homes of residence for women students were unknown; and so, to the other work of her life, was added the toil of tramping about in search of suitable quarters.

She made a number of unfortunate ventures, sampling experiences familiar enough to the middle-class bachelor woman of the present day, though somewhat staggering to the well-bred mid-Victorian girl. The bankrupt householder, the drunken landlady, the undesirable male lodger, "and other fauna," formed part of the things that had to be taken—and were taken most pluckily—in the day's work. If S. J.-B. was instrumental in bringing ill-fortune on herself—as was not infrequently the case—she never sat down and howled,—she never even thought of giving in: she simply put her shoulder to the wheel and went on with what she had been doing. And so it was now, under very difficult conditions, for, once and again, hopes were raised, hopes were dashed, and the weary struggle began afresh,—with many bad headaches and occasional sore throats to complicate matters.

"Quite an experience of troubles," writes Mrs. Jex-Blake, "as much as if you had lived many years. I think no one could have acted more wisely than you have done": and again, "I wish I were near, yet I don't think I could be a real help: it is not in my way." And the same might have been said by many other friends. Greater drawbacks were involved then than now in leaving one's own social groove.

“ You have behaved very sensibly through the whole trial, which has not been a light one,” says her Father.

In her diary she writes,—

“ Mummy says it is (my boarding-house troubles, she means) quite an experience of life. Truly not in these alone. Many, I believe, never live as *much*, and *through as much*, as I have done already, in the whole course of life.”

Fortunately there was one house at least where she could always take refuge, and never failed to find herself a welcome guest,—the house of Mr. Cordery at Hampstead. Her brother had married one of the daughters, Miss Henrietta Cordery, in June 1857, but the friendship was of much longer standing than that, and it would be difficult to exaggerate the comfort and support she derived from it throughout life. With Mr. James Cordery and his sisters Emma and Bertha (now Mrs. S. R. Gardiner) in particular she remained in intimate association, and always managed—even after years of separation—to take up the threads again without a break. She was always at her best in that Hampstead home, full of gaiety and *joie de vivre*—never afraid to be her real audacious young self.

Immediately after the extract from the diary given above, she goes on light-heartedly :

“ I am so *thoroughly* happy in this way of life, hardly any other could suit me as well. So independent, yet so busy, so comfortable, yet not luxurious. Plenty, yet no superfluity. It is certainly *very* kind of the dear ‘ old folks ’ to let me have it so, and very wise. I should never, at least at present, have settled at home. I should have been ever longing for independence and work, and now I have all I want and may yet do good. Having, as Maurice would say, found my centre, other things will, I trust, grow up around it. I trust most fervently I may yet be a real comfort to my precious Mother and dear kind Father. As last year I computed my ‘ worldly estate,’ as quaint old Pepys, whose diary I am reading, would say ; I do it again. I have now for dress and private money £40 per year. Henceforth I shall have tutor’s money as well. From my Father I have, I think, as well as I can calculate, about £50 a term for all expenses, besides all paid when at home, as well as travelling expenses with them or anywhere (except while at College) and riding, etc. So in actual money I have about £200 a year and in money’s worth another £100. Therefore I conclude about £300 a year to

be about the happy medium of wealth for a single woman. Dear generous old Father! Few would, I think, give so much in so good a way to their children. I believe as regards happiness and satisfaction never was money better, if never more kindly, spent. I must try to pay back the 'labour of love,' and 'requite my parents,' dear, dear old things! Bless them both.

I really believe as regards money I am honestly *quite contented*. I wish for no more. And as this is, they say, a somewhat remarkable fact, I specially note it down. Yet it sounds ludicrously tempting to reply to myself, Contented! Shame on you if you were not, I think. Yet for actual pocket money, I am horribly pinched just now,—only 9s. 9d. till next quarter,—nearly four weeks hence."

The reference to "tutor's money" is interesting. She had not been two months at College when she was asked to take the post of mathematical tutor. The suggestion gave her great pleasure, and she broached the subject to her parents when she next went home. Though startled, they were on the whole pleased at the honour done her, but things assumed a different aspect when her father realized the conditions on which the tutorship was to be held.

The correspondence seems well worth quoting *in extenso* :

" Jan. 28th.

DEAREST, I have only this moment heard that you contemplate being *paid* for the tutorship. It would be quite beneath you, darling, and I *cannot consent* to it. Take the post as one of honour and usefulness, and I shall be glad, and *you will be no loser*, be quite sure. But to be *paid* for the work would be to alter the thing *completely*, and would lower you sadly in the eyes of almost everybody. Do not think about it, dearest, and you will rejoice greatly by and bye with all who love you best."

A few days later he writes again :

" MY DEAR SOPHY,—and you are very dear to me—you have been much in my thoughts, and I have been grieved to know that you have had so much real harass, and were so *tried* before you settled down in your present peaceful domicile. Now all is well, I trust, and you in peace and comfort, so, remembering the Appellant from Philip drunk to Philip sober, make the application, giving me the benefit of it, and bear with me, my own child, whilst I briefly tell you what I think and hope. I heartily admire your readiness to turn your talents to good account, and employ them in a way so clearly beneficial to others, but believe me that if you take money :

payment, you will make a sad mistake, debase your standing, and place yourself in a position that people in general, including many relations and friends, will never *as long as you live* understand otherwise than as greatly to your discredit. You would be considered mean and illiberal,—tho' I am sure you are neither the one or the other—accepting wages that belong to a class beneath you in social rank, and which (it would be said) you had no right, under any circumstances, to appropriate to yourself. . . .”

The reply to this came by return of post :

“ Feb. 3rd '59.

MY OWN DARLING DADDY,

I got your kind old letter this morning, for which, thanks. . . .

Well, as to this Tutorship. I have thought about it, and about all the accompanying circumstances. If you will listen, I will try to tell you what I think. I believe I am particularly suited for teaching, my taste, and I fancy my talent, lies that way. I generally succeed pretty well in making my pupils understand what I understand myself and so far I suppose that proves my capability. Well, there are so many who make teaching their profession, who do *not* love it, and are not fond of it or fit for it, that I think anything that can be done to raise the standard of teaching and teachers, must be good. Well, this would be effectually done if everyone who loved the business (and was therefore necessarily to a degree fit for it) undertook it, and no others. I think this very College is doing much to raise the standard, and I fancy they are particularly anxious—the authorities, I mean—to get teachers of a somewhat superior rank in society (as generally considered). Well, justly or not, I am, I believe, supposed to be of rather higher class than the generality of teachers, and therefore specially eligible. I suppose I certainly have considerable talent for Mathematics, if for anything. It is the one thing I know best and love best. Then—when the Mathematical Tutorship is vacant,—surely I am right enough to be anxious to obtain it. I was thought capable, and chosen.

Now remember, Father dear, I am not here taking the place from anyone else, though if I were doing so, being myself the best fitted, I do not think my conscience need be troubled,—but this Tutorship has stood vacant for some months from sheer want of anyone capable to fill it.

Well, the terms of the agreement are—do this work, and receive this payment,—the payment contingent entirely on the work. The conditions are, if the Tutor has four pupils, forming a college class, she receives 5s. an hour. It is right and natural I think, I certainly do work equivalent to the payment, and have fairly earned it. Why should I not take it? You as a man, did your work and received

your payment, and no one thought it any degradation, but a fair exchange. Why should the difference of my sex alter the laws of right and honour? Tom is doing on a large scale what I do on a small one,—I cannot recognize any fundamental difference in the matter. I cannot say 'I do not want this money, I have no use for it,' for in truth, tho' having an ample and generous allowance, I should have plenty of use for it. Then there is the honest, and I believe, perfectly justifiable pride of *earning*. Did you not feel this when you received your first salary? Why should I be deprived of it? Then again you offer to give me the money if I refuse to take it from the College. But this would be a wholly false position, to get credit for generosity in refusing what I yet receive. I could not do this. In that case I must say to the Dean, not 'I am willing to work without payment,' but 'My Father prefers that I should receive payment from *him*, not from the College,' and I think the Dean would think us both ridiculous, or at least foolish.

If I wrote a book I should receive payment for that, and I presume even you would not object: why then now?

For mental work done in the school the reward was a prize which cost money, you thought this honourable,—why should the reward of labour at College, being money, be dishonourable?

Hitherto I have had a class of only 3, and therefore I have not been officially entitled to this salary. The Dean wished to make some arrangement for my payment last term, but I said at once,—'The money is not of much consequence to me—I had rather, not having the official number, teach them as a friend and ex-officially,' and so I have done. Here I think I was right, I could afford to teach them gratis, and I did so. The Dean was gratified, the pupils obliged, and I was satisfied. So it was last term. But if this term I get the official number, I do not see any reason except pride for declining the payment. My pupils would pay the College all the same, why should not the College pay me? I really do not see that I am doing anything either mean or dishonourable, and I hardly think you can think so either. I am *sure* the College authorities do not. I do not think the Dean would think the better of me for declining the money, which I should be glad to receive, on account of a scruple of pride. Do you honestly, Father, think any lady lowered by the mere act of receiving money? Did you think the less of Mrs. Teed because you paid her? Would you have thought better of her for refusing payment? I am sure you would not. You are too much of a gentleman to attach importance to money.

Of course the question of right or wrong, honour or dishonour, is the point. This once settled, people's opinion is worth nothing. I should be glad that my friends had the sense to see clearly and

rightly in the matter, if they have not, I regret it for their own sakes,—not for mine.

Of course I am speaking of indifferent people,—not of you or my Mother. I care very much that *you* should think me right.

But even taking this lower view—of opinion—I do not believe that many for whom I have any regard or esteem, would ultimately think the worse of me for accepting well-earned wages. If I took the post, and, even without accepting a salary, neglected my duty, or did it not to the utmost of my power, I should be far more contemptible.

Mary Jane Evans, I know, for one, and she is one of the proudest families of our relations, thinks me right. Miss Wodehouse, whose family is older and better than mine, not only says I am right, but showed she agreed with my opinion by her actions. She sees no meanness in earning, but in those that think it mean. When accepting Maurice's school, she said to him, most nobly, I think, 'If you think it better that I should work as a paid mistress, I will take any salary you please; if not, I am willing to do the work freely and for nothing.' I think this more noble-minded than any proud refusal of money could have been.

Well, darling Father, I have written you a very long letter, but I wished to tell you honestly all I thought, and I trust you don't think my epistle *too* long. . . .

Your loving child,

SOPHY."

" 4th Feb. 1859.

DEAREST SOPHY,

Your letter has given me unmixed pleasure. . . .

About the tutorship, you write very ably, but your logic and illustrations are not sound, as I hope to show you. I am sure you are fit for, as you are fond of, teaching, and the desire to raise the standard both of teaching and teachers is good, but your receiving or not receiving wages for the work, can neither help or hinder the matter. I agree to *all* you say in favour of working,—it is very honourable, very right, and worthy of all praise, but what I object to is your taking money for it. It is beneath you, and you will be far happier to decline it, and let it flow into its proper channels, to fructify widely and do real good.

The question is, as you say, one of right and wrong. In my deliberate judgment it is *wrong*, in your position to receive pay for what you do, to say nothing of the extent to which it would damage you. The cases you cite, darling, are not to the point. I will take each of them in the order you put them and then judge for yourself. I never received a salary of any kind in my life. I was





*Emery Walker pl. 50*

*Thomas Jex-Blake*

*from a drawing in chalks by H. J. Wells R. A. 1862*



of a liberal profession—a particularly honourable branch of it—and (chiefly) lived by it. This was 'right' beyond all doubt. T. W. is doing the same sort of thing. He feels bound as a *man*, with ability to do so, to support his wife and family, and his position is a high one, which can only be filled by a first-class man of character, and yielding him nearer two than one thousand a year. The third case—Mrs. Teed's—like the others has no analogy whatever to my dear Sophy's—Mrs. Teed had no *means*. She went out in early life as a governess. to earn an honourable livelihood. She did earn it well and her talents, by God's blessing, led to her after success, enabling her to lay by something to support herself and sister in their later years.

How entirely different is my darling's case. You want for nothing, and know that (humanly speaking) you will want for nothing. If you married tomorrow to my liking—and I don't believe you would ever marry otherwise—I should give you a good fortune. What temptation is there for your doing that which, at best, will be misunderstood to your prejudice? I should say at all events wait a bit till you are a little older, and can form a riper judgment. My feeling is strong that you being a paid teacher would certainly *damage* you, in what precise degree nobody can say. Do the work—it is a good work and I rejoice in it, but don't put a penny into your purse for doing it. Let the gold go in some other direction. This will give you a greater and more lasting satisfaction than you could derive from any money payment.

Your loving Father,

T. JEX-BLAKE."

" Feb. 5th '59.

DEAR DADDY,

Thanks for your letter. I do not know whether all my reasoning was logical,—probably not—but I do not think that your arguments respecting the relative position of (at least) Tom and myself, are much better than 'distinctions without differences.' Refine it away as you may, Tom's position and mine are considerably analogous, though very unequal. As far as I can trace the foundation of your asserted difference it is first his being a 'man,' which difference, as I said before, I cannot recognize as radical,—secondly, that his position can only be filled by 'a first-class man,'—and I think, allowing, of course, for very great disparity of knowledge, acquirements and requirements, the comparison holds, for it is not easy, as has been proved by the length of time the office has been vacant, to fill this Tutorship properly. I should say it is the one the College finds hardest to fill, and therefore it is (in its degree) as creditable a thing to hold as the mastership.

Then I cannot think that you mean to urge the superior lucrative-ness of his post as any argument, for the principle must be identical in receiving one penny or 'nearer two than one thousand a year.' Then I cannot say that I want for nothing,—I do want the money, and am quite satisfied to earn it, quite knowing that my allowance is enough. I do not really *see* that I am in any degree wrong, if I am it is unconsciously and honestly.

Well, I don't think it is of much use to argue any more—I have told you honestly what I think. . . . Thank you anyhow for listening to me patiently and answering me. I do not like to vex you after all this—you have been and are very good to me. You ask me to wait a little while and consider. I have considered well, and I do not believe any further thought would alter my opinion. However I will promise you for this term only (not ceding the principle) not to take any fees, but if they come (which I do not yet know) to return them as a free gift to the College. If at the end of this term I still hold my opinion, I trust you not to oppose my determination again. Remember and understand, Daddy, I do promise this simply and only because you wish it, and not because in the least degree my mind is one whit altered on the point. I trust you to meet me half way, and not be in any degree grieved if I resume my intention next term.

Goodbye darling,

Ever your loving child,

SOPHY."

" Saturday night. Feb. 5th 1859.

DEAREST,

. . . Tom's being a *man* makes *all* the difference, he has just taken the *plain path of duty*. I am very pleased with the spirit in which you write, darling, but I must be sincere, which I should not be if I told you that I had the shadow of a doubt that you ought not to be a *paid* teacher. . . .

Ever, dearest,

Your affect. Father,

T. JEX-BLAKE."

So closes this delightful correspondence. It was not to be supposed that she should have no regrets. In her diary she says :

" Feb. 13th. . . . Like a fool I have consented to give up the fees for this term only—though I am miserably poor. I am sorry. It was foolish. It only defers the struggle."

The Norfolk cousins were not a little impressed by the new life S. J.-B. was making for herself, though it was not to be

expected that they should all take so enlightened a view of it as Miss Evans did.

"You seem," writes Cousin Ellie, "to be spending rather a jolly time of it, but still it seems to me rather queer that a lot of girls should walk about London when and where they please. I don't think you would come to any harm, but I am sure there are many that would."

And Sarah with whom "one does not connect the idea of angel,"

"What glorious fun a girl might have if inclined, but you are as steady as a rock. No fear of my dear old man doing anything giddy. My dearest treasure, Goodnight."

We gather from subsequent correspondence that the frivolity of this letter brought down a very severe reprimand from its recipient.

Elinor was the first to pay a visit to the unknown world, and she writes a long account of it to the eager Sarah :

"When I first saw her that evening, I thought she did not look so well, but since then I think the contrary—She is much thinner, but in such good spirits, and so happy. I think she quite likes everyone to know that she has been made mathematical tutor, for it is considered a great honour."

S. J.-B. would fain have seen more of these delightful cousins, but their father held strict views as to the conditions under which well-born girls might visit London.

"As to Ellie and Sarah," writes Mrs. Jex-Blake in one of the severe moods that had become so rare, "instead of being hurt they do not accede to all you ask, you might well be proud of their *warm* love. You have taken yourself out of your natural position, and you cannot understand the need for their conforming to the proprieties their Father so naturally and properly expects. Good-looking girls do not needlessly go about London without chaperons. Happily for them, their Father's wish is sufficient to guide them. There is a respect and duty to the position, however weak and inferior you may judge a Parent to be.<sup>1</sup> Well, darling, God bless and comfort you."

Yet, judged by present-day standards, S. J.-B. would not have been considered deficient in the spirit of compromise.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is not to S. J.-B's own parents.

Her letters to her Father on the subject of tutor's fees is evidence enough on that score, and those letters are in no way at variance with her whole attitude.

"A triumph as to *life!*" she records in her diary. "Last Monday told Mummy of my not going to the Opera without telling her, but proclaimed my intention in the future. No interdiction. So I talked a little about it to make all my ground sure, and coming back on Tuesday found them going to Macbeth, Friday, and yesterday told Mummy as a matter of course. She acquiesced if not consented, and was glad we had so nice a party and hoped I shall not go *often*, so entirely removing all interdiction. . . .

Well, as to the Theatre! I believe I must confess myself disappointed. Charles Kean as Macbeth did not satisfy me. Mrs. C. Kean very good (I suppose) as Lady Macbeth. Yet not *real*, as Shakespeare surely should be. After the murder of Duncan was perhaps the grandest, most awful, most *real*. . . . The scene where Macduff learns his loss more *real* than most. The fighting at the end ludicrous. . . . I thought there would be decent fencing."

A few months later she went (with Miss Wodehouse) to a ritualistic church, and was moved to hot indignation.

"How can this man wear a priestly robe in the Church, and subscribe to her 6th and 20th most scriptural articles? Well, indeed, might we pray for the state of the Church Militant, when within her walls are such teachers.

Yet was I right in not staying the sacrament because this sermon so stirred my indignation? 'The unworthiness of ministers hinders not the effect of the Sacrament.' Perhaps I was wrong. Yet I could not have stayed in a peaceful or holy mind.

To the law and to the testimony! How precious is such unanswerable decree!—so final a court of appeal!"

A note is inserted in the margin,—("This May 1859. Sic transit! Feb. 11, 1865!").

Meanwhile her certificate examination was drawing near, and mathematics absorbed most of her thoughts. On July 1st she writes:

"Certificate examination nearly 4 hours. Out of 23 problems did 20½. So I trust I am pretty safe. I did get rather frightened as the time drew on, but really have worked hard and I trust won. Sent a telegram, 'Success' to Mother, though the declaration is not yet made.

July 28th. My certificate won triumphantly and marked, 'with great credit'."

Of course she was working too hard.

"I have a great deal of work in College," she confesses some time later. I take 8 classes,—English Literature, English History, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Theology, Church History, Algebra, Geometry, and German Conversation; and have 7 pupils. I am afraid it is too much altogether."

And what about the ordinary traditional preoccupations and vanities of a young girl's life in the midst of these manifold interests and claims?—what about thoughts of dress, of personal appearance, of love and marriage? Well, obviously there was little room left for any of these. S. J.-B. was under the impression that she cared a good deal about dress, and she would not have been flattered if anyone had expressed a different opinion. As a matter of fact she never had time to give the subject much more than a passing thought, and the poor little remnant of an allowance that remained when more pressing claims and numerous little charities had been met, was barely sufficient to pay for the work of an ordinary seamstress. The adaptable coat and skirt, and the endless variety of cheap ready-made dress had not then come to the aid of the educated working-girl, and S. J.-B. did not realize the difficulty of the problem she had to tackle.

"I should like to see your muslin at 3s. 6d. before I got one," writes honest Ellie. "You know you are the last person in the world I should copy in dress, or who I would trust to get one for me, for it is the only thing almost you *know nothing* about, and you have very peculiar, and, I think, generally bad taste."

The letter may have been written in a moment of irritation about something else, or indeed about this very subject of dress, for young folks are sensitive as to the appearance of their valued friends; but it certainly contained more than a germ of truth. Fortunately youth and a radiant personality cover a multitude of shortcomings in this respect, and contemporary correspondence often points to the extent to which the Almighty had "favoured" S. J.-B. "in person as well as in mind." In this connection there is an interesting letter of this period from an old schoolfellow, the daughter of a former schoolmistress. After a graphic account of a lecture

by Thackeray, at which the writer had the good fortune to be present, she says :

“ In face Thackeray is the image of—whom, do you think ? Guess. Someone you know,—of *yourself*. Yes, indeed, of you, Sophy Blake. Mama and I were both struck, almost startled, by the resemblance.”

It happened by a curious coincidence some years later that Laurence was taking S. J.-B.'s portrait not very long after he had taken Thackeray's, and he expressed himself as greatly struck by the similarity of the lines in the two faces. S. J.-B.'s magnificent, speaking brown eyes, however, were hers alone. “ If they were taken out and laid on a plate,” said a forcible young friend, “ they would still be beautiful ! ”

As regards love and marriage, one can only say that, for a girl in the middle of the last century she thought of them surprisingly little. She speaks occasionally of her own marriage as if it were as much a matter of course as her coming of age, and, after enjoying some pleasant boy-and-girl intercourse with an unknown “ H.” at the house of her cousins, she describes him as “ the sort of man I may probably marry in the end.” Visiting a newly-married girl cousin, she frankly admits the charm of the comradeship, for indeed, as a friend said of her (with more truth than elegance of diction) a few years later than the point we have reached : “ You have taken on you a hard, hard vocation from your youngest days,—and yet it is scarcely so hard for anyone in the world to stand alone.”

In any case S. J.-B. went straight on her course, like many of the finest girls of our own day, without giving any thought to cross currents that might alter the course of her life. And indeed her daily life was absorbing enough. It is scarcely surprising if, among her many interests, her religious life was somewhat smothered for the time, or that, at least she thought so.

“ Mrs. Thornton called my doing what I had done ‘ noble ’. Yes, if for *His* sake, but, alas, much more—altogether—for my own. Yet my loving the work is no disqualification for doing it for Him. I trust I do do good a little. Surely honest intellectual help is some-



thing, if of lower class. . . . I have thought—I cannot take more work, Sunday School, etc., but what I do is *good* in its degree; if done in His name, surely He will accept it.”

More and more, as she looked back on her own school life from the vantage-ground of a year at Queen's College, she felt how much the education of girls might be improved. On the last night of the year she writes :

“ In this year my idea of work in the cause of education has developed itself into that of a resident College of the Holy Trinity. Heaven knows if ever to be carried out. If good,—yes, doubtless,—if not, God will raise up better. Little ‘religious’ as I fear I am, I do feel this thoroughly. . . .

‘ And may the New Year cherish  
All the hopes that now are bright.’

Such a happy loving Goodnight to and from Daddy and Mummy.  
Very happy I am tonight.

‘ And once more ere thou perish,  
Old Year, Good night ! Good night ! ’ ”

## CHAPTER VII

### FRIENDSHIP

THE great remain children to the last, and in this respect S. J.-B. was essentially one of the great. To the end of her life, for those who knew her well, she could be a delightful child. But it was about the time we are considering—the age of 20 to 21—that she may be said to have become a woman, or, more truly, to have put on her manhood. She was too busy at the time to describe or analyze in her diary the change that was taking place—“ Oh,” she says, “ the little space of time and paper ! The mighty space of events ‘ unheard ’ ! ”—she was in no way self-conscious about it ; but there are indications, like straws on the surface of the water, that show in what direction the current was setting. One sees that she was beginning to look at life freshly and at first hand, that the old traditional dogmatism was falling away from her views of religion, of social questions, of the relation between the sexes. To be sure this old husk was being replaced by the even more acrid dogmatism of youth ; but in that very acidity one feels the promise of growth, of the ripe wisdom of later years.

As far back as March 1859 one finds the following significant passage :

“ Had a long argument with Miss Wodehouse today. Two points chiefly. 1. Are evil deeds, though always pernicious to the doer, sometimes beneficial to mankind ? I affirming : she denying. 2. Is it our first duty to seek our own salvation ? She denying.

I cannot tell why I am so unable to argue with her. She seems to get me into a maze. Yet I think she argues honestly. I some-

times shrink from 'sacred' subjects with her, yet she considers all equally sacred.

'What is truth' indeed? Yet am I not somewhat like 'jesting Pilate' who 'would not stay for an answer'?"

"What is truth?" one finds her asking again and again, and she at least had one grand qualification for the search,—the habit of treating truth with respect even in its humblest fragments.

Her Father, of course, was uneasy about her.

"I should like to see you much," he writes, "but I feel that Sunday would be a heavy day for you here (as I don't frequent popish mass houses or the like), so that if you could run down here on Monday evening. . . ."

And again:

"When I think of the (at best) half teaching you have, but that I confide in our gracious covenant head, I should tremble for you when I am gone. I have no doubt at all that Maurice is a most amiable man, but I believe that to this hour he has never come clear out of Unitarianism, and therefore does not see distinctly, nor, of course, teach scripturally, any one of those fundamental Christian truths (all connected together) original sin, Christ's vicarious work atoning for sin and fulfilling the law, justification by faith, and salvation by grace. Read, darling. . . ."

The following "passage of arms" with a Norfolk cousin, a man some years older than herself, is interesting in this connection:

"Hastings, March 12/60.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

I left Brighton on Friday with something of a heavy heart. I saw I had grieved you where I had really no intention of doing so: that was painful to me and I must regret it. I express to you my strong regrets. But oh! tenthousandfold deeper was the sad conviction *forced upon me*, that the advance you have made,—shall I vex you if I say honestly and openly,—*Romewards*, since I last saw you was very great. I believe you are as yet unconscious of your own tendency. I told you so at Lyng. But in honesty I must tell you, my dear Sophy, I tremble for you. It is such *awfully slippery* ground. It is such a *pleasant* accommodation of religion to our fallen nature. It so feeds our *impulsiveness* and fortifies our *natural religionism*.

Will you forgive me if, with a cousin's, I hope more than that,

anxious love I beseech you to 'consider your ways,' and bring your soul before God in this matter. Pray don't starve your soul on gilded husks while bread lies at your feet in your Father's house.

I know more than one amiable creature who began as you have done, and has landed in Rome. . . .

Dear Sophy, don't trust your *head*, much less your heart, much less any fallen man or imperfect church under the sun. Trust Jesus, Jesus only, Jesus *wholly*, Jesus *exclusively*.

I trust this note will not make you wrath against me. . . . Be sure of one thing, I banter no more, where feeling is evidently so deep. Henceforth I will try and pray fervently for your poor soul's conversion to God."

MY DEAR . . .

" March 14th./60.

If I do not say that you have written me a most ridiculous letter, it will be more from respect to its motive than its matter,—or purport. I know people can work themselves up to any exaggerated view of things, yet I can hardly believe that, if you have half the sense people say you have, you can on sober reconsideration really believe that there was the smallest ground for your tirade in my objection to hear a Church—a house of God at least, spoken of and criticised as if it were a right thing to visit it as you would a theatre, and remain a looker-on while others were worshipping. 'Seeking occasion against' men was not the characteristic of the followers of the Jesus whose name you reiterate so often. I believe this was the whole feeling with which I spoke, exactly as I should have done if it had been a Baptist Meeting-house you were commenting on,—as I believe you would *not* have commented on a Baptist Meeting-house.

You may, if you please, take my word for it that I am *not* going over to Rome, among whose partisans, however, I must say that I have never—no, nor I think from any other denomination under the sun—heard the same virulent abuse of those who have at least 'one Lord,' if not 'one faith and one baptism,'—that I have from the Puritan portion of our own Church: and I am sure no God and no Church was ever served by the one or the other. . . .

What I have written is probably ill conceived and worse expressed. Excuse all such deficiencies. If I have myself fallen into the error I protest against, I need more than excuse—forgiveness. I have not meant to be violent or uncourteous, but where I have felt strongly, I doubt not I have so spoken.

For your cousinly care and affection I thank you heartily, as I am ever

Your affectionate cousin,

S. L. J.-B."

And not only in matters of thought and principle was she developing; she was beginning, too, to take her full share of responsibility as regards her fellow-creatures, entering into the meaning of brotherhood and citizenship. In addition to her work at Queen's College, she undertook to teach book-keeping gratuitously in connection with the Society for the Employment of Women, and had a class of children at Great Ormond Street. "I don't know how I should like *her*," said a candid critic, "but it is a pleasure to see anyone do anything so well as she does teach."

Reference was made in a former chapter to her faculty for taking the side-issues of life too intensely. It may not be right to look on friendship as a side-issue—though many of the world's workers are more or less forced so to regard it: in any case it is scarcely too much to say that—even when one takes into account the endless philanthropic interests and activities of her later years—friendship constituted for S. J.-B. the main work of life. If she had been paid for the sheer hard work she did simply as a friend, she would have been a very rich woman. She was always giving out, and from this time forward, she acted on the maxim, "*Bis dat qui cito dat.*" If she arrived home, dead-tired, to find a letter asking immediate advice or help, she would answer the letter then and there and carry her answer to the post. If a friend was passing through London, or coming to spend a few hours with her, she would piece out a laborious journey by bus between her classes to meet that friend at some far-off station and make things easy for her. If a fellow-student or a teacher seemed on the point of breaking down, S. J.-B. would write three or four letters and call on half-a-dozen people to arrange for a holiday, and, if necessary, for a substitute. "Then home very tired," she writes to her Mother after such an experience, "but very content to write this account to you." (As not infrequently happened, the invalid had found a refuge at 13 Sussex Square, and Mrs. Jex-Blake's kind heart was set on an extension of the holiday.)

"I do not think I ever did so good a Lord's Day work in my life,—if, that is, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath Day,—to save life, not to kill,—or let kill. I think I am very like a life-boat,—value-

less in itself, yet useful enough in saving better things alive. That, indeed, its whole use and work."

"I am sure all that driving and running about with me on Thursday made your eye and headache much worse," writes Cousin Sarah, "but you are such a dear kind old pet,—would half kill yourself for anybody."

A former school friend writes at the same date :

"I feel I ought not to trouble you, occupied as you are, but, whenever I have asked you for anything, your kindness and sympathy have been so readily given that I always think of you when I hear of *any wants*."

"Mama sends her very best love," writes Miss M. J. Evans, "and Papa too. Oddly enough, both like you. How can they?—such a trumpery *heartless* girl!"

And one comes upon hundreds of tributes to the same effect.

Sometimes S. J.-B.'s willing assistance was of a kind that involved no small labour and anxiety. If a friend was shy and gifted and poor, capable of producing work not yet recognized as marketable, S. J.-B. was always ready to be the middleman. She would write round to well-to-do friends enlisting their interest, do up samples of the work for inspection, and (most serious of all!) undertake the responsibility of receiving the samples safe back again. "Put the responsibility on me," she used to say cheerily in after life, "my shoulders are broad enough"; and there is no doubt she began to say this—if not in so many words—before the age of 20. People got into the way of trusting her to *see a thing through*, of assuming that it was her *métier* to be competent and to organize, of leaving to her the heavy end of the stick: and no doubt she enjoyed it all and learned much from it, though, when taken in addition to her regular work, it was terribly hard on her hasty temper and "irritable brain."

"You must be very thankful to be a medium of helping so many," writes her Mother,—“a great honour, I consider it, pleasure without alloy.” But in the same letter she says, “Sad, sad weather for you to knock about in. Darling, don't risk your health.”

"I would not and could not speak" (after parting from you), writes Ellie. "I wish I was not such a silly fool, but I could not

help it and never can, if I have to leave you. . . . I wonder if you have wished for me, if it was only to scold and fight with ; but what I wish most of all is that you would give up fighting. I would do anything for you if I could only make even a slight alteration. . . . I do with all my heart wish that you would try to keep in that temper of yours."

Noble Ellie !—" Walks upright beside me, a companion, a guide, and gives me a hand."

S. J.-B. rarely, if ever, expected her friends to do her the same kind of service ; but, if they became very dear, she did demand—more or less unconsciously to herself—a definite *quid pro quo*. In her big masterful way she would proceed to absorb their lives into her own ; to establish a subtle growing claim that was not easy to resist. She was splendidly loyal herself, and the loyalty she exacted in return, though at first glance an easier thing, involved more than she was in any degree aware of. As life went on people found it increasingly difficult to disagree with her : many simply ran away—*se sauvaient*, as the French say ; and yet it was only when in the last resort one resisted her to the face for conscience sake in some matter very dear to her heart,—that one really gauged the greatness of her nature.

All this is taking us somewhat ahead of the early friendships at Queen's, but the frank recognition of this aspect of her character is essential to an adequate understanding of her life even in those days. A Queen's College friend who, in the most admirable and magnanimous spirit had accepted what might be reckoned a heavy obligation to S. J.-B. and her Father, writes as follows :

" I wish to tell you (I could not before, but think it right now) that this . . . will be more of a personal advantage and enjoyment to me than anything else in the world. . . .

With all my heart I rejoice to acknowledge an *immense* obligation to you for your love to me at all times and for this particular way of showing it, but *not* that sort of obligation which shall in any way affect my words and doings with you for the future."

If friendships are to be weighed, not counted, S. J.-B. was, even at this period, fortunate in her possession of them. The Norfolk cousins, the Cordery family, Miss Wodehouse,

Miss Ada Benson, Miss Lucy Walker (afterwards Mrs. Unwin) who was her junior at Queen's, Miss Martha Heaton (Mrs. Hilhouse) a fellow teacher,—are the names that occur to one most readily. And at this time there came into her life a friendship that was destined to make a deeper impression on her than any of these,—the deepest impression, in fact, of any in the whole of her life.

This is how it began :

" Jan. 26th. 1860. Just had a lesson in book-keeping from Miss [Octavia] Hill. Clever, pleasant girl,—much nicer than I thought. Dined with me. What and how the deuce am I to pay her? £1 1s., I suppose. Dear old Patty Heaton! How fond I am of her, and what wonderfully good friends we are!"

" Jan. 27th. I am sure I am a good companion for her (Miss Heaton) if only in amusing her. I think laughing does her a deal of good—hearty fun. I rejoice in her exceedingly. And I hope for another sort of friend, or ally at least, in Miss Hill who came and taught me book-keeping yesterday evening. Nice, sensible, clever. Very good worker, I expect."

In the published *Life* of Miss Octavia Hill, one cannot but observe how good this dawning friendship was for her also, how beneficent was the sunshine that it brought into her somewhat grey young life. On Feb. 5th, 1860, she writes to her sister :

" I am always thinking of you both, and longing to have you home again that you may really know all our doings and lives. Mine lately you would assuredly consider rather of the dissipated kind. I have been giving some book-keeping lessons to Miss J.-B. She is a bright, spirited, brave, generous young lady, living alone, in true bachelor style. It took me three nights to teach her, and she begged me to come to dinner each time. She has a friend who is killing herself by hard work to support her younger sisters. I gather she would gladly give her friend help, for she speaks most sadly of the 'modern fallacy' 'that the money must be earned.' She thinks it might be given when people are dear friends: she says they've given the most precious thing and what difference can a little money make?"<sup>1</sup>

Almost from the first Miss Hill's letters to S. J.-B. took a serious tone. On March 18th she writes :

" I wonder whether you will think me very impertinent if I say that I wonder you don't see that, in turning away from so many

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Octavia Hill.*



important thoughts with a half joke, you are refusing God's means of grace as much as in staying away from ordained services. It is no good my writing sermons, however. . . . I trust to live to see some one or some sorrow do for you what I cannot, to see such a peace as 'passeth all understanding' come over you, to see the thankful, perfect dedication of all your powers to His service for His sake. . . .

I too long for a nice quiet talk with you. I enjoy it so, and your magnificent energy does me such good."

The talks were not always quiet. There are those still living who remember some animated discussions, for the two girls had stepped, as it were, out of totally different worlds. Here is a typical passage :

S. J.-B. (hotly), " I never heard the game laws attacked ! "

O. H. (calmly), " I never heard them defended ! "

In the Easter holidays of that year both Miss Heaton and Miss Hill were guests at 13 Sussex Square, and the friendship between the latter and S. J.-B. was greatly deepened.

" My dear loving strong child," writes S. J.-B. in her diary after this visit. " I do love and reverence her. . . . Had a loving solemn letter (not altogether pleasing to me) on my telling her we had had a ' row ' [at home]. Told her by return ' Hang you,' and bade her remember she was neither nurse nor parson.

Dear, dear child, though. Mother calls it beautiful letter."

It was so characteristic of S. J.-B. to show that letter to her Mother !

On April 29th Miss Octavia Hill writes again to her sister :

" You dear old thing, I wish I had you here to give you a good rest and rousing, and refreshing. I am as merry as a grig. . . . Miss J.-B. and I are always doing things together—great companions I am with her. You know she's teaching me Euclid. We went to see Holman Hunt's picture, . . ." <sup>1</sup>

And again we quote from S. J.-B.'s diary :

" May 17th, Whitsunday. A most delicious day at Hurst with Ruth <sup>2</sup> and Octa. Went down together second-class by 6 train. . . . Told Octa about Wales,—sitting in her room on the table, my heart beating like a hammer. That Carry wanted to go to Wales and I too, and most convenient about beginning of July, so . . . ' Put off my

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Octavia Hill.*

<sup>2</sup> Miss Heaton.

visit?' said Octa. 'No, I was going to say (slowly) if you wish to see anything of me, you must come too, I think, and not put off the mountains till heaven.' She sunk her head on my lap silently, raised it in tears, and then such a kiss!"

There is a happy letter about this Welsh tour :

" Bettws-Y-Coed,  
July 26th/60.

DARLING MOTHER,

We have decided rather in a hurry as there are to be no prizes, . . . to give a treat to all, which, however, Mr. Jones specially stipulates is not to be a *school treat*. . . . It is just coming off today. I ordered 60 lbs. of dough and etc. from Catherine Owen,—rather less rich than last year (that is, fewer eggs and less butter). It makes 88 lbs. altogether. But it was only settled on Monday, and as this is Thursday I am half afraid all may not know. But we have tried hard to send scouts everywhere. . . .

Please tell me as early as possible where you will be each day of the week beginning Sunday, August the 12th. Now don't let Tom just prevent your remembering or caring<sup>1</sup> to meet your little one. I do long to see you so. . . .

*Weymouth St. July 30th.* All over, darling, now, and such a happy time without a single blot I never remember in my life. Every thing has been better than any anticipation of it. We have done everything we wanted to do. We have been everywhere and have had no mischance, no annoyance of any kind. Octa looks five years younger, and as bright as a sunbeam. And I am in so thoroughly happy a state of mind as hardly to know myself. I really almost think I should be good-tempered now. We came home by Llangollen on Saturday, 40 miles coach and 194 miles rail. Not a bad journey for one day. We went up that morning to your high mound. The view was glorious. I took poor old Ellen Jones some squills for her cough, but she looks very ill indeed. She sent so very much love to you, and wished she had something to send you.

The treat came off excellently on Thursday. It was grand fun to see Octa playing with the children. At Hunt the Slipper once, she, pretending she had the shoe, held up her boot toe, saying, 'See, here it is,' or something like it. Grace Owen, who was seeking, seized hold of it as quick as light, crying 'Let me have it then,' pulled away, and capsized Octa entirely amid roars of laughing. Octa sprang up and chased her round and round the field till she caught and tickled her. It was quite one of the bits of fun of the evening. . . . The only *contretemps* was that poor little Hannah

<sup>1</sup> By the charm of his personality, she means, of course; not by design.

fell down and sprained her arm. However, Miss Hill's surgical powers came in grandly, and I do not suppose Hannah is any the worse except for a few days inaction. Well, how strange it is to find this all over, and probably never to return. I cannot say I am glad our tour is over, for I do believe I was never so happy for so long in my whole life, but neither can I say I am sorry to see dear old London again,—I am sure I could come back to no other place—as a place—with near so much pleasure. . . .

Just fancy Octavia's energy,—after that tremendous journey not reaching home till 10.30, she was off to Lincoln's Inn at 7 a.m. the next morning for the early communion, and went again, and I with her in the afternoon. Her Mother and sister were so delighted with her account of all her doings, and a glorious one she gave certainly. I had tea with them last night. Goodbye, my darling, for the present. Not so very long now, I trust, before we meet.

Aug. 1st. Although this has been in a 'Milan' envelope all this time, I suppose I must now send it to Chamounix, as I foolishly forgot to post it yesterday.

Today quite forgotten to order any dinner, so just bought some cheese and strawberries.

Tell Carry John Davis has sent her a letter to complain of me, which was forwarded to me, and which I have answered. Goodbye darling.

Yours lovingly,

SOPH."

In August, when S. J.-B. and Miss Heaton were abroad together, Miss Hill writes :

"London feels strangely desolate, the lamps looked as they used to look, pitiless and unending as I walked home last night, and knew I could not go to you. . . . I don't the least suppose you'll go to Florence or see my sisters, but, if you should, pray take off your 'spikes' and remember . . . how much they love England, and everyone who is a friend of ours. I look forward to bright long days in which I shall learn always more about you, and watch with unending and unfathomable love and sympathy your upward growth, and we may look back together on our lives, as I do often on my own, and wonder how I could know and see so little, and wonder more how, knowing so little, I should be led continually to deeper truth."

Here, one would have said, was the beginning of an ideal friendship, and so it might have proved—allowing, of course, for the necessary rubs between two such strong natures—had the two girls been alone in the world. But each of the

two belonged to a family that in different ways exacted a great deal from each of its members, and particularly of the member involved in the present friendship. It is doubtful whether even the two girls could have made a success of *living* together, for the diary refers occasionally to "cataracts and breaks," and on both sides there are letters of penitence for hot temper or "coldness and pride." Moreover, Miss Hill loved peace more than do most, and, dearly as she loved S. J.-B., she was almost bound in time to find her "more stimulating than quotidian," to quote a quaint phrase of Carlyle's.

It is therefore with no small sinking of heart that one reads the following entry in S. J.-B.'s diary :

"Sept. 9th. Sunday [1860]. A plan on foot of my taking part of a house with the Hills and having Alice for a servant. That would be very jolly. But rents high about here,—least £120."

Certainly a similar sinking of heart took possession of Mr. and Mrs. Jex-Blake, and when they learned that the finding of a tenant for the drawing-room floor was an essential part of the scheme, it is not surprising that—short of stopping their daughter's allowance which had been increased some time before—they did everything in their power to discourage the arrangement. They were well aware that, here as everywhere, the willing shoulders would take their full share of work and responsibility. The reader will be prepared for Mr. Jex-Blake's point of view :

"DEAREST CHILD,

You cannot surely mean to take a house and let lodgings in direct opposition to your dear Mother and me. It would be quite disgraceful and we never can consent to it. I will not believe, my dear child, with all our love for you, that you will so directly disobey us, or that Miss Hill, knowing our feelings on the subject, can be a party to it.

When you spoke of the other house, you said a lawyer was to look over the lease, and take care of the Hills, and I firmly believed, till the last few days, that you were to hire rooms. I had no more idea of your becoming a lodging-house keeper than of your keeping a shop. You cannot suppose that I would assist Miss Hill in such an exceedingly blameable transaction. I would *with real pleasure* assist her in all possible ways . . . but no Father or Mother who

love their daughter, in your position, could consent to her joining in it. I trust, dearest child, you will give up all idea of such a thing, which, once done, you would repent as long as you lived."

The response to this protest has not been preserved. On October 18th Miss Hill writes :

" MY DARLING CHILD,

Thanks for all the trouble that you are taking about the houses, I am quite ashamed it should all fall to your share. Is Harley Street house quite out of the question? I received a letter from Mama, earnestly desiring that we should keep near the park; she would not at all like Bentinck Street. Don't weary yourself with searching. I certainly will return on Thursday (probably much before) then we will look together again. . . . If it would secure the Harley Street house by all means let us pay all the taxes whatever they may be. I am writing in the dark. Goodbye, my own darling treasure.

I am,

Yours affectionately,

OCTAVIA HILL.

Mama has an affection now for Harley Street."

Finally, the house 14 Nottingham Place was taken, and rather more than the customary number of difficulties had to be worked through in connection with it. In addition to this, illness broke out in the house, and there were several invalids to be nursed.

The most forgiving of mothers writes after a visit to her daughter :

" It is all your own choice and doubtless right, but it sometimes grieves me to think how many discomforts you have, and how many indulgences I have—only it is not my doing that you have them not. I wish I did not think of you as worn and fagged. Do assure me that you go to bed as early as you can and get good rest."

Fortunately youth and friendship make all things easy, or at least bearable. During S. J.-B.'s brief absence in December Miss Hill writes :

" Oh, child, your letters are such a delight, but I miss you so dreadfully. I wander like a lost thing about the house and long for you intensely. Every place seems so desolate. Every witness of your thought and active care of and for me contrasted vividly with Z's odd procrastination till I almost felt unjust and unkind.

And yet I ought to glory in your kindness and goodness, and in all that mighty and glorious energy that *will* help so many people in this sad world, if it is spared to us. Your room, the fire, the thought of all you had told me to provide for myself, fills my eyes with tears. I mean to spend a very quiet and happy Sunday." And again, later,—“ Do you know I get on very much more easily with strangers than I used, all of which I owe to you. It is a great satisfaction to me : it pleases one's friends to have their friends like one.”

Up to this point the friendship had been an almost unqualified gain, but, little by little, Miss Hill began to feel the strain of dividing herself—so to speak—between her family, her comrade and her work. In May 1861 she was called away by the illness of her friend, Miss Harris,<sup>1</sup> and the change to an ideally peaceful life was just what she needed. Her own health had begun to suffer and she remained on at the Lakes for some months to gain strength. In her absence, S. J.-B. took on her own shoulders in great measure the responsibilities of householder. Hitherto her acquaintance with the other members of the Hill family had been slight, but a warm friendship now sprang up between her and the sister, Miranda, who often shared the meals made ready by the devoted Alice and served by her in her young mistress' room. Few young people in the first glow of a new friendship have sufficient tact, self-control and knowledge of life to avoid all risk of wounding their elders, and such tact would scarcely be possible in a nature like S. J.-B.'s. Little rubs and frictions increased, and no doubt Octavia was the confidante of all. In July she writes :

“ I hold myself prepared to come when it seems right, sure to be given strength to do my duty, but certainly not longing for anything that will bring me again into a world of contention. I can't bear to think how pained you would be if you could know the strength of this feeling, for I know you would feel it a failure of love. I tell you all this because I am sure you will feel it in my letters, because I am sure such a cloud hurts less when frankly confessed, because I am sure such a friendship as yours and mine need not fear it, remaining untouched and immoveable, based on what can neither change nor know fear. . . . All my life long this dread and misery about even the slightest contention or estrangement has taken the form of misery, continually saying in itself, ' I cannot bear it.' Since

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Octavia Hill.*

physical strength has left me so far this wretched dread has increased tenfold. . . .

How delightfully kind and good you are to everybody. I can fancy I see you, brightly kind, good and energetic, going about among all the people, entertaining monitors, inviting my sisters to tea, giving club dinners, learning about examinations, arranging the play, talking to Miss Boucherett, delighting to plan work and holiday for them all. . . . When I have thought, as I often have, that it is probable that I may never have strength to work any more, you cannot think how I have clung to the thought of your ever ready and powerful help and care."

Through all this tide of affection, one wonders whether S. J.-B. in any way realized the very genuine apprehension her friend felt about returning to the atmosphere of contention. The probability is that she did not realize it at all, or rather that she looked upon it as the expression of a transient mood caused by physical weakness. No doubt she made a generous resolve that "everything should be made easy for Octa" when she returned; but she did not realize how great was the need for resolve. She never saw her own personality from the outside; and of course hers was not the only "temperament" in the house. No member of the family could have been described as a mere cabbage.

We all know how friction increases when the machinery is out of gear: differences of opinion grew: Mr. and Mrs. Jex-Blake protested against the imprudence of accepting a banker's reference only, in the case of a foreigner who was in terms for the rooms, and for once their daughter upheld their view with tenacity. Finally,—though this not till October—the state of strain became so great that Octavia was summoned home.

One can sympathize profoundly with her in the difficult situation she was called upon to face. She knew by this time what the faults were on both sides, knew in particular that S. J.-B. was not a placid person; began to guess perhaps that explosions of temper were as essential to that generous nature as the thunderstorm is to a stretch of summer days. Meanwhile everyone was counting on her to solve the difficulty with a wave of her wand: and here was she, never very robust, weary with a long journey, called away from a congenial

holiday to the intimate association with a thousand and one petty cares in addition to the special crisis that had summoned her home.

The extracts given above are a mere gleanings from many unpublished letters which bear witness to her devoted attachment to S. J.-B., but although her sympathy with her own mother was perhaps less fervent at this time than it afterwards became—she had a strong sense of filial affection and duty. Moreover she had her work in the world to do—invaluable work we know it proved—and she felt that she could only do it in an atmosphere of peace and quiet.

Assuredly it was not an easy situation to face. Looking back upon the whole story after more than half-a-century, one cannot but wish that she had simply *compelled* S. J.-B. to realize the truth,—that she found herself unable to live and do her work unless she could have the peace that her soul loved, that—much as she had profited up to a certain point by the stimulating friendship of one so unlike herself—the time had come when she found that friendship too stimulating under present conditions. Surely—one fancies—some arrangement might have been arrived at by which so mutually beneficial a friendship might have been continued.

Miss Hill, however, decided otherwise. In the watches of that first night, after a long talk with her Mother (a talk that, in the nature of the case, can scarcely have emphasized S. J.-B.'s point of view), before she had even seen her friend, she resolved to forego even the semblance of an attempt to reconcile these conflicting claims. Something must go, and that something must not be the mother and sisters to whom she had devoted most of her ardent young life, the mother and sisters who depended on her wisdom and goodness more even than they knew.

It was one thing to make the great resolve: it was quite another to explain it to the friend whose one conscious desire was to make Octa's life an easy one.

So she set her face like a flint, and, for the first time in the course of their friendship, she refused to see S. J.-B.'s side of the question at all. Peace must be secured at all costs, and,



if peace was to be secured, this delightful exacting friendship must end. S. J.-B. might retain her rooms for the time as a matter of business—

But neither S. J.-B. nor her indignant Mother would listen to that.

Well, then, let it all go. The time for half measures—or so Miss Hill thought—was over. All intercourse must cease. “The relentless knife must cut sheer through.”

How much the effort cost her we gather from the extent to which she overdid the part. She was at the end of her tether, so to speak, and acting, doubtless, on an instinct of sheer self-preservation, she would allow no discussion of any kind. She set her face so flintily that S. J.-B. was driven in uttermost bewilderment to the conclusion that the complete withdrawal was due to some extraordinary aberration on the part of her friend—an aberration for which so noble a being could not be responsible, and which might therefore come to an end as suddenly as it had begun. A thousand times she had said to herself, “Everything will be right when Octavia comes!” And now, behold, Octavia was here, and it was no Octavia. It was a fairy changeling to whom the beautiful past was a thing unknown. The rupture was so complete that it was no rupture. It was a nightmare, an inexplicable darkness at noonday, something so contrary to all known laws of nature that it could not last. This hope, this attitude of expectancy, was encouraged by the extraordinarily tender and appreciative letters which, at intervals for some years, broke through Miss Hill’s reserve. In one of these letters, dated Nov. 5th, she writes :

“Oh, Sophy, how splendidly you and your Mother did act those last days that now seem so far away. . . . When I see how deep your forethought was, so loving as to have remembered the very slightest things that might be the least trouble to us when you were no longer near to take care of us, one feels as if an angel had (may I not say still is taking) care of us.”

A generous letter indeed, but in the face of such letters was it any wonder that S. J.-B. failed as of old to grasp the extent of the difficulty,—that she refused to accept the situation as final,—that she lived on in hope, and often all but

intolerable suspense? "Did I want to learn constancy?" she says.

If the lesson was needed, most assuredly it was learned. Till the close of her life the friendship on her side remained unbroken, although she ceased in time to speak of it even to her most intimate friends; in repeated wills she left the whole of her little property to Miss Hill,<sup>1</sup> and, although other friends came in time to fill the empty place—although she even wrote playfully in her diary some twenty years later of her "fanciful faithfulness"—until the eve of her last illness she would not extinguish the hope that "even in this life" the friendship might be renewed.

One might say more than this. From the time of the rupture, Octavia Hill became to S. J.-B. a pure ideal—something of what the subject of the *In Memoriam* was to the author of that wonderful threnody.

In any case the whole history of the friendship was destined to lie on higher levels because Octavia Hill had felt bound to break it off.

<sup>1</sup> Until circumstances rendered Miss Hill independent of such aid.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A STEP BEYOND

It has never been customary among students of human nature to attach great importance to the outpourings of a romantic friendship, save in the rare cases where these have achieved consummate literary form. The religion of the adolescent, too, is a thing that we are apt to take a good deal for granted. In S. J.-B.'s case, however, the ideal—the vision—to which this brief friendship gave rise throws a light on potentialities of feeling and expression which we should otherwise never have had. The fact that so apparently transient a gleam should have given rise to a great and lasting inspiration lifts the passages that follow quite out of the category of the great mass of similar experiences.

The effect of one personality upon another is a thing we can never predict and seldom explain. It is not a mere question of addition or even of multiplication. The process is a vital one which can never be mechanically reckoned out. We all see over and over again in life how the receiver may contribute as much as the giver—the pupil no less than the teacher. When the word of God went forth from Sinai, we are told, *each man heard it in the tongue in which he was born.*

In any case that strange and new experience came with the force of a ferment to S. J.-B. "She was never the same again," says a lifelong friend, looking back on the whole history after more than fifty years: "it cut her life in two." But the cutting in two—like the division of the primordial cell—was the earnest, not of death, but of life on a larger scale.

“ My Mother’s full glorious sympathy ! What could I do without that ? God bless her, my darling,—mine for ever.”

So writes S. J.-B. in the first days of her trial. If anyone knew the meaning of the words, “ as one whom his mother comforteth,” it was she.

And never did she need that comfort more than now. She left the house in Nottingham Place at once, but she gallantly finished her term at Queen’s College and then went home to Brighton. “ I must *not* get bitter and cynical,” she says. “ I don’t think I shall. And yet the crash has been awful.”

As often before in lesser troubles she was thrown back on her own deep religious faith.

“ Bankrupt ? ” she asks herself. “ No, by God’s grace, no ! No personal trouble, no trouble of any kind, *can* wreck a life in His charge. Still His,—that the strong, the enduring thought.

From this very threshold of pain, whatever be its present issue, shall go forth an earnest patient life,—to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant to my life’s end.

Yes, I,—Christ’s soldier ! Yes, earnestly, heartily, entirely, though speculatively this Christ I know not,—though my mind asks in all uncertainty What and Who ? . . .

Dogmas are one thing ; life is another.

Doing is clear ; ‘ doing the will,’—‘ knowing the doctrine ’ shall come later. Not *believing* though. I mean *understanding*,—receiving with reason and mind.”

So she prepared her altar, “ and put no fire under,” but the flash came.

“ Dec. 13th. Sunday. 11.45 p.m. Who could have believed what a happy holy evening has succeeded to all the pain, storm and whirlwind of the morning ?

Dr. Smith’s death.<sup>1</sup> The loss of Octavia’s day,—her visit of one hour ; the utter stupor of misery. Then, with all the pain, the perfect feeling of content and assurance of Rightness in things. Then this happy evening, lifting me altogether out of myself and my pain into the trials and struggles and efforts and interests of Lucy and Emily,—and, thank God, the power of helping both. Now this calm perfect peace, which sends me to bed ‘ resting.’ . . . Oh, God is most merciful, most bountiful. ‘ Like as a Father pitieth his children ’.”

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Southwood Smith, Miss Hill’s grandfather.

" 12 p.m. Sunday night.

Don't chide me for writing late, Mother. I must speak to you. If I could give you an idea of the peaceful, happy evening I have had,—sending me to bed with a heart full of love and joy and thankfulness. No, nothing has changed in outer things. I have no other news. But perfect peace has come. I can hardly tell you how happy I am, Mother.

I have had such a happy, holy evening with two or three of the girls. . . . And God seemed to give me such wonderful power to help them, and I believe He has helped them. And in all this—I know not how, but I wake up at their departing . . . to find that somehow God has rolled away my burden utterly.

I had forgotten it and myself altogether, and now I can find neither. I can hardly believe in the pain and misery of the morning, it seems a dim, far-off memory.

Is it not wonderful, Mother? Goodnight, my own darling.

Yours very very lovingly,

SOPHY.

I do not know when I could so fully and entirely say, 'I will lay me down *in peace* and sleep, for Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety.'

Follows an undated fragment, probably written to her Mother next morning:

"—passed other quiet wayfarers, just as heavily weighted. How gentle it ought to make one,—to see how utterly ignorant one may be of sorrow at one's elbow,—how one can only be *generally* tender to people, if one would escape striking down an already tottering neighbour because one does not and cannot know his needs.

It is only God who sees *which* is the bruised reed, and cherishes that specially,—or can do so.

I am thinking how near 4 o'clock is coming. It may bring me a kiss and a word from my darling. I am sure tonight's post will at any rate.

Well, dear, I have you always and forever, and with you only I could never be desolate. And I have her too,—though she doesn't know it now.

Yours very very lovingly,

SOPH."

" 4.30 p.m. Thanks, many, darling, for your loving little note. You will know before this that the cloud is not dispersing in the way you mean,—that it has only more fully and certainly overspread the sky. Yet there is—and will be more and more, please God,—a light in it too."

“ Dec. 16th 1861. 8.30 p.m.

MY OWN DARLING MOTHER,

Thanks so many for the loving little scrap of letter which I knew would come to comfort me.

The sympathy is always delicious, but the active need for it is utterly gone. You will have got my last night's letter, so Mother will not go to bed with a sad heart for her baby.

Yesterday I was wondering how it should be possible that I should ever live out the next three days till I got home to you. Now every sort of trouble seems to have fled utterly away. I never knew before the meaning of the words, 'the peace that passeth understanding' . . .

I every now and then wake up with a kind of start of wonder to find such a sunny smile of heart gladness all over my face. And people see it too. It would be very odd if they didn't when the whole world is changed to me. It is the most wonderful separation of the inner from the outer world that I ever knew. I suppose nothing is changed in the physical world, but everything seems for me bright and golden,—as in my Welsh tour with Octavia (I can speak of it and her now with perfect quiet peace), as in those days at Hurst.

Last night I thought it most glorious, but too delicious to last; but it seems now the atmosphere of life, as if nothing can touch or shake it. . . .

Mother, a grand solemn wonder comes with it all, whether it is that when we have actually and literally given up every will and wish to God,—have rested utterly and entirely on Him with perfect trust—whether then pain loses its power, and only blessing, even now, *can* come.

. . . if so, what a glorious future one sees for all the sorrowful here,—for all the tried and suffering. 'For *all* the wanderers the home is one'. The pain only till it has brought the bliss; the All-loving Father that cannot wound but to heal.

Now my spirit is so perfectly at rest, all my strength seems to have come back to me like Samson. I feel as if Edinbro' or anything else was nothing to me. 'He hath set my heart at liberty',—that is the very truth. Mother, how naturally in every depth of sorrow or joy one turns to those words about which *verbally* we quarrel,—not really or deeply, Mother.

Goodnight, my own Darling,

Yours very lovingly,

SOPH.”

From diary :

“ Dec. 16th Monday. 'For as soon as ever thou hast delivered thyself to God with thy whole heart, and seekest not this or that

for thine own pleasure or will, but fixest thyself wholly upon Him, thou shalt find thyself united and at peace.'

THOMAS A KEMPIS."

" Dec. 22nd. Sunday, 11 p.m. The last thread actually broken,—the parting over.

Left London on Thursday evening by the 8 p.m. . . .

Well, it is all in hands that cannot err,—speculative sceptic as I may be, practically my trust is as firm as the rock on which it rests. My Father doth do all things well,—and even makes me feel it,—even now. And surely, to take a lower ground, I have been an inapt pupil if the lessons of the last few months have not taught me the utter impossibility of calculating the possibilities of the future.

Should I have believed from man or angel on Tuesday the first the events of Thursday the last of October ?

But we don't want low ground. He is the rock,—His work is perfect.

And He will care for my child."

Of course this mood of exaltation could not go on unbroken, except at the cost of sanity itself. Hours of reaction had to come. "We might have done *anything* together, we two !"

" Dec. 29th Sunday. Tonight the bitterness seemed doubled in finding 'my teachers removed out of my sight.' I just feeling my way to truth,—saved by her from so much doubt and possible infidelity. Well, God will teach me, will He not, Himself,—so Mother said. I cannot (or feel as if I could not: *cannot* is not a word for 'Christ's soldier and servant', is it?) put it all away. I seem so physically weak and *rotten*, so unable to exert will and force myself to be quiet.

But I have found something to do. I behave infamously to the dear old man. Well! I mean to throw my whole being into being a good child at home. I *won't* be rude and bad to him !

Now record this vow for a week,—don't be superstitious, Jack ; say 'God helping me' and go on,—forget yourself. Just do this piece of work,—and wait.

So be it.

What was the 'chief evil' to which the suffering must be directed to be sufficient ?

'Selfishness,' said I.

Truly, Jack. And what is it but intolerable selfishness,—this brooding over a 'bootless bene',—this expecting sympathy and all sorts of kindness and excuse from my Mother and the rest, and

talking about nerves and fiddle-de-dees,—instead of forgetting myself and seeing to my work and to other people.

Well, God helping me, now for a new leaf—of strength and resolve instead of whining self-pity."

It was with this inspiration that she wrote to one of her pupils :

" Dec. 31st. 1861.

DEAR LUCY,

... My Modern History was all right, thank you,—I forgot you had it. By the bye, your handwriting seems to me to have 'suffered an improvement'—I must congratulate you.

I am very glad you think I have helped you, dear child,—my life has been a very pleasant one in London,—its memory will be pleasanter still if it has been too not quite useless to some of the people who have helped to make it so. I could not easily count the people who have helped me,—some directly,—some merely 'by living.' It is a glorious thing, is it not, to be a link in that chain of help which encircles the world,—to pass on to another what one has given us,—feeling how all our broken bits of help and gift are gathered up in the perfection of the Great Giver and 'Father of Lights.'

I do heartily hope that you will go back to Queen's just to take and hold your place in that chain. Only do quite resolutely take your part for the highest and noblest,—remember 'the soldier and servant', and remember how very far we are from helping when we acquiesce in any wrong doing,—in any low standard of right and wrong, even by silence.

I do not think it would be easy to over-estimate the importance of a high pure tone among the leading girls at such a place as Queen's,—perhaps such as you and L. hardly know what a power lies in your hands, for the very life of the College,—and mayn't we look higher than that, and say for our Master's work ?

And after all that is the true and simple way of looking at it,—for consequences we can't calculate,—but we always can know right from wrong, and the rest is not our affair.

Well, dear child, God bless and guide you,—that is the true help."

And, finally, she writes in her diary :

" Dec. 31st. 1861. The last day of the year ! Now to 'take stock'. I have just finished, and balanced exactly my money matters (within a deficit of 2s. 8d. with which I left London). Now for the moral and historical. See the last volume for the beginning of the year. How well I remember the last day last year. Does she ? How we did and sorted accounts till the chimes,—and then leant together



out of the window in our new house fresh with plans and hopes, saying so hopefully,

‘ And may the New Year cherish  
All the hopes that now are bright.’

And now truly almost,

‘ For all my earthly hopes this (year) did kill.’

It is almost dreadful to look back and see how this book opens with a jest. How full of joke and spirit all seems! The ‘ deep waters ’ have come this year as never before. But it is a strange wild comfort to find in myself so much *capacity* for suffering. I had always despised myself as a weak shallow nature, to leave others to suffer and escape with a laugh. . . .

(Wrote one last letter to Frid<sup>1</sup> tonight—for her birthday tomorrow. Weak? I think not.)

Well, now to ‘ take stock ’ :

The opening of the year, bright, clear, hopeful. Octavia’s visit to the north, but that no real break. Our delight in our new house,—its quiet and peace. Some disappointment is not letting, but that very endurable. No bar to happiness. . . .

Then the return of Frid and Florence. My unwilling acquaintance ripening gradually into love for Frid, called forth perhaps first by her great love for me.

Then our glorious Whitsuntide at Hurst,—Octa and I. The few days (Thursday to Tuesday) pure unmixed heart sunshine. Purer and deeper if possible than that of Wales.

Then the strange double summons on May 21st., she to Mary Harris, I to the O’Briens. Coming like a thunderbolt on our week, but accepted by both obediently and willingly. Together to London. Then my mission to Tufnell Park. The hurried tea, the night mail, the parting hand pressure as the train moved, ‘ in the sure and certain hope ’—is it blasphemous so to use the words? I think not. There was a glorious churchlike solemnity always on our love. Well!—then the five months’ parting,—hard it seemed then, but painless—heaven—to what came after.

Perhaps I am not yet meant to see the ‘ why ’ of all that followed. . . . We seemed so helpful heavenwards to each other. Never seemed our love truer, deeper, purer,—I know though *now* that mine *could* be all three.

Yet with all this wondering, I do and have felt most solemnly, Surely it is best. ‘ We shall see in Heaven why it could not be otherwise.’

At least, Octavia, you have never had (in me at least) so true and deep and leal a friend as now,—and yet quieter and so stronger.

<sup>1</sup> Miss Miranda Hill.

And for her—God have her in His holy keeping !

I feel some work has been done when I can say as deeply, truly as now that no earthly blessing could seem to me (except relating to my Mother) comparable to her restoration to me (for every feeling of hurt or wound or injury seems merged in deep earnest love 'beyond words') yet I am ready, and God helping me able to go through the world—darkened and lightless as it seemed a few weeks ago—and feel it yet my Father's own world, 'very good' yet : ready in it manfully and cheerfully to take up my burden, and again and forever as 'Christ's faithful soldier and servant' to fight manfully till my life's end—so help me God ! ”

## CHAPTER IX

### FIRST EXPERIENCE OF EDINBURGH

It is the great miracle of life—that first glow and uplifting of the soul in touch with the Unseen. “The immediate consciousness of the religious man,” said Hegel, “has in it an infinite worth, because an infinite content.” For the moment it seems as if all the difficulties of life were swept away, as if nothing temporal could matter any more. But if the world at large is to be ennobled and spiritualised by these individual experiences, the inspiration has got to be worked out in “the commonplace clay with which the world provides us.”

And here comes in an all-important point, to which, on the whole, far too little significance has been attached. To some of those who have the vision, Fate gives a tractable, malleable lump of clay, limited in mass, fine in texture, ready to respond to the lightest touch of the potter: and so we get sweet and saintly characters whose lives will bear the minutest inspection—such characters as Maurice and Eugénie de Guérin, or the wonderful family described in *Le Récit d'une Soeur*. But there are some to whose lot a very different problem falls. The big and rough jobs of the world-spirit have to be tackled somehow. There are unwieldy masses of clay, full of grit and impurities, masses that do not seem to respond to the creative impulse at all. Rough handling, bold tunnelling may be required; and if it be true,—as it is,—that the first beauty of the spiritual vision seems degraded in *any* attempt at realization, how much more is this the case when the seer is baffled and thwarted at every turn by the sheer inertness and stupidity of the

lump, so to speak, when he is forced to resort to almost brutal methods in order to get his idea expressed at all.

God gives man the vision and the lump of clay ; and many a man who escapes the censure of his fellows gives back the two separately to God, like the talent wrapped in a napkin : some men are privileged to return a piece of work that all eyes can value in a trice : and some, " with aching hands and bleeding feet " have merely blocked out a great conception, have half-unconsciously drafted the rough outline of one of the Almighty's big schemes, an outline on the details of which smaller souls will be abundantly occupied for generations to come.

Before we judge of the finish of a man's life, before we judge of its correspondence with what he believes to be his inspiration, let us ask—What was the extent of the problem it had to grapple with?—What was the mass and what the condition of the clay?—What, in a word, was the man's *task* ?

There must, of course, be some sort of affinity, some mesmeric attraction,—even if this should seem to show itself in an actual distaste—between the man and the task. So far as human stupidity makes this possible, we must believe that God Almighty chooses His man, and the work of the Almighty would be singularly limited in range if He chose for His purpose only those whose natural endowments are such as to make them an unqualified credit to any cause they may espouse.

All this must be specially borne in mind in judging the subsequent life of S. J.-B. We are bound, of course, to ask how she worked out in life this beautiful vision of her adolescence—bound to ask how she realized in practice the " infinite (potential) worth and content " of that first radiant consciousness ; but before we attempt to answer the question, we must take into full account the extent and the difficulty of the task that fell to her share, and we must give full weight to the natural attributes which were the tools placed at her disposal.

It is clear that there was about her a doggedness, a high-handedness, a disregard of tradition, an actual—if superficial—

roughness, which are not common qualities among the highly-educated of either sex, and which were never admired in her own. On the other hand, the reader of the foregoing pages will no longer need to be told of her tenderness and sensitiveness—of a capacity for loving and for suffering only commensurate with her power of inspiring love, of incurring suffering. In a sense she was a born fighter, but it is a very nice question how far she enjoyed a fight. Thousands of times throughout life she might truly have repeated the extract from her diary quoted on p. 46 :

“ This brought down an awful storm of wonder, reasoning, etc., till at length I got off to bed *so* tired.”

The diary continues after the extract quoted in the last chapter :

“ And now to turn to the outer facts of life.

Here I am, my London College life over, with all its pleasures, all its cares, all its responsibilities, all its glorious delight at times.

Ten terms have I kept,—ten passed since the beginning of that second volume of mine ! How sorrowfully meagre seems the record. Yet ‘ the world could scarcely contain ’ what *might* have been written.

My rooms in Nottingham Place given up (first and second floors let to Vs.). The world before me. Alice only bound to me. My life in Scotland to begin whenever rested. Wants sufficient resolution to make that ‘ when.’ Yet I expect very needful.

I suppose the shock to my whole being of the last three months could not be easily reckoned. Two months today since I left N.P. !

Again the burden has been lightened since my resolve (how inadequately worked out !) of Sunday night. Not only Watch, but *Work* and wait ! . . .

By-the-bye, Frid’s lovely Christmas gift,—Christ on the Cross. The Child Christ and verses (her’s ?)

‘ The love that brings salvation  
*Shall* at last prevail ! ’

Amen.”

“ My life in Scotland to begin whenever rested.”

It is not easy to say what induced S. J.-B. to seek farther education in Scotland, except that she was anxious to extend her experience in every possible way. A few

years later, thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Crudelius, Professor Masson, Miss Louisa Stevenson, and others, the University Classes for Women at Shandwick Place were successfully started, but in 1862 there is no reason to think women were better off in Edinburgh than in any other town of the same size. A report seems to have gone forth, however, of the superior advantages offered by some institution, and S. J.-B. went north—accompanied by her faithful maid, Alice—full of hope and ambition. On her last night at home, by an interesting coincidence, she heard a sermon that impressed her on the text: “They have no changes: therefore they fear not God.”

The link that bound her with the world on which she was entering was of the slightest. Mrs. Burn Murdoch (*née* Miss Dora Monck Mason) was an old schoolfellow, a contemporary of Caroline Jex-Blake, and the traveller carried with her an introduction to Miss Margaret Orr, sister of Captain (now General) Orr who afterwards married one of the Norfolk cousins, Miss Henrietta Cubitt. In these acquaintanceships—both of which were to ripen into lifelong friendships—S. J.-B. was very fortunate; but as far as the immediate object of the pilgrimage was concerned, she was destined to bitter disappointment.

Here is her own account of her first lesson:

“Then went in to the Arithmetic class. Found the first division doing Proportion! And, oh, such teaching! First question:—‘If cloth is bought for 2s. a yard, at what price must it be sold to gain 25 per cent?’ . . . exhortation following in this style,—‘Now say and exameen carefully’ (*broad* Scotch) ‘I think ye’ll find it need consideration, etc.’ ‘It’s not quite a deerect question, etc., etc.’ ‘Now what will be the third term?’ ‘Stand up the ladies who can answer. What, Miss McCreechie! I think ye’ll hardly tell me, but ye can try, etc., etc.’ And, sure enough, long took this abstruse question to solve.

And such a lesson! No explaining,—some scolding, some shouting,—a good deal of cry and small wool. Then he came to me. ‘Can ye do proportion?’ ‘Yes (!) I want to do Algebra.’ ‘Ay,—but that’ll be Friday. But do ye know Fractions?’ I intimated an idea that I did. He didn’t seem at all to believe it,—‘did I understand them?’ I felt rather absurd and hypocritical, and again said I *did* rather decidedly. However not a bit would he

believe me,—gave me (as a severe test, I suppose)  $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{5}{8}$  to do and explain. Well,—did it! ‘But why?’ I am sure I shall always hereafter have pity on unfortunate examinees pounced upon. The whole thing seemed so absurd,—I was so annoyed.—it seemed so silly standing up by that imp of a Sandy with a slate,—that I very nearly failed to give any rational explanation. However I did somewhat, and he had rather grudgingly to grant, ‘Ay, I see ye know it.’ Then, when I asked him about the Algebra, it seemed he had none but quite beginners (don’t I pity them?) and ‘it wasn’t his subject’! in fact, clearly enough he didn’t know as much as I did. Amazed at my astounding erudition, ‘Where had I learned?’ ‘Oh, in England.’ ‘Ay?’ (very surprised) ‘the English gairls generally come very bad at Arithmetic,—we’ve one just now doesn’t know her tables.’ I laughed out. ‘Well, you mustn’t take her for a specimen.’ He seemed to think that the national average! ‘Ay, but most we’ve had are very bad at it,’ very resolutely. He must be a good judge by the specimen I saw. Well, he kept hovering round me as a sort of strange animal, and told me how the girls changed every year, and how he went through from the First Rules to Decimals as the *ne plus ultra*.”

Clearly there was nothing to be gained here, so next morning she “explained and apologised” to the Principal, and found him “very nice and pleasant.” Her first impulse was to go straight back to London (in fact arrangements were made for her to live with Miss Wodehouse and study at Bedford College) but in the end wiser counsels prevailed. That arithmetic class was not the high-water mark of Edinburgh achievement even as regarded the education of its women. S. J.-B. made the acquaintance of Miss Blyth, who introduced her to Mr. Begbie, Miss de Dreux and others, so she settled down to a varied course of work, living comfortably in lodgings with Alice to “do for her.” To Mr. Begbie she expresses her gratitude over and over again.

“Mathematics not much with S. In answer to Miss de Dreux told the truth. They so nice sensible and honest,—teachers born, ‘without respect of persons’. Mr. Begbie glad to hear truth,—promises me a better far tomorrow. Mr. Weisse a good teacher,—right good. German less formidable than I expected.”

One gathers from the letters that she made an extraordinarily vivid impression on her teachers: several of them refused to take fees, and Mr. Begbie persisted in his refusal.

“Miss de Dreux said my coming and work had given her a fresh impetus and help forward. Isn't that nice?”

On the whole these first months in Edinburgh though she talks afterwards of their “grey pain,” were perhaps the high-water mark of S. J.-B.'s life as regards sheer balance and beauty of living. She was having, it is true, no physical recreation, but, apart from that, her faculties were all called equally into play. She was working steadily and hard, chiefly at her beloved mathematics: her wider reading included *Jane Eyre*, *Le Juif Errant* and *Aids to Faith*: she was profoundly interested in religious problems and conscientiously attended the churches of the best-known Edinburgh ministers: she was happy in her friendships, and still more in the passing beauty of her relation to her Mother: above all, the flame of her religious life—in which was almost merged at this time her devotion to Miss Octavia Hill—was burning with a clearness that made it easy to ignore the little jars and frictions. Even politics were not crowded out. “Daddy is here,” says Mrs. Jex-Blake in one of her letters, “and says, ‘Tell dearest Sophy I would not have the *Times*, which she makes such excellent use of, given up on any account.’”

One cannot read the record of this period of her life without feeling that it was mainly here and now that her character was made,—that it was the resolute determination with which she took to work and stuck to it as the remedy for intolerable heartache—that enabled her in later years to bear the brunt of all she came through.

It is interesting to hear what she herself has to say about the various elements in her life referred to above:

“There never was such a book as *Jane Eyre*—of its kind. Talk of ‘finding’—that finds me through and through continually. How people *dare* speak ill of such a book,—I suppose they simply can't understand it. Its grand steadfastness and earnestness and purity, is something glorious. I read and re-read it as I never could another novel, and how it helps one!”

Again:

“*Aids to Faith* put into my trunk by that dear old Mother who in her weaker moment entertains an uncomfortable kind of desire to proselytize me,—and yet can't be quite dissatisfied.



Immensely interested in *Aids to Faith*. Read Cook's Ideology and Subscription, Brown's 'Inspiration,' and am reading Mansel's 'Miracles.' The last gives me a glimpse of light and clearness I never had before. As far as I have read (and remember *Essays and Reviews*, which I must get) I think this side has it. As to Ideology I don't understand it and don't like to take the whole account from the adverse side (though there seems great fairness and scholarlike equity). As to subscription, I think Cook has it,—I never could heartily sympathize with the other position, though I know it is held by quite good and honest men. I suppose one real question might arise,—Who is to determine the real sense of the Church? For doubtless very grave doubts are found among equally good men.

As to 'Inspiration,' though I like the Essay, I hold more with E. and R. a good deal. Most of all with Coleridge as quoted in *Aids*,—'what finds me' is its own witness, but why impose upon me what is not, because bound in the same covers?"

One finds among her papers brief notes of sermons by Rainy, Candlish, Guthrie and Pulsford, of whom the last appealed to her most.

"The prayers are what I can't manage in the Scottish kirk. 'Other people's' need too much effort to approve or disapprove to leave your spirit free to *pray*. I find more and more the value and *rest* of the Liturgy. . . . Saw Unitarian chapel. Shall I go? Don't expect to be in near such real sympathy as with Church of England. Octa always said so. Bless her!"

For many reasons she was anxious to bring herself into line with the orthodox; she accuses herself of being too ready for an argument with her Calvinistic friends (what earnest spirit is not too ready for an argument at her age?) and at this time she read the Gospels carefully through "with a fresh mind," taking notes that might have a bearing on dogma. If it distressed her to arrive at an unorthodox conclusion, this was mainly because such a conclusion seemed to separate her from those she loved best.

In the meantime she had made the acquaintance of Mr. Pulsford, and had called to have a talk with him about her difficulties.

"Much helpful sympathy and no horror of my questionings (how helpful that is!) but not much direct word gain. I suppose it must be *lived* out. He clearly does hold the Trinity, yet not, I think, as some do. Certainly not the vicarious Atonement. He uses nearly

Maurice's words,—‘ To present humanity perfect to God.’ (I think they are Maurice's.) He believes Christ the man to have been God, but at first in His manhood unconscious of His Godhead. This seems to me very questionable and not clear. However, as I said—and he agreed thoroughly—not being a question of spirit but of history, it is not vital to me now, and living and desiring to know, we *shall* know.

He again spoke strongly of not talking to people who *can't* understand.”

The contrast of the next paragraph in the diary is irresistible :

“ A mouse caught at last. Odd, how it annoys me ! ‘ Shall I drown it, ma'am ? ’ ‘ Oh, let it eat its cheese first ! ’ How Octa'd laugh ! Faugh !—poor little thing, how it struggled for its life,—and how my heart beat ! It was some courage to resolve it shouldn't suffer longer than need be.”

About her friends she has much to say as usual. On March 31st she writes to Cousin Ellie :

“ Now for friends. I think I really may put that word to Dora Burn Murdoch and Margaret Orr, short as the time seems in days since I have known them ; but then days sometimes go for weeks and they have both been so kind to me. ‘ I was a stranger and they took me in.’ [Dora's] charity for others is something quite beautiful, her unconsciousness of other people's inferiority to her,—her width of thought, and power of understanding those differing most widely from herself—most admirable. You never hear her by any chance say a harsh thing, a spiteful thing or a narrow thing,—neither do you ever hear a weak one.”

She speaks many times in her diary of the rest and refreshment derived from visits to Mrs. Burn Murdoch. But she was working too hard, and Mrs. Jex-Blake's letters at this time take on an even deeper note than usual of love, appreciation and solicitude. Varieties of note-paper were not great in those days, so S. J.-B. had possessed herself of a large quantity of common brown envelopes (similar to those used for the delivery of telegrams) in order that her Mother might see at a glance—without putting on her spectacles !—whether the postman had brought the all-important thing. Many are Mrs. Jex-Blake's references to “ the precious brown envelope,” “ the dear brown letters ” ; and well might she prize them.

Indeed one does not know which to admire more,—the painstaking labour with which S. J.-B., at the end of a hard day's work, strove to keep her Mother informed of all she was thinking and doing and trying to do—or the painstaking labour with which her Mother strove to understand and sympathize. She writes at great length about *Jane Eyre*, about the higher education of women, and she enters into her daughter's religious arguments with a largeness of soul that is simply uplifting :

"I expect," she says, "I quoted in commas the very words *you* wrote about the Atonement. The rest was, of course, my able and learned commentary. I *think* I did take your words in your sense, though I couldn't help their *expanding*—you will perhaps say, narrowing,—in my view. He will guide us both into all truth."

The following extracts give some idea how these beautiful letters go on :

May 6th. "I don't think I ever had a letter from you that I did not enjoy and enter into sympathy with, because I never will open them *till* I can enjoy them. Sometimes one has come at dinner time with others when Mr. O. has been here, and he has said,—'Why don't you open the brown letter? I know it interests you.' I answer, 'Just because I can't fully enjoy it'."

May 7th. "You have a glorious field of usefulness before you. No one can guess to what extent you may be permitted to be useful to the generations to come. Plod on; expect rough waves that seem ready to overwhelm your best energies, and almost quench life; but One sitteth above the water floods Who will always bear you through."

May 8th. "My heart's desire is that you should know *the truth of God*, whether it be what I believe or not, and that I should know it too." (Previously she had written,—"I was thinking today how surely God would guide you into all truth,—this text confirming the thought,—'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'")

I think my cup of blessing would be fuller than I could bear did *we two* fully agree on that which must be all-absorbing and by far the most interesting of subjects. Though C. and I essentially agree, we cannot communicate with each other—our natures are so different. I don't think I do her justice or fully understand her."

May 9th. We do well to struggle against that weary powerless feeling, because, given way to, it might overcome all power of energy,

but I quite believe it is sometimes part of appointed discipline, and it is no use to quarrel with ourselves for it. Still I do incline to believe in your present case it proceeds from exhaustion of the nervous system, occasioned by a shock struggled against with all your power. You will be better when Dora is back, and you get real interchange of thought and loving sympathy. God bless her for giving it to my darling. Try not to allow yourself to think on getting up,—‘How long will it be before I lie down to rest again?’ Remember you desire to give yourself to service, though not so active just now, for others. Remember as a help how many bless you for having sped them on their way. Your want just now is someone to be helped and braced for usefulness.”

(“Never fail,” writes Mr. Jex-Blake, “to tell me of any case you know of like that of the suffering governess; it is blessed to receive in such cases, but doubly blessed to give.”)

May 10th. “Own darling, you write me such charming long letters, you quite spoil me. . . . I suppose your work in Edinburgh has been very intense while it lasted, and proportionately exhausting,—and then you don’t, as a schoolboy does, get any reaction the other way. You have no one to play with,—no positive recreation. I always think the games and perpetual ‘outings’ in public schools such a fine arrangement; and then an Oxonian or Cantab. has his boat or his ride, My darling has positively nothing. Don’t little one overwork herself: such concentration of thought as you give in one hour is very exhausting.”

May 11th. “I fear it is impossible for me fully to appreciate your child, and, even had you done differently, I question whether she and I ever would have got at each other, but I *quite* believe in the noble-heartedness you speak of. I would with avidity seize any opening she offered, but I fear she will not make it. In the present distortion of vision, she is more likely to suppose I am inclined to alienate you from her. Had your’s been a common friendship, I should have thought it possible that ‘Art might conceal too much,’ but she knows you in spite of all your faults and independently of them,—and surely the wine was a messenger of love. You *dared* not have sent it had you not been bound up in her.”

On a previous occasion Mrs. Jex-Blake had written on this subject:

“How very remarkable and interesting is Mr. Pulsford’s statement about valued friends apparently lost for a time. I had no idea that your’s was a case that ever occurred,—I mean of increased love—a stronger, deeper, truer love: it is really very grand.” “I

fancy I like 'Sorrow' better than 'Fidelis,'<sup>1</sup> but the latter is wonderfully your picture. I can scarcely grasp it, though I wonder and admire."

May 13th. "I have nearly finished *Jane Eyre*, and like much of it exceedingly. What I object to is the personal handling she allows . . . and, grand as her conduct is, she marries a man of very exceptionable conduct, and who to the last had a relish for swearing. . . . I think she makes St. John very unfairly disagreeable,—his icy coldness very unnatural. . . ."

May 15th. "Well, darling, you and I must wait to talk it out about *Jane Eyre*. I shall never be able to write it out. It appears to me you have built up a wall to knock down.<sup>2</sup> I don't at all ask a different code of morals for men and women. But I do wish a woman to be refined and pure, not because I am conventional, but because I think it essential to self-respect and dignity. . . . I don't believe high-toned governesses fall in love with their employers. . . . I think it *very cruel* upon the race of governesses to put it into people's heads they are to fall in love. I always, since I took a district in 1836 felt the tenderest, most motherly pity for any misguided girl. . . . I certainly never did or will read impure things in books or newspapers. I consider familiarity with impurity rubs the bloom off the plum, which never can be restored. Minds differ, some almost enjoy to read queer things. Impurity does not seem to me to find any response in you: you can come in contact and it runs off like quicksilver—leaves no print. I don't think that is common."

"A letter from Elinor. She talks of enjoying your letters so much. . . . I am very glad Plumtre has sent you a testimonial you like. I fully expected he would send (if asked) a *very* handsome one.

The world has many kind hearts, has it not?—none like my own child."

And again, talking of a sermon she had heard:

"I thought of my precious child when he pictured a strong character with exceeding depth of tenderness and gentleness."

One understands more and more fully the fervour with which S. J.-B. was wont to say in her later years,—“No one ever had such parents as mine!” “How I *wish* you had known my mother!”

One naturally treats S. J.-B.'s religious life at this time as something apart from her questionings about dogma, for

<sup>1</sup> Poems by A. A. Procter.

<sup>2</sup> The letter has not been preserved.

indeed the two belonged to different categories of her being. The following is one of the few letters of this period that have been preserved :

8 p.m. March 17th, 1862.

" DARLING MOTHER,—I know you care to hear all your child's thoughts and hopes and feelings,—I know you will not condemn for conceit and egotism what might seem so to other people.

I want to talk to you,—I feel so sure you want to hear. I want to tell you what a glorious Strength and Power has come out of all the sharp pain,—how I feel that I am a better person, a stronger and more real one, than I ever was before. . . .

Some one says that it is ' not pain undergone but pain accepted ' that bears fruit an hundredfold. You know the acceptance has not been easy,—you know sometimes the flints have cut my feet deep enough, but thank God for two things—I never for any single moment lost the absolute certainty of Infinite Love and Wisdom ' brooding over the face of the waters,'—the certainty of my Father's arms around me,—and secondly that no suffering or pain could shake the love that has never been half so strong, so real, so ideal, so unselfish as now. I doubt if I ever half knew what being a friend was before,—I think I have earned the knowledge now—some of it.

And, Mother, about my work. I cannot tell you the strong exulting feeling that seems to set God's seal to my work, in that through all the personal agony I have held firm to *that*: at no moment, I believe, would I have purchased what I longed for most on earth at the price of that,—that I have felt through all ' The light may be taken out of my life (and thank God how far that is from being so!) but the object never can ! ' Don't you know how the lines that reminded us of the oath upon our head, that bade us ' never again our loins untie, or let our torches waste or die ' was the strong helpful thing through it all.

And though I did believe in myself—and *thou* ever didst believe in me, Mother!—yet so long as my work ' walked in silken shoon ' and lay side by side with the pleasantest life possible for me, there was a certain thought about fair weather sailing,—a certain (not doubt, but) diffidence in looking on to the time of breakers,—a feeling as of David, ' I have not *proved* them.' But now I feel that I have come to the proof,—that my armour has not failed in the battle,—something the sure happy confidence (farthest of all from presumption) ' I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' You can't think how it ' heartened ' me (you know that nice old word ?) to find that truly as well as verbally my work does hold the first place. . . .

I am beginning to have hope, Mother! If I only suffer enough—and I don't believe mine will ever be a smooth or easy life—I may yet be fit to *be* the head for which I am looking so earnestly. . . .'

But all seems centred in the one thought, 'Lead Thou me on!'—or rather, not 'me' but 'us,'—all the wanderers.

Yours very lovingly,  
SOPH."

Not that S. J.-B. was ever conventional even in her religion. Here is a characteristic extract from the diary of the same period :

" You never have the common honesty, Jack, in this most private journal (they say hardly anyone *has*) to put down the thought if it crosses your mind ' Well, I think I am rather a fine fellow ' or its equivalent. Because it never comes? Oh, dear your precious ' humility ' ! I wish Miss W. could look into you :—*do* you? Not you, you humbug !

' Well, but,' (retorts S. J.-B. accused) ' I *do* work with a single purpose,—I *have* tried very hard, and, am sure, succeeded somewhat in this hard battle of these months,—what is the good of pretending to call myself names? Did not Job ' maintain his integrity ' ?

You coward! You must skulk behind Job. Looks respectable, does it? Say honestly ' I do try harder than some people do,' for in truth I believe that is all your conceit does amount to.

I know from my heart I do recognize and reverence holiness and purity as far above mine as Snowden to a mole-hill. And *is* that conceit? I don't believe it is. No,—' Not guilty, S. J.-B.' Plead boldly, and don't give in for shamefacedness. And besides you have no right to deny His triumph ' Who giveth us the victory,'—by fighting modest on the sham. You *have* won some victories. Thank God quietly, and pressing on to the things before. ' I press towards the mark.' God knows—and *you* know—there are enough to win. Oh, *how* far away lies doing even what is our ' duty to do.' But I don't know that the realest soundest life limits itself to calling itself ' miserable sinner.' Zacchaeus told Christ what he tried to do. He did not rebuke him as man does and say, ' No, believe yourself utterly vile (for the glory of your Maker?) '

There,—go to bed, S. J.-B."

A few days later she recurs—as often—to the broken friendship :

" . . . Well, I note markedly how, with all this light, all this growth,—respecting the suffering—(and I think all this would have brought a ' right judgement ' too) I do not swerve one iota from my

judgement of *facts*. I cannot conceive it one hairsbreadth more possible that any but a mental cloud can have worked in the way it has,—that under any possible circumstances my child, with her glorious nature and heart, can have acted as her image has. . . .<sup>1</sup>

But while I have at last manfully and honestly and cheerily faced the possibility of never seeing her again on earth—while I believe my loins are girded for the way quite irrespective of any future fate regarding her and me—while, having put my hand to the plough, God shall grant me grace never to look back even for her (who, God knows, is far enough before me) never to linger irresolute with thoughts that should and shall urge me to double speed,—yet it is curious how the whole fashion of my life shapes itself with the *arrière-pensée* of being ready for her ‘at midnight or cock-crowing or in the morning,’—saving with the thought of her as well as myself,—looking at every path as it opens to see that it is wide enough to tread together if she joins me ere its end,—making the most of the working time now that a pause of rest may fall due whenever she comes to claim the ‘moon.’

And I think, could she see my thoughts, my plans, my work, my resolves, she would not have them otherwise.”

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<sup>1</sup> More than a year later Miss Hill wrote: “I wonder if it would be any comfort to you if you could know the infinite love the thought of you, specially of any pain of yours, calls up . . . how passionately do I cling to a like trust in you that your pain may not be tenfold increased . . . by any sense of desertion in spirit. . . . And yet, Sophy, this thought of me must fail you as time goes on, for you cannot see why I act as I do. . . . My love will be ready for you when He who is teaching us both shall bring us together again.”



## CHAPTER X

### GERMANY

It was perhaps well that an interesting new factor came into S. J.-B.'s life at this moment. Miss Elizabeth Garrett (afterwards Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D.) had made up her mind to be a doctor, and, in the teeth of many difficulties and much opposition, was striving to obtain the requisite education and prospect of examination. A great effort had been made to get the examinations of London University opened to women, but the resolution (brought forward by Mr. Grote) had been negatived by the casting vote of the chairman—the vehement feeling shown by the opposition being, in the opinion of the proposer, quite out of proportion with the cogency of the arguments brought forward.

Miss Garrett had been in correspondence with S. J.-B. for some time as to the nature of the prospects in Edinburgh, in case London University should fail, and after talking the matter over with Mr. Begbie and other friends, S. J.-B. urged her to “come and see.” Small prevision had anyone concerned of all that they were to see in Edinburgh a few years later.

“Miss Garrett and her strength!” writes S. J.-B. in her diary on May 19th, “making me break the 10th commandment. She doing Trigonometry, Optics, etc. Running where I crawl!”

And on the 20th :

“Today Miss Garrett's business. Wrote about ‘Commission.’ Twice to [Royal] Circus with very sore feet. Mrs. Darts, friend of Lord Ardmillan. Lady Monteith (Lord Advocate). Argyle. Hope she will come. It will be everything to have her to help a little if I can.”

"May 29th. E. G. coming tomorrow,—sent her off a telegram this afternoon in case she might stay another day for the report I promised, and so lose tomorrow's appointment with Balfour, whom I saw today with that splendid man, Begbie, who went down last night and this morning with me, and is to arrange with Newbiggin tonight for an appointment for her. My sore foot quite lame and not helpful for this bustle. However I believe I shall have done a bit of real work for her, and, as I said to Begbie, if there *are* such people, ready to face such an ordeal let's help them in God's name. One great obstacle the (sometimes) 'faux air' of consideration for ladies' delicacy. People don't seem to see how that is *her* affair. Besides she *has* faced it: it's a day too late."

How familiar all this talk was to become some half dozen years later!

Miss Garrett remained in Edinburgh for a fortnight, and during that period the canvassing went on. Mr. Burn Murdoch used to say that, when the two young women went about, interviewing great ladies and important citizens, considerable surprise was expressed that Miss Jex-Blake was not the applicant. She was so tall and high-spirited, with great flashing dark eyes, while the real heroine was small and almost pretty, and fair.

Strangely enough, S. J.-B. was not at all fired at this time by Miss Garrett's example. She meant to be a teacher, and medicine as a profession did not tempt her in the least. She had her doubts even about the value to herself of a University degree in Arts (supposing it could be had!) although Miss Garrett and Miss Emily Davies were both anxious that she should be of their number. "Chiefly I want you to make up your mind to obtain the University degree," writes Miss Garrett. "You are one of the few who could do so pretty soon, and it would take most women a year and a half or two years to prepare for the Matriculation."

In any case the opportunity did not arise. The following letter to Mrs. Burn Murdoch explains the situation:

"June 21st, 1862.

DEAREST DORA,

I do not know whether we are to look upon the result of the Physicians' meeting most as a defeat or as a triumph,—the motion 'to consider the question of admitting Miss Garrett' was negatived

by 18 votes to 16,—very disappointing as regards immediate results, but very much as a victory for the principle, just as at London University. You see they have *not* refused to admit,—only postponed the question indefinitely, so that, when time and opinion have been brought to bear, they can again entertain it without inconsistency.

In the meantime the expedition to St. Andrews was very successful,—Dr. Day and Principal Tulloch were both warmly favourable, and it seems quite probable that Miss Garrett would be admitted to the University there,—only unfortunately you see there is no medical school there, and so it would be but half a solution to the difficulties as she couldn't get 'nice little subjects'<sup>1</sup> there. . . .

I have only just come to anchor after some 36 hours' incessant trotting about, etc., so I daresay my intellects are 'even weaker than usual' as C. A. would say.

I suppose I may now thank you again on paper for all your help, dear Dora. You can't cough me down so conveniently. You don't know how much you have helped me through.

Yours affectly,

S. L. J.-B.

Previously to this decision, S. J.-B. had published sensible letters on the subject in *The Scotsman*, *The Daily Review* and other papers. She also drafted an amusing letter in reply to her own, supposed to have been written by one of the retrogressive "unco guid."

"Well, it was grand fun," she says in her diary, "and, if it had got in, might have played very well; but the chief temptation was the immense fun it would be. E. G. and I both thought we could command our faces. Her sister opposed, but we agreed, 'No harm. We don't sign to it,—and it's what some might say; and, if the *Review* puts it in, it's their look-out. It's so weak, it can't do harm that way. She said, 'Don't let me know about it.' I said she was very much like 'Tom, steal the apple, and I'll have half.'

Well, we agreed to send it and no harm done. I went to bed. I wasn't quite content, yet I didn't see any exact wrong,—and it was *such* fun! . . .

Then somehow those dear eyes fixed themselves on me and I felt their sad grieved look. I can't, I can't,—they would grieve,—'Oh, Sophy!'

<sup>1</sup> Talking of the difficulties in the way of Practical Anatomy, someone had suggested that Miss Garrett should get 'nice *little* subjects.'

For a minute I went back,—‘Nonsense, no harm,’—then—

‘Let all thy converse be sincere,  
Thy conscience as the noonday clear,’

and those words ‘righteous altogether’ rang in my ears. . . .

I went out to the sitting-room and sat down to write, and my first words to E. G. were, ‘Oh, I’ve annihilated the Review paper; it’s not righteous altogether.’ She said instantly, ‘No, I’ve been thinking in the night. I was going to advise you not to send it.’

My darling would be glad. God *bless* her!”

“‘Let all thy converse be sincere’: ‘and righteous altogether.’”

A real fighting life lay before S. J.-B.—a life in which she received and gave hard blows, and lost sight sometimes in the dust and turmoil—as a fighter must—of the right on the adversary’s side; but the words quoted above were the rock on which she built her achievement. One sees now that often when lawyers and other well-wishers thought her candid to the point of stupidity, she was simply determined that her converse should be sincere, simply striving to be righteous altogether.

Her great desire for years had been to fit herself for the work of a teacher, to found—or assist at the founding of—a wonderful college and (as the very height of her ambition) to be perhaps herself the headmistress. As she had planned Sackermena of old, so now she drafted detailed schemes of work, organization, finance. Such schemes, however, have been so much more than realized by the work of others that it is useless to quote them. She took a keen interest in the school at Bettws-y-Coed, offered prizes, set delightful examination papers in general knowledge, and wrote stimulating letters to some of the elder girls. Long before this she had written in her diary:

“Read the account of the College in Ohio for both sexes. Well, ‘Be thou but fit for the wall, and thou *shall not* be left in the way.’ I do trust some day to graduate there or elsewhere. But still the great thing is *to be able*; the actual fact matters little.”

The reader will recall, too, the letter to her Mother:

“I am beginning to have hope, Mother! If I only suffer enough,—and I don’t believe mine will ever be a smooth or easy life,—I may yet some day be fit to *be* the head for which I am looking so earnestly.”

Any girl in the present day who was fired with such enthusiasm would have countless advisers ready and anxious to give the necessary guidance. How different things were in S. J.-B.'s girlhood may be gathered from the facts of her pilgrimage to Edinburgh and search for education there. She wanted now to go farther afield—to study the state of women's education in France and Germany, and—after some considerable hesitation—her Mother supported her in this desire. To her father, however, the feminist point of view remained a sealed book—"Truly to him," she says at this time, "my whole life is as the 'sight of dancers to him who heareth not the music,'"—and many objections on his part had to be overcome. Germany was so far away, and France was peopled with Roman Catholics on the look-out to pervert Protestant girls.

"While you are so young," writes Mrs. Jex-Blake, "there will be a fearful struggle to make Daddy bear your going abroad. We belong to a Society for Governesses to protect them when they go for the language,—young women have been sorely tried by *bad* R.C.s to make them perverts or corrupt them. And he has heard so much of this that Germany would be less terrible to him than Paris."

"Written to Mummy at length about Germany," she says. "Oh, the weary kind of languor that deprecates work and talk! It seems almost too much to have to do what is so hard, and to have, too, to justify it to others."

The letter to her Mother has been preserved :

"May 1st 1862.

DARLING MOTHER,

. . . I had hoped that Germany was an accepted fact,—not only to you, but to my Father, as at his (or your ?) wish I took that before France, and at your's before America.

I believe, my darling, that I am trying to look simply and earnestly at my life simply as an instrument for my work,—and shaping the one to serve the other.

I have long formed the conviction (which daily experience and the opinion of others strengthens) that best of all now for my object will be the devotion of years to the observation of other systems and the endeavour to glean everywhere materials for my future edifice. I believe that my work has come definitely before me as early as it did, with the express intention that I should make this use of years which later I could never recall.

It seems to me the simplest verbal expression of the presenting our lives a holy sacrifice, as is our reasonable service, to say,—God has, I believe, given me this work. I have certain qualifications and facilities for it. I will give up my life first to perfect those qualifications and then to use them as He shows me how. So now my whole intention and bent is to go anywhere in the world where, as it seems to me on sufficient grounds, I may expect to learn most for my work,—to learn what will make me myself a better scholar and to learn what will most help me to organize (if organization falls to my lot) a better system here in England.

If I am myself to be the head, I will make myself as good a one, God helping me, as He has put in my nature the material to make,—if I am to be a servant I will certainly be as thorough and complete a one as is in my utmost power. I do from the bottom of my heart pray God that on no failure may be written, 'Had I worked more earnestly, more wisely, more diligently,—this had been avoided.'

You know, Mother, the purpose of my life,—you know the consecration, as I trust, of every power to one aim,—you have helped me nobly, gloriously to keep it in view,—you have told me that 'manfully to fight under His banner' is more blessed than 'dreaming out life even on Mother's shoulder' . . .

Well, Mother, you know my object, you know my hope. Look for yourself and tell me if you see for its fulfilment any course to be adopted rather than the one which seems to me marked out. Look at the work and that alone. Look at my life merely as the instrument,—see how it may best be turned to account,—most solemnly it is my deepest desire to arrive at a true answer.

What could I be doing that would as readily and as really forward my aim? In what way could I as usefully devote my time and power?

I believe most earnestly that it is not to any one plan or scheme of my own that I cling,—show me anything better for my work—show me anything even that you yourself think as good for it (looking at it only) and I am willing, renouncing every present thought, to take the new into deep consideration, and trust to the guidance of the Light to show me which is my appointed path.

But take the question by itself,—satisfy yourself whether you think I have judged rightly, as at least I have striven to judge honestly,—and, if you arrive at my own conclusion I think you will feel that *that* is the only important thing,—that if we are enabled to 'perceive and know what things we ought to do' we shall also surely be given 'power faithfully to fulfil the same.'

As I have said often before, if you and my Father ever need me at home,—ever even desire my presence there,—I will relinquish for the time everything to that which I am sure God would have

me hold my highest and dearest duty,—But I believe nothing else on earth must be suffered to come between me and my work, and, please God, nothing shall.

I see ' my Father's business ' clearly before me,—help me, Mother, wholly to consecrate my life as I would wish, to it.

As to all questions of detail, I think, darling, you need not be disturbed or anxious. Acting rightly, I am quite sure I shall be always cared for far more than I deserve. I think you have, and may have entire confidence in my practical common sense,—I think I have already shown that I am not very likely to get into difficulties. You have trusted me a great deal, Mother, have you had to repent it ?

You may be sure that I shall strive my utmost to do wisely as well as rightly—indeed the one cannot be without the other. I think, moreover, you will be almost certainly satisfied with my plans and arrangements,—I am sure I have ' caution ' strongly developed. And, though it may seem more new to you, I am very unlikely to find in my new life as difficult circumstances as those in which I have already had to act. I think that you may have confidence that I know you trust me, and that I shall not fail your trust. I think you may believe that I shall know and think of your wishes.

Then, as to any anxiety for myself. You have said much to me in the trials of the last months which I would ask you to repeat to yourself. You have told me to trust my darling in perfect faith to ' Him who keepeth Israel ' and whose love you tell me is deeper and truer than mine. Can you not trust me to Him too ?

I think there were some circumstances which there are not here, which did not make it easier.

And in truth, Mother, what is there to fear ? If God (as I believe) needs my life to do a work for Him, He will surely keep it safely till that work is accomplished. If He does not, wherefore should one live ? Could you regret for anyone you loved that they ' in youth should find their rest ' ? When one feels completely how each of us is a link in God's great chain,—how individual life and care sink out of sight, as hardly worthy notice. How one feels the whole object and end of life to be that God's will should be done in us and by us in life and in death.

And whether in one or the other matters so little. . . .

You see, Mother, I have had very much lately to realise all this ;—that time and distance,—that all severance—are things of time—and shall be cast into the lake of fire. That now we have to do God's work, . . . that here we are not even to look for the fruition. . . .

I have to cling very very earnestly now to principles,—I cannot see for myself,—my teachers are removed out of my sight,—I can

only cling to the belief which is above and beyond all that that very sight and those very teachers were but instruments of the great Guide,—and that now without them, as before with them, ‘the Lord alone doth lead him.’ As I said this morning, so it seems to me tonight the root and fountain of everything ‘The Lord reigneth, —let the earth rejoice.’

Yours very lovingly,

SOPH.”

It is not to be supposed—nor desired—that all her letters to her Mother were on such a plane. Doubtless the weary flesh and spirit found expression often enough.

Of course that wonderful mother-heart never failed in sympathy, though naturally the Mother’s mind did not know what the strain of a modern woman’s life meant in those early days when circumstances were all unadapted to meet the new demand. “Little darling shall have all the rest I can help her to,” she writes about this time, “for greatly does her troubled spirit need it.”

And for a few weeks S. J.-B. really settled down to a restful time at home. “I am just now chiefly living in the garden and stable in my waking life,” she writes to Miss Lucy Walker, “but there is a sufficient portion *not* included in that.”

Meanwhile Miss de Dreux had recommended a family at Göttingen, who would be glad to have an English boarder, and S. J.-B. arranged to go to them. To the last moment before leaving home she was occupied in trying to persuade the mother of a sick friend to let the invalid accompany her, in the hope that change of air and scene might check the course of a mortal malady. One cannot be altogether sorry—nor surprised—that the mother refused.

So S. J.-B. started alone on July 21st, and crossed from London to Antwerp. “Delicious, cool and pleasant passage—smooth and comfortable. Beds on deck in a kind of room knocked up under the ‘bridge.’ Quaint night,—with crashing machinery, flashing lights, rough voices,—altogether weird and quaint.”

The choice of adjectives is curious, as it was not till many years later that “weird” and “quaint” became the stock adjectives in the vocabulary of the young.



She spent the night at Cologne, and went on next day to Hanover and thence to Göttingen. She was pleased with her quarters, her hostess, and her reception. What the family thought of her is another question, to which the records furnish no answer; for she was still feeling worn-out in body and mind, and nature simply insisted on a rest cure. She seems to have made little effort even to learn the language, much to the amazement of the elder daughter, who had enjoyed the advantage of a conscientious visit to England. So weary, indeed, was S. J.-B. that she actually chronicles the "great blessing" of being freed from Sundays for a while—of having rest all days, and "Calvinism, separation, none."

"How peacefully came over me today 'One sweetly solemn thought' as they sat talking (I knew but a word or two) of someone found dead. How uncongenial A.P.'s remark, 'I find these so sudden deaths awful.' What she thought I don't know, but I could not but say, 'Oh, no!—going home?'"

August 18th. Everybody going 'zu reisen,'—Rhine, Harz, everywhere. Ah, childie, if you would only come quickly, we could have such a tour!—Alps,—Mont Blanc,—Geneva,—Venice, wherever you would; in a few weeks it will be too late. Too late! For *that*. But truly all is 'in the fulness of time,' and could we see and know, even our restless impatience would not hurry it. . . .

As to money, well enough. I really expect to clear £20 of my allowance this quarter. I have that and about £1. 15s. in hand for stamps, washing and wine to the end of the quarter, besides £9 for rent. How jealously I do watch it! Really between my tour, my E.E.U.,<sup>1</sup> and my distant college, I must look out that I don't turn into a miser in earnest! I get such a trick of watching and scraping halfpence! And yet I don't believe I should grudge them either if need were.

And one must look to pence if one would do anything with pounds.

Still, I believe of the two I have really more to look out against 'nearness' than extravagance. I was right enough when I told Frid (that poor little darling, I am sure her's are 'vicarious sufferings')<sup>2</sup> that she need never fear my spending ½d. I did not see my way to.

<sup>1</sup> Englishwoman's Educational Union,—a society planned by S. J.-B., which should form a meeting ground for really qualified teachers, and also a means of registration.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Miranda Hill's loyalty and devotion to S. J.-B. never flagged.

I expect, with my work, this is perhaps a fitness for it,—a surety against a great danger. . . .

"Today Lina and I reading English. Frau brought a young man out, and Lina shut up all books at once—for the benefit of his remarks, I suppose. I, rather wiath, took up Rawlinson."

During these weeks of comparative idleness, S. J.-B. was making enquiries as to a place where she could profitably study the position of the education of girls in Germany. Finally she applied for the post of English teacher in the Grand Ducal Institute at Mannheim.

As the Institution had embarked on a policy of strict retrenchment and economy, this was refused, but she had quite made up her mind to become an inmate in some capacity (as an ordinary pupil if necessary) and finally she set out without announcing her intention, in a fashion that recalls an adventure in the life of Lucy Snow in *Villette*.<sup>1</sup> The condensed account of this in her diary could scarcely be bettered :

"Sept. 13th. Saturday.<sup>2</sup> Left Göttingen at 5 a.m. with pleasant gifts from the children, and the famous glass knife from Frau B.

The morning cold, dank and misty,—darker than mornings are here even yet, I think. As we came south, perceptible increase of heat, till, leaving a cold autumn at Göttingen, we found a hot summer at Frankfurt. Went to Pfälzer Hof,—clean, cheap, and civil. Had a bedroom opening on a balcony, and very good night considering,—though, as I lay down, the venture rose strongly before me,—quite alone,—without counsel,—having come 200 miles to a place which had already refused me,—with the slender chance of personal representation prevailing,—uncertain, even if accepted, whether I could do the work,—in fact feeling strongly 'not knowing whither I went' yet trusting, like Abraham, I 'went forth'. So fell asleep, seeing all perplexities, yet laying my head very softly on the pillow, 'Oh, Lord, in Thee have I trusted : let me never be confounded !'

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Jex-Blake writes about this time,—“I feel such a real sympathy for the English teacher—Lucy Snow—it is quite a pity you haven't it with you—I think your Institut and the Park and Ducal Palace tally very well with *Villette*. Fortunately you have no male tyrant like Monsieur Paul,—do you remember Miss Lucie being locked into an attic, with beetles, a rat, and possibly a ghost :—to learn in a few hours a part in a play ?”

<sup>2</sup> The account is really written some weeks later, as there was great delay in the arrival of the box in which she had packed her diary.

Well, I slept long,—breakfasted deliciously in my room,—dressed in black silk, etc., with no end of care, wrote a little note to Mother, almost to the beating of my own heart all the time.

Frl. E. had promised to come at 11. I waited till 12,—then came Frl. H. and Frl. M. Walked with them to the Institut,—was shown into the 'parloir' and left. They fetched me again,—walked round the square garden with its high convent walls<sup>1</sup> (oh, how I remember those white berries!) Then out came Frl. von Palaus with her fine port and clear good eyes, and round hat. I told her how I wanted to study German education, and wished so much to enter here.

She asked 'mes conditions'. 'Moi, je n'en ai pas, Mlle.' She would 'parler aux autres dames.'

Marie M. was to show me the house. Then in Miss von Palaus' room :—

'Would I come again at four?' 'Certainly'. Then a series of warnings for my own comfort:—'Very simple here.' 'I most happy to hear it.' 'Very plain little room.' 'I am no sybarite.' 'Mixed communions.' 'I only ask toleration for myself, and am most willing to give it.' 'But as to money!' I leave it entirely to them,—any arrangement of theirs I agree to. Enfin I said I was sure to be more than content. I had no fears.

'Would I stay and dine?' 'Very gladly.' 'Very plain food.' I was no epicure, and sure to be pleased. So the result was, in fine, that I have never dined anywhere else since, and find my prophecy well fulfilled.

After dinner talked to the governesses; they said how comfortable they were. I thought, 'I only wish I were in your shoes,' for I had only asked to come *anyhow*, as pupil or anything. Then Frl. von Gruben came from Frl. von Palaus:—A teacher (a Frl. von Endert) was absent from illness for 6 months (was it not wonderful?) would I take her place?—but (as the Institution was only just struggling straight again after its shocks) without salary? 'Very gladly.' How my heart leaped, though I spoke very quietly. What a chance for saving, if not gaining, money,—literally to earn my bread. Now I could hope for money for my E.E.U., for the £50 for Christmas /63,—perhaps for Bettws school,—perhaps for a tour!

Well, again I saw Frl. von Palaus,—her face had satisfied me from the first. 'Did I quite understand? Was I willing to have no salary and no expense?' 'Very gladly.'

So off I went at 4 p.m., gay as a lark. Settled my bill, got a cab, and by 5 p.m. (less than 24 hours from my arrival) was established in my little cell at the G.D.I., Mannheim!—'au comble de mes vœux.' Thank God!

<sup>1</sup> The building had originally been a monastery.

And now I have been here nearly a month,—already established as if for years, in full sunshine of content.

At work again! And, thank God, with such strength for it! A new sap and strength in all my veins,—my heart in songs of gladness.

The heavy burden seems to have rolled away,—the sting and bitterness quite gone; strength and power returned to my hand,—colour and brightness to my life. Again I understand 'the thrill, the leap, the gladness'—again the sunshine has broken over earth. Now I go up and down the long corridors, catching with my hand at a great beam, in 'superfluous energy' again, (my darling!)—a smile over my whole face as I think I will tell her of my life in this weird old monastery—young bounding life all around—I myself no longer 'going softly'.

'Thank God! Thank God!' I can say nothing else."

## CHAPTER XI

### LIFE AS A TEACHER AT MANNHEIM

To her Mother she writes :

“Sept. 15th, 1862.

MY OWN DARLING,

Though I must now be rather more economical of space (for I can send but  $\frac{1}{4}$  instead of  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz) I cannot resist beginning a fresh letter to you, having but just posted my last, with one also to Daddy. I am afraid Mr. Bevan must be again disappointed to learn that there is still no kind of prospect of starvation for me,—quite the contrary.

I will tell you our plans as far as I know them yet. We get up, as you know, at 5.30 a.m., breakfast at 6.30, begin work at 7. At 10 we have bread handed round, then at one we dine, very well, I think. . . . At 3 we teachers (!) have cups of coffee, and at 5 or 6 some grapes before going out for a walk. At 6 tea (or perhaps at 7) and then at 8.30 a regular meat supper. So you see we are not so *very* badly off,—indeed it seems to me to be something going all day almost ! . . .

Mother, I can't lie down without telling you of the very beautiful, soothing influence one thing has (perhaps unexpectedly) over me. I mean the perfect lovingness and charity in which we all of such opposite faiths live together, and have just knelt and prayed together. There seems to me something so inexpressibly touching and happy in it,—everyone seems so loving to the rest, so far from cavilling for 'words and names': each so absolutely free and all so far from seeking to proselytize. At meals we stand round the table,—'Nous voulons prier, mesdemoiselles,' and in silence everyone together thanks God 'in his own tongue',—one marking only that some cross themselves silently and some do not. Then at night we kneel together,—we have a fine loving German hymn, and a text for us all,—words lovingly pronounced by our Roman Catholic head that yet every Presbyterian minister might say. There seems

to me something so inexpressibly soothing in this union,—so far stronger than all differences. I can hardly tell you the rest and refreshment it is to me now, worn and weary as my spirit is. It struck me very much in its beauty tonight as Miss von Palaus pronounced,—‘There is but one name given under heaven among men whereby we may be saved’, and we all received it on our knees,—Protestants and Romanists, Unitarians and Trinitarians,—each ‘in his own tongue.’ Was it not beautiful how just that name bound us all together,—Christians,—seeking at least the spirit of Christ who loved us’ all,—our Master,—that we might ‘love one another’ . . .

I am charmed to learn the Scotch girl, Janet McDonald, has learned both Latin and Algebra,—both wonderful acquirements here,—and I look forward to perhaps doing some work with her, if she gets on well enough with other things.

2 p.m. Tuesday. The politeness of these girls is really quite refreshing. Last night, going up to my room after dark, there were several girls at the candle-stand, and, when I asked for a candle, one of them lighted one, and, with a reverence and ‘Permettez-moi, mademoiselle,’ carried it the whole way upstairs for me in spite of my efforts to get hold of it,—it being quite out of her way. . . .

7 p.m. Well, Mother darling, I wonder if you can sympathize in my intense exaltation and delight at the—for the first time in my life—literally *earning my bread*,—something like ‘My First Penny’, you know. I have had my ‘surveillance de musique’, but am longing quite childishly for the commencement of my special work,—I see teaching all around, and am just wild to be at it. Can Mother understand and sympathize?

Thursday 18th. My letter at last. I have been several times to the post in hopes of it. . . . Today I have had one lesson, and am just going to give another,—delicious! It’s really like oats to a horse who has been kept a year on hay. Miss Garrett was right enough when she said, ‘Get teaching!’ I quite laugh at myself to feel how radiant I am with delight at being again in harness.”

To Miss Walker she writes :

“Sept. 22nd. 1862.  
Mannheim.

DEAR LUCY,

You will, I think, already have heard from my Mother that I *cannot* now offer myself to accompany L. to Paris. I do not know if you are aware that three weeks ago I wrote to Mrs. B., urging her, as strongly as I knew how, ‘to entrust L. to me for the winter, and

offering to take her to any part of Europe which was thought best. I believe, at Mrs. Z.'s entreaty, Mrs. B. did consult some medical man on the subject, but I am sorry to say they confirmed her resolution of 'keeping her under her own eye'—of course not understanding, as you and I think we do, all the circumstances.

I therefore got so decided a refusal that even I felt further entreaty to be useless, and, giving up the point, I entered at once into a six months' engagement as English Teacher at the Grand Ducal Institution at Mannheim, where I have now been just a week, and therefore, of course, no further change is now in my power as regards my own movements. . . .

I am much pleased on the whole with the kind of tone I find between teachers and pupils, and with the general principles, which, if not the very highest, are yet greatly superior to what you find in most English boarding schools.

By the bye, before I say Goodbye, I must tell you what horror my open window at night (even now) occasions the natives! Having violent headache some time back, an old servant assured me it was 'the window', and since I have been here I have been entertained with the account of a gentleman who went mad, as I understand, entirely from sleeping with an open window! So now you see the fate before you as well as me! Besides that, the doctor here (more shame for him) assures me I shall get a fever!

Goodbye, dear Lucy. Remember me to the B.s when you write.

Yours very sincerely,

S. L. JEX-BLAKE."

And again to her Mother :

"Sept. 30th. 1862.

MY OWN DARLING,

. . . It amuses me very much as a proof of how soon a habit is acquired (and also, I think, an evidence that it suits me very well indeed) to find that now, and indeed for a week past at least, I always wake of myself just at 5.30 a.m.,—usually just 5 or 10 minutes before I am called.<sup>1</sup> I wasn't wrong about my power of adaptability, was I, Mother? Indeed I thrive greatly on hours, fare and all other circumstances; I have not been so strong for many months,—indeed now it is just a year. What a strange, grey, weird year! . . .

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<sup>1</sup> She did not always find this quite so easy. On October 17th she writes in her diary! "Being all but late this morning, it is decreed that for one week from this time S. J-B. rises every morning while the stroke of the half hour and minute hand are 'one and the same straight line.'

"Now, Resolution :"

It is scarcely necessary to say that Resolution responded to the appeal.

You see idleness and listlessness is about the worst thing possible (I was feeling that in Göttingen) : now my days are full, not only materially, but really, for it is the kind of employment that does fill and satisfy me. And, I suppose, next to idleness, the worst thing would be over mental fatigue. . . . It is, too, another advantage, which anybody else can hardly appreciate, to have my day mapped out for me with military exactness,—to find my work always ready before me, and quite definite and imperative,—yet making no demand on my strength almost—always pleasant and always changing.

It would have been impossible to have planned a life suiting me personally more exactly to my finest need,—and the glory is that at the same time it is part of my work, and serving it very really and materially. I don't suppose in that point of view either it would be possible to put my time to better advantage. . . .

You see, Mother, how you get my sunny day-dreams now, as you used to get the weary ones. I don't know if everyone has words running all day long in their head as I have,—it makes a glorious song sometimes—silently enough, but running like a golden thread through daily work and labour, raising it all till 'the parapets of heaven with angels leaning' come full in view. . . . Do you remember George Herbert's delicious poem—?

' My Joy ! my Life ! my Crown !  
 My heart was meaning all the day  
 Something it fain would say,—  
 And yet it runneth muttering up and down  
 With only this,—  
 My Joy ! my Life ! my Crown ! '

It is to me so exquisitely significant of the joy and peace that floods one's whole being, but does not very readily find words, except in those already familiar to it, like those Psalm utterances,—or like sometimes fragments of our own dear Liturgy or hymns ;—and I think that is perhaps one of the greatest uses and values of such things. In the deep struggle times, one of the things that helped me most of all was always those glorious words of consecration that reminded me of the cross on the brow ' In token that thou shalt not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful Soldier and servant unto thy life's end ! ' And again, the Communion words about ' ourselves, our souls and bodies '.

Oh, dear, how one does write on ! But I think it pleases Mother, and I'm sure it helps me. . . .

I fancy my darling will be pleased to get a kiss from her little one



to welcome her in London, as she cannot see her knight at Shore-ditch!—*dear* old lady,—would she could! But, Mother, you would let Daddy go with you if you really *wished* for anyone? I tell you, as I have told you a hundred times before, how gladly your child will stay at home altogether if ever Mother really wishes for and wants her there, or will come from anywhere at any moment as rapidly as trains can bring her, if only Mother wishes for her for any purpose or none.”

It is very unlikely that she gave those about her the impression of being *dévoté*: that never was her way. The “spikes” Miss Octavia Hill referred to were probably in full evidence. In her diary she writes,—

“A talk with Miss E. and Miss H. about the sacraments, and ‘preparation’. Miss Gruben instanced with horror,—‘In England a party the night before.’ I said, ‘The theatre, with all my heart.’ Exclamations. ‘If I could not take the Communion half an hour after leaving the theatre, I would never enter it.’ Then found myself in the disagreeable position of apparent Pharasaism. ‘Wish I were so good, etc!’ or hints like that. Yet surely, Octa? If there is a time when we cannot kneel for the Communion, that time should be blotted out. ‘Living to God’,—how that blends and binds all life!

Today dear Mrs. Teed. God bless her! Yes, surely,—now she would not be hard on ‘prayer for the dead’. Yet what a noble soul! Ah, if she had lived,—if I could have justified myself to her whom I so respected. But, as Dora says, she knows it all now! Perhaps her spirit sees and sympathises with mine that looks with such love to her footsteps gone before. In life she would have disapproved of some things,—now at least she will see motives. ‘I believe in the communion of saints.’ . . .

Just been reading C. Brontë. Moved me almost to tears. What honour and blessing to have dried some of those tears,—filled some void in that heart. And yet doubtless ‘He has fixed it well’. At least she and I and a multitude that no man can number all form portions of the Hosts of the Lord. . . . And it is the work—not our pleasure. The scattering is part of the benefit.

Ah, the Land of the Leal! The banishment past,—the solitude,—the tears,—the struggle. In hoc signo. ‘The Lord shall wipe away all tears from off all faces’.”

At this time she was extraordinarily happy in her work.

“How *can* people paint a teacher’s life as always such a suffering one! My room now quite a little Paradise. Frl. von Palaus up

about it again this morning. . . . Now only some ivy and a tin pot wanted !

My Schematism [?] very light. Certainly they take a generously liberal view of ' earning my bread '. Well, at all events it shall be *well* earned, if not largely. I'm half afraid of myself now that I have the responsibility of 25 English pupils. I am really very anxious to get them on so well and so rapidly as to convince the world of the wisdom of having an English teacher ! "

How thoroughly she succeeded in this aim may be gathered from the letter of one of her pupils written a few months later,—

" We now have an English mistress, Miss Blake, and she gives us so many things to do that I am already too fatigued to entertain me any longer with you : she is an inhabitant of your land, and, if all people are so diligent there, it is a wonder that you are not all philosophers."

Her diary abounds with shrewd and genial criticisms of her fellow-teachers. Of one whom she rather disliked, she says :

" Miss D. has greatly laughed herself into my good books,—such a cheery simple merry laugh. I don't think anything very bad could hide under such a laugh at her age."

And again,—

" That good Fr. von Palaus ! Well might I today liken her to a sunbeam ! How she lights up the very house,—how bright burns her lamp,—yet how simply ! "

No wonder her letters were a joy to the Mother watching at home.

" Your letter has cheered me and done me good," she writes on Christmas day, " taking away the clouds in a great measure, that would hang over a day that owed so much of its brightness to your dear presence ; but truly, as you say, we have a far truer unity and a sympathy which I fear might never have come but through trial and separation."

Life was not all spent on the mountain heights, of course. Even at this time she had her ups and downs like other people. Here is one of the " downs " :

" Who is sufficient for these things ? seems my whole cry today. I don't know why especially, but I seem so oppressed with a sense of the greatness, the weight of my work,—and of my own miserable

insufficiency for it. Oh, so weak and stupid and unfit! And it isn't humility,—it's just truth.

I'm horribly showy,—always (voluntarily or not) deceiving people into a belief into talents I haven't. Then I've will enough and would work, but no health or strength for it. That's not your doing, S. J-B. 'Hath not the Potter—?'

Besides, you'll never be called upon to do what you can't. God will give you power or send another in your stead. . . . And 'who is sufficient?' 'My Grace is sufficient'.

Yet I am thankful, too, for even this fit of despair or at least downheartedness,—for I was fearing horribly, lest, my whole heart being bent on one hope and plan, I might be too far identifying *my* success with *it*, lest I might be seeking to win something for myself,—not simply to see God's will done by me or without me. And from the bottom of my heart did go up, 'Lord, put me aside utterly if need be!—and here, perhaps, the answer.'

She did not always take her reactions so seriously :

"Cold. Therefore rather cross and grumbling. Prowling about the corridors with shoulders nearly up to my ears, mind do. And I fool and sybarite enough to conjure up pictures of a certain dainty little room with blazing fire. . . . 'Shame on ye, Gallants, wha ride not readily!' . . . Well, well, indeed it was not really a grumble,—only a John Bull growl. You don't think I really give in an inch for such nonsense?

No. Well, there, that 'll do.

As well to grumble to my book as to poor small folk downstairs, who want bracing not enervating.

Granted. But why either?

Oh, now you're infringing the liberty of the press! I may write anything that wells up.

There, there!—pax."

This is one of the many dialogues between "The Infantine" and "The Estimable," as she called them. Greatly did her Mother appreciate the titles.

A few weeks later, after some words of yearning for a "comprehending ear," a "sympathetic hand," she breaks off abruptly with,—"*Heigh ho! Shut up Grumbles! 'a cussin' and a swearin' like that,' as long coz would say.*"

Greater troubles were in store than those constituted by cold dark mornings. No mention is made in the prospectus given above of holidays, and Mrs. Jex-Blake in her letters complains much of the "No holiday" system. Apparently

the boarders only went home for a few days at a time, and for months together S. J.-B. does not seem to have slept away from the Institut for a single night. It was no wonder if, under these conditions, teachers and pupils "got on each other's nerves," and among Frl. von Palaus' many qualifications was not that of being a strict disciplinarian. When the novelty wore off, the girls, after the fashion of their kind, began to try how far they could go with the English governess. As may be imagined from her previous history, S. J.-B., though an admirable teacher, did not show herself particularly strong in the matter of keeping order. The pupils found out their power of "tormenting" her, and the delicacy of their feeling may be gauged by the fact that on one occasion they gaily charged her with having "wept in church" ("False, by the bye, in fact," she says in her diary). With delightful *naïveté* they summed up the things she could not do. She could not sing, nor play, nor dance, nor paint, nor embroider?—"What *can* you do, Miss Blake?"

Of course she would have thought it unworthy of her to mention the things she had done and could do. Moreover, for reasons given above, she was spending a minimum of money, and vulgar schoolgirls drew their own conclusions. She sometimes admits with remorse that she was hasty and unjust in little things,<sup>1</sup> and, although there is no indication that she ever fell into the tempests of passion that characterized her girlhood, she owns that she often assumed a stony indifference, which, of course, though she did not know it, was a great deal worse. All the time (so her diary shows) she was almost agonizing over these children, longing really to get into touch and fire them with her own zeal; she did not scruple to talk to them seriously and individually about the great issues of life; but when the magnetic influence of the interview was over, they felt a certain inconsistency in her, a hastiness, a failure to conform to conventional standards of right and wrong, a want of equity, or at least of equable-

<sup>1</sup>"I an't *just*. There's a fact. I'm sorry for it, but it's true. As my sky is bluer or greyer, as I see, or think I see, more or less into a child's character, the scale varies. Justice is blind no longer, but gives a chuck to one side or the other."

ness, of which she herself was almost unaware. "But oh, where is the special flaw?" she cries in her diary. "Lord help me! 'Thou wilt not pity us the *less*'—that fault of my own forms my cross."

In any case her pupils felt the flaw. Her conscientiousness, her zeal, her fine uprightness were more or less lost on them, or so it seemed. A cheaper form of goodness would have appealed to them more.

She never spoke of her home life and circumstances, and probably even Fr. von Palaus had very little idea that the English governess was a woman of family and position.

"Oh, how weary I am after those hours of struggle internal and external!" writes S. J.-B. in her diary. "Almost like being tied to a stake,—so suffering, so helpless. And this I?—who used to fancy I had power to rule! Two months more will see me well nigh home I trust. Some faint foreshadowing of 'Then are they glad because they are at rest.' The thoughts of my green nest, and of the ruddy firelight, and the hymns at Mother's knee very frequent in these days of struggle."

She poured out the story of her failure to her Mother, and delightful were the letters she got in reply:

"(Miss v. Palaus) will miss my darling and her unselfish love terribly when she leaves. . . . Without any great vanity you must know that your hearty ready help must be most refreshing to her, and your wide-awake state must have a great influence over the Girls."

"I cannot believe that your work has been done as indifferently as you think. I believe you have always done what you could, and fought hard against feelings and every form of indolence or selfishness. Surely you could somehow raise some response to fun; only perhaps a good deal arises from your being English and they not understanding."

In spite of all, however, the trouble went deep, and she chronicles sadly in her diary that "neither moon nor stars for many days appeared." Oddly enough, she never seems to have entertained the idea of simply giving in her resignation and going home. She entirely meant to serve her time,—nay more,—to hold the position until some suitable person was found to carry on her work. Certainly it was not the acquisition of the language that served as an inducement to

remain, for, throughout her stay, she learned almost incredibly little. The whole of her very limited energy was thrown into her teaching.

"The hearty praise pouring in for the girls' progress," ought to comfort me there," she says. "I suppose they almost certainly have got on more rapidly than with 9 teachers out of 10."

One is glad to learn that months before she left Mannheim, the tide of popularity turned; and, although even she attributed the change in great part to the fact of her having worn a "ravissant" gown at the School Carnival Ball (a gown which she had worn as a bridesmaid in England) she was glad to respond by expanding good spirits to the diminished pressure. So the pretty frock served its turn. "There's no doubt about it that opinion altogether has veered round widely about me. I think I am rather popular now,—I certainly *was* thoroughly the contrary."

She was, until the later years of her life, wanting in sympathy with the more or less innocent and pardonable vanities of youth, and yet during this period she did sometimes cry out for a more vivid life,—or rather for days and hours of greater vividness to break the monotony of the working life she had deliberately chosen. It was one of her ambitions to be duly presented to Queen Victoria, for whom throughout life she had a great admiration, but the ambition was never realized.

"Darling," writes her Mother, in answer to a very human cry, "your young bright days are nobly spent for the Lord. Shall we offer Him that which costs us nothing? . . . There always has been (though probably not necessarily) so much that is false, impure and hollow connected with most of what are termed amusements that you would soon loathe them, and feel work and even discipline more satisfying." But never for one moment from her twentieth year onwards did S. J.-B. ask for amusement and vividness *in place of* work and discipline.

She might have found recreation and stimulus in the music of Germany, but her chief limitation was on the side of Art. Music did not appeal to her, and, although one of her greatest gifts was the possession of a beautiful speaking voice, with

a perfect natural production, she could not sing and had no ear for music at all. She argues with herself on the subject,—“Surely singing, for instance, is a wholesome and good amusement. Surely it is right that some should contribute it for others? Yet, perhaps, mere amusement, even for others, is not a life-work for anyone? At least unless *as a duty*. So few sing, as Fra Bartolomeo painted, ‘on their knees’.”

This is estimable enough so far as it goes, but artistic perception is wanting, and throughout life she never got much farther in this direction, though she always loved to hear a simple congenial song sung by one she loved. “Do you care for the ‘unlearned praise’?” she used to say. When she quoted, as she sometimes did, “’Tis we musicians who know,”—it was not of music she was thinking.

All through this period her main preoccupation was with religion. She was reading, among other things, the *In Memoriam* and Robertson’s Sermons, and she continued to read them till the end of her life. Her volumes of Robertson are falling to pieces with sheer honest careful lifelong use, and many of the sermons are marked with a date and with initials to remind her of the times when she shared her treasure with some special friend. Assuredly, in the words of her loved quotation, Robertson “found her.” Living, as she was at this time however, mainly among Roman Catholics, she felt—as so many have felt—a real desire to share their communion.

“I mean to study Romanism as thoroughly as I can,” she says. “Hitherto I have not by any means found, as C. Brontë, my repugnance to Roman Catholicism increased by close view.”

She was anxious to get a proper breviary or missal, and apparently finding this difficult in Mannheim, she wrote to her Mother to send her one. That wonderful old lady! She can’t have enjoyed the commission, but she set about the fulfilment of it most loyally. And, oddly enough, she too met with many difficulties. She declined to be put off with *The Garden of the Soul*, and finally she writes :

“I despair of getting a satisfactory breviary, unless you can send me definite orders for Treacher to procure one. Marvellous rubbish

at the *only* R.C. shop. 'They were *very* anxious to fetch the R.C. priest!—to help me,—' were sure he was within.' Fancy if Daddy had come by, with the carriage at the door and I inside in deep conversation with said Priest! . . ."

No, there never was such a Mother! Her openness of mind shows itself in a hundred extracts. "I do not fairly know Thomas à Kempis," she says. "The passage you quoted was very grand and beautiful." "I wonder if you will care for my extract from Pusey in the 'Times'. I always think there is such a chastened, disciplined spirit in what he writes,—no pepper, nor vinegar." "If I were obliged to have a great deal of company, I should, I doubt not, feel 'Lent' a grand repose and comfort; as it is, I am disposed to kick at it as artificial."

And she is no longer afraid to express her loving appreciation.

"I don't call you so much a 'sweet-tempered' as an 'excellent-natured' girl,—most unselfish, energetic, and at all times ready in the behalf of others. A regular 'sweet temper' is rarely found with very strong deep feelings. . . . I don't think there ever was such true love as your's—unless it be her's under disguise. You would not now be able to stand alone as you do had circumstances not separated you. God has two great works,—one for her, one for you."

"I am quite sure, by pouring out your heart to me, you help me on as well as yourself. You bring before me such strengthening texts and poetry, and our hearts get so very closely knit. It may seem selfish to say so, but your sorrows have greatly enhanced my joys by bringing us close, and, as it were, entwining us inseparably."

In a fine sermon on *Old and Young*, the late Bishop of Oxford dwells on the "tragedy going on in the life of many a home, . . . as father and son or mother and daughter grow conscious, sometimes with silent pain, and sometimes with scarcely veiled resentment, of an ever-widening severance, a perpetual and almost irrevocable ebbing of sympathy and trust." If any further proof were needed than has already been given of the wholeheartedness with which this mother and daughter resisted that tendency to severance and realized the sympathy and trust, it may be found in the correspondence that follows:



“ Jan. 23rd, 1863. Friday night.  
and Jan. 24th.

MY OWN DARLING MOTHER,—I'm right sorry you didn't get your baby's first morning greeting,—I went out on purpose to post the letter on Friday that you might. It's very tiresome too that the other little messenger didn't reach you,—however Mother knows it was sent, and it's useless to risk sending more the same way ; you shall get it in duplicate when I come home,—whenever that is.

Sometimes I think I ought to stay here till I have mastered my difficulties and learned to rule,—then again I see that years and years of my life will be but a learning of that lesson, and the great thing is to see how to dispose of them most *wisely*, not in obstinacy or in self-consenting even on a point like that. Besides month after month of unbroken work *does* come to tell on one, specially if one starts not over strong ; and I feel myself looking forward with significant expectation to the coming rest (and still more, *refreshment* time) again,—to say nothing of seeing faces and hearing voices that I fancy may too not be sorry to see and hear mine again. I am watching the now really lengthening days almost like a school-child,—indeed I am tremendously much of a child yet, Mother,—and thinking how the days and weeks roll on and bring the homecoming nearer. Even if I returned *here*, I must have a holiday and not a very short one,—for I have got a good deal *used* one way or another,—though now I am again delightfully cheery and strong,—and able to work twice as well among the children when a laughing word comes instead of a weary one ; and *they* feel it too, I am sure.

I shall be very curious to read Colenso's book,—will you send me its name, please ? It is so very easy a way to get up a laugh (which somebody calls the Devil's keenest sword) against opinions or people you don't agree with, by such a jest as that Colenso wants to turn 'the Bible into Rule of Three sums',—so much more easy than justifiable or Christian. It's just a word which, said of a great Mathematician, is sure to 'take' whether there is any or no sense in it. People like to laugh and repeat what sounds sharp, and prove their own superiority (?) to such men as they can't hope to get within 100 miles of in attainments.

Besides in a certain non-sneering sense, it may really be true without inferring any blame. (I wonder if you like me to discuss the question or not ? If not, just tear up the next page or two unread, that's all.)

The Rule of Three (as it is most absurdly called) is perhaps the purest form of development of the principle of Cause and Effect,—the principle that rules the world and lies at the root of all science and all logic. You see an effect,—it *must* have a corresponding cause. You are aware of a cause,—you imply with certainty

answering effect. 'To look through Nature up to Nature's God'—is strictly (if you choose so to call it) a Rule of Three sum. Again,—'These are Thy works, Parent of Good,—Thyself how wondrous then!'—a pure syllogism,—or, if you please, Rule of Three sum—thus :

I. The author must be greater than his works.

II. God's works are great beyond our conception.

III. How infinite then their Maker !

Or, more beautiful and more sacred than all,—'He that spared not His own Son . . . how shall He not with Him freely give us all things ?'

The form of reasoning that St. Paul did not disdain to use need hardly be a reproach to Colenso.

God Himself *does* give us minds and does bid us use them,—*He* is not afraid of His truth standing in the sunlight, though some of His people are. Robertson draws out very beautifully how the Christ never sought blind credence,—superstitious belief even in His words because they were *His*. He never said 'I say so,—there's an end,' (as so many of His followers like to put in His mouth). 'If I say *the Truth*, why do ye not believe me?'—again, more exquisite still in its loving humility,—'Though ye believe not me, believe the works',—'Search the Scriptures' etc. etc.,—always praying them to test Him by His works, by the voice of their own conscience, by the testimony of their sacred books,—continually protesting against the idea of His own assumption of sovereign power, 'I know nothing of Myself.' But here I'm getting on another subject, and I'll stop.

But I always get greatly interested in a discussion about the Bible,—people seem to me often so hopelessly superstitious and illogical about it, and so to miss its truest, most blessed meaning.

It always seems to me that the question divides itself into two perfectly distinct parts,—regarding, so to speak, the spiritual and temporal part of the Bible. The first is entirely without the province of the intellect or the reason,—'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, . . . but God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit.' As Colani says (I think, indeed, it was him I quoted before) it is not a question of logic or of evidence whether we believe 'the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God Thou wilt not despise!',—the *certainly* of its truth is self-evident to us; we are absolutely sure the moment we hear the words that the All-Good rejoices in repentance and not in blood. It is the word of God from without speaking to the Spirit of God within us 'whose temples we are.' In Coleridge's forcible words, 'it *finds* us',—it pierces through ear and brain irresistibly to the spirit of every man. Yes, *every* man; there is not one in the world however debased who

*could* doubt whether God preferred a broken heart or a costly gift. He may not think about it, he may let the words pass by him, but, receiving them at all into his mind, he *cannot* doubt. . . .

Feel,—suffer, and words like those bring their own proof; let them once *enter* and you need not ask whether their truth is received or not. 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.' We *know* it is so; no one in the world could really doubt for one second whether holiness or impurity brings the man to God,—to see Him. . . .

In all this the whole mass of 'Evidence' goes for absolutely nothing. If the Bible had never been heard of to this moment, and I picked it off a dunghill, *those* words and truths would just as irresistibly transfix and 'find' me as a two-edged sword.

But since, as Pulsford says, 'Most people get their faith through their heart, not through their head,'—there are thousands of God's children who, seeing and feeling the infinite beauty and pricelessness of these words and truths,—but *not* seeing fully their infinite omnipotence, their absolute impregnability,—fancy that to preserve from the slightest danger what is to them so infinitely precious, it is necessary to claim for the whole casket the same authority and value that the jewel claims for itself: and then, because this claim does not and cannot maintain *itself*, they rush to arms for it and brand as 'rejectors of the Bible' some who, like your child, find in its words the very deepest blessings of existence. . . .

I don't know enough about it to have an opinion worth anything, but as far as I can judge, it seems to me the result of open fair criticism rather establishes than disturbs the veracity of all Jewish history as given in the Bible since the time of Moses, while it does not seem to me possible satisfactorily to defend the authenticity of the account of the Creation and probably the first few centuries,—both from the certainties of Geology and probabilities of history, and also from the internal evidence.

But what *is* the leading point to me is the folly of trying to arrest honest investigation about anything,—and the especial mistake of fancying that *any* result arrived at could touch the real standing and position of the Bible. For myself, I can say in all sincerity that if not one fraction only but the whole biblical history were proved to be utterly unreliable and mistaken, it would not make the difference of a straw's weight either to my life or my faith,—it is not as a rival of Herodotus that I have valued the Bible,—the destruction of the historical credit of the one would matter just as much to me as that of the other. We might lose some grand illustrations of God's love and care, but the truths would remain, and the history of any century, of any land, of any man, leaves Him not 'without a witness'. . . .

Well, Mother, it has indeed been more than a page or two,—if it pains or wearies you do but burn it; but I am glad from the bottom of my heart to tell you honestly what and why I believe on a subject where I fear Mother is a little afraid of me;—to put at least calmly and clearly before you other thoughts and words than those you hear oftenest,—not that you may accept, but that you may consider them. For you as for me, Mother, God 'shall lead us into all truth'.

Sunday. You asked me about Miss v. Palaus. She isn't ill now, but I think she suffers altogether from this terrible 'no holiday' system. Think what it is to go on for 26 years!—with only a week's break at a time, and that perhaps once a year.

Dear, I broke off abruptly, it occurring to me to apply the principle of how bad it was to go on without change and how one was bound to get all one could; also that it was a bright day and that I was no use where I was, so had better go to Heidelberg. . . .

The sermon was about sorrow and bereavement, commonplace enough and disagreeable sometimes, but chiming in in bits with some thoughts of mine. For one thing he said it was a duty to rouse oneself after a time and go back to one's daily work. Now, Mother, you know better than anyone how I have strained every sinew to take up my tool again and work on, from the very first months even. But there is a certain state of things which I can't honestly conceal from myself which makes the struggle in some ways a very terrible one.

I am sure 'what is best', and I don't say one word in the form even of sorrow, only of perplexity. But, Mother, I haven't the least the mind I had,—I have waited and waited to see if they would not waken but now for nearly 18 months my mental powers seem struck with stupor. It's no use urging them,—they don't answer the call. The love and power of mental work seem to have faded away. I just jog on, from day to day with sense enough for daily life perhaps,—but I don't seem to get any nearer any return of intellects. I won't say it would have been *better*—because if it would, it would have been so—but I don't doubt if I had had a crushing physical illness last Xmas, the agony would have exhausted itself and I probably risen from a brain fever as strong as ever,—but no physical relief coming in this form, the whole weight seems to have fallen on my brain and paralyzed it. My whole mind sometimes seems a blank,—the children ask me simple questions and I know nothing. Sometimes it's hard work to crush back the tears when it is so.

You know those terrible (they did frighten me horribly) kinds of delusions that showed me a white dog or a wheelbarrow just when I was going to pull up when driving you.

Well, Mother, it's no use to go on,—no use even to say 'What am I to do?' One feels sure in truth that God 'will find a way' and show it to me. . . .

But the time goes on and on, very many months already, and yet no streak of light comes from any quarter. One does not see the faintest sign of change, and yet one cannot see how things are permanently possible as they are.

You don't think it is any want of will or effort in me, Mother? Surely God 'reaps not where He has not sowed'.

Oh, Mother, Mother, what it will be to rest the tired stupid old head on your bosom again.

So lessons a week is too much I'm afraid for Ruth, but I can't pretend to look after her when I'm in Germany,—and perhaps nobody gets on much the worse for that fact. It's a very forcible rebuke to one's vanity to find *how* little anybody is missed from anywhere, (except in their Mother's hearts, darling) and one or two others perhaps. Yet that's a hasty way to speak. I believe I do have a great deal of love from more people than I deserve. . . .

Yours lovingly ever,

SOPH.

Please tell me by what post this arrives."

An able letter surely, for one whose "intellects" were worn out. Of course she fails to realize how different her whole outlook on life would have been if she had found the Bible for the first time accidentally in mature life, "on a dunghill" or elsewhere. The Mother's reply is surely at least as able:

"Thursday, Jany. 29th.

MY OWN DARLING,

Your letter did not reach me till first post this morning. I quite believe Truth will in itself bear coming to the light, without suffering. But I do fear there are many minds, heads and hearts without one sentence of heavenly truth upon which to fall back for comfort, which may be irreparably injured by the doubt and contempt thrown upon historical parts; and thence deduce, 'All is false, and cannot do me good or help me in any way.' I think I must send you the last 'Cornhill' come in this afternoon. I imagine the critique in it is from a man who would favour free enquiry,—a son of Dr. Arnold's,—Matthew Arnold. He says, 'I censure Colenso's book because, while it impresses strongly on the reader that the Pentateuch is not to be read as an authentic narrative; it so entirely fails to make him feel that it is a narrative full of divine instruction in morals and religion, etc., etc.' I ought to have stated that all this comes in in a critique upon Stanley's 'Lectures on the

Jews', which Arnold greatly admires. Now that February is at hand, I find that the *January!* Macmillan has an actual critique upon Colenso. Shall I send it to you? I have not read it. I asked Hetty if she had. She considers it severe on Colenso. I think I shall send it.

Your long dissertation did not annoy or weary me at all, indeed it rejoiced mother's heart. You seem to have all you want to *live* and die upon. What can you need more? Certainly I have individually *great* comfort and enjoyment from seeing Christ as my Substitute in a manner that I apprehend you do not. If it be, as I suppose, needful, I am sure your loving Father will give it you in His good time. As to your mental powers, it is *very strange*. We can only wait patiently and say, 'It is the Lord. Let Him do what seemeth Him right'. I don't suppose the important precious discipline you are going through could have been produced in time of full mental vigor. That will assuredly return if for your real good. Meanwhile you may well trust Him who has done such great things for you. I long as much as you to have you resting on my bosom. Rest you *must* have: refreshment of spirit I pray you may have. . . . Nothing, as you say, invalidates the grand truths responded to from within. At all times the Eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms.

Your loving Mother,

M. E. JEX-BLAKE."

A fortnight later she writes:

"Only fancy, Daddy has been reading Colenso's book!"

## CHAPTER XII

### VARIOUS PROJECTS AND VENTURES

“REST you must have: refreshment of spirit I pray you may have.”

So wrote Mrs. Jex-Blake in the end of January; but even the physical rest was destined to be long delayed. As explained in the previous chapter, S. J.-B. did not at all draw to the idea of deserting her post before a suitable person arrived to supply it, and that suitable person was not easy to find. So the months went by, and it was not till April was well advanced that all arrangements were made for her departure within a fortnight. She was wild with delight at the prospect of getting home, but the fates were unkind. On May 3rd she writes in her diary:

“Well, I do feel most uncommonly seedy,—no doubt about that,—having just waded through my packing somehow, and ‘bitterly thought of the morrow’, and how many leagues and hours lie between me and a snug bed, clean sheets and beef tea. But, somehow or other I do mean to push through and trust my luck for falling as usual on my feet, catlike. Specially anxious, by the bye, not to be spied out here or it’ll all go down to the baths”—she had been bathing in the Rhine before breakfast—“as I daresay this heavy cold may, which reduces me to, or below, the level of the inferior animals.

Well, three days hence! Who can’t hold out that time?”

She certainly did her best to “hold out,” dragged herself out of bed, and went downstairs looking like “*une déterrée*,” so Frl. v. Palaus said. She refused to see the school doctor, believing that he would prevent her going home, and also that he would insist upon her keeping her window shut. For

some reason unknown Frl. v. Palaus resolutely declined to have an English doctor sent for, and so things went on for a day or two till the patient agreed that the German doctor should be allowed to say whether her throat was "of importance." Whether he was allowed adequate means of arriving at a diagnosis we have no means of knowing. In any case his answer was in the negative. Two days later the patient was obviously suffering from a sharp and typical attack of scarlet fever.

It really was a blow, poor child! She was so longing for her Mother, "My year's work just done *so* painfully,—and now my cruse snatched from my lips. It is hard, *hard*! I didn't one moment doubt it was right,—only very hard." Then like an audible voice came the reminder of the inner light, and all pain went.

It does not necessarily follow that she proved a very easy patient, though she tried hard to be reasonable, and even to keep her window shut at night, which was quite unreasonable. The whole situation was sufficiently trying for Frl. v. Palaus; and S. J.-B., although she and her nurse became attached to each other, got little of the petting which throughout life she so greatly valued when just the right person bestowed it. Her Mother's letters as usual were an infinite comfort, and her Father was with difficulty prevented from sending out a London physician to look after her, and, in due time, bring her home.

She made a good recovery, and was allowed to start for England on the 27th, when an English lady was engaged to accompany her. "Very like getting out of purgatory into heaven," she says. "The dear old folks!"

Her Father was nervous about infection, and, fortunately for him, a trifling driving accident some four or five days after her return forced her to consult "Sam Scott." "He couldn't swear me free of fever, but said, 'If you meet my children on the cliff, you may kiss them.'"

So S. J.-B. settled down once more to the old life at home, not without occasional "cataracts and breaks," for her Father did not advance with the times, and hers was not the



only hasty temper in the family. But she never doubted that a definite work was in store for her somewhere.

Her diary is sometimes amusing reading. To an acquaintance who—after visiting at Sussex Square and hearing the intimate fireside names—wrote to her as “My dear Jack,” she replies,

“DEAR MISS D.,

Firstly I don't like being called names, and secondly I have been overwhelmingly busy,—which two reasons must excuse my not having earlier sent you the address.”

“I agree with Macdonald,” is her connotation. “The only argument some people understand is being knocked down, and it's cruel to withhold it from them.

And a very mild knocking down this time.”

“July 8th. Annette's Sunday School. ‘The outward and visible sign in baptism?’

‘Please, ma'am, the baby, ma'am.’”

That her lamp was not burning dim one gathers from the letter that follows. It relates to the young invalid college friend whom she had wished to take with her to Germany :

“Nov. 15th. 1863.

DEAR LUCY,

Though I know you will have heard before this of dear L.'s going home to her rest, I think you will like to have a few lines from me, as I believe E. was not able to write to you herself.

You heard probably of her breaking a blood vessel last month soon after her return to London, and it was very soon after that that I saw her for the last time alive. She was very gentle and quiet then, and I have since thought that she more entirely realised how near the end was than I and others did,—for there was no immediate danger then as far as anyone could know. When I told her again how much a duty I thought it for her to take the utmost care of her life for His service Who gave it, and added ‘Not that I want you or anyone to *fear* death,—that is the last thought one should have of the Home-going’,—she said,—‘Oh, yes,—I never did, and I never understood why people do.’ I told her Mother of this afterwards, and it is a very pleasant memory, among others.

Well, it was on Thursday, November 3rd. that this terrible spasmodic asthma came on, and I am afraid the struggle was sore for just the week,—but there was mercy in that too, for it made her Mother glad to see her at rest after it. Just a week later she died,

very peacefully,—passing in sleep into the rest that remaineth. I heard of it on Thursday and went up to London directly, and I never was more heartily glad of having done anything in my life, for both Mrs. B. and E. seemed so glad to see me, and you can hardly believe the peaceful happy few hours we had together,—indeed there came to me (and I think to them too in some degree) such an intense realization of what the joy and light was into which she had entered, that no room seemed left for any pain even for oneself. I did love L. very much,—more perhaps than any of you knew,—but when I stood looking down on that calm pale face, the only words that would come into my mind were,—‘ He was not, for God took him ’. It seemed quite impossible even for a moment to identify *her* with that chill silence,—one felt *she* was already in the everlasting arms. Dear child! She left altogether a very happy memory,—of a bright clear life, and a calm peaceful death. We ‘ thank God for this our dear sister departed. . . . ’

The funeral is to be next Wednesday,—I know that you will not be absent in spirit, though you cannot be there in presence as I hope to be. Mr. Plumptre will read the service at Kensal Green.

I do not know if I helped dear L. in her life. I know that she has helped me in her death almost beyond my conception. I ‘ never feared ’ death, and I always felt theoretically how it was the ‘ going home ’ and that only, but I never felt it with the practical intensity of this week. I never entered before into half its beauty and its holiness,—I feel almost as if I could never associate sadness with the idea again. Let it come in what form it may,—‘ God giveth us the Victory ’.

Just before she died, L. finished a story at which she had been working to compete for some magazine prize,—if it does not win this, we hope to get it published separately, as a memorial that will be beloved of many,—and indeed I hope it may come out in this form. I have offered to undertake the whole business. It is very pleasant to me that she has left this,—is it not to you ?

Goodbye, dear Lucy,—my letter is already enormous, but I don’t fear your criticisms.

Yours affectionately,

S. L. JEX-BLAKE.”

The monotony of the life that followed was broken by one or two visits to Paris and one to Germany, and she had a great scheme of going to America to study the education of girls there. Here again, of course, she was met by the strong opposition of her Father, and again she was forced to put forward all the good and attractive points in her plan while

herself profoundly convinced of its vagueness and of her own physical inadequacy. She saw a good deal at this time of Mrs. Ballantyne (afterwards Lady Jenkinson) whom she met first in Edinburgh at the house of her sister, Mrs. Burn Murdoch. This was the beginning of another lifelong friendship, most refreshing to both,—a friendship characterized almost equally by playful camaraderie and jesting, and by many long talks about the things that lie deep.

“She *is* just good and true and ‘clear’,” S. J.-B. had written in her diary some months before. She records how they went together to an evening Holy Communion, what they felt and said,—and goes on without a break :

“ Then, again she so delicious about my bonnet (*not* calculated  
     ‘ To take upon it  
     The guilt of her wandering soul ’.)

The first time, I saw you in it, nearly disliked you for it—only it was past that.

Not your taste?—Then you oughtn’t to wear what isn’t,—nor to get 14s. 9d. bonnets!

Poke into omnibuses?—Poke away, but wear proper bonnets.

Tottenham Court Road?—No business to go there for bonnets.

No money?—Then you must manage very badly! [Badly!—poor generous child,—counting every halfpenny that she might have the more to give away!]

Your sister?—No, I have nothing to do with her, but I *have* with you. Buy proper bonnets,—then get them altered—

Whereon I vowed that if she didn’t come to London and choose one, I’d buy the ugliest in Tottenham Court Road.

My compliments to Mrs. Heath, and she oughtn’t to compromise her taste by letting you buy such bonnets, etc., etc.

So very very refreshingly, and with such bright arch eyes.”

It was certainly no lack of appreciation in the ordinary relationships of life that urged S. J.-B. to find her vocation. There are many indications of her popularity at this time among cousins and friends.

“ DEAREST SOPHY,” writes the mistress of Honing Hall,—“ It will be *delightful* to see you here. How often have I said to myself lately (having no one else to address my remarks to,—your Uncle being entirely taken up with his harvest, and more bothered than ever by it). ‘ I do wish Sophy would offer her company for a few days.’”

So, well pleased was I to see your handwriting this morning.

I can meet you anywhere within reasonable distance. On Thursdays I have only your old friend, Little Grey, and on Tuesday, 30th., some of the Catfield people are coming over. Should you be here then, it would be an additional pleasure to *all*."

And here is a characteristic note :

" DEAR MISS BLAKE,

... Pray bring back from America a few more such good stories as you told me yesterday. I say this *not* 'hoping I should see your face no more'.

Yours very truly,

FRANCES P. COBBE."

On November 11th S. J.-B. received a letter that pleased her much from the Revd. T. D. C. Morse, rector of Stretford, Manchester :

" MADAM,

I have had some correspondence with Professor Plumtre of Queen's College about establishing a Ladies' College in this locality, and he has referred me to you as likely to help me in this good work. Notwithstanding the fact that the movement for the improvement of female education has now been for some time set on foot, this populous neighbourhood is still very destitute in this respect. I have two girls, 12 and 13 years of age, and after making enquiries in very competent quarters, I have been told that there is only one Ladies' School 'worth a farthing' in or near Manchester, and that is the Ladies' College on the north side of the city at Higher Broughton. We are living on the south side and are surrounded by a large number of wealthy people who must necessarily miss such educational facilities. I wish therefore to *try* whether a good Ladies' College can be founded on this side of Manchester, and I would be glad to know whether you could introduce me to a lady qualified to act as Principal of such an Institution. Mr. Plumtre was not quite sure whether you might be disposed to undertake such a work yourself or not, but, if you were so, I feel sure from what he has told me that the matter could not be in better hands. . . . You will understand, of course, that the matter at present is only in the phase of a project."

" Plum, I owe thee one ! " is S. J.-B.'s irreverent comment.—" good old Plum ! "

" Such a real ' call ' it sounds—and what a field to learn in ! . . . Now America seems put in the background with a vengeance."

She plunged at once into plans and arrangements, timetables, lists of tutors, etc., and on November 17th she writes in her diary :

“ On Tuesday and today received letters from Mr. Morse, telling me of the Bishop’s support, and thus answering my question. . . . asking me for ‘ any suggestions ’. I feel little more is to be done without an interview, but write somewhat on essential heads ‘ with great diffidence ’ :

I am sure that no one can give their really best work to any scheme which does not stand on foundation principles with which they are in sympathy, and, bearing in mind the proposition you hinted at in your first letter, I am bound both for your sake and for my own to ascertain as far as possible how far the harmony of our views would allow me to be a really efficient worker in your cause. I have a great belief in the superiority of rule by Law over that of individual will, and should as Director of any such College be very anxious to have as little as possible left to my own choice and judgment ; but, having once been able to acquiesce in the spirit of established regulations, would deem it essential to have absolute authority to see them carried out alike by teachers and pupils. I am sure that to have such questions ill-defined at first is one of the most fruitful sources of after disturbance and failure in a college. . . .

I believe that really good women teachers are more able to measure the power of a girl’s mind, and force her to do a certain amount of good work than men, who are in my experience very apt to let *young* pupils slip between their fingers, as it were.

At the same time, after a thorough groundwork has been laid, I think first-rate lecturers (almost useless till then) become quite invaluable.

Meaning—I want an interview.

“ Dec. 1st. 1864. Reached Manchester yesterday. Staying now with the Morses.

Capital man he,—clear, energetic and practical ; a little ‘ trammelled ’ by clerical bonds, but in the main wide and satisfactory.

Spite of the double assurance of Minnie and Ruth that I need not talk of my Unitarianism,—I could not be quite silent, and so tonight, naturally enough, and I think truthfully, gave in my half-declaration.

Mr. Morse said (in answer to my question whether we might not be ‘ too episcopal ’) that, without wishing to exclude any, he wished to have the College decidedly of Church origin, and should be sorry to have other than Church main workers.

I said, ‘ Then perhaps you had better not have me.’

‘ But do you not belong to the Church ? ’

' Well, I was baptized and confirmed in it.'

' But you go there rather than Chapel ?'

' Well, I don't know. I go there pretty often. I go where helps me most.'

' Where else ?'

' Oh, mainly Unitarian', adding ' I have not, however, any intention of joining the Unitarians, but they have helped me', and, in answer to a farther remark ' that I ought to make up my mind clearly black or white'.

' That I *can't* do. . . . However on the whole, though very unorthodox, I believe I am on the whole most of a Churchwoman, and certainly non-proselytizing, nor, I believe in the least likely to originate any religious difficulty.'

Still he was evidently 'stumped', and I daresay I shall hear more of it.

Yet, on the whole, feeling as I do, I cannot regret speaking.

' Be true to every honest thought  
And as thy thought thy speech.'<sup>1</sup>

She visited the Principal of Owens' College, however, and the Headmaster of the Grammar School, drew up a tentative list of names for Council, and had a long talk with Mrs. Gaskell, who promised to be a " Lady Visitor " if the College was founded. (" I explaining it to mean ' right to visit '.")

" As to my contumacy (it's really that and not the heresy!), W. and G. to be consulted. I said how I wished him to do only what he thought right,—yet believing they would be wise to have me (!)

I think he surely *wishes* it, and, as I should guess he would find his consultees not otherwise inclined, a very small push would decide him that way.

(Stories,—' The fool hath said in his heart,' etc. Old sexton loq. ' I can't but think, sir, there is a God after all')."

" Dec. 4th. Came to Rugby last night. The music in chapel again and again bringing me well-nigh to tears,—so weak and thin is one worn.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Morse had unwittingly given her some encouragement previously by telling the story of a candidate for Orders, who when asked " If any man broached before you doubts of the divinity of our Lord (' and I needn't tell you,' said Mr. Morse to S. J.-B., ' what a difficult subject that is ' ) what answer would you make ? "

" My Lord, I beg that you won't suppose that I keep such company.'

" Well, but *if* — ? "

" My Lord, I should take up my hat and walk out."

' (Prudent too)," comments S. J.-B.

(Yet should surely notice the good Miss Garrett's medicine does me—taken about a fortnight now.) . . .

And how the conviction came (when first this Manchester scheme) 'Yes,—“ be thou but fit for the wall, and thou shalt not be left in the way.” It is true! . . .

Is Minnie far wrong in her 'Men have the best of it'? Easiest,—yes!—

Fancy the pleasure of going through School,—College,—returning hallmarked, for good happy well-paid work here.

Yet is the easiest 'Best'?

Must there not be pioneers?—can their work be easy?

Yet is there not (in many tongues and roads) a 'noble army of martyrs'?

Shall we like Erasmus 'not aspire to that honour'?

But, oh, dear, when the heart's light and brain clear and life sunny, it's easy to 'scorn delights' (having plenty of the reallest) but when the 'laborious days' fail and only weary and dim ones remain—when the tunnel narrows and darkens, and nearly all the light and strength seems to have leaked out—

Then—?

'My Grace is sufficient for thee'. No other help,—'none other fighteth for us'—and what need?—'Only *Thou*, O God.' "

How little her friends could guess the attitude of her mind may be gathered from the entry that follows:

"Dec. 5th. M.'s and my mutual objection to family prayers evidenced by staying out tonight. Justified?

I say, prayer continual and interjectional rather than formal and obligatory.

But follow out logically? Public worship, etc."

Meanwhile she was hard at work, drawing up schemes for the proposed College, visiting schools and colleges for men, and striving to fit herself for the new work. Mr. Morse must have felt that Mr. Plumptre had recommended a worker of remarkable talents, fine sincerity and most unusual enthusiasm, one whose knowledge of life and of the world was far in advance of what might have been expected from her years. Such qualities have to be paid for, of course. Nature has a rather staggering way of throwing in counterbalancing asperities, and, when S. J.-B. proposed to foster a religious spirit in the college without the formality of daily prayers, he must have begun to realize the inflexibility of the person he was dealing

with. He would probably have sympathized with the dictum of Cousin Ellie,—“ I would do anything for you if I could only make even a slight alteration ” !

All we actually know is that he showed no indication of wishing to draw back ; and at least one public meeting in support of the scheme was duly held and reported at length in the local papers. Public opinion, however, on the subject, needed more fundamental education than Mr. Morse had allowed for, and—although S. J.-B.'s budget was characterized by the splendid economy that was one of her most striking talents—the project failed for want of adequate financial support.

“ Feb. 22nd. Manchester scheme obiit. R.I.P. ! I must be really in a bad way to be able to find so few mental tears for this ! It does practically close up my foreground again. Heu mihi ! Why mayn't useless people be smothered out of the way if there's no possibility of being or doing or having ?

‘ Because you've got to *learn* ', as that good Miss Harry said last night.”

In the midst of these varied personal interests, S. J.-B. did not lose touch with her old girls at Queen's College. Indeed, when one realizes the intensity of her own experiences, it is rather refreshing to see how whole-heartedly she could enter into those of others.

“ Feb. 23rd. 1864.  
Brighton.

MY DEAR LUCY,

I feel rather guilty in not having written to you before this, but I do not think that you will attribute the omission to any want of interest in one of my dear old ‘ children ’. . . . I have to send you my hearty congratulations and good wishes for the life that seems opening so happily before you. Happiness is a wonderfully solemn thing,—a thing to go down on one's knees and thank God for. . . .

‘ So pray they, bowed with sorrow down,—  
While we whom love and gladness crown  
Bend lower yet in prayer ;  
With hearts so full we need to pray,  
“ Oh, make us worthy, Lord, alway,  
This weight of love to bear . . . ” ’



Don't be too self-distrustful, dear child,—I don't believe that you are at all 'unfit to be a help to anyone'. . . . Send me as long a letter as your indolence will admit of, and tell me all about your prospects, and whether your engagement is likely to be a short or long one."

" Dec. 13th. 1864.

. . . Having heard from E. B. of your marriage last month, I was not quite so bewildered as I might have been at receiving an epistle from a certain mysterious ' Lucy Unwin '—

. . . I am so glad to hear of your being so happy, dear child (dear me, I suppose I ought to be more respectful to so venerable a matron !) I daresay if I heard the other side of the question it would not be so full of wailings over your incompetencies general and particular as yours is. . . . I should like exceedingly to see you in your new sphere . . . and please thank your husband very much for taking me so much on trust as to want to see me,—though perhaps, after all, the real compliment is to *you* ! It will be a great pleasure for me to come to you for a few days when I am next in the North.

[Received May 10th, 1865.]

I had hoped to pay you a visit before this, and I am afraid you will be disappointed as well as myself when I tell you it must now, I fear, be indefinitely deferred, for circumstances have made me decide rather hurriedly to pay a long-planned visit to America for the purpose of learning something about the schools and colleges there.

I am to start from Liverpool on Saturday the 27th., and am going to take with me a girl whom you will perhaps hardly remember at Qu: College :—indeed I think she was after your time,—Isabel Bain.

" May 14th., 1865.

DEAR LUCY,

I should like exceedingly to see you if it were possible before sailing for America, and your letter has made me wish more than ever to do so.

If I found it just possible to come to you for one day and night, would you think it worth while to have me ? I do not know what the possibilities are,—are you *in* the town ?—or would it be an undertaking to get to you from the station ? Would it upset you all terribly if I came and went at unearthly hours as I might have to do ?

I should like to see you exceedingly, and I should like *very* much to see your husband,—if my coming in such a rush and making such a fuss wouldn't make him hate me.

Thank you very much for your photograph. There are no decent ones of me, but I will see if I can find you up one of the least bad."

The visit was paid in due course, and proved successful in every way. Mr. Unwin frankly shared his wife's admiration for the character and gifts of her old college friend, and this was by no means the last visit she paid to their Yorkshire home.

In the meantime S. J.-B. had carried out another idea that had been simmering in her mind for long. It may be remembered how in her childhood she had "bought tracts (for 6d) with Carry," and had even, apparently, been encouraged by her Father to give them away. The distribution of evangelical tracts was a great feature of the religious world in which she had been brought up, and, with the hopefulness of youth, she felt how much good might be done by circulating helpful religious pamphlets of a non-doctrinal kind. As a first step towards the realization of this scheme, she herself wrote three tracts,<sup>1</sup> and had them printed at her own expense. The most remarkable thing about them—in view of the writer's youth—is their non-controversial spirit. A Father of the Church could not have written more simply. With proper machinery for distribution they might have met with some considerable success: as it was the poor little booklets crept timidly into the world only to be pronounced sadly wanting in essentials by most of those who read them.

"Very harmless, but very useless," said Mrs. Jex-Blake, and she at least knew enough of tracts to be an authority on the subject. She had evaded reading these as long as possible, and, of course it was not to the dearly-loved writer of them that she made the crushing comment.

The *Guardian*, strangely enough, reviewed them rather favourably, and a few total strangers wrote to say that this was the thing for which they had long been looking; but on the whole appreciation was rare.

"Frankly, I call them Cobbe and water," said Mr. Morse.

For the Kingdom of Heaven is a treasure hid in a field, and S. J.-B. never realized how few can avail themselves of the treasure without first buying the field.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix B.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A VISIT TO SOME AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

“ I HAVE such a feeling that with the new world, a new life will open.”

So S. J.-B. had written in October 1864, and, seven months later, she sailed for Boston. This crossing of the Atlantic was another considerable venture for the young woman of those days ; and, although S. J.-B. took with her a number of introductions, she knew no one on the other side. She was fortunate, however, in her travelling companion, Miss Isabel Bain (now Mrs. James Brander, H.M. Inspectress of Schools for Madras, retired), a young girl of exceptional charm and promise, in whose education S. J.-B. and her parents had taken a deep and active interest.

It is scarcely necessary to say that both Mr. and Mrs. Jex-Blake regarded the new enterprise with profound misgiving : a few days before the parting Mrs. Jex-Blake had written to Mrs. Ballantyne :

“ I was so sadly selfish and engrossed about America the few hours you were here, that I must write a line to tell you how grateful I feel for all your kindness to Sophy, and how thankful I am that she has such a friend to consult with in this hour of need. I hope you did not suffer for the way in which you were plagued here : it really was very hard : though I quite believe you don't think so.

Tuesday. Sophy's letter has just come, and I do indeed need your prayers and sympathy. The wrench it is to me to have her go is indescribable, but I hope and believe my view will be more reasonable as time goes on. Any way, I know I shall have strength to bear. It is quite a panic, and I feel as if I must run away from

it. Yet I would not prevent it if I could. I should have been very thankful for an older companion. . . .

I ought not to plague you, her good kind friend.

May God bless you and *all* dear to you.

Yours affectionately,

M. E. J.-B.

I hope to write you a less selfish letter another time. I am hardly myself now. Is it not curious,—I have such a prejudice against Americans that I hardly ever will read a book describing American manners. I *hate* descriptions of low life."

Surely the frequent twinkle was returning to her eye when she wrote the closing words of the postscript? In any case there is no doubt about it a short time later when a question arose about Miss Bain's leaving S. J.-B. and becoming a student in one of the colleges they had visited together :

"I think Daddy has a terror of only your bleached bones (!) being found, if you went about without a companion."

The two girls left Liverpool on May 27th, and, after experiencing some rough weather which confined them to their berths, they staggered gallantly up on deck to enjoy the voyage and to make the acquaintance of their fellow-passengers. "A very nice Scotch Independent, Dr. Raleigh of Canonbury," is specially noted.

The great excitement of the voyage is described in a letter to her Mother :

"After I had done writing to you, we were summoned by a cry of 'Icebergs!' and up we ran to see a bright white light on the horizon, just visible, right on our track. Soon another came in sight and it was really grand the next hour. The evening hardly beginning to close in, but the cold *intense*, yet so beautiful. . . . On went the ship, tearing on to the icebergs, that grew whiter and larger every minute,—great cliffs of white rearing themselves out of the waves that beat into spray at their base,—looking so strong and grim and beautiful."

On June 8th the *Africa* reached Boston about midnight, and next morning the two young women went on shore to begin the new life. The weather was very warm and most of the people to whom they had introductions were out of town. The travellers suffered a good deal from the heat and

from various minor inconveniences due mainly to the strangeness and expensiveness of life in general; but S. J.-B. does not fail to put on record how much they enjoyed the ice-cream!

Dr. Lucy Sewall was at her post, but Mrs. Peter Taylor, in providing this introduction had given the wrong address, and it was a couple of days before they succeeded in finding her. The meeting was destined to be full of significance in determining S. J.-B.'s future career.

It was an interesting moment in which to visit the States. The war was over, but feeling still ran high, and, although the travellers met with much kindness and hospitality, they were not a little surprised to find themselves in an atmosphere of deep resentment against England.

"Oh, dear, How they turned on the tap, and talked right on end when they got near politics, only pausing to wonder at our 'ignorance' in England (that being, of course, the only source of difference of opinion with them). Finally, after listening with the utmost patience indefinitely—only devoutly wishing to kick over the table—I got mentally [sic] collared by Miss Peabody with an accusation of being 'still incredulous', to which I replied very frankly, that 'certainly till I heard both sides I could form no definite opinion.'

Emerson was refreshing after the rest, inasmuch as, after speaking, he would allow you to answer. . . . A Miss Elizabeth Hoar told me she had seen Carlyle in London in 1862, and that he had said to her,—'So you're quarrelling out there? Why don't you let the Southerners go to the devil with their niggers if they like, and you go to Heaven with your virtues if you can?' Rather sensible, I thought,—from one point of view at any rate."

There is a pleasant little letter from Emerson, written after this meeting:

"Concord.

Monday 14th June.

[1865.]

DEAR MISS BLAKE,

I am sorry to be so very slow in sending you the address of Mr. Fields' good farmer in the White Mountains region. It is Selden C. Willey, Compton Village, 6 miles from Plymouth, New Hampshire. I looked for it immediately on my return from Mrs. Mann's, but could not find it, and now today have stumbled on it in looking for something else. 'Tis probable that you may have

seen Mr. Fields himself before this time. When I have found my right correspondent at Oberlin, I shall hope to bring you my letter in person.

With great regard,

Miss Blake."

R. W. EMERSON.

The diary continues :

" Everyone most wonderfully kind and helpful to us personally—lots of offers of introductions, etc. That nice Dr. Sewall very anxious that I should not tire myself out and ' get sick '. By the bye one really can converse with her, I think."

There is a kind little note from Dr. Sewall also :

" MY DEAR MISS BLAKE,

As usual this evening I enjoyed your society so much that I forgot to say half that I wanted to. . . .

If you call on Mr. Emerson today, I think you had better call in the afternoon, as he told me he was engaged Wednesday and Saturday forenoons.

Don't have any neuralgia when you come to the Hospital today, or I may want to try my Electromagnetic machine on your face. I have not seen Dr. Zakrzewska yet, but I want you to come early.

Yours sincerely,

LUCY C. SEWALL."

Dr. Lucy Sewall was at this time a young woman of 28, a worthy descendant of " a long line of truly noble ancestry." <sup>1</sup> She held the appointment of Resident Physician to the New England Hospital for Women and Children (an institution which had been founded in great measure through the exertions of her father, the Hon. Samuel Sewall), but there was nothing about her to suggest that she had adopted what was at that time an unusual line of life for a woman. Singularly girlish in appearance, she was and remained throughout life so gentle and womanly that, until one knew her well, her reserves of strength were a source of repeated surprise. " So simple and humble and kindly," writes S. J.-B. at this time,— " said she ' *could* not succeed in learning to think enough before she spoke about a case.' "

No wonder S. J.-B. was attracted. A warm friendship sprang up between the two young women, a friendship by

<sup>1</sup> See *inter alia* Whittier's poem, " The Prophecy of Samuel Sewall, 1697."

means of which S. J.-B. was introduced primarily to the world of Medicine, and, secondarily, to the wide question of Feminism. She had been living, of course, in a feminist world at home, and a very choice world of its kind ; but here the movement had become more explicit, its aims were clearly defined and partially realized. It had, no doubt, lost a certain amount of charm in the process, but that is the fate of all movements the world over. They too have to be worked out "in the commonplace clay with which the world provides us."

In any case S. J.-B. was profoundly influenced by the change of atmosphere. Her conception of woman's work and woman's sphere began to widen out. On June 22nd she writes to her Mother :

" We saw Miss Crocker the other day,—late Mathematical professor at Antioch,—and she impressed me extremely with her quiet dignity and wisdom, and her tremendous Mathematics,—I *should* so like to study under her some day. I felt like an uppish dwarf beside some strong quiet giant."

And a few days later :

" By the way that wonderful astronomer, Maria Mitchell, whom I told you we were going to see, is a *very* nice woman—grand and able and strong and kindly. . . . She is to be a professor at Poughkeepsie, and, if we go there, I shall certainly hope to learn of her,—though I did not know that Astronomy would ever have come into my life. Any way it will be a great pleasure to know such a woman."

On the same day she records in her diary :

" Sat for a couple of hours in Dr. Sewall's dispensary this morning. Some 36 cases heard and helped more or less. Some coming with bright faces,—' So much better, Doctor,'—some in pain enough, poor souls. Dr. Sewall with such a kindly ready sympathy, and such clear firm treatment for them all. Certainly the right woman in the right place, except in as far as she herself gets to look sadly fagged and tired sometimes."

The state of S. J.-B.'s own health continued very unsatisfactory. " What is one to do," she says, " when one has alternate days of ' feeling like a tallow candle,' and days of feeling rather grand and energetic, like yesterday, when my ' book ' was begun with a bounce? " After watching her for some weeks, Dr. Sewall pronounced her " worn out in

mind and body," and advised a holiday among the hills until the excessive heat was over. So she paid a delightful visit to Professor and Mrs. Rogers at Lunenburg, and then went on to West Compton near the White Mountains. "The railway (a single line) cut through delicious woods with no fence or wall, just through the wildest glades full of ferns and pyrolas,—vistas of sun on fir and maple boles,—then again by the side of one lovely lake after another, a perfect prodigality of beauty."

" Aug., 18th 1865.  
West Compton.

DARLING MOTHER,—I don't think I shall be able to write by the next mail, as we are going for a few days' excursion round the mountains, so I must send you off now as long a letter as I can manage, telling you what we have been doing just lately.

First and foremost, I have been coming in useful as 'teamster', in Yankee parlance, having been chiefly employed in driving my neighbours all about the country lately. You would have laughed, I think, had you seen my 'span' (pair of horses) the other day,—one brown, pretty high,—the other mouse-coloured and some three inches lower, the most delightful variety prevailing in the harnessing and general appearance of the two. Behind these beauties came six of us in a big rough country 'wagon', all of painted wood,—two big seats fixed in a sort of open cart.

We went through *such* a ford,—the Penningewassett River, and (when the horses didn't bite each other) we got on grandly. . . .

"You haven't the least idea what that word 'woods' means,—in England there are just a few acres of carefully preserved trees and 'no trespassers allowed'. Here you plunge into a vast forest, miles and miles every way,—lucky if you can find a path at all, else guiding yourself by sun and stream and taking hours and hours to get a mile or two,—yet all through so grand, so green, and so delicious! If you could just have been with us yesterday! Every few minutes we found some great tree fallen across our path, or some black bog of decayed cedar or pine,—oh, the scents of those!—perfectly delicious;—and then round we had to go, creeping, jumping or gliding round the obstruction. Then we would come to some little clearing, and catch such views of the mountains we were shut in with,—then on again and hardly see daylight through the dense trees. And such mosses, such ferns, such berries!

Then over the river somehow from rock to rock, and such a scramble up among the cascades which came leaping down like liquid silver in the sunlight, and such pools we did so want to bathe



in, and had to [refrain] for lack of time and towels! They called the distance  $2\frac{1}{2}$  or 3 miles, but we took just 3 hours to get there,—and then coming back pretty sharply in about half the time. The only grief to me was—what perhaps you will hardly sympathize in—that we didn't come across any bear. There are a good many left in the woods and one hears every now and then of their being met, but they are getting few, and they are proportionately timid and modest, running off full speed if they see you. Wouldn't it have been fun to see one? . . .

I think hardly anything strikes an Englisher more than the no-value of wood here. Over the water it's half high treason to hurt a tree;—here, if you want a napkin-ring, you strip the bark off the first birch you come to and make a lot; or, if you take it into your head, set fire to the woods anywhere and have a bonfire of a dozen trees, and no one says a word. We have seen woods on fire over and over again, and no one says more than,—‘Oh, somebody's fired the wood’; and the odd thing is it doesn't seem to spread as one would expect.

One comes continually to clearings full of blackened stumps not yet grubbed up,—the beginning of a garden or house place perhaps. I want to see a great big forest fire some day,—and I only wish I might see a prairie on fire too; only that is said to be horribly dangerous. It is so funny to hear here, as when I was asking about a certain road (from St. Louis to California), ‘Yes, it's the shortest, but the Indians are cross just now and have been scalping a lot of people there’!

Well, darling, we had such a drive home by starlight last night, and all enjoyed our day hugely. When we got in I suppose I walked slightly lame or something, for my greeting was,—‘I guess you're tired, an't you? You're kind o' waggling’!

One is quite sorry to see the Boston postmark again; but the high spirits do not flag. “You don't know,” she writes to her Mother, “what an immense thing it is for us to have got free admission to the Woman's Hospital life here,—we are always doing something jolly together with the students and doctors,—all women, by the way.

Dr. Sewall is resident Physician, and is always asking us to spend jolly evenings there,—or to join them in going to theatres, etc. Yesterday we made an expedition in the evening to a famous place for ice-cream, 8 of us there were—4 M.D.s (one of whom is a splendid surgeon,—the first female surgeon I have heard of) two students and we two. After the ices we went back to the Hospital, and played a most ridiculous game of cards called ‘Muggins’, keeping

us in roars of laughter half the time. Then Dr. Tyng (the surgeon) sang, and, among other things gave us a specimen of the 'Shaker' singing—with its very peculiar religious dance,—have you heard about the Shakers? I hope to see them and then I will tell you.

But can't you understand how refreshing it is to slip into the bright life of all these working people—working hard all day, and then so ready for fun when work's over? It reminds me of the full colour and life of the old London times when all we working women were together."

So she utilised every opportunity of getting information likely to help in her study of the conditions of Women's education. She regretted in after life that her dislike of 'lion-hunting' had prevented her from making—or cultivating—the acquaintance of well-known people who did not seem likely to be of direct help in her work. Not that she disdained the opportunities when they actually came within reach. Here is an interesting episode in the course of her wanderings :

"Sept. 9th. Went over to Concord, Mass. by 11 a.m. train. At the station found Waldo Emerson just fetching his wife and friends. I spoke to him and he very cordially asked us to 'take our dinner' with him. We accepted, first paying a visit to Mrs. Horace Mann and Miss Peabody. Mrs. Mann gave me a letter to Mr. Pennel (her nephew) at St. Louis, whither I am advised to go after Oberlin and Antioch perhaps. Poughkeepsie we must visit later, by wish of the President, Dr. Raymond.

Went on to Emerson's to dinner. Was received by one of the daughters, Ellen,—simple and kindly, the 'housekeeper', I should think—and shown into a room with several people. . . . About 3 p.m. dinner served, more English-wise than most, though with a new Irish maid for waiter, who looked anxiously to 'Ellen' for orders. Another daughter, Edith (about to be married) and a son, Edward. They had sherry on the table, which I have only seen at the Rogers' besides, . . . Pears and grapes,—partly the queer sage grapes with tarry flavour, —on a pretty basket, large and shallow.

Mr. Emerson struck me as having one of the sweetest expressions I have ever seen on a man's mouth. He was very kind in offering help. We talked besides a little about Swedenborg, for whom he seemed to have some admiration. 'To be read as one reads a poet's ideas,—not critically,' he said, and spoke of the pre-inspiration works on science, etc., as really valuable.

Mrs. Emerson talked a little about 'women's questions', female franchise, etc.—and spoke of the wonderful blinding power of habit,—

as in slavery question,—looking to Christianity in its advance to set all to rights.

I remarked that few had done more harm to the cause than St. Paul by some of his words. She replied very truly that the fault lay rather in those who would rigidly apply such words and consider them binding out of all connection of time and place.

It was left to a later friend to point out that St. Paul showed himself in this respect the John Stuart Mill of his day when he asserted that ‘in Jesus Christ is neither male nor female.’

“Speaking a little to an old schoolfellow of Emerson’s he told me it was hard for anyone to say what Emerson’s opinions were. I said I had heard of him as a pantheist; he said at any rate he was one of the best of men and had been from boyhood up.”

A few days later she visited Niagara,—“the only ‘pleasure’ thing” she tells her Mother, “I *resolved* to do if possible. We hope to spend next Sunday there,—not a bad church, will it be? From Niagara she writes to Mrs. Unwin :

“Sept. 17th. 1865.  
Niagara.

MY DEAR LUCY,

I congratulate you with all my heart on the birth of your little son! I think by this time you will have forgotten all doubts and difficulties, and all but pleasant feelings of responsibility, in your great content, have you not? God very seldom sends us either duties or blessings without showing us how to fulfil and enjoy and use them, and I do not doubt but you will have found in your own case all sorts of new powers and instincts develop with the need of them, and will have by this time a pretty definite idea ‘What to do with a baby’—Is it not so? . . .

I wish there existed a visual telegraph (if such a phrase may be coined) and that I could give you a glimpse of the scene I have in front of me, and which is continually stealing my eyes from my paper. No less than Niagara in its full glory!—and what that glory is I don’t think any *but* eyes can tell. I have seen a good deal of beauty and grandeur in my life, in Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, etc., but I think never anything so wonderfully, bewitchingly, grandly beautifully as this. People talk of being disappointed in Niagara, but I think it can only be because, for the first moment, the enormous width of the Falls (900 feet in one case, 2000 in the other,—separated by an island) prevents their recognizing their height as well, or else they have not got the right natures to

admire with ! (and I think that last is oftener the case than people think).

It gives one most wonderfully the feeling of power and immensity, —the sort of feeling that was [expressed] long ago, ' When I consider the work of Thy fingers, what is man that Thou are mindful of him ? ' —and yet the feeling of infinite beauty and harmony too. Before leaving we go under the Falls, and into the ' Cave of the Winds ' behind a vast curtain of water, and that I think must give one almost more strongly still the impression of might and vastness. It is very little use to talk about it any more, I wish you could see it !

Thank you very much for writing to my Mother about A. I hope she will get away from her present uncomfortable place,—it would give me great pleasure if she came to you. Only I warn you I shall claim her some day !

Goodbye, dear child. With all good wishes for you and yours, I am ever

Yours very sincerely,

S. L. JEX-BLAKE."

From Niagara she went via Cleveland to Oberlin, and so began the tour which she afterwards described in *A Visit to some American Schools and Colleges* (published by Macmillan in 1867). She had been very kindly advised by Dr. Hill, the President of Harvard, as to the Colleges best worth visiting, and the experience proved both interesting and useful. At Oberlin the two sexes were almost equally represented, and "coloured" students formed about a third of the whole number. "In the year of my visit," she writes, "it so happened that the only woman who graduated was a coloured girl, originally a slave, who had not even then paid her full ransom to her former owners." A considerable proportion of students of both sexes supported themselves wholly or in part by doing the domestic work of the establishment. Manners were rather rough even for the America of those days, but the standard of behaviour was high, and the religious atmosphere almost overwhelming.

From Oberlin she went on to Hillsdale, St. Louis, and Antioch (at Yellow Springs in Ohio) spending a few days or weeks at each ; and afterwards she visited a number of schools. What impressed her perhaps more than anything else was the success with which the joint education of men

and women was carried on, and this impression was destined to play its part in the later struggles of her life.

“ If anyone asks you again about my views of comparative English and American teaching,” she writes to her Mother, “ I suppose I may say that I believe on the whole American girls *are* more thoroughly, and especially more universally, taught fundamental things. They learn Mathematics more thoroughly, and Latin more invariably ; their knowledge of modern languages is decidedly inferior (very naturally, being so far from France, Germany, etc.) and their English and their manners both less polished. But I should think a decidedly smaller number of them are able to manage to grow up *quite* ignorant ! ” It annoyed her a good deal that, in the matter of pronunciation, an American will always ask you “ what dictionary you go by,” and seems quite unable to understand the unwritten law of language which in England reigns supreme, and from which, if a dictionary differs, it simply condemns itself.

Her birthday inspired a breezy letter from her brother :

“ 13 Sussex Square, Brighton.

Jan. 21. 1866.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

Many happy returns of your 26th birthday, as they would say in Ireland : and may they ache find you younger and fresher !

We have been enjoying three very fresh but windy weeks here ; and are now leaving tomorrow for Rugby. We leave Violet, Katharine and Netta here, however, as they are only half through measles. . . .

We have ridden a good deal, been with the hounds more than usual ; and not read much. Lecky on Rationalism is the best book I have read lately, of the fairly solid sort ; Swinburne's *Atalanta* the best new poem ; *Citoyenne Jacqueline* the best new novel ; Mr. —'s the worst stale sermons. Is there anything good out in American literature of late ? Artemus Ward is good in his line, but his line is audacious.

I should like six months in America immensely ; locomotive, with introductions, I don't know the politics of the people you are with or have been with ; but I was always a Northerner. . . . I wonder how the Mexican business will end : and cannot pretend to guess : but I hope Louis Napoleon . . . will soon withdraw his troops, and Maximilian will collapse. We are on the eve of a noisy session, I expect ; Home Office stung by reform into a queer tarantula, and Colonial secretaries badgered about Jamaica by both sides of the

House. I cannot pretend to judge till we get more evidence: but as yet none has turned up which in my eyes justifies the execution of Gordon—who for all that was probably deep. . . . Have I wearied you out with politics? or have you not read so far?

With love from us all,

I am your affecte brother,

T. W. JEX-BLAKE."

She answered the letter while the stimulus of it was fresh:

"DEAR TOM,

Many thanks for your birthday letter. Though they came rather late, I got quite a budget at last.

I quite agree that you ought to come and see America,—both its people and its scenery. It's a queer study in all ways, one finds so much to like and respect, and so much that one is inclined to laugh at. People are certainly less tied and bound by the chain of 'on dit', on this side the water, and that tells more for good than for evil, I think; but on the other hand it lets people who are so inclined fall into overgrown eccentricities, and set at nought to an alarming extent all rules of grammar and etiquette when they don't suit. In fact I have not found more than three or four Americans altogether who talk what we should consider cultivated English, or behave as if they had been in what we call cultivated society. They'll pick their teeth while they talk to you (so will the shopmen—'store clerks', if you please,—while they serve you) spit within an inch of you, eat things in the streets while walking with you, perhaps whistle and sing ditto; talk about what they 'had ought to do', say they should 'admire to do so and so for you' or ask if they shall 'turn out the tea,' etc. And all this from men who have been through College, and women who know more Mathematics, Latin, Greek and Philosophy than I dare think about. In fact there's a very curious contrast in the much higher level of learning and the much lower level of outward signs of refinement in American as compared with English averages.

I'm afraid that while we may have some few hundreds better educated,—more 'elegant scholars'—than any in America, we must confess that there is here a very much higher percentage of fairly well read and well educated people than with us. I notice this specially among the girls—as to the men I know less. But almost all girls here have studied a good deal things few English girls go much into—specially Mathematics and natural science.

Then I am sure no one ought to speak more highly than I of American kindness and hospitality,—I am very much afraid few foreigners would have found in England such a welcome as I met with here. People were so cordially kind in helping me in all sorts

of ways. . . . There seems to me much less of the spirit of 'pride of office,' etc., much more readiness to admit one everywhere to see everything, and to be ready to help without standing too much on one's dignity. I found this specially in the case of Dr. Hill, President of Harvard University, the first in America—and the same in the case of the presidents of the colleges for both sexes, Oberlin, Hillsdale, and Antioch.

I don't know whether you will care for all these results of my observations, but your mention of America and wish to see it drew them out.

As to politics, I knew very little about them before I came, and had a faint sort of prejudice in favour of the South, believing the North to be very insincere about slavery, etc. I now think that the Anti-slavery cry *has* been used most shamelessly for private and political ends by some, but that there is at the heart of Yankeedom a strong true heart beating earnestly in favour of liberty for negroes as well as whites, and that there are and have been very many most sincerely bent on very unselfish ends, and a great deal of real patriotism (on both sides probably) evolved by the war.

I am chiefly with some of the very best of the Anti-slavery people. The Sewalls used to shelter escaped negroes when to do so was a penal offence.

I saw Lecky's Rationalism (which ought rather to be called the History of Reasonableness) before I left England, but only read part of it. I first found it on Miss Cobbe's table, and liked it very much. I don't know of any great American books lately,—they pirate almost everything English.

I think the English here must be feeling pretty badly about Jamaican affairs,—I am. They say the French troops are certainly to evacuate Mexico now. . . .

I hope Hetty got thanked for her note a little while ago,—this letter is meant as much for her as for you, though I forgot to begin it so. Love to the bairns. I suppose I shall scarcely know them when I get back.

Your aff. sister,

“S. L. J.-B.”

## CHAPTER XIV

### QUESTIONINGS

WHEN S. J.-B. left England her plan had been to spend at least part of the winter with an old school-friend, now married to the Revd. Addington Venables—afterwards Bishop—of Nassau in the West Indies; but life in Boston proved too attractive. She liked the women doctors and they liked her; possibly they had designs on her; in any case Dr. Sewall was anxious to get her health up to such a level as would make professional life a possibility; and, for the furtherance of this end, it was arranged that she should share the resident's little house in connection with the hospital. Miss Isabel Bain had gone to pursue her education in one of the good girls' schools. Already in October one had heard of S. J.-B. "helping the doctor through oceans of figures in hospital reports," and one can well believe that she was an efficient member of the little community. The very day after she took up her residence in the hospital precincts the "student" who did the dispensing was summoned away, and as—of course!—there was a run of arduous cases at the same time, S. J.-B. cheerfully volunteered to do the dispensing,—“and was very thankfully accepted” to fill the gap! Within a week she writes to her Mother:

“It's very amusing, dear, to learn to write and make up prescriptions so easily,—I shall be up to the doctors in future you see! I have just been making one up for myself under the doctor's directions, to my great amusement,— . . . and precious nasty it is!

It's a great comfort to be of some sort of use to these people who are so frightfully overworked just now. . . . Besides being apothecary, I'm general secretary,—write all the business letters (which



the doctor hates) and post up the hospital records of cases, etc.; and besides this I requested to be and got appointed what I call 'chaplain' with discretionary powers. The only people who visit in the hospital (besides friends at visiting hours) are the Lady Managers, each of whom has a month on duty, and besides that Mr. Barnard comes and holds a short service and preaches every Sunday afternoon. So I thought that the patients would like some reading, etc., sometimes, and Dr. Sewall gave me leave to do all I liked. . . . You can't think how pleased they were all of them, and how heartily they asked me to come again, which I shall do pretty often."

A week later (Nov. 24th) she writes again :

"At present I am so exceedingly content in my quaint pleasant quarters in the midst of so new a working world, that I hardly feel the need of anything beyond; and I do greatly want quiet and rest to 'recuperate' as the new word goes. I can't tell you when I have found so much chance of rest of mind and quiet interest in things wholly unconnected with the old pain,—not for years, I am sure, and I have ready to hand just as much work as I feel able for, and yet no strain on me to do it if I am not able. I can't tell you the pleasure it gives one simply to see Dr. Sewall in her hospital and especially among her poor patients. She is such a true *Healer*;—so infinitely compassionate and sympathetic, with blue eyes sometimes quite full of sorrow for the people's pain, yet such strong firm hand and will to remedy even *through* pain. I say a dozen times a day,—'Were I not a teacher, I would be a doctor'—if I could.

(Nov. 27th.) This hospital life is simply charming. So busy, so simple, so quaint and so interesting! I am entering more and more fully into it daily, and finding more and more nooks which I can fill. . . . sometimes giving mechanical aid in operations where they want an extra hand, etc.

Darling, one very unexpected result is coming out of this new life which I embraced simply for its rest and comfort,—I find myself getting desperately in love with medicine as a science and as an art, to an extent I could not have believed possible. I always associated so much that is repulsive and nasty with it in my mind, but I find that one really loses all sense of that in close contact,—that the beauty of nature's arrangements and of art's contrivances absorb one's mind from everything less pleasant, and I find myself saying to myself a dozen times a day that, did I not feel my life devoted to another object, I would be a doctor straightway. As it is, I mean to use all the time I have in gaining all I can, by observation (for which one so rarely has such a chance) even more than by study, though I find myself devouring all sorts of medical works too, and

am quite amazed to find how far even in this little time I am able to understand to a certain extent all sorts of things going on around me, and how *very* interesting they all become in the new light. . . . Of course one has access to an enormous medical library here, and the junior doctors are all as ready to help or show me all I want as possible. I in my turn do all I can to take extra work which I can do off their hands. Today the hospital note-book was handed over to me, and I went round with the physicians taking down directions for food, medicines, etc., and then making up the latter and taking them to the wards: all of which was very little for me to do, and very interesting, but a great deal saved for the over-worked junior doctor of the wards. I am really a *great* deal stronger and healthier than I have been for a long time."

"Nov. 27th. We get up at 6.30 a.m.,—breakfast at 7, then go round the wards with the doctors, then I make up the hospital medicines and see what drugs need to be ordered into the dispensary. The Dispensary opens at 9, or two days in the week at 10, and on Mondays and Thursdays (Dr. Sewall's days) I am there all the morning, making up prescriptions as fast as she writes them (two of us generally have our hands full, but sometimes I am alone), and very often we have not got through our work when the dinner-bell rings at 1 p.m. Dr. Sewall always has an enormous number of patients—from 60 to 70, and if I go down into the Dispensary waiting-room I get seized on so eagerly,—'Is Dr. Sewall here herself?' as she is occasionally obliged to be absent part of the time.

I think anyone who passed a couple of mornings in this dispensary would go away pretty well convinced of the enormous advantage of women doctors; and one sees daily how the poor women feel it by the crowds that come on the four days in the week when the lady physicians are in charge, and the handful that comes on the two days when a man presides. . . . They say that they have cases again and again of long-standing diseases which the women have borne rather than go to a man with their troubles,—and I don't wonder at it."

Dec. 15th. I have just begun to have a little Sunday service in the wards where there was none before. Dr. Sewall is very good in letting me make such plans if I like, and comes herself to the service.

Of course we have a very mixed multitude, but I think we manage to worship our 'Father in Heaven' and look forward to the 'One fold' some day, when neither 'Jerusalem nor this mountain' shall be the vital thing."

"(Dec. 19th.) My chaplain's work has rather fallen into abeyance now from the crush of other things,—the only thing I do regularly being the Sunday service, writing a weekly sermon for which, by the

bye, is not to be omitted in one's list of work. It's all but impossible to find any printed ones one could read,—one needs to be so absolutely non-doctrinal and non-combative; and besides the doctors and people will come to hear mine when they'd think twice about anything else.

The young surgeon I told you about has a splendid voice, and last Sunday she brought a sort of large accordion and played all our hymn tunes, so we are getting quite grand. Wouldn't you like, darling, to peep in at us and see all our busy doings?—I *wish* you could."

To say that the young doctors who came to her services were frankly critical of her and her beliefs is an understatement of the facts. Some of their remarks have survived,—clever and flippant for the most part; but the following letter from an intimate friend, whom she had persuaded to accompany her to church, is worth quoting:

" Sunday evening. 11 o'clock.

My dear Baby, I cannot sleep for thinking of the rude speeches I made to you this evening. I am so sorry that I said them, but at the same time I could not help it,—the whole service and the going to church of most all the people there was such a farce that it roused the devil in my nature.

Besides all this, my Baby answered me so sweetly and truly that it did me good to make her talk, and raised my faith in human goodness which was getting almost extinguished by that man's sermon. If I ever get into such a disagreeable mood again, and say ugly things to tease you, you must give me a good moral box on the ear so as to bring me to my senses.

I do not believe that going to church is good for me.

Don't think me foolish for writing this, and don't let anything I said today trouble you, but be as good to me as you have been."

In the midst of all this busy life, S. J.-B. never forgot the family festivals at home, the birthdays of parents and friends, the date when such an one was to be married, or another to sail for India. This was a striking gift, more of the heart than of the head, that she retained throughout life. "I was thinking in bed this morning of the faithful few who would remember my poor old birthday," wrote her childhood's schoolmistress, Miss Teed, at this time, "And a little bird whispered, 'You will get a letter from Sophy.'"

Not that she ever felt bound to say the thing that was expected of her.

"I suppose you don't expect me to say much about Uncle's death, darling," she writes to her Mother. "It cannot seem to me sad for anyone concerned. I do not think he would have learned much more here; doubtless he will hereafter."

Three weeks before the anniversary of her parents' wedding, she writes to her sister:

"DEAR OLD CHARLIE,—Please keep the enclosed very secret till the morning of May 12th.

Get a grand plant of some sort—full of blossom, geranium or fuchsia or something,—any price up to 5s.—and put the letter in its leaves on Mother's plate at breakfast. *Mind* you get a glorious plant. . . .

Your aff. sis.,

S. L. J.-B."

From a letter written to her Mother at Christmas 1865 one realizes what a child she was still:

"Our rooms did get so prettily decorated,—Dr. Sewall is clever that way,—and I took holly round to all the wards that everybody might have some bits to look at. We had quite a rush of babies just then—four born on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.—When we were going round the wards on Christmas Day Dr. Sewall ordered of course 'light diet' for the new Mothers,—so I said laughingly to console them, 'Well, I guessed the babies were worth losing a dinner for, weren't they?' 'Humph!' says one of the Mothers, 'a good dinner's worth more to poor folks!'

To tell the truth I was too much taken aback to reflect what a sensible woman she was!—What would *you* have said, dear?

Darling, I come more and more to the conclusion that anyone who wishes to preserve intact all romantic ideas about 'Mother's love,' etc., had better not live in a Lying-in Hospital. It's a grand and blessed thing when it does come, but that isn't always. We had two of the babies born here found deserted in the streets a few days ago,—the day after their mothers were discharged."

On March 4th, 1866, she writes to her Mother:

"I have given up my Sunday service, or at least have resigned it into the hands of a minister who already had a service in the medical wards. I found it very hard to find time to prepare properly for it, and sometimes it tried my nerves very much, and besides it got to be a great weight upon me in the way of responsibility and abso-

lute honesty in *what* I said. Things seem so very un-clear to my own mind that it rather weighs upon me and worries me to be trying to say much about them to others. Perhaps this state may just pass away again, but in the meantime I like best to 'be true to every honest thought' and, till I'm sure, to be silent.

Much love to Daddy and Carry, and such a lot of kisses for my darling.

Yours lovingly,

SOPH."

To understand the inner history of this change one must revert to the diary,—the most intimate friend of all—and this takes us back for a moment to the time of her arrival in America.

"June 18th. How thoughts and plans and possibilities rush upon me! The opening of the bar to women here,—Mr. Sewall's wish for a female pupil. 'Ah,' as I said to L.E.S. last night, 'if I had been an American, I believe I should not have doubted to be a lawyer.' She thinks one *should* be, if one has the powers and will.

Yes, but is the 'dedication' and vocation of years nothing? Have I believed rightly or wrongly that God meant me to do something for teaching,—and that in England,—to the almost certain exclusion of all other life-work? Rightly, I think.

Then, again, the ministry. What seems to draw me so irresistibly that way? Is it pride or wish of note, or is it vocation? Is it partly Dr. Arnold's belief that Headmaster ought also to be chaplain? . . .

One seems at crossways,—'the tide' perhaps. Well, *look*,—and surely the kindly Light will lead."

Anyone who had gone through all S. J.-B.'s papers up to this date with an open mind would have said that the choice really lay between teaching and preaching. All her life she had been more interested in religious subjects than in any others, and her gifts of exposition and of public speaking were far above the average in either sex. In later years, when she was addressing thousands of people, she could make all hear without seeming to raise her voice; it remained full, mellow, easy, perfectly controlled, just as when she sat at the head of her own dinner-table. She might have spent some considerable part of the day in "wishing somebody would shoot her," but no one would have guessed it when the moment came. "My mind is perfectly at ease when *she* rises to speak,"

said one of her patients in Edinburgh, many years later, "one feels then that humanly speaking nothing can go wrong." As a matter of fact it was when she was addressing a large audience that she looked most radiantly happy.

In many ways, then, she would have made a good minister ; we know that she wrote a number of sermons that were appreciated by her colleagues, and she went so far as to preach at Weymouth (Mass.) for the Rev. Olympia Brown. "On seeing Him who is invisible" was the subject she chose, and, judged by ordinary standards, the sermon seems to have been a success.

The main reason why she did not follow it up was (as indicated in the last-quoted letter to her Mother) the change that took place in her religious views after she had lived some time in America. In England she had been considered an advanced thinker on religious subjects : in America—the America in which her lot happened to be thrown—she was amazingly orthodox and conservative. For the first time she found herself among people who really *did not care* about religion as she understood it.

" July 2nd. Very nice these people are," she writes in her diary, "and very nice Mrs. Rogers' deep clear interest about the poor and wicked,—refuges, etc.

Yet is there not in them the sort of un-religiousness which half jars on one in Unitarians ? I wonder *why*. I *hope* I shan't get into it. 'More of reverence in us dwell.' Yet so difficult in throwing off old bonds of sentiment not to lose something of the real feeling,—and, as Miss Cobbe says, if our religion is not a synthesis of *all* the good and beauty we know, we are less, not more, by rejecting errors."

And again :

"A new psychical study in the shape of Mrs. F., who 'can believe in Providence but not in God,' and who 'means to say that there is absolute right and wrong, but *not* good and bad people. People were born with certain notions and acted accordingly ; they did the best they could and could do no more.'

Mr. F. allowing and accepting the consequence that men differed no more from brutes than by finer organization, no more than the elephant from the fish ! It is really good to contrast opposite extremes of thought,—it gives one a certain sense of stability and

reality to have to defend one's castle on *both* sides, and so to feel sure that it is one's own at least. . . .

Talking of struggle as the only root of good, I quoted 'perfect *through* suffering,' and spoke of my belief in Christ's struggle in those 30 years as the only possible root of his accordance of will with God's.

July 16th. Curious how the things most living to me are just simple absurdities to another. Talking of tombstones, Mrs. H. doesn't like them, as preventing the dead rising—in idea. Mrs. F.—' Well, you don't expect them to, do you ? ' (as a sort of *reductio ad absurdum*). ' Certainly I do : the Bible says so.' ' Oh—aw—ah ! ' with such a face,—' if I thought so, I'd take to Banting at once.' "

Curious how none of them seem to have seen that the frivolous remark involved a great principle !

There were many stories and jokes on biblical themes, and—though S. J.-B. even at this time was a touchstone in the matter of jokes, never allowing one to pass which was not funny enough or clever enough to justify its breadth or its seeming irreverence—her sense of humour was keen.

" Suggestion to read the prayer for fair weather,—' Lor, sir,—not a bit of good with the wind in this quarter.' "

But she was constantly reverting to the old religious intensity :

" How reading of any spiritual conflict—even such an ' *ébauche* ' as in Agnes of Sorrento—rouses one's whole nature in a sort of enthusiasm of longing and half prophecy ! . . .

Sometimes I feel such intense sympathy and pity for Christ because of his very deification. That after spending his whole life to learn and tell men about his Father, he should find them, after his death, trying to set him up himself to obscure that Father,—making God a foil to Christ ! "

With that extraordinary frankness that does such credit to both, she writes to her Mother at this time,—" I was thinking the other day how curious it was that I really never read one Unitarian book till I was altogether Unitarian,<sup>1</sup>—never one but the Bible at least, if that counts."

" It is strange," says someone, " that, in all our talk of the

<sup>1</sup> It was only for a very brief period of her life that S. J.-B. would have called herself by this name.

evolution of the individual, we fail to recognize the evolution of the medium." S. J.-B. seems to have thought—as so many earnest spirits thought in those days—that she stood practically alone. "It has so been," she says in the same letter to her Mother, "(I can't say *chanced*) that I have had next to no human sympathy or help on my way. I do not remember that anyone but Mrs. Ballantyne has given me much of either in this one strife, and before I knew her the worst was over."

One must bear this in mind in reading the passage that follows :

"To realize more and more that my life will be one—for years if not to the end—of struggle and perhaps obloquy, certainly out-casting from the synagogue,—struggle theological and social: and will it even succeed at last? Yes, surely,—inasmuch as Robertson says how to fall in the gap is success,—to be one of the conquering army, if not of the conquerors.

The next entry in the diary is the quotation of a flippant joke about the Californians who "when they go to a certain warm abode have yet to send back for their blankets."

"July 30th. A very interesting talk with the Fs. . . . trying hard to show Mrs. F., who longs so to believe in a loving God, 'Thou wouldst not seek me, hadst thou not found me,'—and that to long is almost to believe. Also to show her that Christ's Christianity is a strong true manly thing,—that what she deprecates is the letter not the spirit, and that her willingness to live, and yet fear to die, without Christianity is of the essence of Calvinism.

With him, still more interesting, (except that one pities and longs to help her) about origin of evil, free will, etc. I arguing that God *could* not give men the possibility of virtue without the possibility of evil,—he arguing a higher state where evil not possible. I say—then you exclude the idea of goodness from God.

With some effort cleared ideas so far as to detect the 'undistributed middle term,' to distinguish between the possibility of evil and the wish *toward* evil. Saying that the very truth we prized in Unitarianism was that it said 'Christ, if God, was no example' and that Christ's very goodness consisted in that he had the possibility of evil and no wish for evil.

Illustrating with May forbidden sugar, in a room with and without it. In one case unable to disobey, in the other restrained from the wish to disobey.



The two, confused in one, being absolute opposites.

Is this all part of my training 'for the ministry'? Please God. One does so gain a clearness never, one trusts, to be lost.

He asked me tonight if I did not find I had a clearness of thought and language very rare; and she said I was the first person who had made her feel the intense reality of the invisible and long after it. Please God, a prophecy.

I said I had won through infinite struggle—almost 'to blood'—a certainty to which the visibility of the outer was nothing. And, please God, it is deeply true."

Ah me, Prometheus! The audacity of us small mortals all!

But the words that follow are indeed 'a prophecy.'

"I have such a conviction of infinite struggle and contest in the future,—yet please God, of earnest, on-pressing struggle, and in the end, victory and Rest. . . .

Oh, dear, the 'religious' people and their effects!—very nearly making L. E. S. hate the name. So far from all good being 'in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ' or rather in God's, there is actually room for the reverse to be said;—not wholly truly, I trust though. But she said, 'If I want help for those poor things in or out of hospital, I never go near the pious people. I have and I know them. Go to atheists, and you are never refused.'

Oh, dear!"

Knowing the spiritual history of earnest souls in that generation, one is not surprised to come a couple of months later upon the entry:

"I am wonderfully unsettled and uneasy somehow. . . . I do believe this terrible sort of logical doubt of Theism that enters in—*not* un-faith, but a failure of the abiding surety—an entrance of the admission how possibly *reasonable* Atheism may be—hurts horribly.

And then isn't the whole world void?

Oh for the '*I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not*'!—and doubtless one has it,—both in '*Neither pray I for these alone,*' and also in those who live and love one, Mother and Octa. . . .

L.'s absence of sympathy weighs heavily. Hitherto all my friends have met me here,—she does not. 'All the help she ever got, she got from herself and her will.' Not from the Bible or hymns, etc. She calls herself a theist, but it seems to me to run close to practical atheism. . . .

"Oct. 29th. She is so good! Told her something of today's pain, she so sympathizing and good! Believed that the struggle



And then if I say,—‘ Ah, but see how my theology will impede me!—well, would you have everyone give up working but those who hold the popular views?—is it not just those whose views have changed who need to work and justify them, and not hide light under a bushel at call of indolence or cowardice? You know that you believe in the horrible harm of leaving education to Calvinists, downtreading and hardening earth round the foot,—that you believe in children being taught ‘ the two commandments ’ and no more,—and yet, because you would so teach them, you half shrink from the battle through which you must do it.

L. E. S. says, ‘ If you feel you can and wish to be a doctor, you ought.’ Ah, but I *can* do the other too. And if it is only selfish or worldly considerations that sway you to medicine—if it is the interest or the power or the success, mainly or wholly—if it is the difficulties present or future that make you half yearn to turn from the other—surely these are no reasons.

Surely, having presented ourselves, our souls and bodies, a reasonable sacrifice, these things no longer enter in.”

In view of all that was to follow, it is interesting that, in turning to Medicine, she should suspect herself of ‘ half shrinking from the battle.’ Here is proof, if proof were needed, that while half of her enjoyed the fray, the other half had to be dragged, an unwilling captive, begging always to lie down and be at peace.

“ The Medicine fascinates me. . . . If I resume teaching, it will be grand to have an M.D. for head of College: if not, why Medicine is a ‘ good work,’ and if I am led up to it, it may be mine after all.

But won’t E.G. be cross? ”

Here are two pleasant little sidelights on the situation—from letters to her Mother:

“ (Jan. 21st. 1866.) And, darling, do you know that the doctor has such a splendid temper, and is so infinitely gentle, that I really believe she is improving mine,—because I’m absolutely ashamed to be cross to anybody so good. Suppose I come home angelic, dear? ”

Her best friends would have said there was no great cause for anxiety on that score.

“ (Feb. 6th.) Yes, dear, I mean to be a thoroughly good nurse for you at any rate, if ever you need me; as to ‘ Doctor too,’ I can’t say. I should like to be enough of one at least to know how

to save you some pain. I listen to and learn specially everything that I think can ever help my darling,—it would be grand to be of some use and comfort to her if she was ill."

A few weeks later she wrote to Mrs. Unwin :

" 13 Pleasant Street, Boston.  
March 3rd. 1866.

MY DEAR LUCY,

I hope you are quite prepared to renew your invitation to me for next summer, for I'm beginning to think seriously of my visit home, and I want very much to see you! I say my 'visit' for I have been so well and strong since I came to America, and have found so much to interest me, that I think it very likely I may come back here after seeing all my home folks. . . .

I am so glad to hear that you have got Alice with you, and expect to like her. She is a real friend of mine, and a very true and valuable one. . . . I only hope you will let her take as good care of you as she used to do of me. . . .

Whenever you feel energetic enough to enjoy a chat by pen and paper, I shall be very pleased to hear of your doings. Pray tell me all about the Baby—of course the most wonderful of his kind—and be sure, dear child, that I shall care very much to hear and know about everything that concerns you.

Please give the enclosed lines to A. I shall enjoy her to feed you up no end, and whenever we do meet, be sure I shall ask if you let yourself be taken proper and sensible care of. I believe in food and rest as just the best doctors in creation—with all my new medical lights!

Goodbye, dear child. With every good wish for you in the New Year, I am,

Yours affectionately,

S. L. J.-B."

All through this time her happy letters had been giving no small pleasure to the "old folks" at home.

" Brighton. 18th Dec. 1865.

DEAREST,

Your welcome letter arrived a day or two before the 17th., but dear Mother kept it back till *the* morning. Thanks for all your good wishes. One thing you can always do,—pray for me,—and that, I trust, you will do daily. I have constant faith in prayer simply offered up to our heavenly Father through the one mediator between God and man. I believe it never fails.

I am rejoiced you are so quiet at Boston, and have employment that interests you, but even that work will hurt you, remember,

if you have too much of it. You want *rest*, dearest child, and only light agreeable work on your hands. I wish I could see Dr. Sewall, to give her a Father's heartfelt thanks for all her loving kindness to you. She is indeed an invaluable friend. If I am to see her, she must come to Europe, for I shall never cross the Atlantic. . . . I am *very* glad you are so well, and your letters are so cheery that they are a great pleasure.

We are all, thank God, fairly well, and are to have Tom and his wife, and four (I think) of the children here after Christmas. On Thursday last, at 2 a.m. their house was on fire, and till 2.30 a.m. he did not expect to save the house; and had there been a high wind, nothing could have saved it probably. Mercifully it was a still night and everything went well. Two engines were on the spot rapidly, in perfect order,—plenty of water close by, and the superintendent very active and intelligent. No crowd, and the entrances kept clear by respectable known men: and by three o'clock every spark was out.

The children were sent off rapidly to the school-house, and all *five* (baby being put elsewhere) put in Miss Temple's bed! Nobody has been hurt,—a few colds and that seems all. Our God be praised. How different it might have been!

Your affecte Father,

T. JEX-BLAKE."

And the Mother writes :

"Jan. 29th. 1866. . . . You were very good and very right not to attempt to enter yet as a student. . . .

I had much rather *know* you well and happy there than see you ill and know you worried here. If they would only have the Cable, I think Boston no distance. I should certainly like the Cable,—but I don't hear a word about it. Couldn't you apply to Government?"

"Feb. 20th. I hope your medical education is progressing, and that you don't addle your brains. I shall expect you to make something on the way home by your medical knowledge."

"Mar. 5th. It is such a repose and joy to me to hear of your being occupied so usefully and happily, and feeling comparatively well, though I suspect sometimes my little one is a wee overdone."

The medical study was more or less of a joke so far to her friends at home, and many are the enquiries as to when she means to return and go on with her life after this interesting digression.

"I am very glad you find things and people pleasant in America," writes Mrs. Unwin. "I hope they won't be so nice that they will

tempt you to stay there very long, for I shall be very glad when I can think of you again without that great sea between us. I do so want a long talk with you about no end of things. I don't think I ever wanted you more than when I was ill."

And Mr. Unwin expressed the view of many when he wrote :

"If I told you of the estimate in which I hold the purpose to which you are devoting your life, you would suspect me of flattery, so I abstain ; but, barring all that, your friends in England are in great need of you, and I think it is very horrid that you should leave them all, to whom you would be of infinite service, on God knows what outlandish errand. They all grudge you to Boston entirely, so pray be quick and come back."

Dr. Sewall, on the other hand, had become not a little dependent on her competent helper, and, although this friendship too was not without the "cataracts and breaks" to which S. J.-B. so often refers in her diary, there is no doubt that the older and gentler woman found it not only a pleasure but a great asset. "How I wish I had you here : I do so want your *strength* ! So few people are strong," is a sentiment that recurs in her letters many times from now to the end of her life.

So in June 1866, S. J.-B. returned to England to see her parents, and to talk over the whole question of her future career with them and with other friends.

"Most people are much more in favour of Medicine than I expected," she writes, "except Miss Garrett, who thinks me not specially suited, and E. S. M., who thinks it indecent of unmarried women knowing all about these things."

"July 8th. Sunday. 'Taller,' say Laurence, Mother and self. 'More firmly knit,' say do. 'Muscles like iron, as if rowing all morning and prize-fighting all afternoon,' says Nigger.

Well done America and L. E. S. !—bless her.

Almost at the same moment Dr. Sewall was writing :

"I really feel quite well satisfied with the increase in my practice, and if it continues to increase for the next two years as well, we shall be able to take a fine house and live in style. I cannot tell you how much pleasure I get out of anticipating our house-keeping. When I am too tired to do anything, I lay on the sofa and plan and plan and think what a good time we are going to have, and am as happy as a cricket."

So America won the day, though not without many questionings.

“ August 12th. Sunday. On Sunday last at Mrs. Hyde's suggestion wrote to Macmillan. On Tuesday heard from him, and had a 'book—not too short' warmly accepted by him, at 'no risks and half profits.'

So we gradually come to our wishes when we have ceased to look for them. I accept it almost as I did the preaching,—because I *had* so longed for it.

This day three weeks on the Atlantic,—5 weeks, home to L. E. S., I trust. Study Medicine? . . . or push on in literary career now opening apparently?

How about conflicting interests and powers hereafter? If my book—*inter alia*—brings me to notice of Commission,<sup>1</sup> etc.,—cry off from my chance because too busy as a doctor?

Ah, well,—long way off yet! Do the work 'lies nearest thee' and leave the rest!”

<sup>1</sup> The Schools Inquiry Commission, presumably.

## CHAPTER XV

### PIONEER WORK IN AMERICA

ON September 1st, 1866, S. J.-B. sailed again for America. A warm welcome awaited her, and she speedily fell back into her niche at the Women's Hospital. Her main interest for the first month or two was the writing of her book on *A Visit to Some American Schools and Colleges*, the manuscript of which was duly despatched to Macmillan in November. Based though it avowedly was on somewhat limited observations, and dealing with a transient stage of a great subject, the book was extraordinarily fair and clear, and was greeted with genuine respect by those who were qualified to form an opinion. What was equally important, it made really excellent reading. At the close of a four column review the *Athenaeum* said :

“ An English teacher, whose special avocations enabled her to gain prompt attention from American instructors, and qualified her to detect the true worth and significance of the facts brought under her notice, Miss Jex-Blake has written a sensible and entertaining book upon an important subject ; and, while we thank her for some valuable information, we venture to thank her also for the very agreeable manner in which she imparts it.”

“ Redolent with common sense and practical suggestions,” said *The Stationer*.

How sane a view she took of the whole subject may be gathered from the quotations given in the appendix.<sup>1</sup>

Having happily despatched her book, she was free to give her whole mind to the subject of Medicine, and she seems

<sup>1</sup> Appendix C.



now to have enrolled formally as a medical student. In any case we hear of her dissecting—when material could be got—and finding, in the stimulus this gave to her work, a new interest and fascination.

Excellent work was done at that Women's Hospital in Boston, as a number of our English women doctors have had reason to testify: sickness was relieved, and—what is quite as much to the point—competent and able doctors were turned out year by year. But of course the scholastic side of the work was on a very different level. Even for those days, the practical scientific education, and, above all, the sheer supply of material, were inadequate in the extreme. Then as now, of course, it was true that “*la carrière ouverte aux talents*,” and when women doctors were so rare there was little doubt that a competent woman would make her way. Certainly it was not the hallmark of a good University degree that helped her, for good Universities existed for the male sex only. Graduation in America to this day may mean a great deal or it may mean just nothing at all. It was not the fault of the woman doctor of that period if her “degree” was one that failed to inspire the enthusiasm of those that understood.

Now S. J.-B.'s entry on any new sphere in life could seldom be fitly described as the addition of a little more of the same stuff. For better or worse, she was apt to come somewhat as the yeast comes to the dough, and yet that metaphor, too, falls short, for the medium reacted upon her as intensely perhaps as she acted on the medium. In the present case she had drifted into medical work all uncritical and full of admiration<sup>1</sup>; but a visit to England brought her back as an outsider with her critical faculty fully awake. She saw that the need of adequate Graduation—urgent though it might be—was as nothing compared to the need of adequate

<sup>1</sup> As early as June, 1866, she had written to Dr. Sewall:—“I am glad you are pleased with prospects as to the College; but, however good you may get it to be, take notice (if I study at all) I don't mean to graduate at any Woman's College,—on principle,—or else for vanity and ambition sake,—which is it?” Whichever it was, there can be no doubt as to the soundness of the decision, but she little guessed what that decision was to cost.

Education. It *was* hard to make bricks without straw. In America women doctors had proved, against heavy odds, that women doctors were wanted. Why not give them a fair field? One heard on every side of the splendid advantages laid, so to speak, at the feet of men students at Harvard.

Why should not women be admitted to Harvard?

Why not ask?

In April, 1867, the following correspondence was published in *The Boston Daily Advertiser* :

" March 11th. 1867.

GENTLEMEN,

Finding it impossible to obtain elsewhere in New England a thoroughly competent medical education, we hereby request permission to enter the Harvard Medical School on the same terms and under the same conditions as other students, there being, as we understand, no university statute to the contrary.

On applying for tickets for the course, we were informed by the Dean of the Medical Faculty that he and his coadjutors were unable to grant them to us in consequence of some previous action taken by the corporation, to whom now therefore we make request to remove any such existing disability. In full faith in the words recently spoken with reference to the University of Harvard,—‘ American colleges are not cloisters for the education of a few persons, but seats of learning whose hospitable doors should be always open to every seeker after knowledge ’—we place our petition in your hands and subscribe ourselves,

Your obedient servants,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE.

SUSAN DIMOCK.<sup>1</sup>

To the President and Fellows of the University of Harvard."

" Harvard University. April 8th. 1867.

MY DEAR MADAM,

After consultation with the faculty of the Medical College, the corporation direct me to inform you and Miss Dimock that there is no provision for the education of women in any department of this university.

Neither the corporation nor the faculty wish to express any opinion as to the right or expediency of the medical education of

<sup>1</sup> Miss Susan Dimock was a student of great promise who afterwards completed her education at Zurich. She was lost at sea in the wreck of the steamer *Schiller* in May 1875.

women, but simply to state the fact that in our school no provision for that purpose has been made, or is at present contemplated.

Very respectfully yours,

Miss S. Jex-Blake."

THOMAS HILL.

A few days later the following paragraph appeared in *The Advocate* :

"*The Beginning of the End.* A correspondence between the President and two lady applicants for admission to the Medical School was published some days since in the 'Boston Advertiser.' We understand that the friends of female education have no notion of resting satisfied with their first rebuff; and that prominent Alumni of Boston are already taking measures for the prolonged agitation of the question."

A month later S. J.-B. had obtained introductions to each of the professors in the Medical Faculty at Harvard, and to each member of the staff of the Massachusetts General Hospital and of the Eye and Ear Infirmary: as well as to many people of standing connected with these various institutions: and she now proceeded to canvass them systematically. In addition to a number of influential friends, she was ably supported by Miss Dimock.

On the whole their reception was encouraging. The individual letters, indeed, are so favourable, that the hopes of the inexperienced young applicants must have run high. The following from Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes is typical of some half dozen at least:

"I should not only be willing, but I should be much pleased, to lecture to any number of ladies for whom we can find accommodation in the anatomical lecture room, always provided that any special subject which seemed not adapted for an audience of both sexes should be delivered to the male students alone."

Dr. Brown-Séguard is even more emphatic in a letter to Dr. Holmes:

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

Miss Blake, who will hand you this note, wishes me to say that I am strongly in favour of the admission of persons of her sex at the Medical College. As such is my decided opinion, I write very willingly.

Very faithfully yours,

C. E. BROWN-SEQUARD."

The corporation of Harvard, however, exerted its power to veto any such inclinations on the part of individual professors.

S. J.-B. quotes the above and a number of similar letters in the diary, and adds the comment :

“ All which ends in . . . smoke ! ”

There were always flashes of humour to temper the various disappointments.

“ Those wise men of Gotham at the Eye and Ear think it ‘ the kindest and most gentlemanly thing ’ to shut us out after all ! ”

Dr. A. ‘ not afraid of responsibility, of course ’—only—he’d rather not admit us till other people do ” !

Here is the official letter from the wise men of Gotham :

“ Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary.

June 18th, 1867.

DEAR MADAM,

The surgeons of this Infirmary are, at the same time, members of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and are bound to respect the opinion of its Councillors. And in view of the recent action of that Board, we are of opinion that we cannot continue to allow female students to attend our clinics. Ungracious as is the task, we therefore feel compelled to ask you to suspend your visits.

We have no hesitation in adding that our intercourse with yourself and companions has been throughout most pleasant to us personally.

Very truly yours,

HASKET DERBY,  
for the Surgeons.

Miss Sophia Jex-Blake.”

A certain amount of clinical teaching in the Massachusetts General Hospital the women did obtain, and for this they were duly grateful, though it only made them feel more keenly the deficiencies of their lecture-room and laboratory training. And, even in hospital, they walked with a constant sense of insecurity, as one member of the staff was keenly opposed to the presence of women, and was on the look-out for causes of offence. Little by little S. J.-B. began to feel the wear and tear.

“ July 5th. Rest yesterday, but altogether weighed down yesterday and today with the fear and horror of this irritability which seems so fatally unconquerable,” she writes in her diary.

And one knows how terrible an enemy that irritability was.

Fortunately, a few weeks later, she and Dr. Sewall got away together for a holiday; and this, apparently, was the first of the long series of driving-tours which were to prove the great joy and recreation of an arduous life.

“ Tuesday. July 30th. Atlantic House,  
‘ Town of Wells,’ Maine.

DARLING MOTHER,

As I have a spare hour, I may as well use it to chat a little to you about the oddities of our journey.

I wrote to you from Newbury where we stayed one night at the Merrimac House,—having slept the previous night at the Agawam House, Ipswich (!)—both Indian names, of course. Yesterday we drove (as I told you at the end of my last letter) from Newbury port to Portsmouth, and were uncertain when I wrote whether to stay or go farther. It had been a hot day, but, after posting your letter, a violent rainstorm came up, deluging the streets for about 20 minutes about 5½ p.m.

After it was over, everything looked so cool and clear that Dr. Sewall was anxious to get on, though I was a little afraid of the heavy roads. So we set out soon after six, and had a most delicious drive at first. By-and-bye, however, we came to terribly wet clay roads and could only go at a walk. Our horse got tired and it began to get dark, and we found that the distance to go was even longer than we had been told.

It's hard for you to understand the sort of society in these country places,—no gentry and no peasantry—almost all small farmers doing their own work and owning house and land, with some education but no polish. We stopped at two or three houses, scattered at wide intervals,—and enquired for lodgings, but with no success till after dark when we got to a house belonging to a widow woman who informed us we could come in and have bed and food, but there was ‘ no one in the house but her,—no one for the horse.’ However, I was perfectly ready to act groom, so in we drove to such a queer loose sort of yard, where I unharnessed by very uncertain lantern light, and then the doctor and I had a tremendous job getting our phaeton into a queer coach-house up a sort of hillock!

Then the lantern led on to the ‘ barn,’ which (here as usual) meant also stable, and soon I found myself plunging in the dark through soft masses which proved to be long wet grass, leading my horse by the halter. Then up among big loose stones, and up a step more than 1½ foot high into a barn so low that my horse all but hit his head. Then over some boards set edgewise to divide off stalls . . . the good woman being amazed at my venturing in ‘ with the horse’!

Then a queer hunt in the half darkness for a pail for water and

wooden box for Indian meal (which, stirred with water, often replaces oats here), and then to bed, tired enough!

This morning I groomed the horse, and, so doing, found a stone in his foot, fed him, and we between us washed the carriage. You may tell Daddy I had no idea what hard work it was before! We washed a long while at it, and somehow it wouldn't look *quite* clean at last.

(N.B. Why *will* water dry muddy on to a carriage?)

Then we drove on again some distance and found a place for dinner,—one of the big boarding-houses like what I was in at Compton,—and then on again. Dr. Sewall began to get tired when we were still 5 or 6 miles from our next point, Kennebunk,—and seeing a notice on a bye-road, 'Atlantic House  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile'—we drove down,—found a charming inn almost on the sands, close to the Atlantic,—fresh and bright and airy, and settled here for the night. If you only knew what my afflictions are in American country inns,—I have hardly seen decent food in one since I left Boston—you may imagine my satisfaction at getting here the best supper I have had yet,—excellent fresh fish, lobsters, etc., and currants, and nice bread, and milk. Altogether the best table we've found yet.

It sounds natural, too, to hear the roar of the Atlantic as I write,—only it seems sometimes to murmur, 'Over the sea!'

But then it always makes me feel nearer home to see the actual water, which is the only thing between us,—of which you at Brighton see but another part.

*Wednesday.* . . . We have spent the day quietly here, and shall very likely drive to Portland in one day tomorrow,—30 miles is not much for a rested horse. He has not been out today, except for a short drive on the broad smooth sands which stretch for miles here.

It is deliciously cool here by the ocean,—Dr. Sewall says 'cold,' and borrows my old blue jacket.

It is very pleasant and restful after Boston. If Portland is hot, we may return here for a few days on our way back.

Goodbye, darling. Yours lovingly,

SOPH."

" Atlantic House,  
August 9th. 1867.

DARLING MOTHER,

Here we are staying again on the very verge of the Atlantic, having found Portland more gay than restful, and desiring some perfect quiet before we get home again.

Your letter of July 25th has been forwarded to me with a long one from Carry, and one from an old schoolfellow of mine who had seen and liked my book, and so bethought herself to write to me and say so. She is a governess now.

I should like to see that review in the Pall Mall,—perhaps some of you will send it to me,—and *any* others of which you hear. . . .

“August 11th. Sunday evening. We have been spending the afternoon ‘camping out’ in the midst of some woods (Haywards Heath fashion) letting our horse graze and enjoying the cool and quiet. We have one more day here and then go on towards home, and expect to get there on Friday. Soon after—in September probably—we shall make another attempt, aided by Mr. Loring, and, I hope, by Prof. Rogers (have you seen him?) to get into Harvard or to get some advantages out of them; and I suppose on our success will depend a good deal what we do in the winter. . . .

The Doctor begs me to send her love. I do hope you may know her by this time next year. Don’t you?

Love to all. Tell Carry I’ll write soon in answer to hers.

Yours lovingly, SOPH.”

“I think what you say is true about the difficulties of ‘Joint Education’ in England,” she writes to her brother in answer to a criticism of her book. “Myself, I care very little about it if both sexes can somehow get all the education they want or wish for.”

There is little record of the winter’s work, though the following rough draft—in S. J.-B.’s handwriting—of an appeal to Harvard has been preserved:

“Jan. 1868.

GENTLEMEN,

Having during the past year been granted access to the clinical advantages of the Massachusetts General Hospital, but finding it impossible anywhere in New England to obtain adequate theoretical instruction in Medicine, we now earnestly entreat you to reconsider the subject of the admission of women to the lectures at Harvard Medical School,—such admission being, as we understand, forbidden by no past or present statute of the University.

We do not wish to enter on the vexed question of the capability or non-capability of women for the practice of Medicine, as we believe that time and experience only can furnish its true answer, but we now present our urgent petition that some opportunity may be afforded us for the thorough study of the medical science and art, that we may be granted at least some of the advantages that are not denied to every man, and allowed to show whether we are or are not worthy to make use of them.

We are willing, Gentlemen, to submit to any required examination, to qualify ourselves according to any given standard, to furnish any personal references, and to abide by any restrictions and regulations which may seem proper to the Corporation or to the Faculty.

Several of the Professors having expressed their personal willingness to allow us to attend their lectures, we earnestly request that the Corporation will authorize our admission to those classes into which the respective Professors do not object to receive us, and that, in any case where the Professors does so object, we may be allowed to receive private instruction from some medical gentleman approved by the Faculty, whose lectures shall in our case be held equivalent to those given to the College classes in the same subject."

"Fighting on for Harvard with a sort of dull persistency," she records in her diary in March 1868, "expecting another answer from the Corporation on the 11th.

Well, having been in Mass. Hospital for 8 months is something. With all my dull atheism, I do believe somehow the Best will be,—if not this, another. 'And so far have brought me—to put me to shame'?"

Many entries in the diary about this time prove that she was passing through that veritable "dark night of the soul" that has lain in the path of so many bright spirits of her generation.

"I suppose it isn't till the whole world—and oneself—breaks away under one that one does know what rubbish one is made of,—'dust and ashes. . . . And what fine things I started with! Sir Launfal<sup>1</sup> and gilded armour, etc. To conquer all the giants and beam Christian charity everywhere.

I believe old folks *do* 'know young folks to be fools.'

A nice result at near 28—Chaos!—with a possible sawbones in futuro!"

"Jan. 21st. 1868. 'Quid sum miser tunc dicturus'!

Eight and twenty!—'and a sinner!'"

One must bear in mind always, of course, that a diary is apt to reflect the graver side of a character, the side that associates, and even friends, would scarcely guess at. Certainly the letters to "the dear old folks" bear small witness to this stress and strain. They recount all sorts of innocent adventures and happy doings which were quite as real—one is glad to believe—as the strong crying and tears of the night watches.

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<sup>1</sup> Some few intimate friends will recall the evenings, 30 or 40 years later, round the study fire at Windydene, when the white-haired woman would recite *Sir Launfal* from beginning to end with a subdued enthusiasm that was more expressive than pages of commentary.



“ 13 Pleasant Street,  
Boston, U.S.  
Monday, Jan. 27th. 68.

## DARLING MOTHER

Such a sleigh ride as we had yesterday I hope you'll never have,—and indeed I don't care about repeating the dose myself! I drove the doctor eight or nine miles in a pelting snow-storm, partly across open country, long bridges and marshes, etc., the thermometer somewhere about 10° or 15°, a good deal of wind, which always makes it feel much colder, and the sharp crystals of snow cutting into our faces and eyes like so many pin points and causing actual pain. Towards the end I found it rather hard to see,—some white things seemed to get in front of my eyes;—what do you think they were? Solid icicles hanging from all my eye-lashes on the side exposed to the wind,—frozen together into three or four solid little balls as big as small peas, and partly freezing the lids together! When I got in I called Eliza to see them,—you should have heard her 'Gracious goodness!'

Even sealskin gloves fail one in such stormy cold,—one's hands freeze and have to be thawed out as regards sensation several times in a drive! So we carry hot bottles to do it with, and Dr. Sewall laughed at the figure I cut yesterday, driving with one hand, the other grasping a big two-quart bottle upright on my lap, and my head bent on one side like a lapwing's to see out of the one eye that wasn't frozen up!

She herself offered to drive again and again, but speed was my object, and I always make the horse go half as fast again as she does. He did gallantly yesterday,—the roads and streets were clear, and we spun over the white frozen surface at eight or ten miles an hour.

When it is not actually snowing, sleighing is very exhilarating,—the horse has a light load and is generally in good spirits,—sleigh-bells jangling merrily, etc.”

“ March 6th.

. . . A few days ago one of the women who had been confined here was fetched home by her husband, and with him came a rather big dog of the setter or lurcher kind, I think, or rather a cross on one of them. The folks went away, and so did the dog, but in half an hour he was back again, scratching at the Hospital door. He was fetched again by the man and again ran back, no one having, so far as I know, petted or enticed him at all. Then he was refused admission or turned out on the street, and when his master came again for him I believe he found him on the street; but in the evening there came a scratching at *our* hall door—not the Hospital,—and in walked the same dog again! I knew nothing of the previous story, but remembered having seen him with the man who came to our

house to see Dr. Sewall, so I took him in. From that moment he attached himself to me, so that he follows every step I take, and whines at any door I enter without him. As the man didn't come again for him, I drove to his house this morning,—the dog following close to the sleigh all the way (some two miles), and when he got there the dog greeted his master certainly, but directly I rose to go, up he jumped after me. So, as *his* choice seemed to be made, I offered the man \$5 (15s. 6d.) for him, and now am undisputed owner of my loyal friend!

It is rather queer, for I had been wishing for a dog of my own, and, though he is not a great beauty, he has a nice face, is very obedient, clean, and, I think, intelligent,—though Dr. Sewall professes to disdain him for being 'so big'!—and then one can't help liking even a dog who so plainly declares 'elective affinity.'"<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of all these new interests she had not forgotten the question of education at Bettws-y-Coed, and she was deeply interested in the maturing plans for a new school there. She writes to her Mother:

"I am glad to understand that you have bought, not the first bit of ground, but another near it. I hope Carry will soon send me some idea of her plans, though, of course, we can't build for some months. I enclose a very rough sketch of what would be my own idea of a schoolroom with gallery at one end and with classroom at the other,—and besides the class room a sort of lobby with second entrance and with stairs leading to the rooms above for Anne. The porch to have places to hang hats, etc., as also under the gallery (as at Hastings).

I can't remember about dimensions, though I have a sort of idea that, when we spoke of building before, we planned our schoolroom at 18 ft. by 28, and 10 ft. or 11 ft. high, the class room to be perhaps 11 ft. by 8.

Ask Carry to see how that agrees with the standard space for 100 children."

The school was actually built in 1869, everything being done in a fashion characteristic of the Jex-Blake family. They gave what was needed, but not in such a spirit as to discourage the generosity of others. The landlord gave the site—for a purely nominal rent,—together with permission to take what stone was needed from a neighbouring quarry. Farmers and others did the carting for love. For years the

<sup>1</sup> The dog was named Turk, and became a devoted friend.

Jex-Blakes had been educating a competent girl—a former pupil—as mistress. Local sympathy and appreciation, combined with the persevering interest of the founders, were the very life-blood of the school. How much finer this than the building of an ornamental edifice that should hand down the name of the donor to future generations.

In March 1868 S. J.-B. gave up Boston in despair for the moment, and went to New York, where she had the support of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell and her sister Emily, both of whom had plans for the more adequate medical education of women, and were organizing special classes. S. J.-B. also persuaded the Head Demonstrator of Anatomy at Bellevue to give her and another woman student a course of private lessons in Dissecting and Practical Anatomy.

“ March 28th. Saturday. Began dissecting with Dr. Moseley. . . . oh, dear, isn't it good to have some real teaching at last !

By-the-bye, the Blackwells think they could get us into Bellevue if Harvard refuses. New York for 3 winters ? Shall I bring Alice or what ? They want English ladies to come and make a class, and offer to receive them into the Infirmary. (But English ladies are not given to dine in kitchens on poor kitchen fare, etc.)

Is my old idea ever to work out by O. H. studying medicine ? *Wouldn't* she be a good doctor !

By-the-bye, challenged by the Blackwells as ‘ to whose management (in re English Female University) would inspire me with £1000 confidence,’ I say, O. H., Miss M., etc.”

She wrote delightful long letters to Dr. Sewall about the *minutiae* of her work, and was somewhat concerned as to how the little Boston world was getting on without her.

“ I am glad that you find out (as I told you you would) that I did do one or two little things while you wondered how I spent my time. I wish, however, that you had someone to do them now,—I am afraid you will get so tired. I shall ask Eliza if you eat properly. Tell her that I mean to write to her next time.

The little book of your bills is on my shelf in my secretary,—a small account book. Don't muddle the things in looking for it. Be sure and put down in it all the bills you send out. Can't you get Miss Call to write them for you ? She really can *write* (unusual in the N.E.H.) . . .

Tell me if Eliza does nicely,—tell her I asked after her and her housekeeping and Robert.

I am glad that my son Turk behaves better as he grows older. Give him an extra bone with my blessing."

To her Mother she writes a long account of her difficulty in finding rooms at a reasonable price.

"So living in New York is neither easy nor cheap, you see, . . . I hardly know how I shall manage if I go to a medical college this winter, and have to pay all lecture expenses, etc., besides living,—for women have to incur extra expense in all sorts of ways, because they can't share the arrangements of some sorts made for men. . . .

. . . . while studying, Miss Garrett had, I know, to spend lots of money,—paying £50 for a single course of lectures which the men got (in class) for £5 each.

When there was an idea of my taking the Manchester College, Daddy was willing to advance me £1000 or £2000 for the start, instead of part of the income he allowed me ;—do you think he would be willing to do some such thing now? I suppose it is hard for you at home who don't realize exactly the hard battle we are fighting (especially to get into the good medical colleges) to see how very important it is not to be stopped from seizing every bit of advantage obtainable for want of money. And it unfortunately happens that most of the women who are studying Medicine really *cannot* get money even when most necessary.

When I began I had no idea of going into any of this,—but somehow one gets talking to Mother of what is uppermost in one's mind sometimes.

And I know Mother wants to hear all my bothers and perplexities. Much love, darling, to Daddy and Carry.

Yours lovingly,

SOPH."

"April 12th. Notwithstanding all the discomforts in the way of board, I have been gaining greatly by my stay here. I have had a better opportunity for dissecting, etc., than ever before, and besides have learnt a good deal at the daily medical lessons which take place at Dr. Blackwell's every afternoon. If I am to be a doctor at all, I mean to be a thoroughly good one, and now that I have gone so far in medical study, I mean to go right through, unless some very unforeseen obstacle comes. And then the future may decide what use my knowledge may come to. I sometimes think that a woman doctor could find very useful work in teaching Anatomy and Physiology,—or at least something of them—to women and girls, who are apt to be so terribly ignorant of them.

Lately I have been spending an hour or so of an evening (for rest) in hearing a nice 'daughter of the house' read French to me, she having very few chances of help, poor child."

On the eve of sailing for England, she sums up the situation in her diary with her usual relentless truthfulness :

" April 11th. . . . Within three weeks of leaving for home,—what balance sheet ?

Nearly three years in America.

In that time complete health regained,—probably better than ever before,—real strength and power of study. A profession opening calmly and clearly before me,—its sciences already 'as trees walking,' becoming clearer daily. The edge of pain all gone. But with it vivid faith and life in many directions—belief in all invisible and much reaching after the heroic. A sort of passive 'quo fata vocant,'—a sort of ceasing to demand the very good or very true, perhaps,—a sort of coldbloodedness that is not peace,—a nil admirari that only 'will do for it.' My vocation given up or laid aside, and I quietly learning knowledge chiefly because it is power,—hardly yet shaping out any end ; but what does come, selfish enough. Professor of Anatomy ? Surgeon ? Doctor-Teacher ?

Sometimes a sharp pain rushes across,—' Ah, if Mother shouldn't live to *see* me succeed ! '—She does seem woven in with the heart-strings,—my old darling who *cannot* forget.

All this health and new life—more than ever hoped for—comes mediately from L.E.S."

If this estimate of herself is just, one can only say that the lulling for the time of her higher emotional nature was probably a blessing in disguise. It helped her to make her foundation of knowledge sure. She had in her measure to learn—what every true scientist must learn—that "the natural is the rational and the divine," that "there is no real break between the natural and the supernatural."

" A man that looks on glass,  
On it may stay his eye—"

and if his eye be single his whole body may yet be full of light.

In any case the closing words of S. J.-B.'s 'balance sheet' are significant enough,—

" Comes—*mediately*—from L.E.S." !

## CHAPTER XVI

### GOING HOME

It was in the course of this summer of 1868 that S. J.-B. realized her earnest wish to welcome her friend Dr. Lucy Sewall in England. She had raised great expectations among her friends, but, notwithstanding this, the visitor's sweetness and grace won all hearts. "That woman is fit to be the apostle of a great movement," Dr. T. W. Jex-Blake had said when he first saw her photograph, "with a face at once so strong and so tender." And a closer acquaintance only served to confirm this judgment.

It is impossible to exaggerate the pride with which S. J.-B. took "the Doctor" everywhere, in a world that knew not the "sweet girl graduate" of the present day, and showed her off—for choice in a pretty pale-blue frock—with secret triumph to the friends who were expecting something very masculine and aggressive. Quite a number of sick people—Mrs. Unwin among the number—were eagerly waiting to consult her: and many were the requests that she would come and settle in England.

What Mr. Jex-Blake thought of her may be gathered from the following most characteristic note written a month or two later to his daughter:

" 13 Sussex Square,  
Brighton.  
2nd August 1868.

DEAREST,

It is so much in my head and heart, and in the dear Mother's, to have the privilege of presenting your most valued friend with some

memento of her visit, that I beg you to use all your influence, and entreat Dr. Lucy Sewall to accept a carriage, or any other thing that she would value, as a remembrance of your dear Mother and myself, when she has returned home. She can little imagine how much she would please us both by doing so.

Your affectionate Father,

T. JEX-BLAKE."

Two other happenings specially marked the holiday,—a visit from Mrs. Jenkinson (Mrs. Ballantyne), and a delightful *rapprochement* between S. J.-B. and her Father.

Of Mrs. Jenkinson she writes in her diary :

" So good, so fascinating and dainty ! I haven't had so much wide and deep talk with anyone for three years at least. . . .

The proposal of her driving them to church ending in my doing so. Somehow the service moved me greatly. ' Gethsemane, can I forget,' etc. . . .

' What is truth ? '—no jesting Pilate,—yet *do* I stay for an answer ? Oh, dear, the certainties of p. [181], etc., and now ! Yet I think the wheel is beginning to sway upwards again. Please God ! Yes, surely the Ephesians stretched wise earnest hands (or may have done) to the Unknown God. ' Strenuous souls . . . to stand in the dark on the lowest stair.' "

" May 31st. Wonderful how content everyone is with my medical prospects. Daddy decides our residence (!) for Mount Street, Grosvenor Square. I say now pretty definitely,—in 4 more years England, three years study, and one of practice.

Meanwhile a *quiet* satisfactory holiday *must* have. No one can tell how many more with the old folks, and this *must* be what will be good to remember."

" June 20th. Maurice's lecture. ' Miss Jex-Blake's investigations in America might help much to the solution of the problem ' [of mixed education, presumably]. And after the lecture he *thanked* me for my book. *I'm* cock a hoop now ! "

" June 24th. On the whole my resolve well kept till now,—one month's success in no (or few and light) ' cataracts and breaks.' Somehow I have a solemn sort of feeling about it this year, as if it would be the last with one or other."

" Ah, darling," she writes to her Mother on the voyage, " it was *such* hard work to say Goodbye last week ! Do you know for one little minute I wondered whether after all the price wasn't *too* hard to pay, and whether after all I shouldn't give up doctor, hospital, M.D. and all and just stay with the old Mother.

“ Sept. 29th. Boston. I am sorry to say that Harvard has refused me again, so I must go to New York!—Ah, well,—‘ all things are less dreadful than they seem ’ ! ”

In that autumn of 1868 the Blackwells carried out their project of starting a medical school for women in New York.

Two class-tickets are extant admitting Miss S. L. Jex-Blake to the classes of Practical Anatomy and of the Principles and Practice of Medicine at the Women’s Medical College of the New York Infirmary; and there is also a letter from Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell giving advice about rooms :

“ With regard to your winter’s work, we will discuss it when you come. We shall be glad to meet your views in any way we can.

There are other matters connected with the school itself we shall be glad to talk over with you, one in particular, which I think would interest you, and in which, from your exceptional position in the class, I think you could help us in our organisation; but I shall leave its discussion till you come.

I hope you will allow time to get thoroughly settled and through with the trouble of it before November.”

“ Oct. 23rd. Friday. Came to New York. . . . Went 137 Avenue for a week to hunt for rooms,—oh, dear! . . . At length decided on 222 East Tenth [Street]—two back parlours and two above,—gas and all \$55. Alice arrived on Monday 26th.”

“ 222 East 10th Street,  
New York. Nov. 1st. 68.

DARLING MOTHER,

The term begins tomorrow, and I am glad to say that Alice and I have just succeeded in getting things into some sort of order in time. Besides laying down carpets, buying a stove and kitchen pots and pans, a bedstead and chairs, etc., I have been providing winter stores in American fashion, and yesterday bought two barrels of potatoes, 30 lbs. of butter, etc. etc., to say nothing of flour and wine. My money is running terribly low,—I have only about £20 left when this month’s rent is paid; but then most of my things are bought now, and besides I can borrow from Dr. Sewall if needful. Besides the Hospital owes me about £10 or £11 for duties paid, so I can probably get on till my next quarter comes. . . .

I know Mother will be thinking of me on my own hook in New York. This last week *has* been a pretty hard time, but now things are falling into shape. Alice has been invaluable. I know that having her, with the proper food, will just make all the difference to me of being able to work on all winter without breaking down. The



Blackwells are very pleasant, and, though I have no special friends here, I shall be so busy and cosy that I expect to get on capitally.

I am afraid the poor little Doctor gets the worst of it,—she will really miss my help in many ways, besides mutual loss of company,—and I am sadly afraid she won't take due care of herself. I can't tell you and Daddy how thankful I am that he has given her that charming little carriage,—it is such a relief to my mind to know that she will not be forced to drive herself when weary and half frozen : and I believe it will make a real difference in her health.

Her Father was very pleased with it, though I believe he made very careful enquiries as to whether the Doctor was sure Daddy 'could afford to give her such a splendid present.' Of course he didn't ask me that, but I took an opportunity of telling him that I knew you both felt that the carriage represented only a small part of your feeling of real gratitude to her for all the good she has done me medically and otherwise. Wasn't I right? . . .

"DARLING MOTHER,—I wrote the two other sheets on purpose that you may pass them on to Daddy, and I mean to try to do so as much as I can, and put anything private on a separate bit for you, for I think the dear old man really likes to see my letters, and I am sure I want to give him all the pleasure I can.

His Goodbye was so very kind and loving,—I often think of it."

"Nov. 3rd.

Yesterday was the opening of our College, at which Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell made a speech which I was asked to report for the chief medical paper here. I have done so, and will send you the paragraph when it appears. . . .

My rooms are not far from the College and other places where I have to go daily, and altogether I may consider myself well off. I have managed to buy as little furniture as possible, having brought carpets from Boston, and having hired two tables, a bed and a stove, from the landlady here. I have not yet bought more than £12 worth, and I mean to try to get on with as little more as possible.

I am very glad to hear of Miss Garrett's good news. I shall send her note on to the Doctor. I know it will please her so much."

"222 East 10th Street.

New York. Nov. 8th. 68.

DARLING MOTHER,

I enclose two letters which you can read and forward respectively to 'Mr. H. 69 Jermyn Street, S.W.' and to 'Sam. Laurence, Esq. 6 Wells Street, W.' Don't transpose them!

I have now got fairly settled in my new abode, and am really very comfortable in it,—thanks to Alice. Our rooms are so situated

that we can keep quite to ourselves,—having even a back staircase almost of our own,—and we get on famously. My daily routine is pretty regular throughout the week. I go to the dissecting room at 9 a.m. and work till about 11.15. At 11.30 comes a lecture on Anatomy and Physiology on alternate days,—and I get home to lunch a little before one. Alice always has things ready and nice for me, and I rest for about half an hour after lunch, before going to the afternoon lectures which begin at 2 p.m. and continue (except on Saturday) till 5,—three lectures of an hour each. I have just put in a petition to Dr. Emily Blackwell (who manages everything and is very nice) for five minutes space between each two lectures, for opening windows and a walk up and down the corridors,—to which she instantly assented as desirable.

Pleasant as it was to live with the Doctor, and extremely grateful as I feel for the very great good she has done me, I confess now to rather enjoying a completely independent nest once more,—for a while at least. You see it was inevitable that at Boston everything had to be shaped to suit Hospital work, and that was sometimes a nuisance.

I can study and write and read in a much more thoroughly undisturbed way here than I could there,—in fact it would have been simply impossible while living there to work as I am doing now,—there were so very many inevitable interruptions.

And yet, but for my two years there, I never could have been strong enough for my work here,—I believe that I never was so strong in my life before— isn't that grand? "

" 222 East 10th Street,  
Nov. 13th. 1868.

DARLING MOTHER,

Yesterday your letter (containing the one from the Times agent) was brought to me in the dissecting-room, and wasn't I pleased to get it! . . . It is quaint sometimes to think of the different scenes in which letters are written and read! I am really very much grieved to hear of Daddy's having been so ill,—I did not understand fully before how serious his attack had been. I comfort myself, however, with hoping that while the news is coming here, he is really getting better daily. Give him much love from me and a big kiss on each cheek. . . . I hope my old lady takes care of herself. *Do* for my sake.

Darling, I ought sooner to have answered your enquiries about the Colleges, etc. Harvard (Boston) is a University for *men*, and we couldn't get in there, because they wouldn't have any women. I was anxious to go there because the degree is considered a valuable one. Here in New York the College I am at is just opened by Dr.

Elizabeth Blackwell for women only,—or at least only women attend it, though I believe men would be admitted.

The teachers are 9 in number,—7 men and 2 women professors, as you will see by the circular. In the actual classes we are all women students; in going to hospitals, dispensaries, etc., we mix with the men. The teaching is really very good and I am getting on capitally.

Capitally in every way indeed. . . .

I see it is now a little past nine, and I shall soon be off to bed and sleep like a top till about 6 a.m.

I have never worked so hard in my life (for a continuance), and I have never been in such good health. I am absolutely *well*, (and what a blessing that is after all these years!) I eat and walk and sleep perfectly, have no pains and aches, and the sweetest of tempers!

I only wish Mother could peep in and see me in my little den!—dog and Alice and all.

With very much love, darling, to Daddy and Carry,

Yours lovingly,

SOPH."

"Saturday. Nov. 14th. [Diary.] In sober fact I get on grandly. Better and stronger than I have ever been."

"Monday, Nov. 16th. Oh, why, *why* didn't they telegraph at any rate? If people only *would* do *as* they are asked! Carry's note just come after Chemistry. 'I believe if you could start from New York today, you would have no prospect whatever of seeing him alive'."

"Sunday, Nov. 29th. Brighton. Reached home about 10.30 a.m. yesterday (after a rush through Dublin, Cork, etc.) to find that he had died ten days even before that letter arrived. Nov. 6th. 9.50 a.m."

It seems a pity for her own sake that S. J.-B. could not have been with her Father during those last days of his life, for his was certainly one of the cases in which

"The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,

Lets in new light through chinks that Time has made."

It is no very uncommon experience to see people go through their last illness without a word of complaint, but Mr. Jex-Blake rose to a higher level than that. He had felt the end approaching for some months, and had set his house in perfect order, even to the refinement of writing farewell letters—beautiful letters they are—to be delivered to those nearest

him after he had left them. There was nothing now to be done save to gather himself together for the great ordination of death. "I suppose this is about as bad as can be," he said to the surgeon who attended him. "Nothing more can be done, I take it."

One complaint he did make in the early days of his illness,—that he "could not collect his thoughts to pray,"—he whose "whole life," in the words of his son, "had been a prayer and thanksgiving." It was a great joy and comfort to have that son at hand. "I am very happy, very comfortable," he said. "You cannot tell how happy I am. . . . God is so good to me."

When the end drew near, he wanted to be lifted out of bed, but they dared not move him, except as to pillows. About 11.30 Mr. H. [the surgeon] moved him a little in bed, and he said, "Beautiful, beautiful," and never spoke again.

One can imagine the feelings with which his ardent wayward "youngest little one" arrived in England to hear all this, and to hear it through the transfiguring medium of bereaved affection. With passionate intensity she recalls every detail of the parting which had so lingered in her mind, and which had proved to be the last :

"He had not risen. I went and lay on the bed by him and kissed him, and he told me how they had enjoyed having me,—'never had so pleasant a summer together,' etc.

I said I had tried hard and yet I hadn't fully succeeded. I was sorry I had been cross sometimes. 'No, no,' he said, stopping me, 'I hadn't failed,—there was nothing to forgive.' And then I told him I would try and do them credit in my profession, and then he took my hands in his and prayed for me. And then I kissed him again and got off the bed,—but he (very unlike him) sprang out after me and embraced me again and again,—and so we parted very lovingly,—I telling him, I think, that 'next time' it should be *all* right. And so, please God, it shall,—if there is a God and a 'next time'!"

In the darkest hour she admitted that it might have been worse: it might have been her Mother who was taken. One could almost have foretold how she would act. Cancelling

the golden prospects in America with a stroke of her pen,—cheerfully sacrificing the very considerable financial outlay,—the class fees, the “snug little nest,” and “two barrels of potatoes,”—she resolved that never again should the Atlantic divide her from the life that was most dear.

It was not easy for Dr. Sewall to let her go thus finally, and her first letters are not a little pathetic, but—born friend of heroes as she was—she helped to fasten the armour on.

“If you don’t come back to America,” she said, “you won’t give up the work. You will open the profession to women in England.”

And so it came about that Sophia Jex-Blake sought a medical education in her native land.



*PART II*

IT is as hard a thing to maintain a sound understanding, a tender conscience, a lively, gracious, heavenly frame of spirit, and an upright life, amid contention, as it is to keep your candle lighted in the greatest storms.

RICHARD BAXTER.

INDIVIDUALS, feeling strongly, while on the one hand they are incidentally faulty in mode or language, are still peculiarly *effective*. No great work was done by a system; whereas systems rise out of individual exertions. Luther was an individual. The very faults of an individual excite attention; he loses, but his cause (if good, and he powerful-minded) gains. This is the way of things; we promote truth by a self-sacrifice.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.



## CHAPTER I

### DRIFTING

S. J.-B. landed at Queenstown on November 27th, 1868, and "came rushing through Cork, Dublin and Holyhead on that weary 24 hours' journey" back to the home in Brighton, to find that she had arrived too late. Her Father had died some three weeks before, and outwardly the household had already settled down to the old life—as households do—in a way that to her ardent nature must at first have seemed passing strange. There was the joy and pain of meeting her Mother again,—the joy and pain of finding that that Mother was too fine a Christian to be broken-hearted at the prospect of so brief a parting,—and then, little by little, there came for S. J.-B. the realization of all she had left behind.

On board the *Fava* she had written to Dr. Sewall :

"The first thing of all I want to do is to write and tell you what I said so very imperfectly in my hurry and worry when you left,—how much your kind thought for me in arranging even the little things of my cabin has touched me. . . . Even now when I am going home—and going under such circumstances—the thought of all you have done for me and of all I owe you, comes uppermost. . . .

Mrs. Browning says,—

'God gives what he gives—be content,  
He resumes nothing given, be sure,'

and your love and help have been given to me, and I *know* it is not all over now. . . .

I am going home now to try and be a child once more,—simply to love and serve my Mother, as God will help me (for I do believe in Him in my pain and my love in my heart of hearts) and I believe that by being a child I shall learn to grow a better woman."

Such was her resolve, and for months she struggled hard to carry it out, with no small success when one considers the complexity of the elements involved. She had come from a busy bustling beneficent life, with an outlook that appealed keenly to her energetic and ambitious nature, and she found herself in the quiet, smoothly-ordered home of her childhood, where she was only "Miss Sophy," where her medical books and microscope slides were roughly classified as "nasty," and where she was expected to conform to a rule of life which had never given scope to her possibilities, and was little likely to do so now that all its music was set in a minor key. The free life in America had developed her capabilities; quite possibly it had also rubbed off some few of those superficial elegancies that were regarded as a primary essential in the Englishwoman of her class.

There was another side to the question too. Glad as Mrs. Jex-Blake always was to see her "youngest little one" again, one can imagine that in the circumstances so electrical a presence in the house was not an unmixed boon. "I had much rather *know* you well and happy there [in Boston] than see you ill and know you worried here," the Mother had written years before, and there is no reason to think that her feeling in the matter had changed. Nothing could alter the deep undercurrent of love and understanding between this Mother and child, but neither of them had a naturally equable temperament, and one gathers that on the surface things were not always smooth.

"Poor little woman," S. J.-B. writes to Dr. Sewall, on receipt of the first letter from Boston, "I do feel so sorry for you all alone and dreary, but don't you think I am even worse off than you are? You can fancy what this house is now,—so silent and mourning,—and so much cut off even from outside, and at any rate no people or work or occupation of any interest outside ourselves.

M. and C. have their regular ways and plans, I suppose, but it is so long since I have been at home except for a visit, that it's hard for me to fit in anywhere, and of course everybody's feeling more or less sad and pained doesn't make matters smoother. Just at present I am getting my books and drawers, etc., to rights, and after that is done I mean to try and read some Medicine at least,—perhaps

if we stay here all winter I may apply to visit at the Hospital, etc.—only it would be rather disagreeable all alone.

Oh, Lucy dear, I do think it's too bad to be expected to go on with Medicine, and not have you to help and interest me in it. If I didn't believe you would after all come and start me in practice when I do get through, I don't think I should have any heart to go on at all. But we *will* be together again some day, old lady, won't we? Oh, dear, I am getting so tired of living and fighting and hoping! As soon as one hopes one has got a little foothold it is all knocked away from under one!"

The letter then plunges into the question of money and accounts, which were not Dr. Sewall's strong point.

"Poor little girl!—she has so many accounts, and I am dreadfully afraid she will get into a dreadful mess with them all! Do tell me if you got your accounts anything like straight after New York."

Dr. Sewall was overwhelmed with work, but her letters came as fast and frequently as mails could bring them. "I do hope you do not miss me as much as I miss you," she wrote, and again:

"I do hope this New Year that begins so sadly may not be a very hard one for you, though I fear you will have to fight hard before you can settle down at home. Do try to get some visiting at the Hospital or some medical work as soon as you can. It will do you good and your Mother too."

But she too, when it comes to a question of "business," relapses delightfully into the child. "Do say you are contented with me, and that I have done well."

For three weeks S. J.-B. drifted, uncertain of her course, and then she set her sail.

"Today—after three weeks of doubt, indecision and rather negation—I was suddenly inspired to get up out of the dining-room arm-chair, walk to the Hospital, and ask Mr. Salzmann to read Medicine with me,—so Thursday and seq.—Histology!

It's quite odd how pleased I am at the prospect of 'shop'!"

On the last night of the year, as was her wont, she made her summing-up:

"Within a few hours of eight years ago,—the window,—and

'May the New Year cherish—'

I don't think there are any 'hopes that now are bright.' I believe I have been growing downwards in some ways. The simply quiet and comfortable, with no bother of any kind, seems to be about my ideal now."

And this on the eve of the 'Edinburgh Fight'!

The truth is S. J.-B. was in one of those backwaters of life which may at any moment give place to the swift rush of the current. She was living a great deal, of course, in the life she had left behind. On January 4th she writes to Dr. Sewall:

"When I find time I mean to write to your 'cousin. . . . I am sorry for W., he is a very nice boy. But, dear me, they do seem such a pair of children.

I don't think she will get a *nicer* man, but of course that is nothing if she doesn't love him. I quite agree with you, 'Never marry if you can help it'!"

And, in the depths of her mind she was constantly pondering the problems and mysteries of our being.

"Jan. 21st. [Diary] 29!—'et praeterea nihil'!"

"Jan. 25th. . . . Yesterday Martineau's fine definition of atheism,—the mind that venerates nothing, aspires to nothing."

"Jan. 31st. Came tonight across old Trench's line,—'When God afflicts thee think He hews a rugged stone, which must be shaped or else aside as useless thrown.'

And then those true sad pale lines of Martineau's ('Child's Thought') about youth's eagerness for truth, sometimes productive of dark agonies of doubt and loneliness drearier than death,—leaving the soul exposed upon the field of conflict without a God to strive for or a weapon for the fight.

Yesterday his 'Immortality' helped me again to seize that idea,—apprehend, 'hang on to' (Trench). That the negative testimony was stronger for than against—far harder to realize soul extinct than immortal,—that instinct for immortality grows stronger in sorrow, bereavements and on confines of death,—more likely teachers than the dust and glare of Vanity Fair. That the strange 'caprice of death' in selection, etc., inexplicable except in belief of future to which this is the ante-chamber. 'Simply migrations of mind.'"

Of course the outward stagnation of life, the want of a definite object and purpose, renewed the old regrets for the friendship by means of which "we might have done anything together, we two."

“ Feb. 3rd. 4 p.m.

‘ Are not the letters coming ?  
The sun has almost set.’

I seem to have two such abiding ideas (presentiments ?—hopes ?) 1st. That somehow, somewhen the old door must be reopened,—light in the eventide, . . . 2nd. That some medical way will open—perhaps in Scotland,—and at length some one take pity on me and really teach me and push me.

Oh, dear, how I wish I had anyone with whom I could really take counsel and make common cause.

Well, I believe I am learning silence and patience at least somewhat, but how ‘ bleak and bare ’ ! Everything so grey and so dim.

Feb. 4th. In the night I woke and found M.’s head was ‘ dreadful.’ So I laid one hand on her forehead and one on her hand and willed and willed the pain away,—till she slept quietly.

Curious how weary and achy that arm was even next morning,—how ‘ washed out ’ I was !

She says,—‘ How do you explain it ? ’  
‘ Nohow.’ ”

## CHAPTER II

### AT THE GATES OF THE CITADEL

IN any case S. J.-B. was not to wait long for those "with whom she could take counsel." In the autumn of 1867 Mr. Alexander Macmillan appears to have discussed with her the projected publication of a volume of essays on questions relating to modern women, and in January 1869 he writes in answer to an enquiry from her :

"DEAR MADAM,

Mrs. Butler, 280 South Hill Park Road, Liverpool, is the address. There has been nothing done about the proposed volume yet. But I have by no means abandoned the hope of having it done, and shall not be sorry if you allude to it in writing to Mrs. Butler.

My own notion was that the volume should be wholly written by ladies, and that some diversity of judgement should be allowed on minor points at least, provided that a consensus were assured on the large ground of higher culture for women. I confess myself that the question of the Suffrage is a doubtful one. . . . I confess myself to think that politics in the sense of mere government is by no means of the highest importance to nations and to humanity, and that what is done in homes is incalculably deeper and more powerful [in its influence] on human character and destiny.

All these points are open to discussion, and I think a volume claiming the very highest and widest culture for women might at the same time discuss with advantage whether the field in which it is to be exercised need be co-ordinate with men's.

Yours very truly,

ALEX. MACMILLAN."

Apparently S. J.-B. approached Mrs. Butler without delay, and a few weeks later she writes to Dr. Sewall from Bonchurch,

where they were staying for the benefit of Mrs. Jex-Blake's health :

" Did I tell you that I have been making friends with Mrs. Butler, the head of the non-Davies party among the women ? She approves of the new Cambridge exams. which Miss Davies . . . refuses because not identical with those of the men. Mrs. Butler and I say ' Take all you can get and then ask for more,' don't you ?

I expect to be here with my Mother for about three weeks longer, then she will probably go to Cheltenham to see my brother, and I may go to Cambridge, Edinburgh, St. Andrews, etc., to see if I can poke in anywhere.

And yet, even if I got admitted, I don't feel sure that I should feel ready to leave my Mother next winter. Unless she changes very much for the better, I cannot but think very badly of her. I think she has aged five years since you saw her. . . .

She said to me yesterday, ' Don't you wish Dr. Lucy were here ? ' I said, ' No, she's doing better work,' but I *do* sometimes ' weary for you ' all the same."

Mrs. Butler was deeply interested in the new ally, and very anxious that she should carry out her dream of obtaining a proper medical education in her own country. Dr. T. W. Jex-Blake was also sympathetic, and so it came about that enquiries were made among University professors who might be supposed to have an open mind on the subject. Some interesting letters were the result :

" Wimborne,  
Jan. 14th.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I have not been able to obtain quite as accurate information about London University as I should like, but there is no use in my delaying any longer to answer your letter. As regards Cambridge, I do not think that the most sanguine reformer would advise you to look for any relaxation of barriers that would be of service to you, for some years. I am among the most sanguine, and I do not think that we shall be giving degrees to women until after ten years at least. We do not as yet examine men unless resident in colleges. The University of London, which is an open examining board, ought to be much more hopeful. Unfortunately this university (by an arrangement which ought not to have been borrowed from its older sisters) is governed in the last resort by Convocation, an assembly got together by agitation among all graduates of a certain standard, and in which the influence of the London doctors is practi-

cally preponderant. This assembly rejected last year a proposal by which women would have been admitted to medical degrees.

The proposal will, I believe, be renewed, but I cannot say what reason there is to anticipate a different result. My information is only at second hand, and you may easily get more accurate in London. As soon as I hear more precisely what is going to be done, I will let you know. I cannot, from what I have heard advise you to expect a very speedy change.

At the same time there is a general movement, of which it is hard to estimate the force, against the exclusion of women from the higher education. You say that you do not wish your plans to be talked of. I am rather sorry, for if you would suffer yourself to be made a grievance, it might help 'the cause' in London.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

HENRY SIDGWICK."

" Trin. Coll. Cambridge.

Feb. 4th.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I have now been here nearly a week, and hoped to write to you before, but I wished before doing so to see Markby, Bonney, and one or two of the Medical Board, and, being overwhelmed with work, have only just managed to do so. I find that neither Markby nor Bonney estimate any higher than I do the chance of your request being granted. Professor Liveing, one of the members of the Board, is favourable, but shakes his head as to his colleagues. Doctors preponderate on it, and one, Dr. Humphrey, professor of Anatomy, whom I expected to find somewhat more liberal, is averse to women practising medicine, 'mainly on their own account, because'—but you are familiar with the reasons.

I have not canvassed the others as you had a certain wish for secrecy. If you think it worth while, I will ask Liveing to broach the question at the Board, without mentioning your name, in order to sound opinion: or I will in other ways ascertain privately the views of the members. I do not however feel that this would be decisive, as they may not have considered the question and might yield to argument. However I feel almost sure that your appeal would be rejected without much discussion. *Markby* is of opinion that even supposing the Board consented to propose the change to the Senate, that body would certainly reject it. And he (M.) is inclined to think that it would injure the cause of female education here in general, to stir up hostility in the Senate on this particular matter. (I do not myself feel sure of this.) But he does not think



application to the Board would do any harm. Bonney also thinks this course hopeless but harmless.

Even after consent of the Board and the Senate, you would have to be admitted as member of some college; but in the case supposed, that would not cause much difficulty. . . .

I do not know whether you will think any thing more of us after this. If you do come to look for yourself at the 'terrain,' you will at any rate find a minority of sympathizers who will give you any aid in their power, among them

Yours sincerely,

HENRY SIDGWICK.

P.S. You will see that, on reflection, I am somewhat doubtful of the advantage of making the application. On the whole, however, I still think it would be a good thing."

Meanwhile Professor Masson of Edinburgh University had written a letter to Mrs. Butler, from which S. J.-B. quotes the following extract in her diary :

"It will give me much pleasure to see Miss Jex-Blake (whose name is well known to me); Sir James Simpson will be very glad to see her also. . . . I fear however that at present the chance of the throwing open of professional education and degrees are not so great with us as Miss Blake seems to imagine" (!)—The exclamation point is S. J.-B.'s.—"But who knows what may happen or how soon?"

On February 15th, S. J.-B. writes to Dr. Sewall :

"I think I may probably go to Cambridge and see whether there is the least chance of anything medical there. I have almost no hope, but it is thought well to apply at least to the Medical Board just for the principle of the thing. Then I may probably go to Edinburgh, St. Andrews, Glasgow, etc. I understand that Glasgow was expressly founded on the model of Bologna;—now Bologna admitted women !

Did I tell you that there is to be a volume of Essays published in the summer about all sorts of Women's questions, and I have been asked to write about the Medical question. If I do, I rather think I shall send you my essay to criticise first, shall I? . . . I wish very much that I could find some English lady to go in for Medicine with me,—it would be such a comfort in thundering at the Colleges, and in working afterwards. There is one very capable woman of about 30,—a *thorough* lady,—who is staying with us now, who would like extremely to study for many reasons, but is withheld by the great prejudice and very bad health of her mother."

It was indeed a loss to the whole woman movement that Miss Ursula Du Pre was prevented from taking a more articulate part in it, for one tries in vain to think of one of her contemporaries who was more generously gifted by nature and circumstances. She had mental powers that would have fitted her to shine in almost any of the professions strictly preserved for the benefit of men, great common sense, a finely balanced judgment, and—what appealed to S. J.-B. perhaps more than anything else—a keen and unfailing sense of humour. Tact too she had, and the singular charm of the “great lady” who is at the same time one of the simple-hearted. Deeply religious throughout life, she was absolutely devoid of false humility and of the ultra-sensitiveness that would have rendered her gifts of small avail beyond her own circle. The accident of her sex set her free from the cares and responsibilities of the landowner; and one cannot wonder that S. J.-B. bitterly resented the unalterable decision of some members of her family that a medical career was out of the question.

Nothing, however, can really rob the world of the usufruct of gifts like these. The influence of a man or woman can never be measured by the number of those who experience it at first hand. Who shall say whether it is better to have a thousand disciples, or twelve, or one?

Mrs. Jex-Blake and Mrs. Du Pre had long been acquainted, but it was in this month of January 1869 that the two daughters first met and found each other. S. J.-B. brought much to the friendship, as the reader of the previous volume is aware; her gifts were great, her knowledge of life astonishingly wide for a young woman of her day; but she found no less than she brought. Never again could she complain of the lack of a friend “with whom she could take counsel.” All through the troublous times that were to follow so closely on the inception of their friendship, Miss Du Pre was her admiring critic, her confidante and counsellor, following every move in the complicated game, disapproving, perhaps, sometimes, but sympathising always. She was the friend too of S. J.-B.’s friends and comrades, and in the long days of hope deferred there were those who must surely

have fallen in the breach but for Miss Du Pre's material and spiritual aid.

Meanwhile S. J.-B. wrote the Essay on "Medicine as a Profession for Women," which was published a few months later in the volume entitled *Women's Work and Women's Culture*. "Fairish, not quite satisfactory," is her own verdict on the first draft, which was doubtless considerably improved by the suggestions of friendly critics. As the Essay appeared later in her book on *Medical Women*, it could scarcely be bettered, and indeed it has proved a storehouse of research and argument for all subsequent writers and speakers on the subject.

Professor Newman, to whom Mrs. Butler sent the first draft, wrote an admirable letter :

"I have no learning in the history of female physicians, but I know that in my boyhood I read in a magazine an urgent remonstrance with ladies for their prejudice against man-midwives, of whom the writer speaks as a beneficent innovation. I think I have read that they were first used in the Court circle of Louis XIV. . . . To prove negatives is always hard, but I should not fear to write that the exclusion of women from acting as physicians to women is quite a modern usurpation by the male sex, and limited to the nations which cultivate modern science. The topic reminds me of the address of the nurse to Queen Phœdra in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, when she observes her mistress to be wild and out of health,—'If thy complaint be anything of a more secret kind, *here are women* at hand to compose the disease. But, if thy distress be such as may be told to males, tell it in order that it may be communicated to the physicians.'

This is almost as if *in no case* would the male physician do more than give advice when the facts were reported to him through the women.

It is nearly so in Turkey to this day. A Pasha wanted advice for his wife from a friend of mine without his seeing her."

"Do quote Euripides in your Essay," writes Mrs. Butler. "Never mind if we look a little more learned than we are. Let us spoil the Egyptians."

And again,—

"I am sure Mr. Newman *intended* you to use anything in his letter which you could make available. He is so generously helpful."

On February 24th, S. J.-B. writes to Dr. Sewall :

" I have written the Essay I spoke of about Medical Women, and I shall send it to you to see in a week or two, as soon as I can get it copied. There are several points on which I want your authority and opinion ;—tell me whenever you think I overstate facts or make mistakes—or tell me if you think I might put things *more* strongly with advantage. Tell me how many instances have occurred of men doctors putting their womankind under *your* treatment, or that of other women you know,—Dr. B., Dr. C., and J. W. ?—any more ?

Also anything else that occurs to you generally.

I had a witty letter from Miss Putnam this morning, in which she says how very indifferent it is to her if Mrs. D. chooses to ' invent Arabian Nights' tales ' about her. I do hope that you have published her letter,—don't simply disregard me because I'm across the Atlantic and can't pinch you ! She made me dreadfully envious by saying that she is going in for some months' work at Operative Surgery, and that it will be ' very jolly.' I believe, however that for the summer at any rate I *ought* to stay with my Mother and try to make her very jolly (poor old darling ! ) If I can get into any of the Colleges for the winter, that may be another matter, though I am not sure."

Meanwhile Professor Sidgwick was pursuing his kind and public-spirited enquiries :

" Trin. Coll. Cam.

Mar. 1.

MY DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I should have written to you before, but I have found it difficult to make up my mind. I now, however, after some hesitation, am inclined to dissuade you from making the attempt. I have not visited any of the Medical Board (as I thought it best, if you did come, that you should find them unprepared), but I have discussed the matter with about ten discreet persons varying in age and position.

Not one of us thinks that there is the smallest chance of your request being granted. The feeling of the [? Board] is certain to be decidedly against you : and there are minor obstacles interposed by existing regulations, which might be easily set aside if there was a desire to do so, but which will furnish excuses for rejection to any who may require such.

The question then comes, Will the raising of the matter *now* advance or retard our *ultimate* success ? On this point we vary in opinion, but no one very decidedly thinks it will be a gain, while some are

very strongly of opinion that it will do more harm than good. After much hesitation, I have come myself to this latter view, not on general grounds, for in general I like (as Lincoln said) to keep pegging away: but because we have hitherto done what we have done for women's education by great quietness and moderation, and so far it seems best to go on in the same way: if our present scheme for examining women succeeds, it will be easier to take a further step: moreover I expect that we shall soon open our examinations more unrestrictedly to men, and that will make it easier to open them to women. Your application *now* would thus be a 'breach of continuity,' and would appear extravagant to many undecided people who after a few years may be brought to look upon a similar application as quite natural.

Against this is to be set the advantage of raising the question, and getting people to exercise their minds on it, especially with so good a case (and I have no doubt advocacy) as yours.

In short, we should gain, I believe, by argument, but should very likely lose more by hardening a mass of fluid prejudice, that may otherwise evaporate in the natural course of events.

So that, on the whole, I am slightly<sup>1</sup> opposed to your making the attempt, on public grounds only: and even if the balance between probable gain and loss is about even, I should hardly like to advise you to incur so much trouble that could not possibly benefit yourself.

If you do come, I need not say that I will do anything I can to assist you, and generally to make your stay in Cambridge as pleasant as possible.

My *instinct* is to tell you to come, but that is because I like a fight: my soberer judgment is the other way.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

HENRY SIDGWICK."

" Trin. Coll.

Mar. 8.

MY DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I am sorry that we shall not have the pleasure of seeing you: but, as regards the application, I am quite convinced that your decision is right. Just at present the reformers here do not want stimulating, and I think the neutral people want management. As regards the Scotch Universities, I am afraid I cannot help you personally. . . .

I have taken counsel with a friend here—J. Stuart—who is now examiner at St. Andrews. He has promised to write to you and to send introductions to two or three people there whom you may

<sup>1</sup> "Slightly" is interpolated in the original letter.

like to visit. I imagine that either Edinburgh or St. Andrews will be more likely to serve your purpose than Glasgow or Aberdeen: If I can find any means of aiding you at Edinburgh, I will write again. I may have friends who know some of the Professors. Masson is the only one of whom I know anything,—he having once been an editor of mine. I should think he is very likely to help you, Shairp, I should fear, not; but I may be wrong.

Of Ireland I know nothing: but from what I have heard I should think our Conservatism here is nothing to the Conservatism of Dublin—particularly when Gladstone is Disestablishing.

With best wishes for your success, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

H. SIDGWICK."

On the following day came a letter from Mr. Stuart, offering all the help in his power:

"I hope you will excuse my unceremoniousness in thus writing to you by the belief that I have your success much at heart."

"My husband and I both think that it would be better not to try Cambridge in the face of Mr. Sidgwick's opinion," writes Mrs. Butler. "No one is better able to test the feeling of the University than he. I hope before long England will be ashamed of herself in this matter. We must do all we can by working quietly and extensively on the hearts and consciences of men. I find no man of ordinary candour who is not easily convinced, but the M.D.s will be the obstacle. They hang together so.

Shall you try Edinburgh? If not, do you think of taking a foreign degree? I wish you were an M.D. You would have plenty of patients at once,—myself among the number."

Thus it came about that when Mrs. Jex-Blake went to visit her son at Cheltenham, S. J.-B. "screwed her courage to the sticking-point," and went to Edinburgh. The entry in her diary is characteristic:

"Monday, March 15th. To Edinbro. How I dreaded the journey and sequence! On waking,—'If Thou go not with me, carry me not up hence!'"

Meanwhile the University of Edinburgh stood foursquare, and the professors sat in their comfortable chairs, little dreaming that their Day of Judgment was at hand. Even at a cursory glance they were an imposing body of men. Some few of them were great in character, or in intellect,

or in both: taken as a whole they were probably well above the average. In any case they were men of like passions with ourselves, well-disposed, kindly, just a little blunted by success, desirous of smooth things. As they acted, so would most similarly constituted bodies of men have acted at that day. The only difference between them and other men lay in the fact that it was to them the challenge of the future came.

And who was to tell them that this was the challenge of the future? It was so trifling an episode in outward seeming,—only the visit of a gifted young woman, with a clear strong head, but assuredly with no immunity from an average human being's liability to error and mistake. If the professors had been canvassed on the subject of her request beforehand the result would have been an almost unanimous No: they had no more idea of admitting women to the University than they had of founding a Chair of Millinery. But the applicant was among them before they were aware; she knew what she wanted and she knew how to state her wants effectively. Her arguments were all at her finger-ends; and, although she made no sex appeal, she was possessed of fine dark eyes and a singularly musical voice.

In those days men had not learnt to be on their guard against an apparently guileless young woman. To many she stood for little more than a precocious child, who must be humoured, and, if necessary silenced later by sheer *force majeure*.

But S. J.-B. took them a step farther on than this. She was obviously no mere child: she was a woman who had seen a good deal of life, who realized something of the meaning of sex as a factor in human affairs, and who was prepared calmly to assert that it ought not to stand in the way of the privilege she asked. When she faced the pundits with those candid earnest eyes, there must have been some who were literally mesmerised for the moment into sharing her belief.

Yes, the Day of Judgment was at hand. I do not mean, of course, that the "sheep" were those who forwarded the applicant's claims, and the "goats" those who put difficulties in her way. In those days there might well be room for two

opinions on an experiment that had scarcely been tried. The Day of Judgment is apt to be a subtler, more searching thing than that. What I mean is that one cannot go through the vast mass of letters and documents relating to the whole matter without seeing the stuff of which those men were made,—the “worth” on the one hand, the “leather and prunella” on the other,—and oh, such imposing leather and prunella! One realizes afresh that when a big emergency takes everyone by surprise, only those who are guided in life by great principles can hope to act rightly. They may not all act alike: they may or may not make mistakes; but at least they act with essential dignity: they ring true; when they lie in their graves their greatness shines out from the musty old papers which have chanced for a few short years to embody an imperishable record.

And there is no one whose greatness shines out more clearly than does that of David Masson, Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature, to whom S. J.-B. went first. From first to last one’s admiration for him never swerves: one does not know which to admire in him most, the clear insight, the high courage, the fine discretion, or the sheer unflinching brotherly sympathy.

This is the first impression he made upon S. J.-B. :

“Quiet, rather reserved, kindly. Promised introduction to most of professors. Seems rather hopeful,—‘tide setting in.’”

One wonders what were the words in which he summed her up. He must have rejoiced in the clear brain, the quick wit, the cultured voice, the easy flow of sane and logical speech. Did he guess at the impulsive nature that was bound to make mistakes?—at the great warm heart that was bound to suffer more than most?

In any case he gave her the following letter to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine :

“MY DEAR BALFOUR,

Miss Jex-Blake, an English lady known as the author of a work on American Schools, is now in Edinburgh for a few days, chiefly with a view to ascertaining what chance there may be that Edinburgh University may (now that Paris and other continental cities have set the example) see its way to conferring a medical



degree, after due study and qualification, on a lady candidate. It is but right that having come to Edinburgh for this purpose she should see you as the Dean of the Medical Faculty, in order to receive the best information and advice on the subject: and I shall be obliged by your courtesy in this matter.

Yours very truly,

DAVID MASSON."

There was a similar note to Dr. Christison, in which the writer said :

" The question, I believe, has been already before you ; but it has seemed to Miss Blake possible that, now that Paris and other Universities abroad have set the example, there may be some chance of a modification of the previous conclusion of Edinburgh University on the subject. As she will receive the best information and advice on the whole subject from members of the Medical Faculty, I take the liberty of giving her this note to you, with a request that you will kindly explain to her the state of things as they are, and of possibilities in the direction she has in view.

Yours very truly,

DAVID MASSON."

And so, quite alone—she who was as dependent on a comrade, on a "helpmeet," as some of our greatest men have been—with strange lodgings for a "base,"—she began the great work of canvassing the Edinburgh professors and the distinguished citizens who, for one reason or another, might be supposed to have a voice in the matter. She stood absolutely alone. She might belong to a good old family: her brother might be Headmaster of an English public school: but on the other side of the Tweed only a few of the enlightened knew anything of that. She was merely a clever young woman, with a rather outlandish name, who had conceived the extraordinary desire of obtaining a medical education by hook or by crook under the auspices of the Edinburgh University. If only Dr. Sewall could have been with her—or Mrs. Jenkinson, or Miss Du Pre,—what a stay she would have been! Fortunately Mr. Begbie was "kind and helpful as ever"; the old friendship with Miss Orr and with Mrs. Burn Murdoch was a great resource still; and Mr. Burn Murdoch was ready and willing to help to the utmost of his power. Miss Orr, it is true, was rather uncertain about the whole

quest, wanted to know whether her old friend "went to church and read the Bible"; and, however relevant the question may have been,—S. J.-B. rightly felt that there was no time to go into it at this stage.

Undoubtedly her two great supports through the time of stress—if we set aside for the moment all that was involved in her "*If Thou go not with me,—!*" were the deep interest taken by Miss Du Pre in every detail of the story; and the possession of Sadie's poems, which had just been published. In these latter she found fitting expression for the fightings and fears of her own inner life, and for her hard-won "twilight" consolation. It is an interesting fact that these two elements should have come into her life just at this moment, for one scarcely sees how she could have "won through" without them. Sadie's poems remained dear to her throughout life: she knew many of them by heart and repeated them almost on her deathbed; and her copy is worn even more "threadbare" than are her volumes of Robertson's Sermons. One can imagine the feelings with which, after a keen exciting day's work, she went home to her lonely lodgings, with no "Alice" looking out for her, to write her report to Dr. Sewall or Miss Du Pre, and to copy in her diary—as she did—the lines:

"Up the way that is narrow, the path that is steep,  
With no guide for my footsteps, no help for my fear:  
Only this—that He knoweth the way that I tread,  
And His banner of crimson is over my head.

With the loneliness awful pressed into my soul,  
With no voice for companion, no grasp of a hand—"

Yes, one cannot help wishing that an intimate friend had been at hand. One wonders whether she was even becomingly dressed: we know she would have wished to be; but she so seldom made the most of her appearance.<sup>1</sup>

In any case what happened is perfectly clear. The Professors for the most part had a deeply rooted dislike to having

<sup>1</sup> "By the way your accounts of your dress are just a shade contradictory," writes Miss Du Pre somewhat later. "One day you tell me you look disreputable and plunge me into depths of anxiety! and the next you say you are 'very tidy.' Isn't this more than average inconsistency?"

women students in the University : in fact, the idea of such a thing was unthinkable ; but when a gifted young woman actually sat in their sanctums urging her plea, they could not bear to say No. Strictly speaking, they should have refused to see her, but did any man yet ever refuse to see a woman whose name was before the public ?

One wonders as one reads the papers how many of them knew what their " powers,"—what the legal powers of the University—really were ?—how many of them really wished to know ? There was a comfortable conviction in the back of their minds that insuperable difficulties lay shrouded in those unprobed depths. In the meantime why not show a little kindness to a gallant girl who was as modest as anyone could be in formulating so outrageous a demand, and whose pleading—so it has been said—would have " wiled the bird from the bough " ? It was after she was gone that the real horror of the situation came home to them, and that they fell back again with relief on the thought of those unprobed depths,—the legal powers of the University.

It would all be very ordinary, and sometimes rather depressing, reading, were it not that Professor Masson and some of the others, when they gave her their provisional support, really meant exactly what they would have meant in giving their support to a man—no more and no less. Their own principle, their own righteousness was involved ; they were quite prepared to see women students—if so it was to be—in the University quadrangle and class-rooms ; and they meant to do what in them lay to give this woman a fighting chance.

## CHAPTER III

### SUCCESS?

MEANWHILE Miss Elizabeth Garrett was providing in her own career the very example that was needed to clinch the argument. After much arduous work and lavish expenditure of money on special classes, she had obtained the "L.S.A.," a licence to practise from the Society of Apothecaries,<sup>1</sup> and good use she had made of the platform thus gained. Henceforth no one could deny that an Englishwoman had the physique and the wit to study, "qualify," and practise Medicine,—yes, even to get her full share of patients. It was scarcely to be expected that Miss Garrett would rest content without a University degree, but she considered that the time was not ripe for the agitation of the question in England, and she had little sympathy with S. J.-B.'s efforts in Edinburgh. None the less her successful career was a more valuable argument than her support would have been,—even if, at the moment, she had not been too fully occupied elsewhere to enter into the question at all.

On March 21st, S. J.-B. wrote to Dr. Sewall :

"I have two nice little bits of news about Miss Garrett. One is that the Princess Louise went to see her, and, after enquiring about the medical prospects of women, expressed strong hopes of their complete success. This is really worth a great deal, and I hope you will have too much sense to sneer at it.

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<sup>1</sup> After Miss Garrett had obtained her diploma, the Society of Apothecaries passed a resolution forbidding students henceforth to receive any part of their education privately, thus making it impossible even for a woman of means to follow in her steps.

Secondly, I see in the *British Medical Journal* (which I shall try to send you) a notice that Miss Garrett had 'by special order of the minister' been admitted to the first examination for M.D. [in Paris] and had passed it in the presence of a crowded audience with very great *éclat*. That woman certainly has great power of study and work, hasn't she ?

By the bye, you would have been interested at the scene in which I noticed this paragraph. I was sitting yesterday morning at Sir James Simpson's breakfast table, between him and his wife, and he passed the paper to me. . . .

He was, of course, quite favourable to my application, and I am to breakfast with him again tomorrow and hear what he will do about it.<sup>1</sup> He is going off to Rome for a trip this week, but I am very anxious that he should vote in my favour first. He is so unreliable that I do not know how to make sure of his doing it though,—very likely he'll be at the other end of Edinburgh when the meeting is held. I told him that you remembered him and always spoke of his kindness to you. I am not quite sure whether he recalled it. He spoke highly of Dr. Emily Blackwell."

A few days previous to this an unobtrusive little note of no small import appears in the diary :

"8.30 p.m. at Begbie's met Campbell Smith, who walked home with me. Older and more quiet than I had expected. Kindly."

The favourable impression was mutual, if one may judge from the letter that follows :

"30 Royal Circus,  
21st March, 1869.

DEAR MISS BLAKE,

I left your MS. yesterday with Mr. Findlay of the *Scotsman*. I think he will give you some help. If nothing be in the *Scotsman* tomorrow, and whether or not, you may call for him at the office. He will be happy to see you. He said so, and said further that you needed no note of introduction.

The review of your book appeared on 18th Nov., 1867, and you will see that also in the pile when you call.

Faithfully yours,

J. C. SMITH."

Thus began that support from the *Scotsman*, which, in the able hands of Mr. Alexander Russel, was destined to be of such incalculable value to the whole Feminist movement.

<sup>1</sup>To the irreparable loss of the women students, Sir James Simpson died in the spring of the following year.

The *Scotsman* was just approaching the height of its reputation, and its advocacy was the more valuable because it was not supposed to have a specially weak side for new movements and forlorn hopes. It used to be said in those days that, when the North Pole was discovered, a Scotsman would be found sitting on it, and it might have been added that the Scotsman would prove to be engrossed in the newspaper that bore his name. In any case, from this moment on, all that publicity could do for the cause was done. For better and for worse, the doings of S. J.-B. were about to be writ large for the whole world to read. They were the text round which the whole question was threshed out by countless firesides,—the text on which the life and character of every other woman provided a running commentary.

Small notion had S. J.-B. of the great flame that small spark was to kindle. In her diary she speaks quite casually of "my" leader, "highly approved by Masson."

Meanwhile the canvassing was proceeding steadily, and S. J.-B.'s "thumb-nail" notes and sketches of character often make interesting reading,—none the less so because her gifts in this direction were necessarily immature.

"Thursday, 18th. . . . A long 1½ hours' talk with Allman,—going earnestly over every inch of ground, he very nice; at last, he 'should be delighted to see me in his class,' and he thought no legal objection against admission to classes, however about degrees. I am sure he will be a firm strong true friend."

"Friday, March 19th. Today for the first time the astounding idea dawned upon me that it was perhaps just possible that I really might succeed after all!

*If I did!*—to enter first a British University!—('first'?—Yes, rather mean, I know, but instinctive!—)

11 a.m. [after three hours' work and visiting]—Fraser. Friendly, but rather non-committal,—speaking of it as a 'matter for the medical faculty,' etc.

12. Balfour. At first rather wavering and weak. Didn't see how a woman *could* dissect, etc., till I told him 'I'd done it for some months,' etc. . . . Ultimately a very valuable suggestion that he and A. should admit me to their summer courses, of Botany and Natural History, and then, if all went well I matriculate in October, and go to the rest. Proposes to call a Medical Faculty meeting next week if possible before Simpson goes.

1.30, Lunch at the Grants. Very friendly and kind,—he with real English Oxford manner and courtesy,—she very kindly.

He thought 'all would agree as to end,—only difficulty as to means,'—agreed with Balfour's idea of wisdom of deferring degree question. Was 'very much interested' in it all, and thought my going to see each of the Faculty would make a great difference.

Told me that in a recent speech here, Jowett 'hoped the Universities would open to women' and was cheered greatly.

Gave me (sealed) introduction to Christison (the ogre)—and authorized me to tell him 'he should make no difficulty,' etc.

3 p.m. Henderson,—feared women 'would get the cream of practice, if any' (noble fear!)—would 'think over it,'—after a futile 'non possumus'."

On the following day S. J.-B. sent in her formal application to the Dean of the Medical Faculty :

" SIR,

As I understand that the statutes of the University of Edinburgh do not in any way prohibit the admission of women, and as the Universities of Paris and Zurich have already been thrown open to them, I venture earnestly to request from you and the other gentlemen of the Medical Faculty permission to attend the lectures in your Medical School during the ensuing session.

I beg to signify my willingness to accede to any such conditions, or agree to any such reservations as may seem desirable to you, and indeed to withdraw my application altogether if, after due and sufficient trial, it should be found impracticable to grant me a continuance of the favour which I now request. You, Sir, must be well aware of the almost insuperable difficulty of pursuing the study of Medicine under any conditions but those which can be commanded by large colleges only ; and, in view of the increasing demand for the medical service of women among their own sex, I am sure that you will concede the great importance of providing for the adequate instruction of such as desire thoroughly to qualify themselves to fulfil the duties of the medical profession.

Earnestly commending my request to the favourable consideration of yourself and your colleagues.

I am, Sir,

Yours obediently,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE."

This letter is copied in her diary, and followed by the note :

" Taken to him, and meeting called to oblige me at 1 p.m. Tuesday. Oh, dear, how these folks gain by comparison with Harvard !

\* 9.30 a.m. Turner. Quiet, thoughtful, realizing difficulty strongly,

and referring to Christison as 'our Nestor.' Still listening heedfully and promising my words should 'have due weight.'

10.30. Christison. 'The matter *has* been decided.' Not rude but quite uncompromising. He should use no influence, but vote against me.

. . . 2 p.m. Dr. Bennett, who declared himself tired of fighting Syme and Christison, but will, I think, do it. He railed at them most of the time. Did not see the need of women as doctors, but acknowledged their possible value as assistant physiologists. . . .<sup>1</sup> Will admit me, if possible, to his non-obligatory histology class in summer. . . .

10 p.m. Was awfully cross at having to go to dine at . . . and to tea at . . . , but at the latter 'met the gods,'—a *very* nice woman of 33 or 34 with curiously white hair,—Mrs. Evans, I think. She and I held together on almost all subjects. She would like to study Medicine (and I am sure has the power) but for an 'old aunt.' Oh, dear, the 'might have beens'!—And yet here was I ten minutes ago defending 'absolute right' as the only rule.

Curious though how one's instinct leaps forward at the smallest chance.—'Couldn't we take a "flat" together?'

'Monday, March 22nd. A cup of tea and then to Simpson's to breakfast. He said he should probably be here tomorrow and would go to the meeting if at all possible. . . .

Then . . . to Laycock . . . who was 'frank' (!)—and told me 'as a public man,' etc., he must oppose,—informed me women 'didn't understand their position,' that they did their own work in the world badly, that they had not sufficient strength for medical practice,—'if women are fit for war, I will allow them fit for medicine.' And, when I instanced the Amazons, thought that had nothing to do with it! Was sure women preferred men to do everything for them, even in shops;—and informed me no decent woman knew what young men are, or if she did, it was reprehensible, etc.

After lunch to Syme,—he more favourable than I had expected. Did think women ought to supersede 'that man in . . . Street,'—and thought if it was clearly understood that they only meant to practise in Midwifery and uterine diseases, there 'would be no opposition.' Not to be present tomorrow any way.

Spence,—rather doubtful-minded. Not strongly opposed,—might turn either way, but is, I think, rather kindly and not irrational.

Then called on kind Lady Grant; then home to rest."

"Tuesday, 23rd. 10.30 a.m. Now, having done all that lies in one woman's power—except, perhaps, an article in the *Daily Review*,

<sup>1</sup> As Physiology was Dr. Bennett's speciality, the admission was worth having.



—having left a book, as a reminder, on Bennett, hunted up Sir J. Y. S. and crammed him [with] Mlle Unpronounceable at St. Petersburg,—I have to do what is hardest of all,—wait.

Four distinct votes in my favour, I believe, if all go and all keep faith with me. Allman . . . Bennett, Balfour, Simpson.

Against me distinctly,—Christison, Laycock, and probably Henderson.

Doubtful,—Turner, Spence, and, perhaps, Syme.

Besides Maclagan (ill), and Playfair (probably absent).<sup>1</sup>

To lunch with Simpson at 2 p.m., and hear results.

1.45 p.m. Waiting for the verdict? How will it be? Somehow the probability seems rather for me this time,—but there,—the Fates are so habitually adverse! I can't help hoping and yet I *don't* expect success. I hope they won't 'give an uncertain sound' and put it off indefinitely!

8 p.m.—Gloria tibi Domine! . . .

At 2 p.m. went to Sir J. Y. S.,—found him out, but met him in the street. 'Yes, ye're to be let in to the classes if the Senatus allow ye,—' of course with all provisos as to 'tentative,' etc. But the great fact is granted,—the thin end of the wedge in, and, though nothing is secure till after the Senatus on Saturday, yet it is an enormous triumph!

Three more days' of calling and entreating and arguing,—then 'after all these voices . . . peace.'

After all, my aspiration to L. E. S. was not so ill-founded,—'If I can be the first woman to open a British University'—then surely I, like Charlotte Brontë. 'shall have served, my heart and I'—even if I die straightway.

For May, June and July, the Botany, Natural History, and Histology, with preparation for the Matriculation exam.

Oh, dear, I do feel so exultant. . . . In one sense I do see all the life-preamble to have been needed. The experience in the United States gave me much more chance of success now,—the life there gave me health really to use the chance when it comes.

I hardly fear the future at all;—not the students, nor the work.

I am sorry not to be with Mother, but on the whole this must be best, I think.

Four years of College! All alone? Surely not literally all the time—spiritually, who knows?

What a pity, as I said to U.D. that they will use up gold for toasting-forks!

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<sup>1</sup> It must be borne in mind that at this time the question was before the Professors of the Medical Faculty only.

Well, I am sure the hind-wheels may run by faith for a long time now. Perhaps the tangle is beginning to unravel after all these years,—and I shall have to cry, ‘Oh, why didn’t I bear on better then!’ I suppose that is always the feeling when the cloud begins to lift. But *till* it lifts,—

‘Still it is hard. No darkness will be light  
Though we should call it light from night till morn.’

And surely the Father pitieth His children.”

The numberless quotations in the course of her diary,—however fundamentally optimistic—are almost always in a minor key; but the minor key proves inadequate in the face of this great joy. One can see the dark eyes flash as she goes on,—

“ ‘Fair are the Marcian kalends,  
The proud ides, when the squadron rides,  
Shall be Rome’s whitest day.’

Surely I shall have to institute a festival for March 23rd. I wonder who’s the saint. It will be very odd if any other day in my life will be (if all goes well) as vital an epoch as today. . . .

I feel as if everybody was my peer today, for I want everybody to shake hands with me. I am so glad. Dear old Mother!—why are you not here to kiss me? . . . O. H. ? . . . L. E. S. ? . . . Ursula ? . . . Perhaps *your* thought is nearest me tonight, because you more than any perhaps realize the day of crisis. . . .”

“Wednesday, March 24th. How very nice it is to wake with a sense of something very good in the wind!”

Indeed it is small wonder that she was elated. Everyone had assured her that the opposition of the doctors was the thing to be feared, and now the Medical Faculty had recorded its vote in her favour. True, the permission only applied, in the first instance, to the Summer Term, and some of the professors may well have thought that the Summer Term would be more than enough to quench the ardour of the solitary woman student. But there is really no need to enquire into the manifold motives that may have swayed them. They had done what she asked, and it was scarcely to be supposed that the professors of the other faculties would prove more obdurate. One thinks with satisfaction of some of the men with whom she now had to deal,—Professor

Masson was not the only rock among them. One has but to recall the names of Professor Calderwood, Professor Lorimer, Professor Wilson, and others too, in order to realise that, so far as they were concerned, her feet were on sure ground.

The diary of March 24th continues :

“ Then to Masson’s, where I got 5 introductions. He very hopeful, I think. Seems not to think the University Court have the right to interfere.

Then to Tytler’s. He very quiet and legal. ‘ Should go to the Senatus quite unprejudiced,’—which was hardly all I wanted ! . . .

. . . In afternoon went with Mr. Begbie to see . . . Calderwood,—at home and quite favourable. Should support me on Saturday. ‘ Fine speaker,’ says Begbie.

Then Tait,—quite favourable.

Fleeming Jenkin,—rather so,—indeed I think he almost promised to vote for me, but feared some legal difficulties as to Matriculation, etc.

After Begbie went home, I saw Kelland,—he mildly favourable,—but saw ‘ difficulties.’ Still will vote, I think.

In the evening at Blackies’. He with clear pure face, white hair and straw hat! Half mad looking, certainly. But showed me favourable passages in his Notes on the Iliad, etc.—XI. 740—, and ‘ unless he hears strong things to the contrary’ will support me. Mrs. Blackie also nice, I think,—not commonplace.”

“ Thursday, 25th. Congratulations from Mother and U. D. . . . Left Iliad notes at Blackie’s. Then saw Lorimer. Very kind and friendly. ‘ Very glad to see me.’ Introduced me to Mrs. Lorimer, was ‘ sure women could do work men couldn’t’, etc., and were needed. Introduced me to M’Pherson, saying he ‘ sufficiently expressed his opinion by saying he intended to vote for me.’

Which McPherson *doesn’t*. Not disagreeable however, though less earnestminded than most.

Cosmo Innes. Painfully deaf, but very friendly. Much interested about my written communications about Bologna. Will support me. I’m to send him facts from British Museum.

Muirhead—I had been taught to fear as surely opposed. So he was at first, but candid and earnest and kind, and said at last, ‘ You have disposed of many of my objections.’ Much interested as to University statistics,—Bologna, etc. Suggested Balfour should write for information to Paris and Zurich.

Then bought stockings and basket, and called on Miss Blyth, and came home pretty well done up. Now to start again soon.

(I hear Mr. M., downstairs, is interested to hear they have ‘ that lady’ here !)

3 p.m. Professor Playfair has been here,—very kindly,—very much in earnest,—laying stress on Bologna degrees, etc. Introduction to Piazzi Smith,—‘I am strongly in favour of granting her desire to attend the classes, with the view of taking the degree in Medicine. She is thoroughly in earnest and desires no favour. Do give her an opportunity of stating her case to you.’

Then with D. B. M. to Stevenson . . . who thinks it ‘haigh taimè’ to have female practitioners, and means to vote for me, I think.

Then D. B. M. home, and with Mr. Begbie to Dr. C. who seems to have been at a Tory clack with Christison and Co. in the morning and won’t help me. He most naïvely let out ‘what Christison meant to do,’—i.e. argue that the Senate could not act without more legal advice,—delay,—and if possible refer to Chancellor Inglis. Whereon I wrote to Tait, Innes and Playfair to put on guard.

6 p.m. Dinner at 22 Manor Place. . . .

By the bye, how queerly much impressed Muirhead was with the ‘trouble I had taken’ at British Museum, etc.”

“Friday 26th. This morning at 10.30, to Piazzi Smith,—deaf and very hard to get at. Declared nothing but Astronomy to be his business,—and particularly no science used for money-getting!—Then he rambled off to ‘supply before demand’—Meteorological Society and Mr. Lowe, etc., and Registrar of Deaths, etc. Then—had a ladies’ meeting been called to declare they would employ women, etc. . . . However I might be sure he ‘would not vote against me,’ and advised me not to be discouraged! . . . Oh, dear, what a strain it is on one to have to sit out that sort of thing!

2 p.m. came Professor Wilson,—very kind and friendly,—though, having inadvertently shown him my list, he instantly pounced down on his own name and asked my authority. So I gave up Playfair instantly! . . . A grave good thoughtful man,—a very sound champion.

Then to see Lorimer who encourages me finely.”

“Saturday March 27th. Went with Mr. Begbie to see Oakeley (at school with Tom) Oxfordish (i.e. non-enthusiastic), but civil enough. Said he should support.

11 a.m. Fraser. The Medical Faculty having agreed, he was ready to do so too. I specially pleaded against “shelving” the question.

Indeed I hope with all my writing and speaking and warning (including my rather ill-advised raid on Balfour at College this morning) I have put a spoke in Christison’s wheel. Just about voting on it, I suppose,—3.30 p.m.

It is to be hoped Wilson will be prophetic,—‘We’ll have a great fight, but we’ll beat them!’

10 p.m. Success,—and *such* a success,—14 to 4!—‘Nunc dimittis’?—No, surely,—fresh zeal and energy for lifelong work.

Isn't it *good* after such a fortnight of rush and battle and strain to go to bed, saying,—‘The work is done!’

‘Of all the gifts of God . . . !’ ”

It is interesting to note that the speakers in S. J.-B.'s favour at the Meeting of Senatus were :—Professors Balfour, Tait, Lorimer, Fleeming Jenkin, Masson, Blackie, Bennett, and Sir Alexander Grant. Against her were Professors Christison, Turner, Laycock and Craufurd. To her great surprise Professor Muirhead gave notice of an appeal to the University Court. Professor Playfair was out of town, but the following letter has been preserved :

“ University Club,  
Edinburgh.

26 March, 69.

MY DEAR MASSON,

I have to express my regret that, in ignorance of there being a Senatus Meeting tomorrow, I had made an important engagement in Fifeshire.

I cordially concur in the recommendation of the Medical Faculty, that Miss Blake should be allowed to attend the Summer classes. If no inconvenience be found in practice, there are many precedents for female graduation, and for female professors. Pope Joan herself is an instance, although she professed and graduated in male attire. But lesser people than a pope may be adduced as precedents, in Salamanca, Bologna and Padua, especially from the thirteenth century onwards. Sir Roundell Palmer would not object on the ground of the legality of the prospect of female graduation, though if he were a member of Senatus he might doubt the expediency.

For my part, I have faith that the students will act like gentlemen, and will prove that the tentative session has not been lost by discourtesy on their part.

Yours sincerely,

LYON PLAYFAIR.”

## CHAPTER IV

### A CHECK

ON the day following that memorable meeting of Senatus, S. J.-B. had a curious conversation with the wife of one of the professors :

“ Mrs. A. tells me Christison actually threatened to resign if women are admitted !—and to the Medical Faculty this is a formidable threat. She thinks also ‘ the professors haven’t treated me fairly ’ (which I deny) in not letting me know how much they dislike the whole thing. Doubtless A. does,—and the babble of her bourne is magnified to her.

Still I know all is not yet gained. Yet surely very much *is*. And can ‘ He so far have brought me ’—? Not that that is a real argument, because if it fails we must suppose failure is right in one sense.

Amusing how much personal power Mrs. A. attributes to me, ‘ You’ve just turned them round your thumb,—I don’t believe there’s another woman could have done it,—*you* are wholly exceptional, etc.’ I say ‘ very complimentary, but I think not quite true.’ She thinks I’ve been ‘ wonderfully clever,’ and when I object to the phrase, ‘ have really shown wonderful *power* and tact.’

I’m afraid one can’t help being a little pleased to think one’s own effort has done something,—and yet the other feeling lies deeper :

‘ If Thou didst will, a mighty sword  
Out of my stem should grow.’

By the bye U. D. thinks my poem<sup>1</sup> the saddest in the book, ‘ Poor child ’ [she says] ‘ *how* sorry I am for you ! Oh, if the atmosphere of Easter joy which is bright round me were only your’s too, . . . Such an “ only this,”—it would be better to be in the blackest night with the hope of stumbling into broad daylight some time or other. It is the sort of hopelessness of any more light to come that makes the poem so sad to me.’

<sup>1</sup> “ Walking in Darkness.”

I don't agree. I think the 'only this' is just everything,—enough to live on and die on, though not enough (what is ?) to prevent life being very hard and stony. It seems to me just the essence of the—

' . . . strenuous souls for belief and prayer—  
Who stand in the dark on the lowest stair  
Affirming of God,—He is certainly there.'

And did even Christ keep that much always ?—

I believe Miss Cobbe is right,—in every Calvary there must be 'darkness over the face of all the land' for awhile.

Well, indeed, if we can always keep a firm grip of—

' Only this, that He knoweth the way that I tread,  
And His banner of crimson is over my head.'

And again,—

' This only for solace,—God knoweth indeed  
Where the poverty galls,—of what things we have need.' "

At 1.30 came Mrs. Evans with her clear good eyes and face. Much disposed at least to Botany. *How I hope she will !* "

Meanwhile S. J.-B. was undoubtedly the woman of the moment, and she had the satisfaction—by no means an unbroken one as life went on—of feeling herself a thoroughly popular person. She lunched with this dignitary and dined with that ; some of the wives of the Professors offered to accompany her to the lectures if no other women came forward to join her ; and some students whom she met at dinner told her they thought the students would be delighted that she should join the class.

Apparently this sanguine view was a mistaken one, for an agitation was raised among some of the men—at whose instigation we have no means of knowing—which resulted in another appeal to the University Court against the decision of the Senatus.

Very characteristically, but with Professor Masson's approval, S. J.-B. had called on Professor Muirhead to ask him the grounds of his appeal. He told her he had appealed because he did not think the question had been fully considered, and he thought the vote of the Senatus had settled the question too finally for *all* women. He pointed out that, as things stood, she *must* matriculate even to go to the lectures,

but held out hopes that the University Court could give tentative permission. He was "not at all unfriendly," and showed her cases of mediaeval women doctors to add to the strength of her armoury.

Meanwhile Lord Advocate Moncrieff had proved "kindly and favourable," and the Lord Provost, "very lordly in his big chair, but rather gracious" had promised to give the question "his best consideration." Sir Alexander Grant thought the thing was won with the Professors, and had "hardly a doubt" of the University Court.

When, on March 31st of that eventful year, S. J.-B. returned to Brighton, she fully believed that her cause was so far gained, and there is not the smallest doubt that a number of the professors shared her belief. One cannot read the diary and the letters of the periods without feeling how much cause there was for confident anticipation; but we have only to turn to dry-as-dust facts, to the constitution of Edinburgh University, in order to realize how precarious the situation was.

There were no less than four bodies whose business it was to consider the question at stake, and who—in addition to the Chancellor—had to be consulted before any important change could be made :

1. The Medical Faculty, consisting of Medical Professors only.

This hurdle, as the reader is aware, had been somewhat unexpectedly passed.

2. The Senatus, comprising all the Professors of every Faculty.

This obstacle, too had been passed.

3. The University Court, composed of the Rector, the Principal, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh,—with five others appointed respectively by the Chancellor, the Rector, the Senatus, the Town Council of Edinburgh, and the General Council of the University.

4. The General Council, comprising all those graduates who register their names as members.



Mr. Sidgwick's remarks about Convocation naturally occur to one at this stage ; but what mainly strikes one on facing these particulars is the extraordinary constitution of No. 3 as a body authorized to reconsider the decisions of No. 2. The Rector was some distinguished man who might never have been in Edinburgh in his life ; the Lord Provost may be fairly supposed to have his hands pretty full without taking upon him the consideration of highly technical questions that lay outside his sphere. As for some of the other members,—one can only say that the manner of their election calls up possibilities concerning them too varied for the human mind to grasp.

No doubt there were occasions on which this " lay control " had its advantages ; but, when one considers how much must depend on the point of view from which the case was laid before the Court, one cannot but feel that it lay in the power of so singularly-constituted a body to defeat the very end for which it was created.

From S. J.-B.'s point of view then, as we have seen, two hurdles had been successfully passed ; but the dangers of the third may be estimated from the fact—the importance of which she as an outsider could not possibly gauge—that her avowed and implacable opponent, " our Nestor," Dr. Robert Christison, was the only Professor and the only medical man who had a seat on the University Court. He had in fact the unique distinction of belonging to every body by which the interests of the women had to be decided, viz. the Medical Faculty, the Senatus, the University Court, the University Council, and the Infirmary Board.

Add to all this that he was a respected and representative citizen, one who made a strong appeal to the religious and church-going public. " No man," said Professor Masson about this time, " walks the streets of Edinburgh whom I more respect ; . . . but this is not the first time, and I suppose it will not be the last, when grave and wise men will be found defending a dying tyranny."

Professor Masson's feeling for the great man was destined to be sorely tried.

It will surprise no one, then, to learn that on April 19th,

the following resolution was passed at a meeting of the University Court held, as was the custom, in strict privacy :

“ That the Court, considering the difficulties at present standing in the way of carrying out the resolution of the Senatus, as a temporary arrangement in the interest of one lady, and not being prepared to adjudicate finally on the question whether women should be educated in the medical classes of the University, sustains the appeals and recalls the resolution of the Senatus.”

“ As a temporary arrangement in the interests of one lady.”

Supposing that the decision of the University Court was really to be taken at its face value, so to speak, it was one of which nobody could fairly complain. Was it not simply another way of saying,—“ If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought ”? For, although it be true that “ God and one man make a majority,” the fighter who has God on his side does not indefinitely remain alone, even so far as his fellow men are concerned.

The mere fact of the adverse decision is recorded in the diary almost without comment. One is glad to think that when S. J.-B. received the news she was among her friends in the south, and no longer so dependent on the lonely solace of an unwritten page. On April 26th she wrote to Dr. Sewall :

“ You will have seen my bad news in the papers I sent you on Saturday,—I can no longer urge you to come and settle in Edinburgh, for all my plans there have been overturned again. The University Court has actually vetoed the permission given by the Medical Faculty and confirmed by the whole Senatus (or conjoined faculties).

This is very unusual and seems *very* hard.

I expect to go to Scotland in a week or two still, to see whether nothing can be done about it. If I had any legal standpoint I would take the matter into the Courts.<sup>1</sup> If I *can't* get in at Edinburgh, then I shall try Glasgow, etc., but I should very much prefer Edinburgh. . . .

You see it is very well that I asked you not to talk about Edinburgh to other folks. When I really succeed, you may ‘boast’ as much as you please! I am sure that anything I ever do in Medicine will be all yours.

“ I am so glad that you are prospering so well, and getting patients sent you by the men. Thank you for all the papers you send me,—when you send whole papers, do *mark* the paragraph. . . .

<sup>1</sup> This suggestion had been made to her by one of the legal professors.

I am glad you like my Essay. It will be a good deal better when it is rewritten, for I have a good deal of new evidence to bring in. It *may* be out in July, or it may wait till October.

I have had terrible wear and tear to go through the last two months. Edinburgh was *very very* tiring work,—to repeat endless arguments to an endless succession of people took so very much out of one,—and then too there was really a great deal to *do*, and tho' I took cabs recklessly I could not but get very tired. . . .

I am sure you are right about women being fitter to understand women. I will put in some more about that. Do you know whenever it comes home to me personally I am more and more amazed how women *can* go to men for uterine treatment. I think that, sooner than go to any, I would come across the Atlantic again to you. I wish you would let me know how often doctors have sent you their own relations. I wish Dr. Cabot or some leading doctor would publish a pamphlet or something expressing his strong belief in the '*need* of women doctors for young girls.' This is the point that hits the public hardest, I think. If he could write me a short note that I could quote in my Essay, with or without his name, I would do so. . . .

There is such a nice girl here,—Ursula Du Pre (a sort of connection of Mrs. Jenkinson's) who would like very much to study medicine, but her Mother objects strongly and she is too ill to be worried, she thinks.

It is a thousand pities, for she would make a splendid doctor ;<sup>1</sup> and, being extremely 'well-born,' it would have an excellent effect for her to study. She is very anxious to see you,—she has fallen in love with your picture. I tell everybody that neither that nor anything else can tell them *how* good and sweet you are, my dear child.

Your very aff.

S. L. J.-B."

Meanwhile she was not left without sympathy from those whose sympathy was a distinction in itself. On April 5th Professor Masson had written :

"DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Here is the latest news. The case was to come up today before the University Court—with these two new elements,—of which I heard only on Saturday : viz. (i) That Professor Turner has

<sup>1</sup> "Tell me everything that happens," writes Miss Du Pre about this time, "so that I may not lose the thread of your history. I think I know most of the people's names now, and should not require much explanation. You need not tell me in *every* letter that Sir A. Grant is the Principal. I'll try to remember that fact."

appealed independently to the Court, and (2) That there is a petition against you to the Court by a large number of students—not gainsaying the propriety of women studying or practising Medicine, but laying stress on the difficulty and the injury to male students, should a lady student be admitted to open lectures on certain medical subjects, so that a Professor should be forced to abstain from exhaustive treatment of those subjects.

It was known at a Senatus meeting on Saturday, that the appeal, with these new conditions, might come before the University Court today; and, in view of this, Professor Balfour and myself were deputed to appear before the Court and defend the vote of the Senatus,—representing the reasons of the majority of the Senatus for the vote and replying to any new objections.

We were at our post for the purpose today; but the University Court—whether from an excess of business, or because of a desire for delay in this particular question,—postponed the consideration of your case till the 19th of this month. So nothing was done today.

On the whole I am of opinion that delay will do no harm. Prof. Muirhead appeals (as far as I can understand him) not as an enemy, but in order that there may be farther discussion. Professor Turner's appeal is grounded, I believe, on his own difficulty as regards Anatomy. And then there will be time for outside influences, and the considerations they may induce. . . .

Had I known in time that I should be deputed to defend the case, I would have written to you to request suggestions. As it is, there is plenty of time now, and what occurs to me immediately is that any facts showing the prevalence of right opinion in British Society (both Whig and Tory) might be converted into argument. Please write to me anything that you can collect on this head, i.e. facts and names to prove that the tendency to open the profession to women is approved by eminent and representative personages, of different political opinions, throughout the country.

I will write again. Meanwhile, with doubled zeal for all that has happened, I am,

resolutely Yours,

DAVID MASSON.

P.S. Prof. Balfour received this morning a letter from the Medical Dean at Zurich of very satisfactory tenor."

" 3, Rosebery Crescent,  
April 20th, 1869.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I regret to have to tell you that it went against you at the University Court yesterday. After the three appellants (Profs. Muirhead, Turner and Laycock) had been heard on the one side, and Prof. Balfour and I on the other, we left the Court to their

private deliberations. These were long, and resulted, I understand, in an agreement to something like this effect—that considering the extreme inconvenience that would attend any present arrangement for the end in view, especially when that is demanded for only one lady, the Court, without pronouncing on the general question whether ladies ought to be educated in the medical classes at the University, do not consider it expedient, etc. I tried to get the exact terms of the resolution, but, not having seen the Secretary, report the substance as it was told me by Principal Sir A. Grant, and Mr. Nicolson. The *Scotsman* of tomorrow will probably have the communicated report: if so, I will send it to you.

Only five of the Court were present,—the Principal, Mr. Gordon, Dr. Christison, Mr. Phin and Mr. Nicolson. I believe the petition of the 180 students against you was really the determining argument,—the Court foreseeing the chance of a disturbance, and not being prepared to run the risk. Except two, I rather gathered that those present favoured the notion of the medical education of women, if circumstances would permit, and, on the whole, what has occurred to me, since I learnt the decision, is, that, if a new attempt were to be made, on the University of Edinburgh (and I hope there will), and if it were to come in the form of a joint and simultaneous application from a few ladies (say from half a dozen to a dozen), then our authorities would be obliged to yield and to betake themselves to the consideration of the means whereby such a class could be best conducted—how far along with the men, how far apart.

Much chagrined at the result, but with the firm conviction that your application and visit have done great good, and led to an advance in the right direction beyond what could have been anticipated.

I am,

dear Miss Jex-Blake,

Yours very truly,

DAVID MASSON."

"Aberdour, Fife, April 20th.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Your letter has followed me to this place, which must be my apology for not replying to it at once. I was indeed annoyed at the reversal of our judgment in your case at the University Court,—the more so considering how the Court,—at all times a most absurd body to review the decisions of the Senate—was constituted on that particular occasion. I have not a copy of the Universities Act with me, and I cannot therefore express any opinion as to whether this decision falls under the category of those which are reversible by the Queen in Council. If it does belong to this category I should

say that your best course was at once to carry it there, and I should say, with the majority you had both in the Medical Faculty and in the Senatus, that the reversal of the decision of so very insignificant and prejudged a body as the Court was which judged of your case was pretty nearly certain. If this cannot be done—which Masson or Playfair or Sir A. Grant will at once tell you,—then I suspect the best thing is to bring the case before the next meeting of the University Council. It has no power to decide, but it may recommend to the University Court, and that will bring the matter up again, and the constitution of the Court can be better looked after than it appears to have been this time. It may be also—though here again I am speaking without the Act, that such a recommendation could be carried beyond the Court to the Queen in Council. Any claim to admission on a legal construction of the Charter would involve you in a law-suit which would not be decided for years and would cost  $x = \text{£s.!!}$  Against that course I have no hesitation in advising you, as a question of personal interest and comfort, though of the legal merits of the question I can say nothing. I certainly, in your case, however, would lose no time in seeing the Lord Advocate. Substantially, I think he will be with you, and his advice in all such matters is of great value, and will, I feel sure, be willingly given.

Mrs. Lorimer joins me in very kind regards, and in sympathy for the annoyance which you are subjected to, and I am,

Yours very faithfully,

J. LORIMER."

In a later letter Professor Lorimer says :

" There is one point on which I find I am with you against many of my colleagues—even those who are guided by reason and not by tradition, viz. as to whether Medicine ought to be taught to ladies separately, or in the open classes along with the male students. As regards the question of delicacy, I am clearly and strongly of opinion that in holding the latter view your female instincts have guided you right. The root of indelicacy is immodesty, and the root of immodesty is immorality, and the arrangement that would in my opinion be immodest, and might be immoral, would be that such subjects should be taught by *one* man to *one* woman. The farther you recede from *that* arrangement, the more you separate yourself from the circumstances in which according to a well-known legal *brocard*, 'charity ceases.'

The opposite pole as it seems to me, is the teaching of science publicly in an open class, irrespective of the sex, age, or other peculiarities of the audience ; and mindful only of *truth*.

I am aware, however, that there are other considerations which influence Sir Alexander Grant, and other members of Senatus who

would probably agree with me on this point. If young men and women were thrown together daily, they say, imprudent marriages and the like would come of it. Even here, however, I think the balance of evil is on the existing arrangement, and not on that which you propose to substitute for it. I have not seen Mr. Mill's 'Subjection of Women' and I don't go in much for that sort of thing, but I cannot see why greater harm should come of men and women meeting at their occupations than at their amusements; and I think imprudent marriages are just as likely to come of croquet parties and riding-lessons as of medical lectures.

As in later life one is sometimes apt to be deceived as to one's earlier feelings, I asked a young bachelor whom most Edinburgh Mamas would *not* consider 'an imprudent marriage' what his feelings were on the subject; and his reply was 'Anything rather than those dreary balls and idiotic evening parties which at present afford the only occasions on which men who go in for work in the early part of the day can make the acquaintance of persons of the other sex.'

It can scarcely be doubted that by *working* together men and women would learn to know each other better, and that many *mistakes* that are now committed, would be avoided.

With kind regards from Mrs. Lorimer, believe me,

Yours very truly,

J. LORIMER."

No one who has grasped something of S. J.-B.'s character will imagine that she was likely to mistake a check for a checkmate, though she sometimes made the converse mistake. She seems to have had some little correspondence with Professor (afterwards Sir Lyon) Playfair, for the following letter is among her papers :

"Athenaeum Club,

London, 10th May, 1869.

DEAR MISS BLAKE,

I was much obliged by the list of women graduates and grieved at the result of your case in Edinburgh.

There is no power of appeal against the decision of the University Court. You had overcome the prejudices of the profession, but not those of the students. With their strong opposition the University Court could not possibly decide otherwise, for Scottish Universities, without endowments, cannot go in face of the Constituency by which they are supported. It would not do to ruin classes by the admission of one pupil against the opinion of all the others. Though I regret the result, I am not surprised at it. In

the face of this prejudice, the only hope that I see is for intending female graduates presenting themselves in sufficient numbers to induce the Universities to give them a separate education though a common graduation.

Yours truly,

LYON PLAYFAIR."

"What I thought and think," wrote Sir Alexander Grant, "is that if a sufficient number of ladies could be found to constitute a small extra-academical class in medical subjects, the University of Edinburgh would be willing to make arrangements for the teaching of such a class, and to examining the lady pupils with a view to awarding them medical degrees."

In her diary S. J.-B. writes,

"Tuesday, May 11th. . . . Wrote today to ask to see Goschen,—see if anything *can* be made of appeal."

"Friday. Saw Goschen, who will have the Act 'looked up' about appeals. Lord Advocate also to 'write.' Slept at Hampstead Heath."

"Saturday. Croquet. Came to Brighton by noon train."

She used to recall many years later how on these much-prized visits to the Corderys, some of the young folks got up at 6 o'clock in the morning to have another game of croquet before the work of the day began.

"Wednesday. Met U. at Waterloo Bridge. It did me good to see her. Had just heard 'No appeal' from Moncrieff, and no support except for private classes from Grant."

Here then she was obliged to stop and take breath. Failure? Surely not. I think no one can view the subject all round, as we have done in the foregoing chapters,—realizing something of the forces that were arrayed against her—without a feeling of amazement that she should have accomplished so much. Whatever the mistakes and failures of her subsequent life, that first campaign must surely be pronounced an astonishing success.



## CHAPTER V

### OPENING OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY TO WOMEN

THE results of the campaign, duly chronicled in the *Scotsman*, filtered through into other papers, and a certain amount of public interest was the result. Before many days had passed the following letter came to nerve a possibly flagging arm :

“ 8 Bedford Square, W.C.  
May 15th. 69.

MADAM,

I venture to write to you as I see that the decision of the University Court at Edinboro is based on the fact that they do not feel justified in making ‘ a temporary arrangement in the interest of one lady.’ I also gather from the article in the *Scotsman* on the subject of your application that you are desirous that in some cases private instruction should be taken instead of compulsory attendance at the public classes.

As these are your views, I should be glad, if you renew your application, to join you in doing so, and I believe I know two or three other ladies who would be willing to do the same. . . .

Trusting you will pardon my troubling you on account of the great interest I feel in promoting the entrance of women into the medical profession, believe me, Madam,

Yours truly,

ISABEL THORNE.

Miss Jex-Blake.”

A few days later came an equally interesting letter from Mrs. Butler :

“ Your Essay is in Macmillan’s hands. You will receive a proof soon. I have asked him also to let me see one, and to let you have a duplicate to send to America.

I read it once again before sending it away. It is well worth while to have included in it so much research. It gives one strongly

the impression while reading it, how much the present male monopoly of the profession is an innovation; also how at all times women seem to have striven to assert their right to a share in the healing art. I cannot help hoping the publication of your Essay may be the beginning of a new social era in those matters. God grant that it may!

It is indeed most trying to be kept back so long by the difficulty of getting leave to do good and to toil. O England, what a wicked amount of conservatism of selfish customs have you to answer for! I daresay to yourself your life must appear sometimes to be being wasted—but it is not so. In every good cause there must be martyrs and pioneers, who, with gifts for more, have had the hard task of opening the way for others to work. I saw a Miss Pechey at Leeds, who wishes to become a doctor, and Miss Wolstenholme told me of a lady she knows who is studying.

I don't think the story about the Greek lady at all indelicate. I hope no one else will think so. Is it not strange how people cry out at the indelicacy of *speaking* of a thing which it is far more indelicate should *exist*, and yet to its existence they have no objection.

In a later letter she says:

“... Have you *seen* Miss Pechey? She did not seem to me very clever, but very steady and nice,—a silent, quiet woman.”

One knows the fine reserve under which Edith Pechey's great gifts lay hidden. “I only wish,” wrote a friend who knew her well, “that there were 12 more *like* her ready to begin.”

This is what Miss Pechey had to say for herself:

“Before deciding finally to enter the medical profession, I should like to feel sure of success—not on my own account, but I feel that failure now would do harm to the cause, and that it is well that at least the first few women who offer themselves as candidates should stand above the average of men in their examinations.

Do you think anything more is requisite to ensure success than moderate abilities and a good share of perseverance? I believe I may lay claim to these, together with a real love of the subjects of study, but as regards any thorough knowledge of those subjects at present, I fear I am deficient in most. I am afraid I should not without a good deal of previous study be able to pass the preliminary exam. you mention, as my knowledge of Latin is small and of Euclid still less. Still, if no very extensive knowledge of these is required (and doctors generally seem to know very little of them) I could perhaps be ready by the next exam., and the study

of Carpenter at the same time would be a relaxation. Could you give me any idea when the next matriculation exam. will be held, and whether candidates are examined in *all* the books of Euclid. If I thought I could prepare myself in time for this, I think I could arrange pecuniary and other matters so as to enter in October as you advise; and, though for some reasons I should prefer to wait another year, yet, as I am nearly 24, it will perhaps be better to lose no time.

Allow me to thank you for your kindness in assisting me with your advice. I feel especially grateful as I have no friend able to supply the information I need.

Believe me, dear Madam,

Yours sincerely,

EDITH PECHEY."

We know how warmly S. J.-B. felt that the thanks were not all on the side of her unknown correspondents, and she would have felt this even more if she had known the sheer value as human beings of her first two recruits. Taking the trio together, one simply could not have wished for abler representatives of a struggling cause.

Meanwhile a new avenue of hope had opened quite unexpectedly; Mrs. Jex-Blake had been seriously ill, and her daughter had taken her to consult Dr. King Chambers.

"I liked Dr. Chambers very much," she writes to Dr. Sewall. "I first had a talk with him alone, and told him I was studying Medicine, about which he was very kind. He seemed to think that if women were willing to pay for separate Anatomical teaching, they could get into almost any of the London schools, and promised to enquire about his own school,—St. Mary's. I doubt whether the way is quite so open as he thinks, but I shall be very glad to hear his report, and meanwhile shall go on to Edinbro' and see what can be done there by way of a separate class. It would be a much greater thing in the end to get the Universities open, for of course the other medical schools feed Apothecaries' Hall and the College of Surgeons, and do not give the M.D.

I think it very possible that by guaranteeing some sufficient fees for two or three courses (*whatever* the number of pupils) we could get the thing *tried*, and, when once publicly done, I am sure numbers would flock in. I had rather borrow and spend some money a bo it than be bothered any more. But of that I can tell you more next week."

In her diary she writes (June 19th) :

" After opposite advice from Mrs. Butler (for St. Mary's), and Salzmann (Edinbro') and much deliberation, decided for ' baith, my lord.' The petition to go today to Dr. Chambers (signed by Miss Pechey and Mrs. Thorne),—mine to Senatus on 25th. and to University Court July 5th.

Dr. King Chambers spared himself no trouble in the matter.

" I have got over the chief difficulty," he writes, " viz., that of engaging the Anatomy lecturer, Mr. Arthur Norton, to undertake a class of ladies. There is also a room they could have for dissecting, and arrangements may be made with the porter's wife to take care of their cloaks and attend to their comforts. The other lecturers shall be approached in due course, but I think Mr. Norton is the chief one to be considered. What number of ladies can you get to form a class ? "

A fortnight later, however, he is obliged to write :

" DEAR MADAM,

I fear you will be disappointed with the result of my application to the School Committee of St. Mary's. It was a full meeting which had been already called on another subject ; so I took the opportunity of getting as many of my colleagues as possible to freely state their opinions. And the result is my agreeing with the idea you expressed in your note, that the most insuperable of your difficulties lay in the direction of the students—to which I may add their parents and guardians ; of whom, as customers, private firms in the position of the medical schools of London, must stand in awe. Such a sort of partnership is essentially opposed to change, as, if even a minority object to a novelty, their colleagues shrink from forcing it upon them.

It seems hard that British women should be sent abroad to get that of which there is such abundance at home, but circumstances seem to render this inevitable.

Repeating my regrets that I should have deluded you with false hopes, I am

Yours faithfully,

T. K. CHAMBERS."

It is pleasant to note that, if S.J.-B. failed to get from Dr. Chambers the thing she wanted at the moment, she had at least found in him a lifelong friend and helper.

It was well that she had decided for " baith, my lord." She now once more approached the University Court in the

person of its President, the Rector, asking whether they would remove their present veto in case arrangements could be made for the instruction of women in separate classes; and whether in that case women would be allowed to matriculate in the usual way, and to undergo the ordinary examination, with a view to obtaining medical degrees in due course.

She also wrote to the Senatus, asking them to recommend the matriculation of women as medical students on the understanding that separate classes should be formed: and she addressed a letter to the Dean of the Medical Faculty offering on behalf of her fellow-students and herself to guarantee whatever minimum fee the Faculty might fix as a remuneration for these separate classes.

"I appreciate your truly kind and thoughtful plans with regard to the pecuniary arrangements," writes Miss Pechey in this connection. "I shall be sorry if my means will not allow me to take a full share of the expenses, but I am afraid I shall not be able to afford more than double the usual fees for a man."

S. J.-B. had returned to Edinburgh in order to further arrangements, and to meet any difficulties that might arise. The first thing to be done was to secure teachers, and, now that it came to the point, some even of those who had been most favourable showed a singular reluctance to take the plunge. Their enthusiasm had had time to cool.

"June 26th . . . Today went to see A. Most disappointingly timorous,—'could not give the extra time himself,' though he did not refuse to see the importance and responsibility of the case. I *hope* he will vote for me still.

B. very disappointing,—very avaricious,—trying for the 100 guineas.

Balfour, out.

I very disheartened and weary. . . .

I *do* fear failure now,—indeed it seems to me probable, in Medical Faculty.

And then all the time and effort wasted since March 1st! A year's steady work would have been less strain! . . .

If one had but faith! Ought one not to say, 'I fight and work my best,—God *will* bring out the best result,—let me not prejudge what is best.

And so be content either way."

" June 30th. Christison has had to go to London,—wrathfully enough they say,—hurrah! I hear that he asked to have the day changed, and that Balfour refused,—the brick!

Of course this adds to my chances.

Also I had a long crack with Turner this morning. He did not speak against it as in his own person,—only evidently thought how awful it would be if 'odium were thrown' on two professors for refusing perhaps what others had granted. I suggested that it might perhaps be more awful to refuse all women for the sake of that.

9 p.m. The 40 lines of Virgil written out [in preparation for the matriculation examination that as yet was a more than doubtful prospect], eyes and head weary. (Oh, dear, 'it is not good for man to be alone.')

By this time tomorrow Medical Faculty at least decided.

Thrown back utterly again? Today for the first time since Friday I hope a little. (Something of the Caliban in me says,— "Unlucky to say so!")

" July 1st. Yesterday O. H.'s 'Two Poor Courts' interested me much.

7 p.m. Won after all!—and I do think this must be at last 'the beginning of the end.' For me 4 out of 6:—Balfour, Bennett, Spence, M'Lagan. Turner would not vote dead against it, as Laycock wished, so those two did not vote, but Laycock 'protested' . . .

Allman absurdly wroth (to Masson) about canvassing and unjustifiable, etc., etc., seeming to mean that my poor little calls on people had interfered with their judicial wisdom.

Just seen a letter from A. G. J.—I must hear that organ at Lucerne (with its storm, etc.) before I die."

" Friday, July 2nd. . . . 6 p.m. Hurrah!—The Senate granted my request without limitation and without division, though M'Pherson tried to get up a motion for delay,—no one (not even Turner!) would second him. Turner wished to have it recorded that he 'did not vote,' but as no vote had to be taken this could not be, so he reluctantly had it recorded that he 'dissented,' which I regret, for I am sure that it is more than he wished.

Present,—14. Grant, M'Pherson, Lorimer, Masson, Wilson, Tait, Kelland, Craufurd, Liston, Stevenson, Balfour, Bennett, Spence, Turner."

" Monday. *The day!* Even now (4.30 p.m.) a University of Britain may be literally open to women,—if so, won't that have been worth doing?

When I say to Alice, 'The University Court may still stop it all,'—'They'd better not!' quo' she ferociously."

What actually happened at the University Court this time is best related in a letter to Dr. Lucy Sewall:

“ Maitland Street, Edinburgh.

July 6th, 69.

MY DARLING,

You may address to me here for a fortnight after you get this, for I expect now to be here till about August 15th.

The Medical Faculty and the Senatus have both voted in favour of special classes in the University for Women, and the University Court at their meeting yesterday passed a vote in favour of the measure. It seems however that there are some legal difficulties about the old Charter, etc., and that the matter will require the sanction of the Privy Council, which will cause delay, but I think no real difficulty,—for the Queen is known to be favourable to women doctors; and the present government is specially liberal. Indeed it has this real advantage that it will make the whole thing very public and very safe and permanent,—so that it will be almost impossible ever again to exclude women.

So now I am looking forward to years of steady work here, and am so very glad to be able to do so!

I am working at my Latin, etc., for the Matric. examination. It would astonish the women studying in Boston to see the examination that we have to pass here before we can even begin Medicine,—and it is a capital thing, because it will keep out ignorant and silly women to a great degree. . . . Oh, dear child, it is so nice to look forward to having you here next summer to see and know all about it. You will so enjoy Edinburgh. I have been thinking about taking rooms or a house lately, and I keep saying to myself, ‘ You must have a room full of sun for my doctor!’ It is so good to look forward to seeing you. . . .

Have you seen Mill’s Subjection of Women? Your Father would delight in it. I mean to send him a copy as a remembrance.

I am very glad to see that the British Medical Journal encourages the opening of classes for women. I shall send you the number.

I am only anxious now to have a good big class of women and of a creditable kind. . . . *How* I wish that you would come and settle here! You could establish a Dispensary at once, and have all us students at your orders. We shall want sadly some teaching of that sort. . . . This climate would be so much better for you, and I should feel so much happier about you if you were here. I know if you are in Boston, I shall worry about you all winter. . . .

Well, Goodbye, my dear child! Whether you come or stay, all good be with you!

Your very aff.

S. L. J.-B.”

The reader will scarcely be surprised to learn that when on July 23rd the University Court formally acceded to her petition, S. J.-B. was almost too tired to feel elated, though she admits that she would be "grieving bitterly had things been otherwise." In addition to her other work, she had spent a fortnight in the house of a very dear friend, nursing several serious cases of scarlet fever. Trained nurses for private houses were almost unknown in those days, and she did not spare herself. On July 9th she had written to ask Mrs. Thorne—who was in Aberdeen at the time—to join her in Edinburgh. "I *won't* take the whole responsibility alone,"—the responsibility of engaging lecturers and guaranteeing fees,—she confides to her diary. The grasshopper had become a burden. Even the modest amount of Latin required for the Matriculation Examination was a great effort to her, and she knew of old the importance of husbanding her strength.

"Most folk," she says with great truth and pathos,—“or at least many, have only their indolence to strive with. If they conquer that, all serene. I (after that done) have to pause half way,—ware crash!—and to calculate nicely how much brain force I dare bring to bear or use up.

Ah, well,—shall my strength be as my day,—or isn't it fair to apply that to self-imposed work?"

"Self-imposed?" There is a big question involved here. No doubt the readers of this book will answer it in different ways.

In any case she had achieved her task. Notwithstanding a direct negative, moved by the Revd. Dr. Phin, the resolution of the Unveirsity Court was approved by the General Council on October 29th, 1869, and was sanctioned by the Chancellor on November 12th, The following regulations, drawn up by the Court, were officially issued at the same date, and inserted in the *Calendar* of the University :

"(1.) Women shall be admitted to the study of medicine in the University; (2.) The instruction of women for the profession of medicine shall be conducted in separate classes, confined entirely to women; (3.) The Professors of the Faculty of Medicine shall,



for this purpose, be permitted to have separate classes for women ; (4.) Women, not intending to study medicine professionally, may be admitted to such of these classes, or to such part of the course of instruction given in such classes, as the University Court may from time to time think fit and approve ; (5.) The fee for the full course of instruction in such classes shall be four guineas ; but in the event of the number of students proposing to attend any such class being too small to provide a reasonable remuneration at that rate, it shall be in the power of the Professor to make arrangements for a higher fee, subject to the usual sanction of the University Court. (6.) All women attending such classes shall be subject to all the regulations now or at any future time in force in the University as to the matriculation of students, their attendance on classes, Examination or otherwise ; (7.) The above regulations shall take effect as from the commencement of session 1869-70."

This is how the "first British University"—the University of Edinburgh—was thrown open to women.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE HOPE SCHOLARSHIP

THE month of August brought some rest and refreshment, though S. J.-B. remained in Edinburgh to "coach" for the Matriculation Examination. Mrs. Burn Murdoch put her spacious and comfortable house for a little time at the solitary student's disposal, and, to S. J.-B.'s great joy, Miss Du Pre came to visit her.

There were delightful excursions up the Forth, through the Trossachs, and even farther afield, and S. J.-B. spent what is now known as a week-end, at his country-place, with Mr. Findlay of the *Scotsman*, and his wife. One realizes by many little indications how her views on the whole question of women were becoming explicit. In the course of her visit, her host showed her letters he had received from a clever American woman—a journalist of sorts, apparently—in the course of which she asked him to "help the little woman," "the wee bit thing." "When *will* women learn," says S. J.-B., "if they claim to stand on common ground at all, to 'stand upright,' to ask *only* 'fair field and no favour'!"

On October 10th she moved into No. 15 Buccleuch Place, "the house nice, airy, wholesome, roomy,—rent, taxes and all probably £45," and, on the following day Miss Pechey lunched with her. A week later S. J.-B. sums the new comrade up :

"I think her strong, ready-handed, with 'faculty,' great ability, resolution, judgment; great calmness and quiet of manner and action, and probably strength of feeling; good taste, good manner; very pleasant face; rather good feet and hands; considerable

sense of humour; lots of energy and interest in things,—witness dissecting the slugs, keeping caterpillars, etc. In fine, as good an ally and companion as could well be had.”

She had occasion to add considerably to this estimate as life went on, but in no wise to subtract from it.

Meanwhile Mrs. Evans had resolved to throw in her lot with the little band, and S. J.-B. was coaching her in Arithmetic. Miss Chaplin (afterwards the wife of Professor Ayrton) had also joined their ranks, and it was a gallant and creditable little phalanx that made its way up to the University on October 19th to undergo the Matriculation Examination.

Of course they all passed, and passed far above the average, though there was one “narrow squeak” in Arithmetic. They were all cultivated women, all on their mettle, and the result was scarcely more than might reasonably have been anticipated. “We believe,—” as a local paper had occasion to say, after a similar result some ten months later,

“We believe that these results prove, not that women’s capacities are better than those of men,—a thing that few people would assert,—but that these women who are devoting themselves to obtain, in spite of all difficulties, a thorough knowledge of their profession, are far more thoroughly in earnest than most of the men are, and that their ultimate success is certain in proportion. Nor would we omit the inference that, this being so, those who wantonly throw obstacles in the way of this gallant little band, incur a proportionately heavy responsibility, as wanting not only in the spirit of chivalry, but even in the love of fair play, which we should be sorry to think wanting in any Briton.”<sup>1</sup>

It was natural, however, that friends and well-wishers should be not a little elated. Here is one of many delightful letters :

“Oct. 22, 1869.

MY DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

This is just one word of warmest congratulation from us both to you and the other ladies. We are rejoicing more than I can tell you over the results of the examination. I have been a prisoner today with a severe cold, or I should have been unable to rest until I had shaken hands with you. Shall you be at home any

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Review*, Aug. 5, 1870.

time tomorrow after one o'clock? If so, I shall like to come and see you and Miss Pechey.

Do send me a line to tell me if you are as happy as I fancy you.

Yours faithfully,

E. ROSALINE MASSON.

Mr. Masson was very much gratified by the papers of the ladies. They fully justified his highest hopes."

From diary :

"Tuesday, Nov. 2nd. 'The deed—of life—was done!'—This morning, 11.30 a.m., I, S.L.J.-B., first of all women, matriculated as 'Civis Academiae Edinensis!'—Tonight for the first time 5 women are undergraduates!—Hurrah!

'With exactness grinds He all.'"

"I do indeed congratulate you undergraduates with all my heart," wrote Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, who had now settled in London. "It seems to me the grandest success that women have yet achieved in England; it is the great broad principle established that conducts to every noble progress.

I feel as if I *must* come up to Edinburgh in the course of the winter, to see and bless the class! Perhaps towards the close of the term would be best,—advise me."

So began a winter's work that for most, if not all, of the women students, was an experience of extraordinary interest and happiness. S. J.-B. and Edith Pechey had settled together in Buccleuch Place, and the house was a *rendezvous* for a choice little circle. It would be difficult to say which of the two proved the greater attraction to their friends. Miss Pechey was younger, more adaptable, less obviously alarming, though possibly more critical really, in proportion as she had seen less of life. The reader is already aware that S. J.-B., though a most interesting person to live with, was not by any means always an easy person to live with, particularly when she was overworked and overstrained. For her friends as well as herself it was sometimes a question—in her own significant words—of, "Ware crash!" Moreover, although she often gave to others the advice,—"*Glissez, mortels : n'appuyez pas!*", she not infrequently failed to act on it herself: she still, as when a child, staked her happiness too readily on matters that might better have been

regarded as trifles : and this is a characteristic that becomes a more serious factor in domestic and social life as the years go on. On the other hand, when she really "let herself go" in her most intimate circle, there was no one like her. The diary and the letters give scarcely an indication of the sense of humour and fun that were so ready to bubble over into real whole-hearted laughter. The eyes so familiar with sorrow could still sparkle with merriment like a child's, and, when anything struck her as irresistibly preposterous or comical, she had a way of "tossing them up to the ceiling and catching them again" that was a joy to behold. Increasingly as life went on, she was a touchstone on which to test the things that might be said, the stories that might be told. She could enjoy a joke that would have shocked many women of her generation ; but, as her Mother had said long before, "anything impure ran off her mind like quicksilver," and she was a past master in the art of calling home a conversation that was lingering too long in permissible bye-ways.

More than this,—even at the time of which we are writing, she was one of those with whom people know instinctively that it is safe to speak, not only of the great things of life, but of the disgraceful things, or the small disconcerting things that want to be looked at in an atmosphere of greatness. She was a Mother Confessor to many. "Now straight into the fire!" she says in her diary of certain letters she had received ; and the smoke of that sacrifice meant something, for—born chronicler as she was—it was pain and grief to her to destroy a letter at any time.

She was particularly happy that winter term. On the last night of the year she writes in her diary :

" 11.30 p.m. The long tangle of accounts unravelled at last !—  
' after long travail, good repose ! '

In more senses than one.

Nine years since that look from the window,—' And may the New Year cherish.'

Since then I suppose no such (visibly) important year in my life. One very dear friend won,—one strong ally,—Edinburgh opened !—What if one *is* a little tired ? ' After long travail good repose ! '

I see that a year ago I thought there were no hopes ' now bright,'

—and ‘an hour of joy I knew not was winging its silent flight.’ Indeed the next six months did cut out their own work.

The year has been glorious in many ways.

The chief point of pain. . . .”

The chief point of pain was the fear that she was fickle,—that the new interests and friendships were making her disloyal to the strange unearthly friendship for Octavia Hill. Whether this would have been blameworthy is a question that it is unnecessary to discuss, as the contingency never arose. The flame may have flickered and sunk low, but it continued to burn for another forty years. Then “after long travail good repose.”

And in any case she was very happy that winter term. Strangely enough,<sup>1</sup> her family were thoroughly sympathetic with her aims. Discussing the volume of Essays to which she had contributed, her brother wrote :

“Miss Cobbe was very vigorous and suggestive : might have been longer. So might yours without any risk of the interest flagging ; and more details of fact would (I think) have driven the nail deeper in the Philistine’s understanding. . . . I should say that Mrs. Butler’s and yours will hit the public hardest ; most dissimilar as they are. . . . On the main question, for you personally, I am very glad that you are on the medical rails. They are real and solid and really lead somewhere. There is more specialty about them than in the somewhat vague educational line. They belong to an old strong well-paid profession. They tend to the alleviation of intense human misery ; and that for a large class of delicate cases women when properly trained are the right physicians I have felt for years and feel increasingly. Stick to them head and hands and feet. Don’t be drawn aside into tempting but irrelevant bye-ways. You will be very useful and very happy in your work : and to have helped to bring about the result that for the years to come girls shall not be without the pale of professional and University education, —shall not waste their best years in chafing at want of elbow room at home—will be a great and additional satisfaction. Nothing succeeds like success, and what you have got to do is to prove that a Lady Physician can be trustworthy and a success. Do nothing but your

<sup>1</sup> “Strangely” when compared with the families of her contemporaries. “When I told Mamma I had got my certificate,” said a former fellow-student, “she said ‘Have you?’ When I told Uncle, he said ‘What good is it?’ When I told Emily, she said, ‘I am very glad to hear it, but I am very much surprised.’”

work, and you will do your work well. Of course get hold of the widest and deepest Professional education within reach.

Your aff. brother,

T. W. J.-B."

This last point, on which the writer touches so lightly, was precisely the rub.

"Everything is just as we would have it," wrote S. J.-B. at this time to Dr. Sewall, "but that Professors are not *compelled* to lecture to us. We have already arranged for two courses for this winter,—5 lectures a week each,—Physiology and Chemistry; and we are now arranging for Anatomy, both in lectures and dissecting.

As we have to make entirely separate arrangements, the Anatomy will be very expensive,—about £100 probably for us five,—and of this I shall pay about one-third, as two of the students are not at all rich.

Still it is worth any money to get the thing done, and I am only thankful that I *can* spend the money. Of course I borrow it from my Mother.<sup>1</sup> My fees for this year will be about £55 or £60,—about \$400,—for the 6 months.

I have made up my mind to spend if needful £1000 on this business. I feel sure that one does more good in thus concentrating one's energies and one's funds to get one thing done thoroughly, than in frittering away lots of small sums in charity,—Don't you think so? It is a grand thing to enter the very first British University ever opened to women, isn't it?

My darling, you *must* come and see us this summer, for, as I tell the other students here, the whole thing is due to *you* primarily;—when they say that they feel grateful to me for having worked for this, I say, 'Thank Dr. Sewall,—she made me care for Medicine, and resolve that a *thorough* education should be open to English-women.' So I told Dr. Blackwell too when she said something pretty to me. She is *very* pleased about Edinburgh.

Well, dear child, I have settled down now for the winter in my little new house. It amuses me to hear of your expenses in furnishing. The *whole* I have spent is under £35,—about \$200,—and yet we are very comfortable!

Miss Pechey is very nice and very clever,—you will like her very much, and she is excellent company. . . .

Our classes begin on Nov. 3rd. I am *very* busy till then.

Your very aff.

S. L. J.-B."

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<sup>1</sup> Money borrowed from Mrs. Jex-Blake was refunded as strictly as if it had been borrowed from a banker.

Busy indeed she was with the great task of finding lecturers. The University of Edinburgh still stood foursquare, and the Professors sat in their comfortable chairs, lecturing to enormous classes of male students. Looking at the question as a sheer matter of business, one asks what inducement had these men to lecture to a handful of women students? S. J.-B., Mrs. Thorne and the others might struggle and pinch to raise the fees of a dozen or more, but what was that to men of assured wealth and position?—men who looked upon a Scots professorship as the topmost rung on the ladder of comfortable success,—men to whom leisure and peace seemed almost a matter of right, an essential part of the prize they had drawn in the lottery of life? Why should they double their work for the sake of this paltry pittance? It was not to be expected that they should have a great enthusiasm for the cause. How could they? They might, it is true, have been possessed of a high sense of the trust conferred on them by their position: but is such a sense in any sphere of life the possession of more than the choicest few?

As regarded the class in Chemistry, everything had gone with delightful smoothness. On July 10th, S. J.-B. had written in her diary, "Dr. Crum Brown agrees,—not a word of demur as to fees,—good fellow," and a few days later she had received a letter from Dresden in which he said:

"I am convinced that the experiment must be made, and do not wish to place any unnecessary obstacles in the way. I therefore cordially agree to your proposal, on the understanding that the consent of the University Court is obtained, and that the course be conducted in the Chemical Class-room of the University, and be in all respects the same as the ordinary course of Chemistry."

So far as the work was concerned, one is glad to think that his generosity met with its reward. All the teacher in him must have rejoiced in the mettle of the new students. Miss Pechey, in particular, simply fell upon Chemistry and proceeded to make it her own. In the house of which the furnishing had cost £35, she and S. J.-B. rigged up some kind of laboratory, and carried on experiments with a keenness that to the stern advocate of "limited liability" might well have endangered their success in class examinations.



When the winter session came to an end in March, however, it was found that Miss Pechey stood third in the entire list, and was really first of the first-year students,—two of the men having attended the class before. There would have been nothing calamitous in this state of affairs, had it not chanced that there were certain small scholarships involved. A previous Professor of Chemistry in the University—Dr. Hope—had made the experiment of delivering a course of lectures to ladies, and had devoted the proceeds—amounting to about £1000—to the founding of four Hope Scholarships, which entitled the winners to the free use of the College Laboratory. What this privilege would have meant to a born student like Miss Pechey one can easily imagine, but, as mixed classes were forbidden, there might have been a difficulty—scarcely insurmountable—about her making full use of it.

Hitherto, as we have seen, the Professor had treated the women generously. We know that he bore them no grudge ; and it is absurd to suppose that he had any wish to be unjust to an engaging, deft-handed girl, with a calm strong face, and a brain which he must have already seen to be far above the average in either sex,—a girl, moreover, who was frankly appreciative of her good fortune in having so able a man as her teacher.

One can only conjecture the motives and the advice that must have influenced him in the decision to withhold even the name of Hope Scholar from this woman, and to give it to the man who stood beneath her on the list. In explaining his position, the Professor said that, having studied at a different hour, she was not a member of the Chemistry Class ; but at the same time he awarded to her the official bronze medal of the University, to which she could only lay claim as a member of that class ; and, in the published list of honours, he put her name and those of the other women in the place to which their marks entitled them.

It was a clumsy though well-meaning compromise, and only led to greater difficulties farther on. Having said that the women were not members of the Chemistry Class, how could he give them certificates of attendance on that class ?

It was obviously impossible, so he offered them written certificates of having attended "a ladies' class in the University,"—certificates absolutely worthless from the point of view of professional examination. One is reminded of the strawberry jam labels which Mark Twain offered to the conductor of a continental railway when his ticket was worn out; but, unfortunately, the Registrar of a great University is not to be appeased with strawberry jam labels.

In truth the Professor had done the cause an incalculable service. A howl of indignation went up over the whole country. The *Times*, the *Spectator*,—a faithful supporter from the first,—even the *British Medical Journal*, were genuinely roused. The Universities and the Profession had been governed by a spirit of Conservatism, of Trades-unionism, of which this was but a mild example; but now at last that spirit had become explicit: here was the priceless desideratum of the tangible grievance: and it was just like life—just the irony of fate—that the man who provoked the outburst, the man who had to suffer, was not one of the bitter opponents: he was, in his own way, the friend and helper of the struggling cause. He had taught the women Chemistry, and he had taught them well; and that was the main thing, even though a bronze medal, and a few "strawberry jam labels" were—for five people in deadly earnest—to be the only outward and visible signs of six months' hard work.

The matter was referred to the Senatus, who decided by a majority of one that Miss Pechey was not entitled to the Hope Scholarship, and (on the motion of Professor P. G. Tait) also by a majority of one, that the women should have the ordinary class certificates. So the women grasped the substance, if they did lose the shadow.

"I agree with you that the one vote stultifies the other," wrote Professor Masson, "and I think people are seeing this. At the time I made up my mind that the first vote must carry the other unfavourably with it; but it was not for me to keep the Senatus consistent, and, when Tait announced his view, I grasped at the unexpected accident and seconded his motion."

But the outcry was not stilled. In those days the general public knew little of the difference between one certificate and

another ; but they had some idea of what was meant by the losing of a scholarship, and Miss Pechey became the recipient of an amount of condolence that was positively embarrassing when compared with the extent of the injury inflicted. The skilled appreciation of the situation, however, was delightful. This was the tribute of the *British Medical Journal* :

“ Whatever may be our views regarding the desirability of ladies studying medicine, the University of Edinburgh professed to open its gates to them on equal terms with the other students ; and, unless some better excuse be forthcoming in explanation of the decision of the Senatus, we cannot help thinking that the University has done no less an injustice to itself than to one of its most distinguished students.”<sup>1</sup>

One can imagine the effect of criticism such as this on some of the professors. Here was a tiresome muddle from which it was difficult to see a dignified exit. What wonder if many took the cheap and obvious course of exclaiming, “ The woman that Thou gavest me !—she is at the bottom of it all ? ” So far as the explanation went, it was perfectly true : and of course only a few of the pundits saw today with the eyes of tomorrow ; only a few realized that the difficulty that was worrying them was a part of a world-wide upheaval involving the whole human race.

Of course there were those who, without taking any extreme view, were admirably sane and dignified. Instance the following letter from Professor Fleeming Jenkin :

DEAR MADAM,

“ April 5th, 1870.

I regret that I shall be unavoidably absent on Saturday next, or, as far as might have been possible, I should have supported Miss Pechey’s claims.

I regret my absence the less, however, as it seems to me that the legal question of a particular reward is of far less consequence than the fact of the position which you and Miss Pechey have taken in the class.

Accept my very hearty congratulations and

Believe me,

Yours truly,

FLEEMING JENKIN.

Miss Jex-Blake.”

<sup>1</sup>*Brit. Med. Journal*, April 16th, 1870.

There was a question of referring the matter to the University Court, but one is glad to think that wiser counsels prevailed. Miss Pechey had gone to her home in the country, and was listening to the nightingales.

"Thank you for Masson's letter," she writes to S. J.-B. "He is a grand fellow. Wilson has sent me the minutes of the Senatus meeting about the scholarship. I suppose I ought to write to him. I wish you were here to tell me what to do.

You understand that I leave you to do as is thought best about the scholarship,—only remember that my own judgment—apart from personal feeling—is against appealing, and that I do not wish to do so unless our friends are very decisively of opinion that we ought to."

Well might Miss Pechey say, "He is a grand fellow." Professor Masson had taken up the cause of the woman as wholeheartedly as if it had been a matter of vital import to himself. At the next meeting of the General Council of the University, he moved (seconded by Professor Balfour) that, instead of having separate instruction, women should be admitted to the ordinary classes of the University. The original draft of the motion was as follows :

"That, as the present arrangements for the medical instruction of women in the University impose great and unnecessary inconveniences on the women who are students, and also on Professors, and may, if continued, even nullify the resolution of the University admitting women to the study of medicine [and as it will not be to the credit of the University that it should pretend to do a thing and not do it],<sup>1</sup> the General Council recommend to the University Court that women desiring to study medicine be admitted to the medical classes as other students are, and on the same terms, except in cases where the Court may see special reasons why the instruction should be separate."

"The motion is longish," he says, "but I thought it well to have something which, when printed, would explain itself and attract attention of members of Council. . . . I am the more convinced that we do right in moving the General Council as above, even if we should lose, because I distinctly perceive a relapse on the part of those who had merely acquiesced, and a kind of exulting feeling on the part of others that the experience of the session may be

<sup>1</sup> The words in brackets were omitted from the resolution, but introduced in the speech supporting it.

pleaded in proof that the University perpetrated a troublous blunder when it admitted Eve's sex at all. This state of feeling will be but temporary; but it is time that the opposed forces should meet in full conflict on the mixed-classes question."

"Full conflict," indeed, it proved. The opponents brought forward arguments that called forth an indignant interruption from the Professor of Moral Philosophy (Dr. Calderwood); and the *Times*, while disapproving of mixed classes, stated in a leading article:

"We cannot sufficiently express the indignation with which we read such language, and we must say that it is the strongest argument against the admission of young ladies to the Edinburgh medical classes, that they would attend the lectures of Professors capable of talking in this strain."<sup>1</sup>

The motion was lost by 47 votes to 58.

"No speaking on our side could have changed the vote," wrote Professor Masson, "those present were all predetermined. Crum Brown did well, and administered a proper reproof to L. Struthers was present and voted with us; so did Nicolson (who was quite in earnest when the time came), and Dr. Craufurd, who avows himself a convert. On the other hand, Wilson, Bennett, Charteris and Tait, of our side, were absent, reducing our number somewhat. People today are consoling me—for I was really downcast—by saying the result was a success in its kind, and an omen of final success when the thing comes up again, as it must. All very well; but how shall I console *you*? What are *you* to do this year? The only thing I disliked in Crum Brown's speech was his opening statement that he thought the motion perhaps premature, the time not having elapsed for the experiment of the other method. Premature! This in face of his own refusal to continue, and in face of his subsequent declaration that the existing method is impracticable! Still he said and did well. What shall I say but that my heart is sore for your immediate discomfiture? Time—a year or two—will rectify the thing generally, here and elsewhere; but how you are to get on with us is the question. Christison, who draws Turner, Lister, and Sanders (L. is nothing) with him, seems determined to get rid of you, and trusts to effecting this by mere continuance of the present arrangement. Whether you can wriggle on with us by any ingenuity in the hope of beating him is for your consideration. Would it might be so!

Ever yours truly,  
DAVID MASSON."

<sup>1</sup> The *Times*, April 25th, 1870.

The view that the result of the motion was a success in its kind proved to be a general one, and the matter was discussed at great length by newspapers, lay, medical and religious.

"There is no possible reason," said the *Guardian*,<sup>1</sup> "why a very large proportion of instruction may not be given with perfect propriety to men and women together; but there are clearly some parts in a medical course which cannot be so treated, and there ought to be no difficulty whatever in making arrangements for these. To provide separate lectures for a few special occasions is a very different thing, both in the matter of convenience and expense, from insisting on having two distinct and separate courses throughout in every department. . . . Professor Masson's motion was defeated, but by a majority so small—eleven in a meeting of a hundred and five—that its success at some future time seems certain. Let the ladies only add to the exercise of one quality, with which the world credits them, that of patience, another, which is supposed to be a less common attribute of their sex, perseverance, and they will assuredly gain their point."

"The female students almost deserve this rebuff," said the *Spectator*,<sup>2</sup> "for making the concessions they have done to English prudery, concessions not made either in France, Austria, or the United States. The only safe ground for them to stand on is that science is of no sex, and cannot be indelicate unless made so of *malice prepense*, and that by the very conditions of the profession the modesty of ignorance must be replaced by the modesty of pure intent."

It is not to be supposed that the women students were fortified by a unanimous chorus of journalistic support: far from it: some six or seven months later the *Spectator* strove to understand "the bitter and, so far as we know, the unprecedented malignity with which women who aspire to be Doctors are pursued by the literary class."

One does not wish to dwell on this. It was simply bound to be. As Sir James Stansfeld said seven years later in reviewing the whole movement:

"It is one of the lessons of human progress that when the time for a reform has come you cannot resist it, though, if you make the attempt, what you may do is to widen its character or precipitate its advent. Opponents, when the time has come, are not merely

<sup>1</sup> April 27th, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> April 23rd, 1870.

dragged at the chariot wheels of progress—they help to turn them. The strongest force, whichever way it seem to work, does most to aid.”

It is the more pleasing, however, to record the sane and wholesome view taken from the first by the leading responsible papers, including *Punch*.

“ I am very vexed about the General Council,” wrote Miss Pechey from her home ; “ but it’s no use worrying,—at least so the nightingale tells me. She sang two hours at my bedroom window last night, and said all sorts of pretty things. I wish I could bring her to Edinburgh with me, but she wouldn’t like it ; besides they are a very old family, and have lived in the place from the time of the Britons, so she wouldn’t like to move.

Papa did not write to the *Scotsman*. I knew he wouldn’t unless someone told him what to say ; and I believe, if the truth were told, he still has some lurking prejudice against mixed classes. He isn’t a bit scientific, never notices the butterflies and beetles in a walk unless I point them out to him, and there are lovely ones now, peacocks and brimstones and tortoiseshells.”

It is clear that just then Miss Pechey was having a very good time. She was the woman of the moment, a lion abroad as well as in her country home, and she had the courage and the sense to enjoy the position quietly and without making a fuss. Moreover both she and S. J.-B. were human enough to appreciate the situation all the more because, from the ordinary point of view, the heroine was a truly pretty girl, as disarming as heroine well could be.

## CHAPTER VII

### PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES

PERSEVERANCE—"wriggling on"—was thus the course recommended to the women by stranger and friend alike.

The Professor of Botany (Dr. Balfour, formerly Dean of the Faculty of Medicine) who had wished to admit them to his ordinary class, made arrangements to teach them separately. Professor Allmann also had declared his willingness to admit S. J.-B. to his class of Natural History (see p. 234) but he did not feel able to follow the generous example of his colleague in devoting special time and energy to the purpose. Fortunately the women had a second string to their bow in the person of Dr. Alleyne Nicholson, lecturer in the Extra-Mural School,<sup>1</sup> and their application to him called forth a letter which shows what the difficulties were which even a kindly and open-minded man had to face.

" April 26th. 1870.

DEAR MISS BLAKE,

I have not as yet succeeded in obtaining a positive assurance as to the legality of my admitting you to my ordinary class, though I no longer entertain any doubt as to my perfect freedom in the matter, so far as the University is concerned. I have, however, consulted several of my colleagues, and they are tolerably unanimous in advising me to submit the question to my class. . . . They advise me, namely, not to commence abruptly on Monday without any warning, but to give my opening lecture separately, to my ordinary class at one o'clock, and to you at 2 p.m. At the conclusion of the hour I should explain to the students how matters stand, and should ask their permission to make over to you a bench

<sup>1</sup> Appendix D.



in the general class. This is the advice which is given me, and I have no doubt as to its wisdom.

I am fully aware that this will not be nearly so satisfactory to you as unconditional permission on my part; and I must beg you to believe that it is in many respects far from being so satisfactory to my own feelings in the matter. If I were a thoroughly independent man I can assure you that I should not be deterred from doing what I thought right in this question by any fear of the consequences. As things really stand, however, I do not feel justified in running the risk of losing my ordinary class in whole or in part, as I am assured I should do if I were to attempt to introduce this innovation wholly without warning. If I *knew* my class, if I had the opportunity of even two or three days' acquaintance with them, I think I should have little to apprehend as to their behaviour on any such question as this. You will remember, however, that I am dealing with an unknown quantity in making up my mind as to the course I shall adopt; and that I am wholly without adequate data to guide me in my determination. . . . My present opinion is that whilst I have every wish to admit you to my general class, it will be safest for me to submit the question to my class and to abide by a decision of the majority."

Apparently S.J.-B. obtained a verbal, but satisfactory, modification of this programme by suggesting that the class should be asked "to unite with the lecturer in inviting" the women to join them, but that was a mere matter of detail. Everything depended on the way in which Dr. Nicholson stated the case, and one is not surprised to hear that the favourable reply came not from a majority, but from the entire class. "So," says S.J.-B., "the first 'mixed-class' was inaugurated and continued throughout the summer without the slightest inconvenience."

"The course of lectures on Zoology which I am now delivering to a mixed class," wrote Dr. Nicholson later in answer to a mistaken statement in a medical paper, "is identically the same as the course which I delivered last winter to my ordinary class of male students. I have not hitherto emasculated my lectures in any way whatever, nor have I the smallest intention of so doing. In so acting, I am guided by the firm conviction that little stress is to be laid on the purity and modesty of those who find themselves able to extract food for improper feelings from such a purely scientific subject as Zoology, however freely handled."

This was all very well, but the classes so far obtained were mere outposts. The real Giant Difficulty lay with Anatomy

and Clinical teaching, and that session's work was complicated, for S. J.-B. in particular, by a constant undercurrent of effort to obtain the necessary teaching. It was essential that the teacher, if not a Professor, should at least be recognized by the University, and there were representatives of the University who were not desirous to make the matter easy. Over and over again hopes were raised, only to be disappointed: on one occasion the lecturer, after much parleying, had actually agreed to do the work and had accepted his fee; but, even at that late stage, he backed out and returned the fee with an apology. ("How vexed I was!" says S. J.-B., "thoroughly upset and nervous.") It happened repeatedly, too, that the men who would have liked to help had already on some other question taken up a position unpopular with their more conservative *confrères*, and simply dared not espouse another fighting cause.

S. J.-B. was urged to go to Zürich and fit herself to teach Anatomy; but what assurance had she—what encouragement had she even to hope—that the University would recognize her teaching on her return? And what were the other students—a growing number—to do in the meantime? Try their fortune elsewhere?—and brave the inevitable, "Lo, these who have turned the world upside down are come hither also"?

Once and again some chivalrous man took up their cause, refusing to believe that the difficulty was real; but little by little he was apt to find that the intangible mist of opposition was as impervious as an iron wall.

It was due to Dr. Arthur Gamgee that Dr. Handyside finally agreed to admit the women to his ordinary Anatomy class and dissecting-room at Surgeons' Hall, provided the other lecturers made no objection: and, so far the arrangements for the following winter session were made.

"Saturday, [June] 25th. Called on Dr. Watson<sup>1</sup> (Surgery). He signed my petition readily. Thought if *we* made no difficulty, no one ought to about mixed classes,—anyone in earnest in his subject should be able to teach all students. Of course the teacher should

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Patrick Heron Watson.

put his foot down,—the students followed a beck,—and, if invited, would of course make a row, etc. . . .

Saw Keiller too. . . . Was quite favourable as to Handyside and mixed classes ;—he himself having had students and midwives. . . .”

The question of these mixed classes in the Extra-Mural School was technically an infringement of Regulation 2 in the *Calendar* (see p. 260), and in this connection it was duly brought before the Senatus of the University, with the proposal to refer the matter to the University Court ; but Professor Bennett moved, seconded by Professor Tait, “that the Senatus see no reason to interfere.” This amendment appears to have been carried by the casting vote of the Principal.

“So that’s settled,” says S. J.-B.

“*How fast events go!* I really hope for mixed classes in the University before 1871.”

She forgot to allow sufficiently for the fighting force of a large minority, led by an angry few.

Meanwhile that wonderful Mother was following the struggle, not indeed with the minute study Miss Du Pre was giving to the question, but with the old unfailing sympathy. Like Miss Pechey’s father, she had been rather staggered at first at the thought of mixed classes, but shortly after this she writes :

“DARLING,

I don’t now at all object to mixed classes. As the teaching must at present be given *by men*, I don’t see why there should not be mixed classes to listen : and I feel confident if you continue to have such a nice set of women, the tone of the young men generally will be greatly raised. If mixed classes answer so well at Zurich and Paris, why not here ?—but I confess to great ignorance.”

Intellectually, the supply of women showed no sign of falling short. With the advice and coöperation of Miss Garrett, Lady Amberley had offered a scholarship for competition at the October Matriculation Examination, and S. J.-B. proudly jots down the verdict of the examiners on their work :

“ ‘Miss Barker’s Logic paper best ever had from medical students.’  
 ‘Miss Bovell’s French best in University except one Frenchman’s.’  
 ‘Miss Walker had the *only* 100 per cent. in Mathematics.’

Classical examiner wrote,—‘I was very much struck with the accuracy as well as elegance of some papers.’”

Of course a woman—or a man for that matter—may pass a brilliant examination in Mathematics or Chemistry, and yet be unable to keep her head at a difficult midwifery case ; and it was perfectly right and fitting that men doctors should recognize and even emphasize this fact. One would not have wished them to do otherwise. It was fortunate for the women, however, that their opponents were apt to state their case with a conspicuous want of any sense of humour, as the following letter from the *Lancet*<sup>1</sup> sufficiently exemplifies :

“ SIR,—In all popular movements, however one-sided and irrational they may seem, there is some foundation of truth, the grain of common sense in the bushel of chaff. And so it is with the movement that is now taking place with respect to the admission of women into the rank of medical practitioners. I believe most conscientiously and thoroughly that as a body they are sexually, constitutionally, and mentally unfitted for the hard and incessant toil, and for the heavy responsibilities of general medical and surgical practice. At the same time I believe as thoroughly, that there is a branch of our profession—midwifery—to which they might and ought to be admitted in a subordinate position as a rule.

In France, and in many other parts of the Continent, this division of labour in Midwifery is fully carried out, and with great advantage to both parties—to the regular practitioner, who is relieved of part of his most arduous, most wearing and most unremunerative duties, and to the women who have a vocation for medicine, who are able, thus, in large numbers, to gain a respectable living in the profession they wish to practise.

I think I may safely say that there are very few medical men who have been ten years in practice, who would not gladly, thankfully, hand over to a body of well-educated and friendly midwives their half-guinea or guinea midwifery cases. To a young practitioner there is the charm of novelty, and the desire to improve, which make remuneration altogether a secondary consideration. But after ten years' practice, often long before, a very decided change comes over the spirit of the dream.”

The part of the letter that follows is perhaps too technical for quotation ; but the writer continues on the general question :

“ I would add in conclusion that, given women of exceptional energy, capacity, and intelligence, nothing would be easier than for

<sup>1</sup> June 18th, 1870.

them, if deserving, to rise out of the midwifery ranks into a wider sphere of activity and worldly success. Let them show by their energy, by their writing, by their contributions to the progress of medical science, that they had exceptional powers of observation and intellect, and fame would soon reach them. It has reached the very few women, who, like Mrs. Somerville, have given evidence not only of mere ability and talent, but higher powers, the power to grasp the more recondite and abstruse teachings of science. But even this power—the power to master and understand the existing state of science—does not constitute the characteristic feature of the male mind in the Caucasian race. The principal feature which appears to me to characterise the Caucasian race, to raise it immeasurably above all other races, is the power that many of its *male* members have of advancing the horizon of science, of penetrating beyond the existing limits of knowledge—in a word, the power of scientific discovery. I am not aware that the female members of our race participate in this power, in this supreme development of the human mind; at least I know of no great discovery changing the surface of science that owes its existence to a woman of our or of any race. What right then have women to claim mental *equality* with men?

That woman may attain an honourable social position and pecuniary independence in our ranks in the position I point out, is proved by a case that came under my observation last year. A German lady M.D. in a German University, called on me on her way home from San Francisco. She told me that she had been practising there as an accoucheur and a ladies' and child's doctor for twenty years, had gained a small fortune, and was returning to Germany to live and die in quiet. Her history was this: Early in married life her husband lost his fortune and became a confirmed invalid. She had thus her husband and two children to support. She studied midwifery and medicine, took a degree, and then went to America, settling at San Francisco. There she placed herself in a subordinate position to the medical men, acting with them, under them, and consequently supported by them. She had thus lived harmoniously with her professional brethren, and had had a career of uninterrupted professional success.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

HENRY BENNET, M.D." <sup>1</sup>

One can imagine the somewhat grim smile with which this lucubration was passed round the little band in Edinburgh:

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with Dr. Hughes Bennett, who had lectured to the women on Physiology.

and it is only fair to say that many of their opponents would have been glad to cry :—" *Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis!*" The *Lancet* was not the advocate of the women students in those days, and one is glad to record that the Editor allowed S. J.-B. the opportunity to reply. Her letter is a fair sample of the style of writing that was becoming habitual to her,—translucently clear, concise and business-like,—absolutely shorn of the picturesqueness that had characterized the writing of her youth.

" SIR,—I see in your columns of June 1st, 1870, a letter on ' Women as Practitioners of Midwifery,' and appeal to your sense of fairness to allow me a fourth part of the space it occupied for a few words in reply.

It is hardly worth while to discuss the early part of the letter, as the second paragraph sufficiently disposes of the first. After saying that women are ' sexually, constitutionally, and mentally unfitted for hard and incessant toil,' Dr. Bennet goes on to propose to make over to them as their sole share of the medical profession what he himself well describes as its ' most arduous, most wearing and most unremunerative duties.' In the last adjective seems to lie the whole suitability of the division of labour according to the writer's view. He evidently thinks that women's capabilities are nicely graduated to fit *half-guinea* or *guinea* midwifery cases,' and that all patients paying a larger sum of necessity need the superior powers of the ' *male* mind of the Caucasian race.' Let whatever is well paid be left to the man; then chivalrously abandon the ' badly remunerated ' work to the women. This is the genuine view of a trades-unionist. It is well for once to see it candidly stated. As I trust the majority of medical men would be ashamed of avowing such a principle, and as I am sure it would be indignantly disallowed by the general public, I do not care to say more on this point.

But when Dr. Bennet proceeds to dogmatise about what he calls our claim to ' mental equality,' he comes to a different and much more important question. I for one do not care in the least either to claim or disown such equality, nor do I see that it is at all essential to the real question at issue. Allow me to state in a few words the position that I and, as I believe, most of my fellow-students take. We say to the authorities of the medical profession,—' State clearly what attainments you consider necessary for a medical practitioner; fix your standard where you please, but define it plainly; put no obstacles in our way; either afford us access to the ordinary means of medical education, or do not exact that we shall use your special

methods ; in either case subject us ultimately to exactly the ordinary examinations and tests, and, if we fail to acquit ourselves as well as your average students, reject us ; if, on the contrary, in spite of all difficulties, we reach your standard, and fulfil all your requirements, the question of ' mental equality ' is practically settled, so far as it concerns our case ; give us then the ordinary medical licence or diploma, and leave the question of our ultimate success or failure in practice to be decided by ourselves and the public.' This is our position, and I appeal, not to the chivalry, but to the justice of the medical profession, to show us that it is untenable, or else to concede it at once.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE.

Edinburgh, June 21st."<sup>1</sup>

Nothing conciliatory here : no appeal for help for " the wee bit thing,"—the appeal that some men in those days used to find so disarming : nothing even in the spirit of the " Now remember, Daddy dear," of those delightful controversial letters of her girlhood. It is a fair field and no favour with a vengeance now.

Possibly she might have shortened the battle if she had adopted a more conciliatory attitude. One might say the same of many of the martyrs. Had she done so, it would have meant a smaller battle,—a victory far more limited in its results. If a new move is being effectively made, it is almost always overdone. That is in the scheme of things. If there were not faults on both sides, there would be no dramatic action,—no " story " ; and the world would go on its sleepy way, and pay no attention. " Individuals, feeling strongly, while on the one hand they are incidentally faulty in mode or language, are still peculiarly *effective*. . . . The very faults of an individual excite attention ; he loses, but his cause (if good, and he powerful-minded) gains. This is the way of things ; we promote truth by a self-sacrifice."

Here then were the opposing forces, duly ranged against each other. One can almost imagine the move and counter-

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet*, July 9, 1870.

move that were bound to ensue. And we must not forget the element furnished by the great mass of the students—though there were “individuals” here, too, of course—on the look out for mischief and fun, rejoicing in a row, ready “to follow a beck” as that wise Heron Watson had said.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RIOT AT SURGEONS' HALL

S. J.-B.'s medical experience in America had consisted mainly of practical hospital work, and that chiefly in connection with the special diseases of women. She had done a little dissecting in a rough and ready way, and the privilege of what she then considered "real teaching" had just been put within her reach when she was called home by the illness of her father. She had this advantage, however, over her fellow-students,—she knew that the "horrors" of the dissecting-room have only to be faced in a spirit of serious intention in order to be dispelled. She knew by experience that one *must* pull oneself together in the first instance for fear of doing irreparable damage to the dainty structures that lie almost as cunningly hidden in surrounding tissue as the future statue lies in the block of marble; and she knew that, little by little, the privilege of laying bare that marvellous "handiwork" becomes so enthralling as to make the earnest student oblivious to everything else.

The Anatomy Class began formally in November, but the rooms were open and teachers present from the beginning of October, for those who cared to attend; so the women had the advantage of meeting in the first instance only the keener of the students, or at least those who were working with a special object in view. The women would gladly have had a separate room, had this been available, but in their quiet corner they worked away steadily, forgetful of all beyond. And everything went well. Never, the lecturer said, had better work been done in his class-rooms.

Meanwhile influential friends were doing what in them lay to forward the interests of the women in other quarters ; for it must be remembered that, as matriculated students of the University they ought not to have been *compelled* to study in Extra-Mural classes, and indeed it was only a limited number of such classes that would be accepted for the University degree. On October 28th a motion was brought forward in the General Council of the University in favour of affording farther facilities to the lady students. The motion was met by a direct negative, Professor Christison asserting in the course of his speech that Her Majesty Queen Victoria had expressed her concurrence in the views that had been put forth on a previous occasion by Dr. Laycock and himself. If there was any truth in this, one can only speculate as to the form in which the story had reached Her Majesty's ears,—certainly not through the medium of a leading article in the *Times*. What weight her reported opinion may have carried it is impossible to say, but, in any case, when put to the vote, the negative was carried by 47 to 46.

(“ Well, try again next year ! ” says S. J.-B.)

In reading the whole story, one is struck over and over again by the narrowness of the majority by which things were turned. Great is the responsibility of the weak and cowardly, the lazy and double-minded,—the “ unstable ” who call themselves impartial.

At this stage, wisely or not, the women were advised to apply for permission to work in the wards of the Royal Infirmary. This was the only hospital in Edinburgh large enough to fulfil the requirements of the General Medical Council for registration as a medical practitioner, and the women were entitled to the privilege in virtue of their Matriculation tickets. They knew that some of the doctors were in their favour. Here are two of the “ thumb-nail sketches ” from the diary :

“ Saturday, Oct. 29th. Dr. Watson,—most friendly. Only too happy to have us as pupils. Could not anticipate difficulty about Infirmary, etc. . . .

Dr. Littlejohn foresaw the ruin of his son by women doctors, but ‘ would drink the bitter cup to its dregs,’ and vote for us.”

Their request, however, was met by a curt refusal.

“Monday, October 31st. Refused us dead.

Gordon says, ‘Try a written memorial!’ Wood says he believes their charter compels them to admit all medical students.

Qui vivra verra.”

It is obvious that they had approached the very stronghold of the enemy. Might is right and possession nine points of the law. The matter lay in the hands of a body of Managers who were obviously judging the case as represented to them by the medical party in power; so now the duty fell upon the women of explaining their position as far as possible to those in whose hands the decision lay.

“Friday, Nov. 4th. Just put down this day’s work for a specimen! Studying and canvassing at once,—

8.45. Started for Surgeons’ Hall.

9–10. Tutorial class, bones.

10–11. Surgery lecture.

11–1. Dissecting.

1–2. Anatomy Lecture.

2.10 Reached home and found a letter from Mr. Blyth (Manager) telling me to meet him at 2 p.m.!! Got there (after bolting beef-tea and wine) at 2.45. Talked at him for nearly an hour with good results, I believe. Got back home 3.40. Bolted some food, and went

4 p.m. Demonstration exam. Didn’t know the Acromion but got 13/20 marks.

Home to dinner.

7 p.m. Started on round of calls.

Home at 10 p.m. Not tired,—oh, dear no!”

“I *don’t* like you to be a perpetual battering ram,” writes Miss Du Pre, “for I suppose battering rams do wear out after a good many sieges; but still I thoroughly like and admire your ‘never say die’ feeling, and it *is* a fight with something worth fighting for to be got at the end, which is a great thing.

If only I could be with you!”

One must read the following letters, which were laid before the subsequent meetings of the Board, in order to realize how strong and sane the position of the women was:

“November 5, 1870.

MY LORD AND GENTLEMEN,—As lecturers in the Edinburgh Medical School we beg most respectfully to approach your honourable

Board, on behalf of the eight female students of this school whom, we understand, you object to admit to the practice of the Royal Infirmary. On their behalf we beg to state :—

1. That they are regularly registered students of medicine in this school.

2. That they are at present attending, along with the other students, our courses of anatomy, practical anatomy, demonstrations of anatomy, and systematic surgery, in the school at Surgeons' Hall.

3. That as teachers of anatomy and surgery respectively, we find no difficulty in conducting our courses to such mixed classes composed of male and female students sitting together on the same benches; and that the presence of those eight female students has not led us to alter or modify our course of instruction in any way.

4. That the presence of the female students, so far from diminishing the numbers entering our classes, we find both the attendance and the actual numbers already enrolled are larger than in previous sessions.

5. That in our experience in these mixed classes the demeanour of the students is more orderly and quiet, and their application to study more diligent and earnest, than during former sessions when male students alone were present.

6. That, in our opinion, if practical bedside instruction in the examination and treatment of cases is withheld from the female pupils by the refusal to them of access as medical students to the practice of the Infirmary, we must regard the value of any systematic surgical course thus rendered devoid of daily practical illustration, as infinitely less than the same course attended by male pupils, who have the additional advantage of the hospital instruction under the same teacher.

7. That the surgical instruction, being deprived of its practical aspect by the exclusion of the female pupils from the Infirmary, and therefore from the wards of their systematic surgical teacher, the knowledge of these female students may very reasonably be expected to suffer, not only in class-room examinations, but in their capacity to practise their profession in after life.

8. That our experience of mixed classes leads us to the conviction that the attendance of the female students at the ordinary hospital visit, along with the male students, cannot certainly be more objectionable to the male students and the male patients than the presence of the ward nurses, or to the female patients than the presence of the male students.

9. That the class of society to which these eight female students belong, together with the reserve of manner, and the serious and reverent spirit in which they devote themselves to the study of

medicine, make it impossible that any impropriety could arise out of their attendance upon the wards as regards either patients or male pupils.

In conclusion, we trust that your honourable Board may see fit, on considering these statements, to resolve not to exclude these female students from the practice of, at all events, those physicians and surgeons who do not object to their presence at the ordinary visit along with the other students.

Such an absolute exclusion of female pupils from the wards of the Royal Infirmary as such a decision of your honourable Board would determine, we could not but regard as an act of practical injustice to pupils who, having been admitted to the study of the medical profession, must have their further progress in their studies barred if hospital attendance is refused them.—We are, my Lord and Gentlemen, your obedient servants,

P. D. HANDYSIDE,  
PATRICK HERON WATSON."

The second letter was a petition signed by the lady students, the famous "Septem contra Edinam," as they were called, enclosing *Paper A* and *Paper B*. It may be well to give the names of the gallant seven once for all: Sophia Jex-Blake, Mary Edith Pechey (Mrs. Pechey Phipson), Isabel Thorne, Matilda Chaplin (Mrs. Ayrton), Helen Evans (Mrs. Russel), Mary Anderson (Mrs. Marshall), Emily Bovell (Mrs. Sturge).

" November 5, 1870.

*Paper A*.—We, the undersigned physicians and surgeons of the Royal Infirmary desire to signify our willingness to allow female students of medicine to attend the practice of our wards, and to express our opinion that such attendance would in no way interfere with the full discharge of our duties towards our patients and other students.

J. HUGHES BENNETT,  
GEORGE W. BALFOUR,  
PARTICK HERON WATSON."

In *paper B*, two other medical men expressed their readiness, if suitable arrangements could be made, to teach the female students in the wards separately.

" 15 Buccleuch Place, Nov. 13, 1870.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—To prevent any possible misconception, I beg leave, in the name of my fellow-students and myself, to state distinctly that, while urgently requesting your honourable Board to issue to us the ordinary students' tickets for the Infirmary

(as they alone will 'qualify' for graduation), we have, in the event of their being granted, no intention whatever of attending in the wards of those physicians and surgeons who object to our presence there, both as a matter of courtesy, and because we shall be already provided with sufficient means of instruction in attending the wards of those gentlemen who have expressed their perfect willingness to receive us.—I beg, my Lord and Gentlemen, to subscribe myself your obedient servant,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE.

To the Honourable the Managers of the Royal Infirmary."

Now the managers of the Infirmary were worthy folk as human nature goes, "several" of them, says S.J.-B., known to the women as "just and liberal-minded men," so it is not surprising that a majority were sufficiently moved by these arguments to desire that the request of the women be granted. On the ground of want of notice, however, the party in power got the matter deferred for a week.

And now, clearly, the moment had come when every effort must be made to turn the women out altogether. If they carried their point at the next meeting, all might well be lost.

It was at this juncture that, for the first time, some of the students began to make themselves unpleasant, "shutting doors in our faces, ostentatiously crowding into the seats we usually occupied, bursting into horse laughs and howls when we approached,—as if a conspiracy had been formed to make our position as uncomfortable as might be." A students' petition against the admission of women to the Infirmary was handed about, and 500 students signed it.

So the majority gained their point, and the party in power won an easy victory.

"Follow it up," said someone. "Don't stop there. While you are at it, why not get rid of the women altogether?"<sup>1</sup>

It was not a surprising suggestion; the presence of the women was making some people very uncomfortable; but those who made the suggestion must have had a pretty good idea of how the students would proceed to carry it out, and what class of student would take the lead.

<sup>1</sup> This is a neutral and harmless paraphrase of the arguments some of the professors actually used in talking to the students, but one does not want to perpetuate the memory of words used in an angry conflict.

For a day or two a feeble and cowardly effort was made to obstruct the entrance of women into the class-room, but S. J.-B., followed by her companions, simply failed to see the students who half-heartedly stood in her way, and walked through them.

And then came about the "riot at Surgeons' Hall", of which so much has since been said, and of which Charles Reade made picturesque use in his novel, *The Woman Hater*.

In order to get a plain, unvarnished account of what took place, we cannot do better than quote the *Courant*<sup>1</sup> (the only Edinburgh morning paper which was unfavourable to the women) and the very brief record in S. J.-B.'s diary:

"A disturbance of a very unbecoming nature took place yesterday afternoon in front of the Royal College of Surgeons, caused by the entrance of the lady 'medicals' to the class-rooms. However ungallant it may appear, there is no doubt that many of the students look upon the admission of the ladies to the classes with no friendly eye; but, unfortunately for their own credit, some have adopted a very undignified mode of signifying their displeasure. Shortly before four o'clock, the hour when the ladies arrive at the College, nearly two hundred students assembled in front of the gate leading to the building. As may be readily supposed, there was no lack of animation amongst the students; and, with other popular melodies, 'The Whale' and 'John Brown's Body' were sung with more spirit than good taste by at least a hundred voices. Such a noisy demonstration speedily attracted a large crowd, and greatly interfered with the public traffic. Shortly before four o'clock those on the outlook descried the approach of the ladies, and immediately their appearance was greeted with a howl which might have made those who are supposed to be possessed of more temerity, quail, but it seemingly had no effect upon the ladies, for they most unconcernedly advanced towards the gate, the students opening up their ranks to allow them to pass. On reaching the gate it was closed in their face. Amidst the derisive laughter which followed this very questionable action, it must be said to their credit that a number of students cried 'shame.' In a short time the janitor succeeded in opening one leaf of the gate, and the ladies were admitted to the precincts, but not before some of them had been considerably jostled.

The anatomical class-room to which they proceeded was crowded to the door, and, in consequence of the noise and interruption, Dr. Handyside found it utterly impossible to begin his demonstrations.

<sup>1</sup>The *Courant*, Nov. 19, 1870.

With much difficulty, he singled out those students belonging to his class, and, turning the others out of the room, he was about to proceed, when the pet sheep which grazes at the College was introduced to the room, a student jocularly remarking that it would be a good subject for anatomical purposes. Poor 'Mailie' was kept a prisoner, and the lecturer was allowed to proceed."

"Let it remain," Dr. Handyside had said, "it has more sense than those who sent it here."

"When the class broke up, a number of the students seemed determined to accompany the ladies home; but the result was that several of them were apprehended by the police."

The writer of the diary naturally saw things from a different point of view:

"Friday, 18th. On getting in sight of S(urgeons') H(all), found mob of students and mixed multitude.

Had to go down to P.O. and to Houlden's for Mrs. Evans [a most characteristic touch this! in later life S. J.-B. often spoke of herself as 'a sheep dog grown old.'] Then crossed road, . . . Mrs. T[horne] and I in front, then Mrs. K[ingsley] and others.

Reaching pavement, way cleft for us by one or two, till gate reached and clashed in our face, by smokers inside. I placidly leant on it outside, mid cries of 'Shame,' 'Let them in,' etc., till Sanderson sprang forward and forced it open and in we went,—Mrs. K. not, [she] remaining outside to hear 'very bad language, in which I didn't join.' (To S. M. M.'s great amusement.)

Then we went in and had demonstration,—some rushed in after us.

Dr. Handyside went out and remonstrated, etc. Then sheep introduced.

We passed rather good examination. Then at end H. asked if we would go out by back door. 'Oh, no,' I said, 'I am sure there are enough gentlemen here to prevent any harm to us.' And so we went, Hoggan and Sanderson pioneering,—S. M. M. said she got hit,—Wilson came up and took Mrs. K.'s arm (to our momentary fright), then we proceeded home, escorted by

- a. gallant cavaliers,
- b. police,
- c. general mob,
- d. all boys and girls of the town.

"Monday, 21st. Had warning of a 'more serious demonstration', so Wilson swore in the Irish Brigade. I asked Professor Wilson



about it, and he requested Turner to keep his class till past five,—they were let out at 4.45! <sup>1</sup>

However, it being rainy, there was almost no crowd.

“ Tuesday 22nd. . . . The Irish Brigade filed in to demonstration, and then escorted us home,—some 30 or 40 in all. One woman hissed. W. as we came to crossing regretted it ‘hadn’t been swept,’ etc.—otherwise all quiet. The O’Halloran squired E. P., called her ‘ma belle,’ declared ‘a loife wasn’t much, but all the Irishmen would lay down theirs before we came to harm,’ etc.

And in the passage, the same mighty chief shook my hand nearly off, vowing the pleasure it would give him and his to be any service to us, etc., etc.

They gave us a great cheer when they got to the door.

In the crowd B. heard,—‘ You know they’d never do it if they could get married.’ ‘ Eh, you’re wrong there, there are some very good-looking ones among them.’ ‘ Eh, now, see the students escorting them home,—isn’t it pretty?’

And O’Halloran’s troubles with his men. ‘ For God’s sake, look after X. ! It’s his first night out, and he’ll be wanting to distinguish himself,—he’ll be hitting a policeman !

Altogether great ‘ demonstration in favour,’ as *Daily Review* says.

“ Wednesday, 23rd. Same escort, though little necessary.”

The Wilson who swore in the Irish Brigade, has, of course, no connection with Professor Wilson. He was a student, and remained throughout life a loyal supporter of the cause.<sup>2</sup> His letter, written on the Sunday following the riot, is interesting :

“ DEAR MISS PECHEY,—I wish to warn you, and, through you, your friends, that you are to be mobbed again on Monday. A regular conspiracy has been, I fear, set on foot for that purpose. I wish you to tell your friends that, although the projected demonstration against you on Monday is intended to be much more serious than the one on Friday, and to frighten you all away, you need not in the least fear it. I have made what I hope to be efficient arrangements for your protection. I have passed the word round

<sup>1</sup> One hopes this fact was incorrectly reported ; it has never been contradicted. Possibly the Professor was annoyed at being asked to effect that by force which could safely be confided to the gentlemanly feeling of his students.

<sup>2</sup> In January, 1886, Mr. Robert Wilson had an article, “Æsculapia Victrix,” in the *Fortnightly Review*.

amongst a lot of my friends—not wholly inexperienced in the kind of work—and you will be all right.

I had a meeting with my friend, Micky O'Halloran who is leader of a formidable band, known in College as the 'Irish Brigade,' and he has consented to tell off a detachment of his set for duty on Monday. Micky was the formidable hero with the big red moustache who stood by us on Friday and whose presence with us rather disappointed the rioters who, I think, calculated on the aid both of himself and his set. I have taken care of *that*, and I believe the mere demonstration of the fact that you have men on your side able and willing to protect you, will deter the mob from even an attempt at a row.

They are a cowardly lot, nearly all very young, and I don't think they have even one amongst them, who has had experience of the days when street-rioting was one of the accomplishments Edinburgh students were acquainted with, so they are not likely to be very troublesome. I believe they'll 'cave in' if you only show a brave front. I have considerable influence also with the Highlanders in College, and expect to get a good deal of help from them, when I pass the word round tomorrow.

May I venture to hint my belief that the real cause of the riots is the way some of the professors run you down in their lectures. They never lose a chance of stirring up hatred against you. For all I know they may have more knowledge of the riotous conspiracy than most people fancy. However, as I tell you, you and your friends need not fear, as far as Monday is concerned. You will be taken good care of.

Yours faithfully,

ROBERT WILSON.

P.S. I would have sent this communication through Mrs. Kingsley, but as I have no chance of seeing her tomorrow, and as you are her friend, I send it to you."

Mr. Henry Kingsley was at this time editor of the *Daily Review*, and almost as redoubtable a champion of the cause as Alexander Russel himself. Of Mrs. Henry Kingsley's loyalty it is impossible to speak in exaggerated terms. In the drawing-room, in the columns of a newspaper, and on the platform, she was equally ready to defend a fighting cause, and to correct the numerous misapprehensions that sprang up in connection with it. She attended the scientific classes without any idea of qualifying as a doctor, mainly for the purpose of identifying herself with the movement, and with people who had her wholehearted sympathy and admiration.

' The news of the " Riot " went forth over the whole world, and the indignation roused by the matter of the Hope Scholarship was as nothing compared to that called forth by this escapade. " We trust the authorities of the medical school at Edinburgh will visit exemplary chastisement on the cowardly cads—we have no milder name for them—who could so conduct themselves towards the ladies who paid them the compliment of supposing they could act like gentlemen. Edinburgh has ceased to be so attractive as she was as a centre of education." This was a fair specimen of the indignant criticism called forth, and one is glad to record that none were more prompt to disown the delinquents than the more reputable of the students themselves. Some few papers, even of some standing, espoused the cause of the rioters ; and, in order to do this, it was perhaps almost necessary to represent the women and their doings in a way that disgusted all decent-minded men,—“ a brutality,” said the *Spectator*, with reference to a given article, “ of which a costermonger quarrelling with a fishwife would be ashamed.”<sup>1</sup>

Some of us can imagine, too, the style of anonymous letter which the women received, and such letters were rather terrible to the women of those days.

“ ‘ Well !—we are about in the deepest waters now,—that’s one comfort,’ says S. J.-B.”

“ ‘ What *do* you think your constitution is made of that it will stand such overwork ? ’ writes Miss Du Pre at this time. ‘ You will be a real martyr to the cause, if you don’t take care. Yet I know you never needlessly use up one atom of strength, so I get a fearful idea of what the amount of work must be. I *do* wish you could just sit down to your lessons quietly as the men students can.

The two newspaper articles made me nicely angry ! I think the — is the lowest, but, when you get to such a depth it is not easy to measure degrees of lowness. I should think such attacks must make you feel as if all people on the other side were low and mean and wicked,—don’t they ? It’s always so hard to believe that one’s opponents may be good and honest and even sensible ; but when any of them write such letters as those, I think it must be well nigh impossible.’ ”

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, December 3, 1870.

A new Act came into operation at this time, and all the Managers of the Royal Infirmary had to retire from the Board unless re-elected. Now was the time to get in members favourable to the admission of the women, if this could be done. One can imagine the canvassing that took place on both sides.

Here are some characteristic "thumb-nails" from the diary :

"Littlejohn at Police Court,—very uncomfortable talk; he so very candid and honest, but believing he ought to vote against us in Infirmary, because 'by hook or by crook' they'd got up such a spirit among the students (L. was 'ashamed of his sex') that he was afraid persistence would injure the School.

M.,—£1000 subscriber. Quiet, simple, not narrow or hard,—only not interested previously. Said he 'must think of it now,' though his prejudices were against women doctors. I showed him that that was only a detail,—the question of justice lay beyond.

L. R.,—Had nothing to do with it, etc.,—but thought it all improper.

'The young men in female wards?' . . . 'Oh, it was *their* business'!!"

At the Annual Meeting of Contributors on January 2nd, 1871, the hall at the Council Chambers was crowded long before the advertised hour, though that hour was one o'clock. Proceedings began with a hot dispute among the civic magnates as to the propriety of adjourning to the High Church (St. Giles' Cathedral) which would seat a larger number of people,—the representative of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners declaring that the Police Court would be a more suitable place, but allowing himself to be over-ruled on a point of law by Mr. Duncan M'Laren, M.P. for Edinburgh. By the time the move to the church had been effected, everyone was "rubbed up the wrong way," and there was a good deal of squabbling and noisy interruption before the main question at issue came on at all.

The Lord Provost himself proposed the election of six men known to be in favour of the women students, and an amended list was proposed by one of the Infirmary Medical Staff. Warm language was used on both sides, and interruptions

were frequent. This was the atmosphere in which S. J.-B.—in the capacity of a subscriber—asked leave to speak.<sup>1</sup>

She was, as has been said, one of the finest women speakers of her time ; but, even in her maturity, she was wont to suffer beforehand from an access of nervousness, of which, happily, no trace was obvious when the crucial moment arrived. What she must have suffered on this first occasion in Edinburgh we can imagine. We know that she was over-worked and tired, and that her honest resentment had been raised to the highest pitch by the way in which some of those in authority were inciting the students to make trouble. It was deliberately said later by certain grave and responsible Edinburgh citizens that she had suffered “unexampled provocation.” She wished the contributors to know the real truth of the situation, and she was resolved that the presence of her adversaries should not deter her from giving a plain, unvarnished account of what had taken place. She had realized the danger of failing from cowardice ; but, in her inexperience, she had not realized the danger of going to the other extreme : and that was what she did. Part of her speech might quite justly be described as a direct personal attack on one or two individuals.

She spoke well, of course, but she owed her gift to Nature, in no way to Art : and she was confronted by those—double her age and more—who had learned the full value of outward calmness and urbanity in debate.

She had many friends in that church, and most of them must have suffered acutely : not because they did not agree with her, but because they did. Some whose allegiance was of little value, or who had come with “an open mind,” probably went over to the enemy. One is almost surprised to hear that it was only by the usual narrow majority—94 to 88 in this instance—that her cause was defeated.

And yet, perhaps, one ought not to be surprised : for courage and honesty make their own appeal ; and the sore heart-burnings of generous adherents are a fire in which great things are kindled.

<sup>1</sup> Someone has pointed out that she was the first woman to speak in St. Giles' Church since Jenny Geddes threw her stool at the minister.

Of course hostile papers jeered. The *Church Review* went out of its way to take up the matter. As it began by severely criticising on literary grounds the speaker's use of the words "realize" and "emanate," one wonders that it ever came to the end of its indictment at all.<sup>1</sup>

We quote the part of the speech that was destined to lead to farther proceedings :<sup>2</sup>

" I want to point out that it was certain of these same men, who had (so to speak) pledged themselves from the first to defeat our hopes of education and render all our efforts abortive—who, sitting in their places on the Infirmary Board, took advantage of the almost irresponsible power with which they were temporarily invested, to thwart and nullify our efforts. I believe that a majority of the managers desired to act justly in this matter ; but the presence of those bitter partisans, and the overwhelming influence of every kind brought to bear by them, prevailed to carry the day—to refuse us not only admission on the ordinary terms, but also to refuse us every opportunity which could answer our purpose. I know of the noble protests made against this injury by some of the most respected and most learned members of the Board, but all their efforts were in vain, because strings were pulled and weapons brought into play of which they either did not know or could not expose the character. Till then, during a period of five weeks, the conduct of the students with whom we had been associated in Surgeons' Hall, in the most trying of all our studies, that of Practical Anatomy, had been quiet, respectful, and in every way inoffensive. They had evidently accepted our presence there, in earnest silent work, as a matter of course, and Dr. Handyside, in answer to a question of mine after the speeches at the meeting of the General Council, assured me that, in the course of some twenty sessions, he had never had a month of such quiet earnest work as since we entered his rooms. But at a certain meeting of the managers when our memorial was presented, a majority of those present were, I understand, in favour of immediately admitting us to the Infirmary. The minority alleged want of due notice of the question, and succeeded in obtaining an adjournment.

What means were used in the interim I cannot say, or what influence was brought to bear ; but I do know that from that day the conduct of the students was utterly changed, that those who had hitherto been quiet and courteous became impertinent

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<sup>1</sup> At a later date (1872) the *Church Review* became definitely friendly.

<sup>2</sup> *Scotsman*, January 3, 1871.

and offensive; and at last came the day of that disgraceful riot, when the college gates were shut in our faces and our little band bespattered with mud from head to foot. ("Shame.") It is true that other students who were too manly to dance as puppets on such ignoble strings, came indignantly to our rescue, that by them the gates were wrenched open and we protected in our return to our homes. But none the less it was evident that some new influence (wholly distinct from any intrinsic facts) had been at work. I will not say that the rioters were acting under orders, but neither can I disbelieve what I was told by indignant gentlemen in the medical class—that this disgraceful scene would never have happened, nor would the petition have been got up at the same time, had it not been clearly understood that our opponents needed a weapon at the Infirmary Board. This I do know, that the riot was not wholly or mainly due to the students at Surgeons' Hall. I know that Dr. Christison's class assistant was one of the leading rioters—(hisses and order)—and the foul language he used could only be excused on the supposition I heard that he was intoxicated. I do not say that Dr. Christison knew of or sanctioned his presence, but I do say that I think he would not have been there, had he thought the doctor would have strongly objected to his presence.

*Dr. Christison*—'I must again appeal to you, my Lord. I think the language used regarding my assistant is language that no one is entitled to use at such an assembly as this—(hear)—where a gentleman is not here to defend himself, and to say whether it be true or not. I do not know whether it is true or not, but I do know my assistant is a thorough gentleman, otherwise he never would have been my assistant; and I appeal to you again, my Lord, whether language such as this is to be allowed in the mouth of any person. I am perfectly sure there is not one gentleman in the whole assembly who would have used such language in regard to an absentee.'

*Miss Jex-Blake*—'If Dr. Christison prefers——'

*Dr. Christison*—'I wish nothing but that this foul language shall be put an end to.'

*The Lord Provost*—'I do not know what the foul language is. She merely said that in her opinion——'

*Dr. Christison*—'In her opinion the gentleman was intoxicated.'

*Miss Jex-Blake*—'I did not say he was intoxicated. I said I was told he was.'

*The Lord Provost*—'Withdraw the word "intoxicated."'

*Miss Jex-Blake*—'I said it was the only excuse for his conduct. If Dr. Christison prefers that I should say he used the language when sober, I will withdraw the other supposition' (laughter).''

The *Pall Mall*,<sup>1</sup> chuckling sympathetically over this and another repartee, wisely concluded :

“ It is sincerely to be hoped that these unhappy little differences will soon come to an end. It cannot be to the advantage of anyone that lady students should be pelted with mud, or that they should use the power of retaliation displayed by their champion at the Royal Infirmary meeting on Monday.”

So the conflict deepened, and it would have been small wonder if all but the very brave had taken fright.

But Edinburgh did contain some very brave people besides the women students.

At the meeting on January 2nd, the Revd. Professor Charteris had been ruled out of order in some matter, but, at the earliest opportunity he returned to his point, and brought forward a motion, expressing the desire of the contributors that immediate arrangement should be made for the admission of the ladies to the Infirmary. This motion, seconded by Sir James Coxe, M.D., was lost by a small majority.

Several things happened at that meeting, however, which were of more value to the cause than a formal victory would have been :

A petition was read, signed by 956 women of Edinburgh, expressing “ our great interest in the issues involved, and our earnest hope that full facilities for hospital study will be afforded by the Managers to all women who desire to enter the Medical Profession.”

More important still was the appearance of Mrs. Nichol, a well-known and most gracious elderly lady, endowed with the very fragrance of early Victorian womanhood, who came forward to ask a question,—“ not,” she said, “ in the interests of the lady students, but on behalf of those women who looked forward to see what kind of men were they who were to be the sole medical attendants of the next generation, if women doctors were not allowed.”

“ If the students studying at present in the Infirmary cannot contemplate with equanimity the presence of ladies as fellow-students, how is it possible that they can possess either the scientific

<sup>1</sup> January 5, 1871.



spirit, or the personal purity of mind, which alone could justify their presence in the female wards during the most delicate operations on, and examinations of, female patients."

Yes, there were very brave people in Edinburgh besides the women students.

This question was received with "laughter, hisses and applause," and no one ventured on a reply. No one except the rougher of the students who were assembled in the gallery on the look-out for a lark. They howled their appreciation of the question; but it was only when S. J.-B. rose to speak—and of course she had to pay the penalty of having rashly described them as "puppets"—that they really let themselves go,—shouting and yelling and pelting her with peas.

"Well," said Professor Blackie, "ye can now say ye've fought with beasts at Ephesus."

As a matter of fact she had not meant to speak again, but one of the professors had left her no alternative. In the course of a long speech he had asserted that, in consequence of mixed education, a college in America "had become so degraded that a woman who respected herself shrank from the contamination, and preferred to renounce the benefit of years of study rather than don the academic robe of one of its graduates."

"Name the college," said S. J.-B., and other voices took up the cry of "Name!"

"He spoke on authority." (A voice—"What authority?") "On the authority of Miss Blake herself, who . . . when asked why she had not pursued her studies instead of coming here, told him that the character of female medical students in America had so deteriorated that she could not consent to stay."

It cannot be easy to speak when one has awaited one's opportunity through a storm of hooting and pea-throwing; but now indeed S. J.-B.'s fine courage and truthfulness shone out like the sun:

"She wished merely to give an absolute, unqualified denial to Professor X.'s statement respecting her. She never made the statement he asserted she had made. During her whole visit to America she had never spent one whole session in any medical college whatever. . . . It was true she had studied two years in a woman's

hospital, and every day's experience there had made her long more and more to see women in charge of their own sex—(Great interruption and cries of 'Order')—and it was her experience in that hospital and her knowledge of the ladies connected with it [One can almost hear her inward cry, 'Oh, Lucy!'] that made her devote her life to getting medical education for herself and also for other women. . . . Some of the friends she was proudest of were women doctors in America who had been educated there entirely, and in regard to whom she scarcely knew any equals and certainly no superiors."

It was only in answer to repeated calls that Professor X. rose and said, "He was sure there was not an individual in that meeting who would not give him credit for having given what he believed to be the correct version of what occurred according to his recollection two years ago—(Hisses and cheers)—between Miss Jex-Blake and himself. If he had misconceived what had been said, or if his memory had failed him and he had stated what was not correct, he begged to apologise, as it was purely unintentional." (Applause and hisses.)

A somewhat disappointing outcome this, of a long course of training in scientific exactness.

It was now that the Professor of Moral Philosophy (Calderwood) rose, profoundly stirred beneath the calm and judicial demeanour that seldom failed him, and pointed out that Professor X., while speaking to the amendment "that the question (of the women students) be left to the unbiassed decision of the Managers," had voluntarily given them a fair average specimen of an unbiassed opinion!

There are worse adversaries, in fact, than the honest beasts at Ephesus.

A sore heart lay behind that jest of Professor Blackie's if one may judge by the following letter:

" 24 Hill Street,  
Edinburgh.

20th January, 1871.

MY DEAR MISS BLAKE,

It is of no consequence to you, my poor sympathy with you all at present, and my utter horror of the conduct of your enemies; but I wish to tell you how saddened my husband was by all he saw and heard at the Infirmary meeting last week. He sat at tea-time shading his eyes, and saying quietly from time to

time, 'I am ashamed of my sex.' I never saw him so hurt before. I am sure the unmanly and indecent conduct of these poor ill-led young men, and the untruthfulness of their leaders will ultimately do you good. If men lose our respect and confidence, let them look to themselves. Your admirable letters must do great good.

Pardon this intrusion, and believe me always your true friend,  
E. H. S. BLACKIE."

No less welcome, we may be sure, was this :

Huntly Lodge,  
Monday Evening.

MY DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I am feeling inexpressibly for you and your friends this evening, and cannot resist the inclination that has come over me to tell you how deeply grateful everyone who has the welfare of the next generation at heart must feel to you who are so nobly fighting the battle which must soon be gained—the *results* of which will bear *precious fruit*, I fully believe, long, long after even your heads are laid in the grave.

You and the struggle you are carrying on remind me so forcibly of the contest which the band of women in America so nobly waged with the demon of Slavery. Your struggle will end much sooner, I trust, than did theirs, but, whilst sympathising with you, I cannot help feeling that the discussion is doing so much to educate people's minds, that it is better for the cause than if you had met with no opposition ; and in the end it may be better for you also, for by the time you are ready to practise, persons will have become accustomed to the idea and ready for you.

Meanwhile tell us if there is aught we outsiders can do for you, and believe me, with love to dear Miss Pechey,

Your affectionate,

E. P. NICHOL.

I am sure you will like to know that I don't feel a bit the worse for this day's work.

You will excuse haste and some little weariness."

Once more we are tempted to quote from a delightful budget :

" 13 Sussex Square,  
Brighton,  
Jan. 19th. 1871.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

One line to wish you many happy returns of the 21st, and most of them quieter than this birthday seems likely to be.

I feel sure you will carry your point eventually, and should recommend you to stick to Edinburgh where you have already so very nearly won.

It must be very harassing at times, and need a great deal of patience: for half the enemy seem wily and half seem roughs.

The speech you last made, when the gallery ought to have been earlier cleared of its noisy occupants, seemed to me excellent: and I thought Maclaren showed great judgment in dealing with the adversary that same day. I should not be drawn much into newspaper correspondence, if I were you; and I doubt if . . . was worth powder and shot. But he may be, from personal or local reasons unknown to me.

I feel no doubt whatever of the ultimate victory, but the delay is very fatiguing to the combatant. . . . Take it easy, and don't let the enemy make you angry. They are sure to try.

Your affectionate brother,

T. W. J.-B."

Very soon, too, a long letter arrived from women in London,—"to the Lady Students in Edinburgh:

"DEAR LADY STUDENTS,

Let us entreat you to persevere—"and so on.

Here then were both parties firmly entrenched, with no prospect of an end to the combat; but that fire in the hearts of generous adherents was burning steadily. The Lord Provost declined to accept his defeat. He proceeded to call a meeting of citizens, and in a very short time a committee was formed to share a burden that had become far too heavy for the shoulders of a handful of women. The list of sympathizers grew like a snowball, attracting many of the most honoured names in the country, till it became a rallying cry for weaker folk the wide world over. One can best describe the significance of all this in S. J.-B.'s own words, written some fifteen years later:

"To the Committee thus inaugurated, we owe a debt of gratitude which I hardly know how to describe adequately. From that time forward to the close of our battle in Edinburgh, they stood by us with a fidelity and chivalrous readiness to help which was never marred by officiousness or needless interference. In a very short time they lifted from our shoulders the whole burden of pecuniary risk and responsibility, and, by personal and public help of every kind, made it possible for us to continue the struggle in which, with-

out such aid, we should have been hopelessly outnumbered. Where so many gave us such invaluable assistance, it is almost invidious to single out any for special thanks ; and yet I cannot refrain from putting on record our extreme debt of gratitude to three men, of whom two have already passed away from among us, viz., the Lord Provost of Edinburgh (William Law), who gave us continually the support of his official countenance and assistance ; Mr. Alexander Russel, Editor of the *Scotsman*, whose advocacy was literally beyond all price in those days, when our one hope and our great difficulty was to get the real truth laid fully and fearlessly before the public ; and our still invaluable friend, Professor Masson, whose championship of the weak and oppressed was then, and always has been, worthy of the noblest days of chivalry."

## CHAPTER IX

### THE ACTION FOR LIBEL

It is not to be supposed, however, that the dark days were at an end. Far from it. The next act in the drama was an action for libel brought against S. J.-B. by Professor Christison's assistant.

Of course she took the lawyer's letter smiling, but it must have seemed well-nigh the last straw, for she was sorely overstrained by the public meetings and all the criticism they called forth; and her entire Christmas holiday had been spent in calling on Infirmary managers. These were naturally of all sorts, from the big bustling prosperous brewer to the refined gentlewoman of equally restricted outlook; and the strain of adaptation to such divers personalities must have been very great.

Even on Christmas Day <sup>1</sup> (a Sunday!) she had been at the *Scotsman* office, arranging with the Editor for the alteration and publication of various entries on the following day. Things were not made easier by the fact that a heavy fall of snow had been followed by alternating spells of slush and ice. All the other students had gone out of town, and in many ways it would have been better all round if she had gone too. But her supporters simply could not get on without her. She might on occasion be difficult and trying, expecting more of people than they were prepared to give; but no one else could even compare with her in knowledge of all the facts and arguments that might at any moment be called for

<sup>1</sup> "God bless the Massons," writes Mrs. Jex-Blake, "for cheering my darling on Christmas Day."

by the emergencies of a big public controversy. There was no need for professors, editors and others to charge their memories with endless *minutiae* when S. J.-B. was at hand, clear and concise, as a book of handy reference.

Life was too full this year for the accustomed backward survey at midnight on December 31st; there was no quotation of "May the New Year cherish—" This is the entry:

"Less utterly hopeless tonight,—only so tired. E. P. just back, bless her!"

Well, in any case, here was the lawyer's letter, and it just had to be faced. There is no reference to it in the diary till long after—indeed, except as a register of facts that have now lost all interest, the diary becomes almost non-existent—but, in a day or two, the news was all over the country. It was more than could be expected of human nature that some of the women students should not have felt aggrieved that the situation had been complicated by their leader's impulsiveness. On the whole they were loyal, especially the three first recruits, Mrs. Thorne, Mrs. Evans, and "E. P.,—bless her!"

But, as ever, faithful friends gathered round, and, if the postman's visit had become a thing to be dreaded, he also brought much good cheer. Here is a letter from the wife of a leading minister of religion:

"DEAR MRS. EVANS,

The opposition have 'crowned the edifice' by bringing that action of Damages against Miss Jex-Blake,—how unspeakably low and unmanly it all is. I never knew before that saying a man was drunk was actionable; if it is we must be very careful how we speak even of our nearest and dearest. I think a subscription ought to be set on foot at once to pay Miss Jex-Blake's expenses, and I shall be delighted to contribute my mite."

One can only quote one or two out of many:

"The Athenaeum,  
Jan. 23, 1871.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

I will gladly pay half expenses of your action for libel brought by Dr. Christison's assistant.

I think it vital that you should have the best legal assistance, and win. Be careful, and don't let them 'draw' you into indis-

cretions that are most forgiveable morally, but damaging to the cause practically.

I don't the least want to lecture you or assume the Mentor. I only want you to win all along the line.

Your aff. brother,

T. W. J.-B."

The next is written in a clear and clerkly hand :

" Miss Jex-Blake, Ph.D.

Edinburgh.

Kinbuck, 7 February, 1871.

MADAM,

We the undersigned desire to express our most sincere sympathy with your cause and earnest hopes for your success.

I am,

Your obedient Servants,—"

Follows a list of four names, apparently of young business men. One wonders which of them conceived the bold idea of the "Ph.D." How gladly they would have made it "M.D." if they could!

The letter was addressed to "Miss Jex-Blake, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh," and is grimly endorsed, "Not for Royal Infirmary."

One more letter we are tempted to quote with very mingled feelings :

" 19 Inverleith Row,  
Edinburgh.

27 January 1871.

MY DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I see that Mr. C. has raised an action against you. If you have not already fixed on a counsel to defend you, will you allow me to propose that you should employ my son-in-law, Mr. Trayner. I propose this, not for his advantage but your own, as I am quite sure from the great interest he would take in your case, and also that I know you would find in him, not only an able advocate, but a kind friend, that you would have no cause to regret the choice.

Believe me, dear Miss Jex-Blake,

Very truly yours,

MARGARET WYLD."

From another source one learns that Mr. Trayner [now Lord Trayner], if employed, would have done the work without fee, from sheer sympathy with the cause.

The pity of it! One cannot help feeling how differently



things might have gone, if S. J.-B. had availed herself of this suggestion. "The best legal advice" is an expression capable of varied interpretation, and of course S. J.-B.—young and inexperienced—was guided by her solicitors. It is possible, too, of course, that the advice was good.

Young and inexperienced she was in matters of this kind,—full of hope that she, who had nothing to hide and everything to gain from full publicity, would see herself substantially justified in an open court of law.

On the whole, public opinion was against her. All sorts of stories were rife, many of them entirely false, some with just that grain of truth that makes a lie so deadly. When the Winter Session came to an end in March, the President of the College of Physicians and the President of the College of Surgeons both announced that they would not preside at the prize-giving if lady students were to be present and to receive their prizes on this occasion.

On the other hand S. J.-B. was, of course, much sought after by outsiders who admired her talent and courage. In April she was urged by the leading women suffragists of the day to speak at a Suffrage meeting in London, and, after consulting Professor Masson and other friends in Edinburgh as to the probable effect on her own "Cause," she agreed.

"Darling," writes her sorely-trying Mother, "speaking at a public meeting will be anything but restful. You positively require rest to go on with the real work and worrying work before you. May you be guided aright."

The speech took place, however, and was a great success. Her "pathetic voice" and clear exposition of the argument deduced from her own trying experience are referred to repeatedly. This was her first public association with a cause of which, throughout life, she was one of the sanest and most practical exponents.

It was in the course of this visit to London, too, that she made the acquaintance of Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Stansfeld, whose influence was to prove so priceless in the farther development of the movement.

Meanwhile the law ran its slow and expensive course.

"Monday, May 22nd. . . . White Millar wants to know if I will say C. 'hadn't drunk' if he on his side allows that I 'had been told so.'

I don't want to be too obstinately pugnacious, but I hate the idea of giving a handle to people to say I 'ate my words'. Calderwood wisely says it should be a *sine qua non* that the public should know the overture came from them, and I should like also to make C. own he was 'Foremost among the rioters'.

"Tuesday May 23rd. I have just accepted Lord Advocate at fee of £200, so now it shall go on unless they pay costs. . . .

"May 26th, Friday 10 p.m. 'Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.'

*How* inclined one feels to turn one's face to the wall and say with Elijah, 'Lord, take away my life, I am not better than my fathers'.

The obstinate lying of these students in preference to giving any information possibly useful to us;—the constant hisses and rudeness even in the streets,—J's insolent civility, especially to Miss B.,—those two scamps shouting 'Whore' after S. M. M., as she crossed the George Square Gardens yesterday evening, etc.

Oh, dear, I hope Tuesday at least will end one worry satisfactorily. I think it must clear me morally at any rate!—and yet I have that nervous quiver through me as when one wakes with nightmare. I wonder if any such hysterical wretch ever had to do such work as mine!

And yet what good friends and helpers! Gilbert's ever ready kindness, Wilson's hearty interest, 'Well, if you lose on Tuesday, even you will not be more vexed than I shall'."

The case came on for trial on May 31st. On the morning of the day, S. J.-B. received the following letter from her Mother:

"God's protection and blessing be with you, my own precious child. I will not harass and plague you by writing further than to assure you I am in spirit present with you.

Your loving,

M. E. J.-B.

I am quite well, and picturing how calm and collected you are, and how *many many* are thinking of you with friendly thoughts."

The case lasted two days. It was reported verbally in the *Scotsman* and other daily papers. "Throughout the day the Court-room was densely crowded, many ladies being

among the audience." For many, of course, this was the first opportunity of seeing these amazing women, and for some time the provincial and weekly papers ran riot in impressions of this kind :

" Mrs. Thorne succeeded as witness, and the assembled public thought it very hard that she should be neither odd nor eccentric. Why was she married ? She was a medical student and ought not to be married. Sedate, quiet and ladylike-looking, and dressed in an unobtrusive fashion, and yet fairly within the pale of orthodoxy, Mrs. Thorne confused the minds of many."

" Miss Pechey was the sole remaining witness, and created a good deal of fresh interest. A tall figure and a classically shaped head with dark hair, are generally supposed to be the attributes of young ladies who keep to their ' sphere.' That female medical students should dare to be good-looking, dare to be married, dare to be dressed in good taste, is, of course, an unpardonable crime."

" Great interest of course was manifested in [Miss Jex-Blake's] appearance in the witness box. Plainly dressed in black, with white round her neck and wrists, she presented the appearance of a tall and well formed, handsome and determined woman, with dark hair and eyes. She was perfectly cool and collected, and her manner was a great contrast to the nervousness of Dr. Christison and the ' smartness ' of Dr. Bell."

So much for the " hysterical wretch " !

In truth the women had learned their lesson. There was no bitter, impulsive speaking now. They said what they meant to say, and they said it well and with restraint. " These customers *are* composed ! " a man in the back of the Court was heard to exclaim.

As has been said, S. J.-B. had everything to gain from publicity, from a full exposure of the facts. The worst she had done had been to state her case in public without fear of persons, without much tact and discretion, though with no exaggeration of the actual truth. The public had already passed judgment on her. She was now on her defence, desirous only of asking her opponents, under cross-examination, to deny the truth of what she had said.

But the law of libel is an intricate and parlous thing. S. J.-B. had been told by several people of standing—including her teacher and his assistant—that Professor Christison's assistant

had been a ringleader in the riot ; but she did not know of her own knowledge that he had been so.

“ I wished,” she says, “ to plead the substantial truth of my statement ; but, being, of course, ignorant of Scotch law, I was overruled by my Counsel, among whom was the Lord Advocate of Scotland (Young), on the ground that I could not *personally* prove the truth of what I had said, as indeed I did not know the young man by sight, and it would be held an aggravation of the injury to plead ‘ Veritas ’ in a matter which was, after all, only one of hearsay. I was assured that, if the case came to trial, abundant opportunity would be given to prove the young man’s real conduct in the matter.”

This opportunity, however, was relentlessly withheld.

The case for the defence was one to rejoice the heart of a brilliant counsel, being full of technical opportunity,—and to a brilliant counsel it fell. So entirely did Mr. Shand (afterwards Lord Shand) rely on his own bow and spear to win the day,—and it must be admitted that there was nothing else to rely on—that he dared to risk the conclusions which must inevitably be drawn from his omission to call the pursuer as a witness on his own side ; he dared to provoke a laugh by saying that Mr. C. “ was not so fond of public appearances as the defendant.” He laid down in his opening statement the law that must govern the case, and with dogged tenacity, he brought the Judge and everyone else in Court to heel. Lord Mure, as it chanced, was easily led. The choice of a Judge in Scotland lies with the pursuer, and in any case it might not have been easy to find one in those days who had a prejudice in favour of women doctors.

One is glad to know that the protagonist appeared “ cool and collected ” to the indifferent observer, but she must have been on the rack much of the time, for the “ substantial truth and right ” for which she longed, got no chance at all, or rather they saved their lives only by losing them, so to speak ; and that is one of time’s revenges that youth cannot foresee.

The full report of the case appeared in the *Scotsman* of May 31st and June 1st. The following extracts are taken mainly from the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, because they

are slightly abbreviated, and because they appeared in a paper unfriendly to the cause of the women.

“There could be no doubt,” said the advocate for the pursuer, “that, however injurious the arguments she used might be, if they were justified by facts, it was perfectly open to Miss Jex-Blake to maintain that her statements were true, and to take what is called an ‘issue in justification,’ for the purpose of establishing upon her own issue, as counter to the present one, what she said. But she had not chosen to do that: it was not pretended that the statements were true; and therefore the only question the jury had to try was, practically, whether those statements were to the pursuer’s loss, injury, and damage.<sup>1</sup>”

This argument, fair enough as coming from an advocate, represents to all intents and purposes, the attitude adopted by the Judge. The case positively bristled with arguments, but the humblest appearance of a really relevant fact brought Mr. Shand to his feet with a taboo.

“Thomas Sanderson deponed in answer to Mr. M’Laren—I am a student of medicine and last winter I attended Dr. Laycock’s class. On the 18th November I was at the gate leading to Surgeons’ Hall. There was a large crowd of students and a larger crowd of other people at the gate. The students were both inside and outside the gate. The majority were University students. I assisted the ladies to pass through the College gate. I was pulled about a little by the students. The students were hooting, and oaths and offensive expressions were used.

Among the students inside the gate did you recognize Mr. C. ?

Mr. Shand (to witness)—Don’t answer that question.

Lord Mure sustained the objection.

Mr. M’Laren—Did you see Mr. C. at any time on the 18th November?

Witness—Yes.

Where did you see him ?—At the Surgeons’ Hall.

At what time of the day did you see him ?—A few minutes after four o’clock.

How was Mr. C. conducting himself ?

Lord Mure disallowed the question.

E. C. C., examined by the Lord Advocate, deponed—I am the pursuer in this action. I was twenty-one years of age last August.

You remember the riot at Surgeons’ Hall on the 18th of November ?—I do.

Where were you ?

<sup>1</sup> *Scotsman*, May 31, 1871.

Mr. Shand objected to this question. His Lordship had already ruled that no evidence could be led as to whether the witness took part in these proceedings; and it seemed as if the Lord Advocate was attempting to evade his Lordship's decision.

Lord Mure said this was a general question and he allowed it to be put to the witness.

The Lord Advocate—Where were you at the time? Witness—At what time?

At the time of the riot?—I was at the College of Surgeons during part of the time.

When did you go there?—Three o'clock.

When did the riot begin? Shortly after four.

What were you doing between three and four?—I was in the class for practising physic.

When did it come out?—A few minutes before four.

Was there a mob of students at the gate?

Mr. Shand—Your lordship will understand that I am objecting to all these questions.

The Lord Advocate—Were you present during the whole of the riot?

Mr. Shand—I object to that question.

Lord Mure sustained the objection."

In addressing the jury, Mr. Shand said,

"A slander had been committed and was unrepented, and only by a verdict from the jury could the calumny be wiped off. A nominal sum, however, would be an injury instead of an assistance. Excessive damages<sup>1</sup> he did not ask, but only such a reasonable sum as would mark their sense of the injury inflicted on the pursuer by the statements made in his absence."

The Lord Advocate's summing up was humorous in the extreme, and called forth peals of laughter at the pursuer's expense; indeed in the end he almost went so far as to produce a counter-wave of sympathy for the victim of his brilliant raillery. But, indeed, nothing could be made of the case as it stood.

In the final summing-up, Lord Mure said:

"He had not allowed any evidence to prove that the pursuer had been a leader in the riot, because, according to his view of the authorities on the subject, it was incompetent to allow such evidence

<sup>1</sup> The amount claimed—£1000—was only specified when the case came into Court, having been inadvertently omitted from the issue.

in the absence of an issue of justification. The jury had heard the evidence of Dr. Christison and others as to the injury which a man's character was calculated to sustain from such a statement as had been made use of by the defender; and it was for the jury to judge whether that charge was one which was likely, without retractation or apology, to injure the pursuer's character.

The jury retired at five o'clock, and at half-past six they returned to Court, and gave a unanimous verdict in favour of the pursuer, assessing the damages at a farthing."<sup>1</sup>

On the following day a leading article in the *Glasgow Herald* made the following comment:

"Miss Blake has not pled or proved the substantial truth of her accusations. She has preferred to challenge Mr. C. to prove their falsehood. We are altogether unable to understand why he should not have accepted the challenge, and why he omitted to deny the charges levelled against him. We cannot see how he could have expected a jury to give him substantial damages for his injured reputation when he refused to allow any enquiry into the circumstances in which he stood. The witnesses who were present on the occasion of the riot were not allowed to say whether they saw Mr. C. present at the riot, whether he took part in it, or what he said or did on the occasion if he was present. Miss Jex-Blake is accordingly very properly fined one farthing for her rash and libellous statements, and the public is left to wonder for what earthly reason Mr. C. brought his action. It has only one compensation for the loss of time involved in reading the evidence in a trial which has established nothing. Miss Jex-Blake has completely vindicated the title of her sex to aspire to the highest honours not merely in medicine but in law. She has shown herself a perfect mistress of the art of self defence. In no cricket field this season have there been so many dangerous balls admirably stopped, and so many badly bowled ones dexterously played. If the witness and the counsel could have interchanged positions, the change might possibly have had considerable effect upon the fortunes of Mr. C."<sup>2</sup>

But the end was not yet. It was still possible for the Bench to make S. J.-B. responsible for the entire costs of the case, and in due time she was called upon to pay—in addition to the farthing damages—a bill of £915 11s. 1d.

<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, June 1, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> "Of course, as you know, I daresay," writes Professor Jack to S. J.-B. about this time, "all the articles that appear in the *Herald* are mine, and especially the good ones."

Let it be recorded at once that her brother promptly redeemed his promise, and sent a cheque for half the amount.

As soon as the decision of the Court was made known, one of the jurymen expressed his feelings in a letter to the *Scotsman*:

"Edinburgh, July 1871.

SIR,—As one of the jurymen before whom this case was tried, I am extremely disappointed to observe from the papers that the Court have found the pursuer entitled to his expenses.

I have been anxiously looking forward to the determination of the case, in the hope that the verdict of the jury would be so applied as to receive the effect which they intended by it.

The jury were of the opinion that the pursuer should have submitted some evidence to them of his non-participation in the disgraceful riot, of which Miss Jex-Blake had so much reason to complain, to have entitled him to a verdict; and they would have made some representation to the presiding Judge on the subject had it been possible to do so.

After retiring, the first thing done was to appoint a foreman. This gentleman turned out to be in favour of a verdict for the defender. With the view of ascertaining the mind of the rest of the jury, he asked us individually to write down on pieces of paper whether we were for 'libel' or 'no libel'. The result was an equal division—six for finding that there was a libel, and six for no libel. This was done a second time with the same result. In this predicament, and after considerable discussion as to the amount of damages, in the course of which I don't think a larger sum than one shilling was even mentioned, even by those who thought there had been a libel, it was proposed to ask the Court whether the foreman had a casting-vote. This was done, and the Clerk came back and told us he had not. We then asked the Clerk whether we were entitled to find for the pursuer without giving any damages, and he told us we were not. Shortly after, we again sent for the Clerk, and enquired whether a farthing of damages would carry expenses against the defender. He stood a while, and said there was some new Act which provided that a farthing of damages would *not* carry expenses.

He went out to consult the Judge; but, having got this information from him, we agreed upon our verdict, and rung the bell for the macer at once. I had no doubt of the soundness of the Clerk's opinion, and in that belief I concurred in the verdict finding the pursuer entitled to one farthing of damages. I certainly would not have done so, had I for a moment anticipated the result which has



happened. I think the case a very hard one for the defende<sup>1</sup>, more especially when, but for the opinion given by the Clerk, the verdict might have been in her favour. I think it is due to her that the public should be informed of the circumstances under which the verdict was given, for it seems a very illogical result to affirm that the pursuer had suffered no damage by the alleged slander, or, at least damage of only one farthing, and at the same time to compel the defender to pay a large sum for expenses, especially when the origin of the whole matter was a riot in which the ladies were so badly used.—I am, etc.

A JURYMAN."

This letter was followed by one from a lawyer :

" Edinburgh, July 12, 1871.

SIR,—I am not surprised at the letter in your publication of to-day, of a ' A Juryman ' in the above case. The Clerk of Court was *in substance* correct in his statement to the jury that by a recent Act of Parliament the pursuer in an action of damages is not entitled to expenses if the verdict is for less than £5, but he was wrong in not at the same time informing them of the discretion still left to the Court. . . .

But the thing that strikes me most forcibly in the juryman's statement is how came it that a Clerk of Court was allowed to speak to the jury at all on such a matter. The public are indebted to the juryman for making this known, because it at once explains what was intended by the verdict. I do not think in the circumstances the verdict is worth anything, and I would strongly advise Miss Jex-Blake to appeal the case, and have the verdict set aside on the ground either of the Clerk's interference, or that the decision of the Judges is wrong. Certainly the decision on the matter of expenses is very unsatisfactory to the legal profession, especially as it was given without the usual statement of the grounds of judgment.

I am, etc.,

A LAWYER."

It remained for Miss Pechey to give her views on the practical outcome of the case. Poor little Hope Scholar ! She had travelled far since the days when she had refused to " appeal " because she was better employed in listening to the nightingales.

" Edinburgh, July 13th.

SIR,—I see that a juryman has written to you to say how very ill the recent decision as to the costs agrees with the intentions of the jury, and a lawyer has made clear how extraordinary it is in point

of law. Will you allow me to say a few words, from personal experience, on the practical results ?

The medical students of Edinburgh have received a hint by which some of them seem well inclined to profit. They have been told pretty plainly that it is possible that there should be a riot got up for the express purpose of insulting women, for one of the very women insulted to be accused of libel when she complains of such conduct, and then for the insulters to escape scot-free, and the complainer to be mulcted in expenses. In fact the moral seems to be that, unless a woman is willing to be saddled with costs to the amount of several hundred pounds, she had better resolve to submit to every kind of insult, without even allowing herself to mention the facts.

I say that some of the students appear to have taken the hint so given ; for to this I must think is due the treatment received by myself and some of my friends if we happen to meet students on our way home in the evening. It will possibly strike some people as sufficiently extraordinary that a knot of young men should find pleasure in following a woman through the streets, and should take advantage of her being alone to shout after her all the foulest epithets in their voluminous vocabulary of abuse ; yet such is the case. I am quite aware that it would be useless to represent to those students the injury they do to the University and to the medical profession in the eyes of the public, because neither of these considerations would weigh with them for a moment ; but it may make some impression on them to be told that the effect of their conduct is really such as they would least desire. Dr. Christison is reported to have said during his examination in Court, that he considered the riot of November to be ' a great misfortune,' and from his point of view he was undoubtedly right. If the wish of these students is to bar our progress, and frighten us from the prosecution of the work we have taken in hand, I venture to say never was a greater mistake made. Each fresh insult is an additional incentive to finish the work begun. I began the study of medicine merely from personal motives ; now I am also impelled by the desire to remove women from the care of such young ruffians. I am quite aware that respectable students will say, and say truly, that these are the dregs of the profession, and that they will never take a high place as respectable practitioners. Such is doubtless the case ; but what then ? Simply that, instead of having the medical charge of ladies with rich husbands and fathers, to whom, from self-interest, they would be respectful, they will have the treatment of unprotected servants and shop-girls. I should be very sorry to see any poor girl under the care (!) of such men as those, for instance, who the other night followed me through the street, using medical terms

to make the disgusting purport of their language more intelligible to me. When a man can put his scientific knowledge to such degraded use, it seems to me he cannot sink much lower.

How far the recent decisions are calculated to arrest or discourage such conduct, I leave the public to judge.—I am, etc.

MARY EDITH PECHY.

One is glad to note that the *Lancet* now took fire :

“Common candour must compel any unprejudiced person to admit that the fight has been pursued by the orthodox party *per fas et nefas*, and that the ill-advised conduct of grave and learned seniors in the profession has offered only too plausible an excuse to the heated blood of younger partisans to indulge in coarse excesses.”

It would be wrong to make too much of this ebullition of wickedness from the hearts of “ill-led” boys; but we must not forget that the women were scarcely more than girls, unable to view these things as calmly as we view them now; and all these experiences went to make them the thing they became.

For the iron entered into their souls.

Thirty years later one of their number—a married woman and a physician of standing—was heard to say that on her occasional visits to Edinburgh, she would make a *détour* of miles rather than pass the gates of Surgeons’ Hall.

“Would you *really*?” said S. J.-B.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME FRIENDSHIPS AND HOLIDAYS

OF course S. J.-B. was not allowed to pay one penny of her expenses. The amount was subscribed, and more than subscribed, by sympathizers all over the United Kingdom in the course of a few weeks ; and her brother's cheque was duly returned. It would almost seem as if nothing had done so much to excite public interest and fellow-feeling as that unfortunate speech and the lawsuit to which it led. The very names of those who undertook to receive subscriptions gave a striking indication of the challenge of popular sympathy.<sup>1</sup>

There was no lack of criticism and condemnation, of course ; the move and countermove went on ; but hundreds of letters poured in, bearing witness, not only to the width, but to the depth, of the feeling called forth. Miss Frances Power Cobbe's impulsive beginning,—“ I want words to express my indignation,—” was typical of many. Harriet Martineau, too, was a subscriber and a cordial sympathizer.<sup>2</sup>

A number of subscriptions were returned after the full amount was raised, and many people expressed their dis-

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Hill Burton, Rev. Professor Calderwood, Treasurer Colston, J. R. Findlay, Esq., David Greig, Esq., Mrs. Hope of Drylaw, Miss Agnes M'Laren, Mrs. Nichol, Admiral Sir W. Ramsay, K.C.B., Miss L. Stevenson, and R. S. Wyld, Esq.

<sup>2</sup> “ If you, as the honoured and trusted representative of us working women, are insulted for us all, the grosser the insult, the more secure you must be of sympathy and gratitude from increasing multitudes of individuals, and of the adoption of our cause as a practical aim by the best part of society in our day.”

appointment at hearing of the fund only through the announcement that it was closed. "I wish it would open again," wrote the Revd. Professor Charteris, "even if it were only a little chink."

Here are two very different letters that one is glad to put on record :

" Inverness, Aug. 3/71.

DEAR MISS STEVENSON,<sup>1</sup>

Assuredly *no man* could calmly read Miss Jex-Blake's case, out of or in Court. And, could I do so publicly, I would cast from me with *loathing* all my once valued connexions with the Edinr. Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons; to show my utter disgust at (with a few honourable exceptions) their unmanly brutal conduct towards Miss Blake and her friends.

On the 9th (D.V.) I shall be in Edinburgh, when I shall call for or write to you. On that day, I hope to get some help from absent friends to add to the mite of

Yours faithfully,

J. MACKENZIE, M.D."

" 33 Richmond Place,  
Edinburgh, 24th Aug. 1871.

MADAM,

I beg to enclose a P.O.O. for eight shillings. This small sum is subscribed by a few working men in aid of the fund for defraying the Law expences so unjustly thrust upon Miss Jex-Blake for simply speaking the truth in her own defence in a Straightforward Manner. They deeply sympathise with this lady in the noble struggle she is making for Womens right to a liberal education and remunerative employment. May she be of good cheer, of good courage, and continue steadfast unto the end.

I am, Madam,

Your obedient Servant,

JAMES GRAY.

P.S. If this subscription be advertised please put it, A few working men—8s. It is payable at the Nicholson Street Post Office.

Miss A. M'Laren."

<sup>1</sup> Miss Louisa Stevenson and Mrs. Henry Kingsley had kindly undertaken to be Hon. Treasurers of the fund.

There was almost always an element of comic relief, too, about these tragic and moving situations. The following letter was one of those which provided it in this case :

“ 58 Altom Street,  
Blackburn, 15 Aug./71.

MISS JEX-BLAKE,  
DEAR MADAM,

Although a complete stranger to you I have long been familiar with your name, and also with your efforts to open the Edinburgh University to Ladies. I understand that you have been in America, you will therefore be familiar with many of the Colleges and Universities there. My wife who is in full practice here has studied Medicine in the Hygeio-Therapeutic Medical College and has obtained her M.D. Degree from the same College. As I am able to influence the Degree of M.D. to either Ladies or Gentlemen who are able to satisfy me as to their fitness to practise Medicine, I thought I would communicate with you, as probably an American degree would answer your purpose until it is possible to procure one from an English or Scotch University.

After all, it is not the degree but the ability of a Medical practitioner that should be appreciated. . . .”

Truly: but the law has something to say about the signing of death certificates, the registration of lunatics, the recovery of fees, and other incidental details. More strawberry jam labels!

The cheque, for over £1000, was presented to S. J.-B. at a public meeting, when there was a large gathering of influential citizens, the faithful Lord Provost occupying the chair. When all expenses were fully paid, a balance remained of over £100, which S. J.-B. asked leave to add to an already existing “nest-egg” for the purpose of founding a future hospital for women officered by women.

The immediate struggle with the University was not made any easier, however, though the “Cause” was gaining ground by strides all over the rest of the world. The *Scotsman* continued to give a wholesome lead to the press: indeed no woman gained scholastic or other honours anywhere without having her name and achievement duly registered with an implicit *Verb. sap.* at the end of the paragraph.

One is glad to record, too, that one or two delightful holidays relieved the strain of this year's work. Mrs. Thorne was

proving herself a most valuable representative, not comparably so well versed as S. J.-B. in all the *minutiae* of the conflict, but certainly less exacting and easier to work with.

Considering the stem from which she sprang—a Tory family of landed gentry—S. J.-B. as prophetess had a surprising amount of honour in her own house. Her conservative old friend, Lady Waldegrave, had written a quite touching letter of appreciation in April of this year; and her Norfolk uncle and aunt, the Revd. Thomas and Mrs. Gunton actually subscribed to the cause and allowed their names to be put on her Committee, though Mrs. Gunton had postponed reading the papers bearing on the subject for some time, from fear that she and her husband would be constrained to refuse.

“How ANY WOMAN can have a desire for the Medical Profession is indeed WONDERFUL,” she writes, “but of course only very talented ones could go through the stiff examinations that are required.”

She remarks too, with complacency, that men doctors will be kept up to the mark when they have to compete against women.

In some remote part of Norfolk, Mrs. Jex-Blake gave her name in a shop, whereupon “a lady stepped forward and said what good work you were doing, but, if we were English, we must think very ill of the *Scotch*. I said No, you had received far more kindness than unkindness, having had a great many real and warm friends.”

This incident leads one to note that the present year, 1871; saw the ripening into lifelong friendship of S. J.-B.'s acquaintance with Miss Agnes M'Laren, daughter of the Member for Edinburgh,—a lady who adds one more to the gallery of truly noble women with whom we are brought into contact when reviewing S. J.-B.'s life. At the time of “the Edinburgh Fight,” Miss M'Laren was engaged in Suffrage work with Miss Taylour, acting as Hon. Secretary to the Association (with no paid subordinate to do the drudgery), travelling on occasion all over Scotland in serious propagation of her principles.<sup>1</sup> She was perhaps the most public-spirited

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that at this time almost all public-spirited women thought the suffrage would be granted before the right to a medical education. They had so nearly got it more than once! “You will

member of a public-spirited family, for the reason that in her the strong purpose, shrewd judgment and liberal sympathies that characterized all, were combined with an instinctive aloofness and even shyness, with a spirit almost of quietism, with a real old-world grace of womanhood.

She was hailed with something like reverence by the work-worn, hard-driven students at 15 Buccleuch Place, and almost from the first they spoke of her among themselves as "St. Agnes," a name to which she characteristically took exception as soon as it reached her ears.

"DEAR MISS M'LAREN," writes S. J.-B. in this connection,—

"You can't seriously suppose that anybody in this house,—least of all that I,—should really laugh at you!—though I don't doubt that you are a great deal too humble-minded to understand in the least the sort of light in which most of us working women do regard you. However we'll keep our pet name for you to ourselves if you don't like it."

And again a few weeks later :

" 15 Buccleuch Place,  
Edinburgh. June 7th.

DEAR MISS M'LAREN,

Though we all miss you here almost daily, I am unselfish enough to be heartily glad that you are going to Germany. I am sure the change of air and scene must do you good, and the chestnut trees at Heidelberg must be simply lovely now.

When you get to the top and sit and look down at the valley of the Neckar, you may picture me (as a lonely English teacher at Mannheim) going over there on Sundays to church, and climbing to that brow to enjoy the setting sun and the infinite peacefulness and beauty of the whole scene.

I only *wish* I could be there with you!—If you stay at all at Mannheim, do go and see my old school, the 'Grossherzogliches Institut'—I think they will still remember my name there,—and I should like so much to hear news of them. They would be electrified to hear of me as a doctor.

I finished up by having scarlet fever there, and shocked them all by refusing to submit to the stupid old German regimen of starvation and shut windows ! . . .

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accomplish nothing," S. J.-B. was sometimes told, "until we get the vote." And one is grimly amused to find her expressing a serious fear that the suffrage may be granted before she has had an opportunity of hearing her friend, Miss M'Laren, speak in support of it. She need have entertained no undue apprehension on this score.



I do most heartily wish you a pleasant journey and great rest and refreshment in it. Do you know that when I got your letter such a longing came over me to see the Rhine again that for a moment I almost thought of asking if you would take me with you, but five minutes reflection showed me how wrong and foolish it would be for me to leave home just now in the midst of term, and with these 'appeals' still undecided, and with my petition to the Senatus coming on! But it *was* a huge temptation all the same!"

This brings us back to the diary :

"Monday June 5th. The trial over at last. 'Farthing damages' satisfactory, I suppose.

But I so weary! If I could but get a month's real rest! I wake feeling driven,—I get through nothing all day, and I lie down tired out at night.

Wednesday, June 7th. Sur ces entrefaites (as my present neighbours would say) came a letter from St. Agnes saying she was to go to Heidelberg on Saturday for three weeks. Instantly—Why shouldn't I go with her, quoth the Infantine.

Fifty reasons, quoth the Estimable,—law, money, study, Senatus, etc., etc.

Telling Pussy<sup>1</sup> of the temptation overcome, came a proposal to 'treat Resolution,' urged by her, E.P., and even Mrs. Thorne.

Millar [lawyer] said I could be spared.

So Thursday went to London with L. and F. Stevenson, . . . Good journey. Slept at Hampstead.

Sunday 11th. Morning Stopford Brooke, St. James Chapel, York Street. Stood till sermon, then pulpit stairs. . . .

It might almost have been predicted that S. J.-B. would not pass through Paris in a time of peace. The visit was destined to prove exciting enough. She just dashes down a few polyglot jottings in her diary to serve as stepping-stones for memory later on :

Tuesday 13th. Reached Paris about 6.30. No cabs, no apparent chance of any. At length in streets 2-seated fiacre, drove to [Hotel] Folkestone, was deposited, C. M'L.<sup>2</sup> returning for others.

Friday 16th. Writing all above (from 7th. onwards) by open window of Hotel F.—rain falling on market outside. They not back from Versailles, where gone in hope of hearing Assemblé, etc.

<sup>1</sup> The name by which Miss Louisa Stevenson was affectionately known in the little circle.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Charles M'Laren (now Lord Aberconway) and Mr. Walter M'Laren were of the party.

Wednesday. After long trudge found 'voiture de grande remise' 4 frs. the hour, drove by Luxembourg, Notre Dame, Sainte Chapelle, etc. (Not allowed to lift written scrap from street from heap of ruins by side of Palais de Justice.) Great order and quiet everywhere and civility.

Pantheon dented with 'obus'. Hotel de Ville gutted, (with all registers, etc.)—Tuileries, and Palais de Justice Ditto. Ministère de Finances even more utterly in ruins, and houses here and there, —e.g. in Rue Royale by Madeleine and elsewhere.

Hotel de Clugny incendie but unhurt. All along streets notice holes to cellars stopped up with plaster for fear of petroleum.

Thursday. Drove by Champs Elysées, to Champ de Mars, Porte de Neuilly (where such destruction from bombs, etc., vault of railway crashed in,—trees in splinters, etc.) Then by Quaiès, into Place de Carrousel between Tuileries and Louvre to Bastille Column and (through bad parts of town . . .) to Père la Chaise, with its horrible trenches filled with hundreds of bodies and soaked black with petroleum (clothes, etc., burnt over them?).

Then that ghastly corner where 250 and 140 ('4, 5 femmes,') were shot 'en pleine vigueur' crying 'Vive la République!' as a keen young fossier told with evident sympathy, he having had to stand by,—see the firing, and bury the results.

Today Friday, 16th. The Petit Moniteur gives a horrible circular (torn down last night in the Rue Rochechouard) inciting 'Travailleurs from every country to join against priests, soldiers and tyrants, and succeed, or nous nous ensevelirons sous les ruines de Paris!'

Fancy crying for fresh bloodshed when steeped in it to the lips now!

Some Frenchwomen at table curiously indignant at our small care about English 'communists',—quite unable to understand how the solidarity of national sentiment made such as these late events impossible in England, and then, when I mildly said so, shooting at me:—'Pourtant, la Révolution où on a tué votre roi!!!'

"Monday 20th. Went to Versailles to see the Chambre;—unpunctual sitting, I only present during some minutes of debate. Given ticket in 'D' by President Grévy.

6.30. Left Paris via Dieppe. 8 hours roughish sea.

Tuesday. Brighton."

So there was no Heidelberg after all,—no sitting on the brow of the hill to look down on the valley of the Neckar, and recall *ces jours heureux où nous étions si misérables*. We are not told why S.J.-B.'s holiday was cut so short: perhaps railway communication was broken for the moment, and it

proved impossible to proceed : but in any case it may be that the intense and unexpected picture of carnage and strife served to take her more completely out of herself and her worries than the more peaceful experience she would have chosen.

Moreover a real holiday was in store that Autumn, a holiday brightened by a visit from Dr. Lucy Sewall. How much this meant to her one gathers from the following letter, written about this date :

" MY DARLING,

I am so sorry for your loss of poor little Scamper,—I have got a splendid big ' Collie ' for you here,—the handsomest I ever saw,—if you can take him back with you. If, that is, you *must* go back ; but, oh, Lucy, I do *so* wish you would stay with us here for a few years.

People are getting wild for women doctors here,—and you might make almost any income, and do quite incalculable good by living here for the next five years.

We have eleven women studying here now, and absolutely no one to give them [adequate] uterine teaching !

This morning I had a quite spontaneous offer of £200 to help found a Women's Hospital here, and I believe that in a week I could get ten times that amount promised.

You should organize everything exactly as you liked, and, republican wretch as you are, you would be a sort of Queen among us,—and, what you would care for much more, would do quite infinite good to everybody concerned,—ladies, poor women, students, and all.

However, you shan't be bothered or worried. I think the strongest argument of all will be when you see for yourself how sorely we need you.

I shall not make any definite plans for you till after you come. If you like to stay quietly in Scotland all the time, we will do so, or I will go with you to Zurich or Paris or anywhere you like. . . . Send me early word of the steamer by which you expect to come, and, if at all possible, I will meet you at Liverpool. . . .

I send you another copy of my Suffrage speech, and hope you have received the newspapers about the trial.

Your very aff.

S. L. J.-B.

Turk has put on mourning for Scamper,—crape round his left arm, as they do in the army. He evidently quite understands, for he doesn't try to get it off. . . ."

The reader will not need to be told that S. J.-B. went out on the tender to meet her friend at Liverpool,—“after awful rush previous day with Surgeons' Hall, leader, etc.”

Dr. Sewall's choice of a holiday, happily, was a quiet time, mainly in Perthshire; but, straight from Liverpool, the two fellow-workers went to Shipley to see Mrs. Unwin, whose health had been failing for some time.

The friendship between S. J.-B. and her fellow student had never flagged. S. J.-B. had paid repeated visits to the Yorkshire home, where husband and wife vied with each other in the warmth of their welcome, and where both had proved most loyal advocates and upholders of the new Cause. More than once when a petition was being got ready for Parliament on the subject of the medical education of women, Mrs. Unwin had proved herself a keen and successful canvasser for signatures in her neighbourhood, throwing into the scale that weight of personal popularity which is so important a factor in the achievement of any aim. She had even paid a visit to the beehive at 15 Buccleuch Place, to be made much of by the workers, and to be not a little impressed by the sight of such divers and strenuous activities.

And now she was ill, and S. J.-B. was perfectly sure that, if anyone could bring healing, it was “the little doctor.”

Fresh courage they brought indeed, a little fresh lease of life in which the sufferer recovered strength and proved a renewed source of comfort to husband and children before she was called hence out of their sight; but healing in this world was not to be. *Dis aliter visum.*

In other respects the holiday was a refreshing one. It included attendance at a meeting of the British Association—great joy for Dr. Sewall—and a stay at an old Perthshire farmhouse, which, to many other attractions in S. J.-B.'s eyes, added the crowning one of a ghost,—a ghost which was visible to the dogs, and abundantly audible to herself and Miss Du Pre, though it failed subsequently to make any impression on the representatives of the Society for Psychical Research.

From the farmhouse as a centre they made delightful

excursions, the germ of many subsequent driving-tours in Perthshire, and it was on this occasion that the roadside inn at Fortingal was discovered, with its restful surroundings, cosy interior, and omelettes that constituted a positive object in life to the healthy holiday-maker !

After a farewell visit to Mrs. Unwin, Dr. Sewall sailed for Boston in September, parting from S. J.-B. on the tender at Liverpool. Her "log" was a lengthy one, full of wise observations and reflection, and every word of it was written for S. J.-B. . . .

"MY DEAR ONE,

. . . I have been thinking last night that if you and I could ever practise together, we ought to do better than either alone, for you have many qualities in which I am wanting. I think if we were together, you would write a valuable book, and so give the world a higher idea of women doctors. I know I shall never succeed in writing a good book by myself.

It hardly seems worth while to make you read all my fancies, but it seems to bring you nearer to me while I am writing, and the days are so long and lonely here."

"When I lie awake nights and think of you wanting me to help you in Edinburgh, it seems to me as if I must break off from all my ties, and come back to you at once ; but then my New England conscience wakes up and tells me that my life must be duty and not pleasure, and I try to be contented with doing the work that God gives me, and trust that when I am really at work it will be all right.

I do hope that you are having a nice quiet time with Miss Du Pre, and getting rested."

"It is just a week now since I said Goodbye to you, but it seems almost like a month to me. Last night for the first time since I left, I dreamed of having patients instead of dreaming of you."

## CHAPTER XI

### THE QUESTION OF PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION

APART from the ghost—which was a pure joy, though a very exciting one—S. J.-B.'s holiday was broken in upon by very disturbing rumours.

It was whispered by some of those who might have been supposed to know, that—notwithstanding the paragraphs that still stood in the *University Calendar* (see p. 260)—an effort would be made to prevent any new women candidates from undergoing the Preliminary Examination, and from matriculating. Worse than this, it was hinted that a similar effort would be made to prevent the women who had been studying for that express purpose for two years, from presenting themselves for the First Professional Examination.

There were positive difficulties apart from these vague rumours. In a previous chapter we saw that the President of the Royal College of Physicians and the President of the Royal College of Surgeons had refused to preside at the prize-giving “if lady students were to be present and to receive their prizes on that occasion.” This announcement was followed by a decision on the part of the lecturers at Surgeons' Hall “to rescind the permission given last summer to those lecturers who desired to admit ladies to their classes,”—“it being, however, understood that the prohibition should not extend to the instructions by Dr. Keiller [in Midwifery] and others, of women who were not registered students of medicine.”

It was still open to the women, of course, to get Extra-Mural lecturers to teach them elsewhere, if rooms could be found and the necessary arrangements made ; but, as regarded

the original students, an automatic deadlock arose at this point of which certain Professors unhappily elected to avail themselves :

By the rules of the University only four classes might be taken from Extra-Mural (non-professorial) teachers, and the original students had already taken these four. Professor Christison's class was one of those that came next in turn, and it would, perhaps, have been expecting too much of human nature that he should have chosen this moment in which to lay down his arms. In any case, he refused point blank.

In this dilemma, the women appealed to the Senatus,—(1) to appoint special University lecturers (assistants to the Professors or others) whose payment the women would guarantee ; or (2) alternatively, to relax, in the case of the women, the ordinary regulations, so that they might take an increased number of Extra-Mural classes.

Counsel's opinion was taken by the Senatus as to the powers of the University in this respect, and, an opinion adverse to the wishes of the women having been received, the Senatus decided by a majority of one to take no action in the matter.

Promptly S. J.-B. and her Committee submitted the facts to other counsel (the Lord Advocate and Sheriff Fraser) and received the opinion (1) that it was quite competent to the University authorities to make any necessary provision for the completion of the ladies' education : and (2) that the Medical Faculty were bound to admit the ladies to professional examination on the subjects in which they were already qualified to pass.

This latter point was included with special reference to the incredible rumours referred to above.

As the day of the examinations drew near and nothing happened, the leaders among the women began to feel reassured. The following letters, however, show how well-founded their fears were :

“ Private.

MY DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Oct. 2. 71.

I shall be at the Senatus any day you like, unless prevented by something of which I have no present prospect.

I was glad to hear, from my wife, . . . that Mr. Fraser has given

you a favourable opinion. His view that the Professors are *bound* to teach all persons who present Matriculation tickets to them, is what I have always held, and I believe often expressed to you. In the same way I should say, they are bound to examine them. What you must do now, then, I fancy, is to present your Mat: tickets and class fees and *demand* class tickets, and present your Certificates, etc., and *demand* Examination, and, on either or both being refused, claim a legal remedy. If possible you ought to go to the Court of Session and not to the University Court; and to the 2nd Division, if you have to go beyond the Lord Ordinary. Moncrieff will be much influenced by Fraser's opinion, whereas Inglis will be influenced, if at all, in the wrong direction. As Chancellor, however, I should think he would himself decline to sit as a Judge in a case which may come before him in the former capacity.

With kind regards from Mrs. Lorimer, believe me,

Yours very truly,

J. LORIMER."

" 16 Charlotte Square,  
Edinburgh.

Friday, Oct. 13th. 1871.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

. . . I should very much like to see the legal opinion you have obtained upon the point of legal responsibility as incurred by the University Court in their pragmatic sanction of the lady students matriculating and passing their preliminary examination.

A legal opinion depends so entirely upon the manner in which the matter is laid before counsel, and usually leaves so many loopholes for escape unperceived by a non-professional eye, that I am always jealous of such opinions unless the interpretation thereof is given by someone of good common sense and legal experience. . . .

I shall be at home tomorrow (Saturday) evening at 7.40 p.m. when it will give me the greatest pleasure to see you, if that will suit your convenience.

Is it true that Mrs. de Lacy Evans is engaged to Mr. Russel of the Scotsman? !!!

Most faithfully yours,

PATRICK HERON WATSON."

Here is a significant little letter, too, from the Secretary to the University :

" Inveresk. Oct. 13.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I have instructed Mr. Gilbert<sup>1</sup> to receive the money [for the First Professional Examn.] and give the customary acknowledgments, so that you may be all right with the Dean.

<sup>1</sup> Clerk of the University.



I am bound to call a meeting of Senatus upon a requisition signed by 3 Professors. Secure a day likely to suit your friends. Saturday is not a good day generally, and on Friday 2 or 3 are coming down here to dine,—at least they are asked to do so.

How would Thursday or Monday do ?

Yours truly,

JOHN WILSON."

That afternoon, we are told, there was a "furious row" in the Medical Faculty, and a day or two later each of the women candidates for the First Professional Examination received a copy of the following letter :

" University of Edinburgh,  
October 14th, 1871.

MADAM,

I am instructed by the Medical Faculty to inform you that your name and your fees have been received in error by the Clerk of the University as a candidate for the first professional examination during the present month, but that the Faculty cannot receive you for such examination without the sanction of the Senatus Academicus.

I am, Madam,

Your obedient servant,

J. H. BALFOUR,

Dean of the Medical Faculty."

Two days later S. J.-B. received the following letter with reference to the Preliminary Examination :

" University of Edinburgh, Oct. 16. 1871.

MADAM,

I am desired by the Dean of the Medical Faculty to inform you that he has been interdicted by the Faculty from giving examination papers to ladies on the 17th and 18th curt.

Kindly communicate this fact to the ladies whose names you some time ago handed in to me for this examination.

I am, etc.,

THOMAS GILBERT."

It will be noticed that the letter was dated on the day previous to that on which the examination was to take place. Three ladies had come—or were on their way—from various parts of the kingdom to submit to it. If they were not allowed to enter, they would be thrown back in their professional studies for a whole year.

Most women—and men—would have sat down under this blow. S. J.-B. went straight to her solicitor and took him with her to see the advocate (Mr. Fraser). The following is a copy of the letter that was sent by them to the Dean of the Medical Faculty :

“ Chambers, 8 Bank Street,  
Edinburgh. Oct. 16th. 1871.

DEAR SIR,

We have been instructed to obtain the opinion of counsel with reference to the legality of your refusal to admit ladies to the Preliminary Examination in Arts, which will take place tomorrow.

We beg now to enclose the memorial submitted, and the opinion given thereon by Mr. Patrick Fraser, for your perusal, and request that you will, at your earliest convenience, return them to us.

We beg to point out that you are individually responsible if the refusal is persisted in, and that we have been instructed, in that case, to raise actions for damages against you at the instance of each of the memorialists. You will also observe that the instructions of the Medical Faculty, being in themselves illegal, will be no defence against such actions.

We trust that you will, in these circumstances, reconsider the matter, and see fit to retract the refusal, and prevent the necessity of further proceedings.

We are, etc.,

MILLAR, ALLARDICE & ROBSON, W.S.

Professor Balfour, M.D.,  
Dean of the Medical Faculty.”

There was no loss of time in receiving the reply :

“ University of Edinburgh, Oct. 16th., 1871.<sup>1</sup>

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I have received the legal notice from your solicitor. Under these circumstances I shall not take the responsibility of refusing the ladies admission to the preliminary examination as heretofore. But I must inform you that I admit them provisionally until the matter is decided by the proper authorities, and without prejudice as regards myself.

I am, etc.,

J. H. BALFOUR.”

So the ladies were duly examined in the ordinary course.

<sup>1</sup>The dates of these three letters are correctly given. They were all delivered by hand.

On applying for Matriculation tickets, however, they were informed by the clerk that the Principal of the University had written him word that, in consequence of representations made to him by Professor Christison, no ladies were at present to be allowed to matriculate. "Of course," said a friendly professor, "the Principal had no more authority to issue this decree than had the janitor."

In this case, fortunately, there was time to call a meeting of Senatus, as referred to by Professor Wilson above (letter of October 13), and the necessary requisition was signed by Professors Crum Brown, Tait, and Liston.

[Diary.] "Tuesday 17th. Preliminary examination all right,—Mundy, Dahms, and Miller. Dr. Alex. Wood takes Motion in General Council.

Thursday, 19th. Leader written yesterday, in proof today. I, oh, so tired! Settled about motions in Senatus. Med. Fac. want Lord Advocate's opinion,—seem shaking in their shoes.

Ah, we *will* win,—but the price!"

Poor little Despotie Emperor! Where was her Sackermena?

"It may be that the gulphs will bear us down,  
It may be we shall reach the happy isles . . ."

"How these worries must increase the difficulties of study in the case of each one of you;" wrote a faithful friend, the Dowager Countess of Buchan, next day. "But then the certainty of success *somehow*, as the dear Newman used to say, when he meant that there were benedictions in the air; and that you will surely have worked out the greatest possible benefit for womankind for all generations, even if hostilities are prolonged, must be a support now and an abundant recompense, I hope, for all your toils when they are happily concluded."

About the same time another "honourable woman" was writing:

"SIR,

I venture to trouble you with a post office Order for £2,—payable from me to yourself,—as my small contribution to the Fund needed by the General Committee for securing a Complete Medical Education for Women in Edinburgh.

The question is so important, and the Lady-students have manifested so fine a spirit and temper under the harassing trials, that

a large proportion of their countrymen will, I trust, feel the obligation of sustaining them during their conflict with jealousies and prejudices which will scarcely be credited by a future generation.

Permit me to offer you my thanks for the service you render to a good cause by managing the financial concerns of the movement, and believe me, Sir, with much respect,

Yours,

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

W. L. Reid, Esq."

At the Senatus meeting on Oct. 21st., the question of admitting women to the First Professional Examination was discussed, and the Medical Faculty was instructed to examine them. It is interesting to know that all the candidates passed.

But S. J.-B. was not one of them. All her strength was being spent in carving out the way.

It was matter for congratulation, of course, that the schemes of the enemy had been foiled; but the friends of the women in the University were now more anxious than ever to raise the whole question on to a level above these harassing obstacles. At a meeting of the University Council Dr. Alexander Wood moved that "the University is bound in honour and justice to render it possible for these women who have already commenced their studies, to complete them."

"This," said the *Lancet*, "is precisely the ground we have always taken up about the matter; and we hope the General Council of the University will, by the adoption of Dr. Alexander Wood's motion, put an end to the controversy which has redounded so little to the credit of that school."

Dr. Wood made a brave and telling little speech, and was ably seconded by Mr. Alexander Nicolson. In moving the amendment, Professor Turner, with great shrewdness, quoted S. J.-B.'s letter to the Dean of the Medical Faculty of two years before (see p. 235), a letter which, at a superficial glance, looked like the weakest point in her case—the letter in which she had signified her willingness "to withdraw my application altogether if, after due and sufficient trial, it should be found impracticable to grant me a continuance of the favour which I now request"; and of course no one present knew enough of the facts to reply. It was

only after Dr. Wood's motion had been lost by 107 votes to 97, that S. J.-B. had an opportunity of pointing out—in the hospitable columns of the *Scotsman*—that the letter quoted had reference only to the tentative proposal that she, alone and without matriculation, should attend Professor Balfour's and Professor Allman's summer courses. This proposal the University had refused, "deferring the whole question till a permanent plan could be arranged and formally sanctioned by all the necessary authorities,—which was finally accomplished after eight months of consideration and delay."

This is one instance—out of hundreds—of S. J.-B.'s extraordinary ability to refute statements that *looked true*, that *might have been true*, that *were nearly true*,—by a precise quotation of facts. It was an ability that made for her more enemies than friends as life went on. Let it be noted, too, that, but for the generosity of the press, she never could have corrected such statements at all.

"To sum up the whole matter in one word," she wrote, "I will venture to say, that, instead of the daily trials of the past two years and the apparent deadlock at which we have now arrived, we should have found nothing but smooth paths for our feet, and no difficulties from either students or professors, had Dr. Christison but kept to the promise he voluntarily made to me at the close of my single interview—of two minutes—with him 2 years ago—'I shall vote against you, but I shall take no measures to oppose you.'"

Once more the *Lancet* made dignified protest :

"The Edinburgh school has come badly out of its imbroglio with the lady students. The motion of Dr. Alexander Wood, to which we made reference last week, was negatived by a majority of ten. As we then pointed out, the issue before the General Council was neither more nor less than this,—to keep faith with the female students whom the University had allowed to proceed two years in their medical curriculum. The Council was not asked to commit itself in the slightest degree to any opinion, favourable or unfavourable, to the admission of ladies to a medical career. It had only to concede, in common courtesy, not to say common fairness, the right to which the best legal advice had clearly shown the female students to be entitled,—the right to carry on the studies they had been allowed to prosecute half way towards graduation. Will it be

believed? An amendment postponing the settlement of the difficulty till it had been duly considered by the authorities of the University, was put and carried; as if there was any more room for 'consideration' in the matter! Thus Edinburgh stands convicted of having acted unfairly towards seven ladies, whom she first accepted as pupils, and then stopped half-way in their career."<sup>1</sup>

Move and countermove follow with bewildering rapidity at this time. Within a fortnight Professor Muirhead is urging the Senatus to rescind the regulations for the admission of women to the University, reserving the rights of those already entered; and this is passed by a majority of one,—14 to 13.

Eighteen Professors, however, rose up in wrath to protest against this decision, and—as only fifteen, out of a total of thirty-five, could be got to support it,—the regulations of Nov. 1869, were confirmed by the University Court, and everything was left *in statu quo*!<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile—in addition to classes for the seniors—arrangements had to be made for the three new students who had entered. It was probably in connection with these that S. J.-B. received the following letter:

" 17 Drummond Place,  
December 23rd. /71.

DEAR MADAM,

As you will probably be aware before you receive this, I have been utterly unsuccessful in my attempts to bring my Colleague to my own way of looking at the matter in question.

I may mention to you that my own impression, derived from various conversations with several of the most prominent of your opponents, is that they would have but little objection to give you, or at least to make arrangements for giving you, the instruction you seek—*provided* it were sought as a favor and not claimed as

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<sup>1</sup> *Lancet*, November 4, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> "The Court find it inexpedient at present to rescind the said resolutions and regulations, and therefore decline to give effect to the decision of the Senatus. The Court must not be understood as indicating by this deliverance any opinion as to the claims of women to proceed to graduation, or as to the power of the University to confer on women degrees in the Faculty of Medicine." Commd. by direction of the University Court. J. Christison, W.S., Sec.

a right—in other words I think many of them are anxious to avoid making what might be called a precedent. This I give you confidentially and merely as an impression, but I have little doubt of its being at least nearly a correct one.

Believe me, dear Madam,

Yours truly,

P. G. TAIT."

This was the letter of a wise man, and it might, perhaps, have been better for the cause in the immediate future if S. J.-B. had acted on the advice it contained. Her reply is not forthcoming, but we know quite well that she was not prepared to run the risk involved in acting on the advice. Two women had already secured registration "by a postern gate," and that was not her aim. She longed—no one more—to write M.D. after her name; but she would, as a matter of course, have foregone that right forever, if, by so doing, she could have opened the gate for all.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ROYAL INFIRMARY

A YEAR previously to the date we have reached, Robert Louis Stevenson had written in a letter to his cousin :

“ You will probably know how nicely woman’s rights were received by some of my fellow students the other day. The female medicals were hooted, hissed and jostled till the police interfered. My views are very neutral. I quite believe that Miss Jex-Blake and the rest of our fellow studentesses are the first of a noble army, pioneers, Columbuses and all that sort of thing. But at the same time, Miss Jex-Blake is playing for the esteem of posterity. Soit, I give her posterity, but I won’t marry either her, or her fellows. Let posterity marry them. If posterity gets hold of this letter I shall probably be burnt in effigy by some Royal Female College of Surgeons of the future.”

It was many years before this letter was brought to S. J.-B.’s notice, and when it was, she received it with a hearty laugh of genuine appreciation. She enjoyed R. L. S. much more than he enjoyed her, but she had never had the smallest wish to marry him !

He was entirely wrong, moreover, in the assumption that the women students would have to wait for posterity to marry them. This very autumn of 1871—to the profound sorrow and discomfiture of many upholders of the movement—saw the engagement of no less than three of them. Mrs. Evans’ engagement has been already noted in a letter from Dr. Patrick Heron Watson. In a characteristic passage, we learn how the news of it came to S. J.-B.’s ears :

“ After my business over with R., I rose to go.

‘ Oh, sit down a minute. So your class is thinning ? ’ [Miss Anderson had been married a month before].



'Yes,' quoth I dolorously. 'We've lost one.'

'And I hear you're going to lose another!'

'Oh, no,' protestingly. 'I hope not.'

'But I think so.'

'Do you? Well, have you heard who?'

'Mrs. Evans.'

'Oh, no,—I don't believe it.'

'Well, she told me so herself.'

'*Did* she?—and who on earth to?'

R. got red up to top of bald crown. 'Have you no idea?'

'No,' (a fib by this time).

'Really no idea?'

'How should I?'

'Well,—she asked *me* to tell you about it,—does that give you an idea?'

'*Mr. R.*!—you don't mean to say it's you?'

Great redness, and 'Yes, I do.'

'Well!!!'—I hope your treachery will go between you and your sleep!'

'Now don't you be hard upon her! Will you go and see her?'

'No, certainly not. The most she can expect is that I don't send a policeman after her.'

'And brand her with D?'

'Yes. You may tell her I won't do that,—and that's the utmost she can expect!'

And leaving,—'Well, I think you're an uncommonly lucky man, but I hope your conscience will prevent you sleeping!'

This was all very well, but the blow was a severe one, especially as Miss Chaplin was married—to Professor Ayrton—to a month or two later.

"I do hope you and Miss Pechey will remain firm to the end," writes Miss M'Laren plaintively, "for really three marriages within six months is quite alarming."

How many times Miss Pechey was urged to forsake the good fight one cannot even roughly conjecture. Certainly very often.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following scrap has been inadvertently preserved. There is not even any certain indication to whom it is addressed:

"When I came into the Anatomical room and saw you sitting there dissecting, I was overpowered,—utterly conquered. When I spoke to you and you looked up at me to answer, the look you gave me was the coup de mort!—I determined then in my own mind to seek you for my wife. . . ."

But to see you as you were then with your superlative beauty, working

There was no time, however, to weep over fallen comrades. One must just give them decent burial, so to speak, and pass on. From this time forth the work in hand must take a two-fold direction :

1. The struggle in Edinburgh must be carried on with unabated energy, as if success were a matter of course.
2. Every enquiry must be made, with the utmost secrecy and discretion, as to a more hopeful solution of the problem elsewhere.

The following letters indicate some of the influences at work :

" 13 Sussex Square,  
Brighton.

1. November.

DARLING,

You must not think I don't sympathize with you, but I am so vexed and perplexed really I don't know what to say. I always hope you can see the next step in a clearer and brighter light than I do, and,—you are sure you have my best wishes. I am rather uneasy about you, being sure you must be worn and harassed, and can hardly know what to do next.

I am very glad the examinations were successfully passed. . . .

Your loving,

M. E. J.-B."

" Trinity College,  
Cambridge,

Oct. 18. 1871.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Mr. Sidgwick has shown me in " the Scotsman " a notice to the effect that they are attempting to exclude you from paying the fees at Edinburgh.

Are they making a final effort to reject you ? Will it be successful ? If so, have you any plan of action.

Please let us know, for Mr. Sidgwick and I have been consulting together, and have made up our minds that we will try all that we can now for your admission to this university, and we are ready to

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so bravely, so sensibly,—all fashion, frivolity and folly cast aside,—was to me so new, so strange and so admirable a sight, that on considering and re-considering it, I don't wonder at myself for flinging aside ordinary prudence to make a snatch at a jewel of such unusual brilliancy."

It is almost disappointing to reflect that the recipient of this tribute was not equally prepared to " fling aside ordinary prudence."

begin, if you feel that this is your best place to turn to, and if you need it. Let us know then.

We feel quite sure of ultimate success here in the matter of full admission of women to the whole benefits of the university.

Still we do not know how distant 'Ultimate' may be. We are not *sanguine* of success at present in your cause. Still we think it worth while trying, if it would materially help you.

I am,

Yours truly,

JAMES STUART."

So there were very brave people in Cambridge as well as in Edinburgh: for Mr. Stuart as well as Mr. Sidgwick knew all about that unfortunate speech and the lawsuit to which it led. S. J.-B. had scrupulously sent them the records; and, as a matter of fact, Mr. Sidgwick had been one of the many distinguished people who subscribed to the Fund for defraying the expenses of the lawsuit.

If only the struggle had ended here: if only the University had consented to give the women the little ledge they coveted on its precipitous wall: or, failing that, if some young, enlightened university had said, "Come to us!"—the story would be in all ways a pleasanter one to tell. But that is not how things happen in life. Removal to another university at this stage would simply have meant beginning the fight all over again; and Edinburgh—blundering old Edinburgh—was so kind, so homelike, with its great army of friends, many of them convinced that victory lay within sight, that the inducement to stay in spite of all was great. The very next turn of the wheel might revolutionize all things.

Meanwhile the protagonist had been on the strain for nearly three years, and she was growing very weary of the struggle: she was losing a little of the verve that had carried her on hitherto. The incessant canvassing, organizing and writing had developed her inherent business capacity to the last point, and was making her a little intolerant of unbusiness-like ways in other people. It was more difficult than formerly in journalism and in verbal argument to show herself all things to all men as she had done so finely in those first calls on the Professors. But she had not the smallest idea of giving

in: like a strong man lost in the snow, she was conscious mainly of a resolute determination to keep going on somehow.

"Your cause is sure to win," Dr. Guthrie said to her about this time; "but a cause may be won at the cost of a life."

"I know," she replied, "I am prepared to give it mine."

But she did not mean to die if she could help it until the work was done.

In any case the next move was fairly clear. The Annual Meeting of Contributors to the Royal Infirmary was coming round once more, and again the election turned on the question of the admission of the women to the wards. S.J.-B. went doggedly on with her canvassing, but the outer public was getting a little bored with the whole subject, and she herself had no longer the attraction of freshness and novelty. In those days perseverance was not reckoned a special virtue in a woman, and persistence was a positive vice. She received one nasty snub (conveyed through the office-boy) from one who had been almost a friend, and, in order to understand what this meant to her, we must remember that family tradition was strong in her still. Pelted with peas or pursued by a mud-throwing mob, she never for a moment forgot that she was, in her own way, *grande dame*. And now she was too tired to brush the little insult off. "I was fool enough to go out with eyes so full of tears that I doubted being fit for my next call."

But the moral thews and sinews were in fine fighting form, and the ideals of youth were as fresh as ever. The very words of the old inspiring quotations rose to her mind. How surprised the old managers would have been if they had heard them! They thought it was only that weary question of Miss Jex-Blake and the Infirmary.

Kindly folk were many, however, and every now and then she met an unexpected tribute of appreciation or respect; and sufficient votes were gained to make the dreary proceeding worth while.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was at this Christmas season that Miss Miranda Hill sent to her old friend, in the form of a brooch, a "winged Victory,"—meaning, she said, "many things,"—"the victory of a steadfast noble purpose over outward obstacles, of love over time."

Sometimes she would return from these missions to find herself called out to a slum maternity case undertaken through the mediation of a friendly doctor. Then,—

“ Home after 10 p.m. Then to write leader for Monday. Done about 12.15. Then to relight fire and get warm,—then bed ! ”

“ Sunday, [Dec.] 31st. Wrote paragraphs and finished article. Went down to Scotsman Office. . . .

Oh, dear, I hope the things will be in right tomorrow,—and oh, *how* I hope we may win !

We have 296 votes more or less promised. *We ought.*

Now,—‘ ring out the old, ring in the new ’—Ah, that it may be so in some things,—‘ Ring out the care that frets the mind ’<sup>1</sup>—Ring in quiet and peace and liberty,—‘ leave to toil ’.”

Next day the great meeting took place, and this time a large hall had been taken for the purpose.

As before, six candidates were proposed by those in power, and six by those in favour of the women. The task of the latter was made easier by the fact that the suggestion of mixed classes had been given up some two or three months before, the Committee for Securing a Complete Medical Education for Women in Edinburgh having undertaken to guarantee the payment of teachers, and to provide suitable rooms and accommodation for the classes, if the University should find this latter an insoluble problem.

Professor Christison pointed out incidentally that 80 beds at £40 a bed would be one item in the reckoning.

When the votes were counted there were :

For the Women, . . . . .	177
For the Powers, . . . . .	168

“ The result was received with great cheering and waving of handkerchiefs from the ladies’ party.”

Professor Masson then proceeded to move :

“ That henceforward all registered students of Medicine shall be admitted to the educational advantages of the Infirmary without distinction of sex,—all details of arrangements, however, being left to the discretion of the managers.”

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<sup>1</sup> “ Ring out the grief that saps the mind,” is Tennyson’s line. S. J.-B.’s version needs no explanation.

The hostile party raised an objection to this on the ground of want of adequate notice—though Professor Masson had, as a matter of fact, advertised it in the public papers as required—and, through an indescribable hubbub, the proposer stood his ground, ably supported by Professor Calderwood and by Mr. M'Laren, M.P. When it became clear that they were going to carry their point, the opposing party rose and left the hall almost *en masse*; and it was then that Dr. Guthrie made what proved to be his last public speech, in support of Professor Masson's motion. At the close of his peroration, with a wave of his hand towards the door through which the great retreat had taken place, he concluded with the lines S. J.-B. had quoted in her diary the night before,

“ Ring out the old, ring in the new, . . .  
Ring out the false, ring in the true ! ”

The motion was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

“ I, oh so tired ! ” says S. J.-B.,—“ hearing voices round me in a sort of swoon.”

Her letter-bag for the next few days was enough to put new life into anyone.

“ 24 Hill Street,  
Edinburgh.

“ My dear Miss Blake, and all your brave sisterhood, Three cheers for you and one cheer more ! My husband has just come back and told me of your victory.

May this be an augury of future success in every direction.

Ever very truly yours,

E. H. S. BLACKIE.”

A lawyer who had strenuously opposed the idea of mixed classes writes,

“ For your sake, I shall make my first charity this year £5 to the *Infirmary*.”

And no one was more enthusiastic than the young man who was demonstrator of Anatomy at the time of the riot :

“ It would be almost a mockery to wish you all a Happy New Year after such success. It is enough to turn one's head, but only, I suppose, the heads which hammered on so hard in defeat, or rather repulse, are not to be turned with victory.”

It would have been almost a mockery, certainly, though not in the sense he meant.

“Sunday, Jan. 7th. Hear that the doctors are going about getting their patients to sign papers,—exact tenor unknown.”

True enough, here were already the first mutterings of a fresh storm, and indeed, most people must have been rather uneasy at so terrifying a victory.

“Dear Miss Jex-Blake,” writes Dr. Heron Watson on January 5th, “See to it that there is a full representation on behalf of the ladies on Monday week at the adjourned meeting, as I expect foul play! . . .”

And another lawyer writes :

“DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I don't know whether you are taking any means to secure a muster of your friends at the Infirmary meeting on Monday week ; but I think it would be worth while to do so. I am afraid our opponents may attempt a surprise for the purpose of rescinding the Statute passed at last meeting as to the admission of Lady Students. I have not heard that they have any such plan on foot ; but as no notice requires to be given of any such motion, they may not improbably try it, trusting to our being off our guard.

Yours truly,

WILLIAM ROBSON.”

A fortnight after the Annual Meeting, the Contributors met to hear the result of a scrutiny of the votes, and it was then that the following unexpected issue—quite distinct, of course, from the immediate object of the scrutiny—was thrust upon them :

On the side of the women had voted,

28 firms,  
31 ladies,  
7 doctors.

On the side of the powers,

14 firms,  
2 ladies,  
37 doctors.

It was now claimed that the votes of firms were incom-

petent, and that the majority really lay on the other side.

"It mattered nothing," said the *Scotsman*,<sup>1</sup> "that firms had voted ever since the Infirmary was founded; that contributors qualified only as members of firms had, as has now been ascertained, sat over and over again on the Board of Management, and on the Committee of Contributors. It was of equally slight importance that the firms whom it was now sought to disqualify had been among the most generous benefactors of the charity, and that, with the imminent prospect before them of great pecuniary necessity, it would probably be impossible, without their aid, to carry out even the plans for the new building. The firms had voted in favour of the ladies, and the firms must go, if at least the law would (as it probably will not) bear out the medical men in their reckless endeavour to expel them."

An appeal to law, however, is a slow affair, and on this occasion there was obviously no inducement for the law to bestir itself unduly. It was not till July 23rd that Lord Jerviswoode pronounced the votes of firms to be perfectly valid.

The case was appealed to a higher court, where it did not come on for trial till the end of October: it was then again postponed and judgment was not given till December.

"Dec. 7th. Saturday. Judgment from Second Division in our favour on all points."

The Annual Meeting was now once more at hand, however, when new managers might be elected who were unfriendly to the women. Needless to say the woman's party lost no time. A Contributors' meeting was called for December 16th, and another for December 23rd, when a vote was passed admitting the women to the Infirmary on condition that their visits were to be separate from those of the men, and that they were to go only to those wards where their presence was invited by the physicians.

So at last they got their tickets, and began an attendance which was to "qualify" for graduation.

"Qualify" in the technical sense; assuredly not in any other. What the girl graduate of the present day would

<sup>1</sup> January 29, 1872.



say to such qualification, one need scarcely ask. Here is S. J.-B.'s account of it :

“ Dr. Balfour gave us a separate hour in his wards three times a week, and such chances of practical study as could be arranged from time to time. Dr. Watson's very large practice, as the most eminent surgeon in Scotland, made it impossible for him, at whatever inconvenience, to repeat his visit in this manner, and our enemies would have gained their point, had he not, with a kindness which I find myself even now quite unable to acknowledge duly, given up for the two whole winter sessions his Sunday mornings (his one day of rest) to our instruction, while steadily refusing to accept any fees whatever for this great sacrifice of his time and strength. Few more chivalrous acts were ever done, and I only hope he found his reward in the lifelong gratitude of a dozen women, who were not at that time too much accustomed to such kindness and courtesy as his.”

To the end of her life, S. J.-B. looked upon these two men as “ the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,” and another name she would have added with (in one sense) even better reason—that of Dr. Peel Ritchie, who, a strong Conservative, absolutely and avowedly at that time without sympathy for the “ cause,” from a sheer sense of fair play, gave up his class of men at the Royal Dispensary in order to teach a class of women instead.

Of course S. J.-B. was a “ celebrity ” by this time. Here is an amusing letter from a distinguished man who had been asked to meet her and her friends at dinner :

[Letter undated.]

MY DEAR EDITOR,

Wae's me that I am engaged on Saturday ! If I could on any decent pretence get off I would do it *aftsoons*, for apart from the pleasure of meeting yourself and Mrs. R., I would like fine to meet the other ladies in such company, especially *some* of them. I won't say which !

But I accepted an invitation the other day from — to meet a Mr. — a very nice Irishman that's working at our Celtic MSS., and I promised to show the Milesian the way. So though I would go far for the sake of the ladies and of you, I feel that it would be rather too flagrant a breach of faith to tell old — that I have another engagement which I had *forgotten*. I wish he or his wife would take some harmless disease for a day or two and put off their dinner.

I needn't say that I appreciate immensely the distinction of being asked as the one man in Edinburgh worthy of admission to that select company! It's equal to the Cross of the Legion of Honour and a great deal better. There's something in the idea too that piques the imagination. It's as if—but far better—a favoured mortal got a special card per Ganymede, to sup quietly in Olympus with Mr. and Mrs. Jupiter and the Misses Minerva, Diana and Urania: or like being asked by a Flamen and his wife to meet three of the Vestal Virgins over a jar of Falernian; or again like an invitation from the grand Lama to have a little jollification with a few Buddhist lady abbesses in the innermost shrine of the great temple at Lassa, or from a chief of Carbonari to take a glass and pipe with Mazzini, Garibaldi, etc. There's no end of the things it suggests.

As to your unworthy fears, fie upon them! You are more to be envied than the Sultan, the Pope or Brigham Young.

Hoping to have a chance some other time of doing homage to the Trinity, and to have the pleasure soon of calling upon Mrs. Russel.

I rest,

Ever Yours,

—."

And her fame—or notoriety—extended to the most unexpected classes of society. "Miss Jex-Blake had that house last year," the driver of a Highland coach would say, pointing with his whip in the direction of the farm where she had stayed. Her name occurred repeatedly in that year's pantomime, and Harlequin and Columbine had called to ask if she had any objection to this,—an incident which she always recalled with amusement and appreciation. The main reference, as it happened, was quite complimentary. A game was played on the stage in which various Edinburgh dignitaries were the cards; but "Miss Jex-Blake" took the trick.

Her dislike of publicity was great, but she had long since hardened herself to endure it in so far as was necessary for her work's sake. Beyond that she drew the line absolutely. The press rang with her name for a few years, but she steadily refused to be interviewed. It was nothing to her that the public had not the smallest idea of the more human side of her character. "Nothing," she wrote in response to many requests, "would induce her to consent to the sale of her photograph." Her holidays were spent in absolute retirement, and intimate friends will never forget how, on

the first day in the country, the words would rise to her lips,—

“ The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number,  
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.”

A memorandum of this period directs that, in case of her death, the funeral shall be as simple and inexpensive as possible, and that the headstone—if headstone there be—shall bear only her name, the dates, and the words,—“ Then are they glad because they be quiet.”

“ Partly you see, I am so tired,” she had written half to herself and half to Miss Du Pre in February,—“ not physically or even mentally exactly. I could come up to any given exertion of either kind for the time being; but my whole nature is strained and wearied. I can get up energy for nothing,—can but just get through the day’s work in the day and long for rest!

‘ Hades must rest us for ages,  
Ere we can glory see.’

No, my glory *is* rest! . . .

How strange lives are! Miss Anderson’s husband—married Oct. 5th (?), died on Monday, November 12th,—love enough to change a life for, and it,—no, not *it*, the marriage,—ends in 4 months!”

It was about this time that her friend Mrs. Unwin died. Up to the last she had followed the Edinburgh campaign with intense interest and sympathy. S. J.-B. had promised that, whatever the claims of her work might be, she would pay a last visit to the Yorkshire home in case of “ utter need”; but Mrs. Unwin refused to make this plea. Resolutely she bore her own cross: and, with a last message of “ deepest love and regard,” she passed away.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ACTION AGAINST THE SENATUS

MADAM,

. . . I never read or heard of such a hard case as yours—and so peculiar. It might be worth while to seek the advice of a Solicitor—who would consult counsel—to find out whether you and your disappointed friends have no case at Law. I would (if it be possible) just like to know what the Court of Session would have to say, touching—not only the arbitrariness, but the gross injustice, if not absolute illegality, of the whole affair. You matriculate—get through with about half of your classes—great loss of time—money—disappointment—even exasperation or half ruin—all incurred: and are then summarily brought to—made to fairly stick—and yet no legal remedy! I can't believe it. I would try and find out,—but yet, it is an awful prospect. The length of time, and expense that would have to be borne, ere any decision could be come to. You seem to me like one who took a leap, without *seeing from the first*,<sup>1</sup> where the leap was to land you. For surely, had you foreseen all this,—you never would have set foot in Edinburgh. . . .

The tide is coming in and nothing can retard it,—nothing worth speaking of. And these views will be realised and acted upon some day. Depend upon it.

The day will come when women will sit cheek by jowl with men through a six months' course of Anatomy, Physiology, Midwifery, etc., etc., right cheerfully, and neither jeering nor sneering there—nor winks nor any other impertinences—singularly misplaced and out of time—if certain important personages could only see matters rightly. Yes, and walk the Hospitals—surgical and medical—and the lying-in Hospital also, the Eye Infirmary, the Cancer one and the Consumptive one, and the Lock into the bargain. And then all these important obstructives will be dead, buried, rotten—forgotten—and their writings selling at three halfpence per lb.”

<sup>1</sup> “ Believe and venture ! as for pledges,  
The gods give none.”

The above is quoted from the letter of a complete stranger, —the so-called “man in the street” apparently, and is a sample of many that came pouring in upon S. J.-B. during those troublous years. “Has the University any *right* to act like this?” friends kept asking constantly; and we know that more than one of the Professors had advised an appeal to a Court of Law.

Towards the close of 1871, S. J.-B. seems to have consulted her brother on the subject, drawing from him the following letters:

“The College,  
Cheltenham.  
Nov. 18. 1871.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

I do not think you can gain anything by suing the Professors or by going to Law with the University in any other shape.

It may be too late now to persuade, but it would be at all times hopeless to compel, a great University to open its doors to ladies.

I return the Queries and Opinions: and should distrust legal opinions that advised further law-suits.

It is most provoking, and your treatment has been unjust: but it comes to my mind to this, When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another.

You can make better use of your time by getting University instruction elsewhere, than by throwing legal pebbles at the University gates of Auld Reekie: and life being short you had better gather up the net result of your Scotch experience, and go to Zürich or Paris, or wherever your own knowledge and judgment lead you.

I am exceedingly sorry for you; but I see nothing else to be done, so far as I understand the facts.

It is very tantalizing that the majorities have always been so narrow: and that there has been so much to justify sanguine friends in their advice.

I shall be glad to hear your decision, and both Hetty and I are very sorry for you.

Your affect. brother,  
T. W. J.-B.”

“The College,  
Cheltenham,  
Nov. 21. 1871.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

There is more to be said for legal action than I knew of: for I thought Paris or Zürich degree was legal qualification in

England : though of course to go abroad for degree is objectionable in several ways, and the language must slightly increase the difficulties.

Still there is nothing to be said for legal action unless it is likely to succeed : and of that your Scotch lawyers are the best judges ; though their expectations hitherto have been more sanguine than accurate in your case.

I am sorry I cannot be of much use, and very sorry the Trades Union is so strong and so well organized.

It must be very annoying, and is certainly a horrible waste of time : but half of most people's time is spent in untying the foolish knots of blind opponents.

Hetty joins in love.

Your affect. brother,

T. W. J.-B."

" 13 Sussex Square, .  
Brighton.

Jan. 21. 1872.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

One line to wish you many happy returns of the day, and to tell you that all is going on very well here. . . .

We were very glad that you crept into such a haven of rest as Mrs. Nichol has to offer you : and I am quite sure the strain of so much fighting and organizing must be very great.

It seems hardly possible that you should get on with your own Medical education while there is so much polemical business on hand ; but if you carry the point for all women, it will be cheaply bought at the sacrifice of two or three years of individual training in books and bones."

"When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another."

This was advice which S. J.-B. had always kept well in mind, though not with regard to Paris and Zürich ; and enquiries as to other British Universities had been diligently prosecuted. St. Andrews was the one that most naturally suggested itself, "as a comparatively rural University, without male students of medicine, and yet with the power to grant degrees." It is true that the Medical Curriculum at St. Andrews was—and is—very incomplete ; but the deficiency might be made good by some teaching-school unable—or unwilling—to grant degrees. Professor Lewis Campbell and Mrs. Campbell had taken a deep interest in the project of

making their University the Alma Mater of the women students; S. J.-B. had visited them at St. Andrews in the autumn of 1871, with Miss Massingberd Mundy<sup>1</sup>; and there are a number of cordial letters witnessing to the genuine desire of both the Professor and his wife for the success of the scheme.

Their enthusiasm was not typical of the University, however, though Principal Tulloch "seemed friendly in a vague way"; and all hope in this direction had, for the moment, to be given up.

Meanwhile S. J.-B., on behalf of herself and her fellow-students, had made a final appeal to the University Court of Edinburgh to provide them with the means of completing their education, and she had also forwarded to them a farther legal opinion from the Lord Advocate and Sheriff Fraser to the effect that the University authorities had full power to permit the matriculation of women in 1869; that the resolutions then passed amounted to a permission to women to "*study Medicine*" in the University, and that therefore the women concerned were entitled to demand the means of doing so; and finally, that if such means were persistently refused, the legal mode of redress lay in an Action of Declarator.

On January 8th the University Court resolved that it was not in their power to comply with the requirements of the women as regarded teaching: the whole question, they said, had been "complicated by the introduction of the subject of graduation, which is not essential to the completion of a medical or other education": if the ladies would altogether give up the question of graduation, and be content with certificates of proficiency, the Court would try to meet their views.

"They forgot," says S. J.-B., "that though a degree is 'not essential' to a medical education, it is absolutely indispensable to any practical use of it,—that is to any lawful practice of the medical profession."

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<sup>1</sup>Miss Massingberd Mundy was one of the junior students who did not go on to graduation, but her gaiety and humour made her a real acquisition to the little circle in the trying days.

She offered, however, to waive the question of graduation,—pending an authoritative decision as to the powers and duties of the University,—if arrangements might meanwhile be made for the women to continue their education. To this the Court agreed. Farther correspondence, however, elicited the fact that the Court had no intention of coming to any decision with regard to its own powers, and that it did not mean to take any active steps in the matter.

“On the other hand,” says S. J.-B., “we had no less authority than that of the Lord Advocate of Scotland for believing that we were absolutely entitled to what we had so humbly solicited, and that a Court of Law would quietly award to us what seemed unattainable by any other means; we had the very widely spread and daily increasing sympathy of the community at large, and received constant offers of help from friends of every kind. . . . Under these circumstances we did the one thing that remained for us to do, we brought an Action of Declarator against the Senatus of the University,—praying to have it declared that the Senatus was bound, in some way or other, to enable us to complete our education and to proceed to the medical degree which would entitle us to take place on the Medical Register among the legally-qualified practitioners of medicine.”

Of course the news of this daring step was forthwith noised abroad, and S. J.-B. received a protesting letter from Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, urging her not to waste on an uncertain lawsuit, money that might be so much more profitably spent in some other way.

The following is S. J.-B.'s reply :

“DEAR DR. BLACKWELL,

I suppose rumour very seldom does report things correctly, so I do not wonder that you have been misinformed about the action which we are on the point of bringing against the Senatus. It is not one for breach of promise (what fun *Punch* would make of it if it were !) but simply an Action of Declarator whereby we pray one of the Judges of Session to declare that the Senatus is bound to complete our education, according to the decided opinion given by the Lord Advocate of Scotland.

In the brief space of a letter it would be impossible for me to submit to you all the facts and grounds on which our intention is based, tho' I should be glad to explain them in detail if you were on the spot, but you will be glad to hear that not only are the whole



of the students here of the same mind as myself on this point, but our determination is strengthened by the advice and concurrence of some of the wisest heads in Edinburgh, including those of friendly Professors. I hope therefore that you will believe that, though you find a difficulty at a distance from the field of action in concurring in our present step, you would probably do so if all the facts of the case were as thoroughly before you as they are before us and our counsellors.

It is just because I find that London friends are so little au courant of the facts that I am hoping to give an explanatory lecture when in town next month, and I need not say how doubly glad I shall be to give every explanation and information to you to whom [all] of us medical women owe so much gratitude and respect as our pioneer and forerunner.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

Now that there was something definite to be done, S. J.-B. was in her element once more and the following letters make it very clear that her "counsellors" were working *con amore*.

"University Club,  
Edinburgh.

18 March, 72.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Under the dread of bringing disgrace on the whole masculine race, I applied myself today during all the time I could command to the framing of the great Summons, and I brought it up to a point at which I think nothing of importance remains to be added except the historical statement and the pleas in law, both of which you may take for granted will be made right. If I can get them done this evening I'll send them to you.

I thought as you were in a hurry to see the thing I had better let you have what I had done at once, and so I took it to White Millar and left it with him to send you. There must be a distinction drawn between you and the other ladies who are ready for the first professional exam., and the others who are not. So you will please note on the margin of the M.S. who those are that occupy these respective positions and the exact stage at which the less advanced ones have arrived. I must also have the dates and exact terms of the several resolutions and letters referred to in the last article, so as to make the chronological statement complete and accurate. I would like before the thing is finally adjusted to consult all the available sources of information on the subject of graduation and

the original constitution of the University, and also I think if Bologna was our model, as seems to be taken for granted, that it would be worth while to communicate with some one there, such as the Secretary of the Senatus, if they have one, or the Librarian, to get authoritative statistics on the subject.

I have not heard from the Dean of Faculty yet in reply to my inquiry on the point of professional punctilio involved in my undertaking the case, but another eminent legal friend whose advice I highly value thinks on the whole that I ought *not* to undertake it. This did not prevent me, however, from doing the Summons! Meantime you needn't mention that I am doing it, in case of my not going on with the case, which might lead to unfavourable remarks, if it were supposed that I had begun and afterwards backed out of it. I'll be very sorry to do so, if that is the Dean's opinion.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

ALEX. NICOLSON."

Apparently the decision of the Dean was adverse to Mr. Nicolson, for the case was taken up, and very ably argued, by Sheriff Fraser and Mr. M'Laren (afterwards Lord M'Laren), who had been junior counsel in the libel case.

"I am quite certain," writes Mr. Fraser to S. J.-B., "that upon a more thorough investigation it will be found that women did attend the Universities and graduated. . . . When you are up in London just now perhaps you would refer to some of the books in the British Museum, mentioned by Watts, which are not in the Advocates' Library. You need not trouble yourself with the University of Edinburgh, as I have gone over the whole Records of the Council and of the Professors since the institution of the University, and I cannot find a single case of a woman being a student. The same I fear will be the result of an examination of the records of the other universities. This was natural, for, until recently, both the law and the social customs of Scotland, like those of other barbarous countries, regarded women as nothing else but domestic drudges and field hands."

It was useless, of course, to suggest the British Museum. S. J.-B. had long since exhausted that mine. And she had no great faith in the information to be derived from correspondence with foreign secretaries and librarians. She had worked that vein too. It still remained to send an emissary to examine the archives of the Italian Universities at first hand, and this was what she now resolved to do. Someone had

commended to her interest about this time an able and well-educated young lady whose health was causing her friends some anxiety, and, after watching and tending her for some time S. J.-B. despatched her on the mission, duly armed with the following *dossier* :

“ 1. At each University get access, if possible, to the official archives and lists of students, and make a complete list of every woman who studied there, with date, Faculty, and other particulars.

2. If you cannot get access yourself, get the lists made by some official, and, if possible, compare it with originals or other authorities.

3. If possible get the Secretary or Librarian, or some Professor to attest the list with his signature, as truly extracted from the records.

4. Pay any necessary fees, having as far as possible arranged for these beforehand.

5. Make copies in one book of every list obtained, of name and address of each person making or attesting such lists, and of all additional information likely to be of value.

6. Send off attested lists to me in registered letters as soon as obtained, marking in your M.S. book the exact duplicate in case of loss and sending a separate letter to Miss P. to announce dispatch.

7. Do not let your own M.S. book out of your hands for any purpose.

8. Send all lists on foolscap and not on foreign paper.”

The ambassador seems to have carried through her mission most efficiently, and an imposing array of names was the result. At any rate *that* vein was now worked out.

In the meantime “ the great Summons ” was duly delivered, and on March 27th the Senatus met to consider what action they should take with regard to it. We get the following informal account of what took place from Miss Pechey :

“ I could not get particulars of the Senatus meeting . . . till too late to write last night, but it appears that it was first moved to defend the action ; then Fleeming Jenkin proposed that an attempt should be made to have an amicable lawsuit. This was negatived by 17 to 10, and then the other motion *not* to defend the action being put against the first, was negatived by 22 to 5. Many of our friends voted to defend,—Wilson amongst others. He says he feels sure that the thing will never be fairly settled without a legal decision. I saw him today in his office. He is very anxious you should get some member to ask a question when the Parliamentary grant is

being arranged.<sup>1</sup> He told me the enemy were dreadfully angry at the suit, from which he concluded that our Summons is well drawn up."

"This was the great argument for assenting to the corporate defence," writes Professor Masson, "i.e. that the Senatus could not possibly let judgment go by default, which would yield all your demands (compulsion of Professors, etc.) and yet not really settle the thing, inasmuch as the Professors or anyone might afterwards reopen the whole judgment. On the same ground it is that friends don't seem to want to stir individually. They say the defence is corporately by the Senatus and everybody will understand that, and hence that individual secession is superfluous. Tait, however, said he would consult his lawyer, and Craufurd and Jenkin meditated something of the same."

On the other hand, six members of the Senatus—anxious though they well might be to have the weary question settled one way or the other—simply could not allow the resolution to pass without protest, and the following minute is duly recorded in the books of the University :

"We dissent from and protest against the resolution of the Senatus of March 27, 1872, to undertake the defence of the action. This we do for the following reasons :—(1.) Because we see no just cause for opposing the admission of women to the study and practice of medicine ; but, on the contrary, consider that women who have honourably marked out such a course of life for themselves, ought to be forwarded and aided in their laudable endeavour as much as possible, by all who have the means, and especially by those having authority in any University or other institution for education ; (2.) Because, in particular, we feel such aid and encouragement, rather than opposition and discouragement, to be due from us to those women who have enrolled themselves in the University of Edinburgh, and we entirely concur, with respect to them, in the desire expressed by Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, the Rector of the University, that they should obtain what they ask—namely, a complete medical education, crowned by a degree ; (3.) Because we have seen no sufficient reason to doubt the legal and constitutional powers of our University to make arrangements that would be perfectly adequate for the purpose, and we consider the public questioning of

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<sup>1</sup> S. J.-B. appealed to Sir Robert Anstruther ; and there is a business-like note from Lady Anstruther, asking for a very brief summary of all the main events,—just the thing that only S. J.-B. could supply.

The matter was brought forward in Aug. 1872, on Sir Robert Anstruther's behalf, by Sir D. Wedderburn, see below.

such powers, in present circumstances, by the University itself, or any of its component bodies, unnecessary, impolitic, and capable of being construed as a surrender of permanent rights and privileges of the University, in order to evade a temporary difficulty; (4.) Because, without pronouncing an opinion on the question now raised, as to the legal rights which the pursuers have acquired by matriculation in the University, admission already to certain examinations, or otherwise, to demand from the University continued medical instruction and the degree on due qualification, we yet believe that they have thereby, and by the general tenor of the proceedings, both of the Senatus and of the University Court in their case hitherto, acquired a moral right, and created a public expectation, which the University is bound to meet by the full exercise of its powers in their behalf, even should it be with some trouble; (5.) Because, with these convictions, and notwithstanding our utmost respect for those of our colleagues from whom we may have the misfortune to differ on the subject, we should individually feel ashamed of appearing as defenders in such an action, and should account any such public appearance by us in the character of opponents to women desiring to enter an honoured and useful profession, a matter to our discredit."

The following are the names of the six<sup>1</sup> Professors who felt bound thus to stand out against the arguments of their colleagues.

John Hughes Bennett, M.D., Professor of the Institutes of Medicine,

David Masson, M.A., Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature,

Henry Calderwood, LL.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy,

James Lorimer, M.A., Professor of Public Law,

Archibald H. Charteris, D.D., Professor of Biblical Criticism and Biblical Antiquities,

William Ballantyne Hodgson, LL.D.,<sup>2</sup> Professor of Political Economy.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to these six, Professor Fleeming Jenkin and Professor Cosmo Innes removed their names from the list of defenders.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Hodgson was a recent addition to the professorial staff, and a great asset to the women's cause.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE LORD ORDINARY'S JUDGMENT

" DID you advertise your lecture in the *Lancet*? I expect you will have a lot of blackguardly doctors there in consequence. Don't have any libel cases, and don't be hard on the students. They're very bad, but they're not so bad as the Professors.<sup>1</sup> I know you are very busy writing and so on, and that there would be plenty of copying for me to do if only I were at hand. Don't you want me to bully and be bullied by?

How I wish I could be in the gallery to make faces at you and throw peas!"

An admirable and characteristic letter, this, from Miss Pechey. Was a bracing message of warning and sympathy to a senior and chum ever more tactfully and lightly delivered?

On April 25th, after some days in the country, S. J.-B. went to London and was met by Miss Du Pre and Miss M'Laren, who "heard and finally polished up the lecture," which was delivered the following day at St. George's Hall in the presence of a large and curiously assorted audience. The Earl of Shaftesbury, who occupied the chair, was supported by Professor Lewis Campbell, Rev. Dr. Martineau, Mrs. Garrett Anderson, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the Dowager Countess of Buchan, and other well-known folk, and among the general public were a number of girlhood's friends, including Miss Ada Benson, Miss Miranda Hill, and many "modern women,"—with a sprinkling of Norfolk cousins. In the course of his

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact a number of students came—unasked—to serve as stewards.

address the Chairman made a shrewd remark, of which time has proved the truth :

“ The argument that women were not wanted in the medical profession struck him as very singular. He was old enough to remember when railways and electric telegraphs were not wanted for the simple reason that they were not known. When they became known and tried, we could not do without them, and in all probability it would be the same with reference to ladies in the medical profession.”

In many ways the lecture was a success, and it was largely quoted and referred to in the press ; but, for the ordinary hearer, it was overloaded with statistics, and—with a view to that ever-possible action for libel—the lecturer kept herself too well in hand. It is amusing to find *The Christian World* hinting a regret that she “ had not really worked herself up into a passion ” in narrating the injustice and vexations to which she had been exposed.

On the other hand, Mrs. Priscilla Bright M'Laren, an unbiassed expert, expressed the wish that the lecture should be delivered throughout the length and breadth of the land. The publication of a pamphlet, she said, would not have the same effect, because most people never have their sympathies thoroughly roused unless they come face to face with the person who has been persecuted. “ If you could be seen and *heard*,” she wrote, “ you would produce a wonderful effect in favour of the cause you have at heart.”

S. J.-B. had serious thoughts of carrying out this suggestion, but—in the interests of her own health—one is glad to record that wiser counsels prevailed.

“ Thank you *very, very* much, darling, for your telegram,” writes Mrs. Jex-Blake, the day after the lecture. “ I thought if you knew how anxious I had been the last few hours, you would send one, but I did not at all expect it.”

“ I have not known where to direct to keep adding my rejoicing at the many accounts of the success of your lecture. Well, I am very very glad for you and with you, and I pray things may somehow take a fresh start. How very nice of some medical students to come and officiate. I wish Professor Masson could have been there.”

“ I am very glad to think of you as once more snug at home and I hope with less work in view and some anxieties abated. . . . I

am very glad indeed you have given up going about lecturing. . . . Tom, too, thinks you very wise to give it up : he was struck with your looking so worn, and very vexed to see you so."

It is interesting to note that S. J.-B. had taken an invalid friend home with her to recruit ! At the same time she is writing to a protégée :

" I have seen Dr. Blackwell, and think she is rather disposed to give you the work. . . . I think you should go in your bonnet, and look sage, and not seem too eager for the work, and put a good price on yourself,—say £2 a week, or, oh, you would accept £40 for the 6 months, etc. And be very confident you can do it all, if she asks you to call on her."

This is really the most worldly letter that S. J.-B. ever wrote !

In all these later happenings, one misses the name of Mrs. Butler, who had stood by S. J.-B. so enthusiastically in the day of small things. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Butler was now fully embarked on her own heroic campaign, and both Mrs. Garrett Anderson and S. J.-B. had failed to give her their support. Thinking differently from each other on many points, characterised indeed by a fundamentally different way of looking at life, the two medical women alike realized the complications of modern civilization too profoundly to add the stupendous question that occupied Mrs. Butler to a programme that was already involved and difficult enough. Mrs. Butler felt their attitude keenly, and it was evidently with mingled feelings that she received a letter from Miss Pechey about this time, asking the privilege of adding her name and that of Canon Butler to the ever-growing Committee.

" My dear Miss Pechey," she writes, " You are welcome to use my own and my husband's names if you think they will do your cause *any good*. We cannot conceive that they would, and, on that ground alone, we should be as glad that you should not use them. It had better be left to Miss Jex-Blake's judgment.

" All the world knows that we are on opposite sides on one of the most vital questions of the day, and that the Medical ladies have no sympathy with the efforts being made to get rid of the scandal of a great State system of legalised Prostitution, and therefore it



appears to Mr. Butler and me an inconsistency that our names should appear in any such adverse connexion, deeply as we desire the prosperity and success of the medical woman movement. . . ."

"Dear Mrs. Butler," writes S. J.-B. in reply,— "As Miss Pechey tells me that you leave me to decide whether or no to place on our Committee your name and Mr. Butler's, I write to say that I shall most gladly avail myself of your permission so to use your names.

I am glad to say that our Committee is made up of over a thousand friends who not only differ widely on the point to which you refer, but among whom differences no doubt exist on almost every other question, social, political and religious.

As we cannot hope that even the most conscientious among us will always agree on matters of judgment, I am sure that the only wise rule is to keep each question distinct by itself, and to welcome for it the support of all who care for its success, whether or no they agree on other points.

With kind regards to Mr. Butler, believe me,

Yours truly,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

The breach was never quite healed. When people care more for great causes than for personal pleasure and satisfaction, the loss of a friend must sometimes be taken as part of the day's work. *Sunt lachrymae rerum.*

Meanwhile the work of propaganda was going on steadily, and, as S. J.-B. had given up the idea of lecturing in the great towns, she proceeded, as the next best thing, to publish her lecture, in conjunction with her historical researches on the subject of Medical Women, in the form of a small volume.

Just as she was seeing this through the press, news came of the illness of her Mother, who was visiting the cousins at Bylaugh Park.

"June 17.

DARLING MOTHER,

I am *very* sorry to hear that you have had such an attack again. I should be really unhappy if I did not believe and trust in you that you would telegraph for me if you at all wished for me, or if you felt really seriously ill. Am I right in so trusting you?

I am sure they will take all the care they can of you, and I hope you will be good and wise enough to eat all you can, broth at first, and then as much meat and vegetables as possible—and lots of strawberries!—are they ripe yet at Bylaugh?

You know that I am doing Dispensary work now, and have several patients of all kinds to look after, but I envy the doctor that has my old lady instead of me.

If you decide against going to Wales, suppose you come up here straight from Norfolk, and we have a quiet month quite alone together?—somewhere in the Highlands—if I have to give up Brighton.

Of course I shall send you your *own* copy of my new book myself, but Miss Pechey will send any quantity more that you may order for giving away, etc.

How good of dear old Auntie to write!

Yours lovingly,

SOPH."

The illness, however, rapidly assumed a dangerous character, and S. J.-B. was telegraphed for next day.

"Lucky was up," she says [she had been ill herself], "and received the telegram by 9.50 a.m. Got things packed and off by 10.25 train. Thunder and lightning whole way up. Reached Peterbro about 6.30,—Lynn 9.15. Got a carriage and drove to Swaffham . . .—thence to Bylaugh, arriving at 2.45 a.m. Crept up to Mother's room,—she, 'My darling!'—She had been nervous and restless, but slept, holding my hand.

Oh, the horror of seeing her all shrunk together in bed, hardly articulate,—I thought dying.

And had been very nearly . . ."

As usual when life was doing its worst, there follow a few blank pages in the diary,—pages that were to be filled in some day! "I am so glad," wrote Miss Jane Cubitt from Fritton,—Miss Cubitt was the "sensible cousin" of the childhood, who could do equations—"I am so glad that you have arrived at Bylaugh. I feel now that all that can be done will be done." And fortunately on this occasion recovery came more rapidly than the doctors had thought possible.

S. J.-B. returned to Edinburgh on the 8th July, not a moment too soon. She was called out to a case the evening of her arrival—having travelled north by day—and she proceeded forthwith to finish seeing her book through the press. Law business, too, was urgently claiming her return. On Wednesday, the 17th July, the historic lawsuit came on before Lord Gifford.

It must be understood that this lawsuit, though of almost infinite importance to the women, was in no way a dramatic affair like the last. In the nature of the case it afforded no sensations to provincial papers. An Action of Declarator is "for a decree defining and declaring the right of the pursuer,"<sup>1</sup> and the evidence in Court was given by Counsel only.

The women repeated in effect the requests they had so often made to the University, viz. that the Professors should either receive them as members of their classes, or else appoint (or recognize) other lecturers who would. The defence consisted substantially of two pleas: 1. that all parties are not called (see below); and 2. that the Senatus has not the power to do what it is asked to do; in other words, (a) that the University existed for men only, and, (b) that the University authorities in making this experiment, had never intended to admit women to *graduation*. If they did so intend, the intention was *ultra vires*; and indeed they probably went beyond their powers when in 1869 they framed regulations admitting women to share their privileges at all.

The hearing of the case lasted two days, and it was fully reported in the Scottish daily papers of July 18th and 19th. Much of it, of course, consisted of sheer technical detail that has long since lost interest, but Lord Gifford's judgment—delivered eight or nine days after the hearing of Counsel—was characterized by a grip of the whole situation and enlivened by a warmth of human interest that make it a landmark in the history, not only of medical women, but of the whole Feminist movement. If he allowed his sympathy with the pursuers to appear rather too clearly, this was surely a fault that, in view of all the circumstances, may well be reckoned to him for righteousness. The gist of the judgment is contained in the following sentences:

"The Lord Ordinary finds that, according to the existing constitution and regulations of the said University of Edinburgh, the pursuers are entitled to be admitted to the study of medicine in the said University, and that they are entitled to all the rights and privileges of lawful students in the said University, subject only to the conditions specified and contained in the said regulations of 12th November

<sup>1</sup> See S. J.-B.'s letter to Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, pp. 356-7.

1869 : Finds that the pursuers, on completing the prescribed studies, and on compliance with all the existing regulations of the University preliminary to degrees, are entitled to proceed to examination for degrees in manner prescribed by the regulations of the University of Edinburgh."

In the "Note," the Lord Ordinary discusses the case in detail :

"It is not easy to over-estimate the importance of the questions involved in the present action. The decision may affect, in various ways, not only the interests of the pursuers, and of all who are similarly situated, but also the future welfare of the University, and indirectly the well-being of the community at large who are interested in securing the services of thoroughly educated and accomplished medical practitioners.

The Lord Ordinary has endeavoured to approach the consideration of the questions dispassionately, and free from all prejudices or prepossessions. He has also endeavoured to keep in view that his functions are merely judicial and not legislative, and that his duty is simply to declare and apply the law as it at present stands, and in no way to endeavour to amend it, however strong his convictions of what the law ought to be. . . .

The importance of the question to the present pursuers, and to all ladies who, like them, may contemplate the practice of medicine as a profession, lies in this, that, by the provisions of the Medical Act of 1858 no one is entitled to be registered as a medical practitioner without possessing a medical degree from one or other of the universities of the United Kingdom, or a licence equivalent thereto from certain established medical bodies mentioned in the Act. A foreign or colonial degree is not available, and does not entitle to registration unless the holder thereof has been in practice in Great Britain previous to October 1858. Unless the pursuers, therefore, succeed in obtaining degrees, they will be practically excluded from the profession of medicine, for they are not in a position to demand licences from any of the authorised medical bodies, and it can scarcely be expected that they will prosecute their medical studies merely in order to be hereafter classed with empirics, herbalists or medical botanists, or with those who, in common language, are denominated quacks. Without legal registration under the Medical Act of 1858, the pursuers would be denied all right to recover fees ; they would be incapable of holding any medical appointment ; and they would be subject to very serious penalties if they so much as attempted to assume the name or title of medical practitioners.

It is a fact, whatever may be its effect in law, that no University in Great Britain has ever yet granted a degree to a lady. The

Medical Register of Great Britain only contains the name of two female practitioners—Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell and Dr. Garrett Anderson. Dr. Blackwell obtained her degree in America, and, being in practice in Great Britain before 1858, she obtained registration in virtue of the exception in the Act. Dr. Garrett Anderson obtained a licence from the Apothecaries' Hall, London, and is registered as such; but, since her admission, regulations have been made which prevent any other lady from hereafter obtaining a licence from the Apothecaries' Hall. Accordingly the course pursued by Dr. Blackwell and Dr. Anderson is not open to any of the pursuers, and their only hope of being allowed to practise medicine in Great Britain rests upon their being able to obtain a degree from one or other of the Universities.

*Practically, therefore, the questions are now raised for the first time, Can a lady obtain a medical degree? and, Is any lady to be allowed to practise in Great Britain?"*

The Lord Ordinary then discussed the case for the defenders, point by point: The first plea in law was the technical plea that "all parties are not called," or, in other words, that the action should have been brought, not against the Senatus and Chancellor, but against the University as a whole.

This question, said the Lord Ordinary, should have been raised before the record was closed, and settled *in limine*. As a matter of fact, however, it was of little moment, as the Senatus and Chancellor were the only parties complained of,—it being assumed that the University as a whole was ready and willing to do its duty as soon as such duty was clearly defined. The Chancellor, indeed, had expressed this willingness so far as he individually was concerned, and, strictly speaking, he need not have been called as a party.

From the principle on which this preliminary plea was repelled, it followed that there was in the present action no attempt to impugn in the slightest degree the existing constitution of the University. Its existing regulations and ordinances must be taken as right, and the Senatus must simply be called upon to give effect to these as they stood.

The Lord Ordinary proceeded to make one or two observations of a general nature. He was clearly of opinion that, by the law of Scotland, there was no inherent illegality in

women prosecuting the science of medicine, using the word in its largest sense, or in their engaging in the practice of medicine as a profession. . . . Indeed some branches of the profession were peculiarly appropriate to women and peculiarly inappropriate to men. For instance, in obstetric practice and in numerous diseases of women, a male practitioner was singularly out of place, and nothing but the deadening effect of habit would ever reconcile the community to that anomaly both in name and in reality, "a man-midwife."

Keeping these preliminary observations in view, the Lord Ordinary proceeded to consider the constitution and regulations of the University of Edinburgh so far as they related to women :

I. It had been broadly maintained by the Counsel for the Senatus, in a very powerful and able speech, that the University of Edinburgh was founded and existed for males alone.

If this proposition were well founded, there was, of course, an end of the whole case. The Lord Ordinary, however, had felt himself quite unable to affirm this proposition, but had come ultimately, without any hesitation at all, to the conclusion that there was no foundation for this first and general contention of the defenders.

*a.* The charter gave no countenance to this supposition. The masculine noun or pronoun was used merely in conformity with ordinary brevity and simplicity of expression.

*b.* The fact that the Universities of Scotland were founded to a great extent upon the model of Bologna, etc., seemed to show that—as women were admitted to the Italian Universities—there could have been no original intention to exclude them from those founded in Scotland.

*c.* It was true that there was no recorded instance of a woman having taken her degree in Scotland, and this was an argument of some weight, perhaps considerable weight. If, however, the women had the right originally, that right would not be lost by the mere fact of non-usage. The right in their case was *res merae facultatis*, like a man's right to build upon his own ground,—a right that is not lost though no building be erected for hundreds or thousands of years. To extinguish such a right there must be a contrary usage—

a possession inconsistent with the exercise of the right—and that did not exist in the present case.

*d.* If there was no express exclusion of women and nothing necessarily leading to their exclusion, it seemed fair to fall back upon the inherent legality and appropriateness of the study and practice of medicine by women, and to infer that a medical school founded in the University could not have as one of its conditions the exclusion of the female sex.

*e.* Passing from such general considerations, the Lord Ordinary considered it quite conclusive of the whole question that, by regulations lawfully enacted by competent and sufficient authority, provision had actually been made for the admission of women to the study of medicine in the University of Edinburgh, and that actually detailed regulations had been made regulating their studies and examinations.

II. The Lord Ordinary was of opinion that the "regulations for the education of women in Medicine in the University" of Edinburgh, enacted by the University Court of 10th November, 1869, and approved of by the Chancellor on 12th November, 1869, were valid and binding in every respect, and formed an integral part of the constitution and regulations of the University as it at present existed. At the debate it was felt on both sides that these regulations formed almost the turning-point in the case, and the counsel for the Senatus, sorely pressed by them, had boldly challenged their legality, maintained that they were *ultra vires* of the University Court to enact, and had asked the Lord Ordinary to treat them as a nullity. Here again the Lord Ordinary thought the position taken by the Senatus was absolutely untenable.

The regulations in question were solemnly, after much discussion, after long consideration, and after due communication with the whole governing bodies of the University, enacted by the University Court, a body which had very large and almost legislative powers. The regulations were enacted with all the required statutory requisites. "Due communication" was had with the Senatus. The matter was submitted to and was duly considered by the University Council, and the regulations received the final sanction and approval of the Chancellor. The Senatus, the University

Court and the University Council had all the benefit of the very highest legal skill and experience. Most eminent lawyers were members of all these bodies ; and the Chancellor who put the seal of his approbation and sanction to the regulations held with universal acceptance the very highest judicial office in Scotland. . . . So satisfied had the Senatus been of the validity of the regulations, that they had actually applied to the enacting power—that is, to the University Court—to rescind them. The University Court had refused to rescind the regulations and they still stood part of the law of the University.

III. The Lord Ordinary was of opinion that the pursuers were entitled in substance to the declaratory decree which they demanded in the present action. . . .

The right to medical graduation was really at the foundation of the whole of the present dispute. If the ladies had been content to study as mere amateurs—as mere dilettanti—it rather appeared that no question would ever have been raised. But their demand for degrees, and the announcement of their intention to practise as physicians, had aroused a jealousy which the Lord Ordinary was very unwillingly obliged to characterize as unworthy, and hence this strife.

The Lord Ordinary was of opinion, without any doubt at all that the proposal to withhold from successful or fully accomplished female students the regular degrees, and to give them instead mere certificates of proficiency was incompetent as well as unjust. The proposal was not unnaturally stigmatized by the pursuers as “ a mere mockery.”

IV. All this, of course, had reference to the declaratory conclusions. Beyond that the Lord Ordinary could give no help. The first petitory conclusion asked that the Professors be directed to admit women to their ordinary classes ; but this, as Lord Gifford pointed out, was more than the Senatus had power to do, and the University Court could only do it by altering regulations which the present judgment had assumed to be right. The University Court, however, had undoubted power to recognize extra-academical teachers ; and—as teachers of unquestionable standing and ability were ready to give the pursuers instruction in separate classes—



as, moreover, the University had only been held back by a doubt as to its own powers—the Lord Ordinary hoped that this solution would terminate the unfortunate controversy which had raged so long.

S. J.-B. records the result very briefly in her diary :

“ Friday, July 26th. Lord Gifford’s judgment. Affirms declaratory conclusions, i.e. full rights,—denies petitory conclusions, i.e. says action so framed that he could not make order on *Senatus*.

Gloria tibi, Domine !

Substantially the whole cause won for all women, I believe.

His note too good to be easily set aside. *May* be fresh delay—hardly defeat.”

In any case it was a great and inspiring judgment,—almost enough to atone to S. J.-B. at the moment for all she had come through ; for it must not be forgotten that the epoch-making enactments of November 1869, on which almost everything turned, had been won by her own bow and spear, practically before any other woman student had appeared upon the scene.<sup>1</sup> Well might she cry, “ Gloria tibi, Domine ! ”

And within a few days a great pæan of rejoicing rang out over the land,—rejoicing that was to spread over the whole civilized world. Once more the postman was a delightful visitant. Indeed, as one reads the letters, one is fain to retract the dictum that this lawsuit was in any way devoid of dramatic interest.

The telegraph boy came first, with a characteristic message from Mrs. Kingsley :

“ A thousand congratulations. How is R.C.”

“ Eileanach,  
Inverness.

July 31/72.

DEAR MISS BLAKE,

A paragraph in the *Daily Telegraph* of the 30th made me surprise sitters-by, by exclaiming ‘ Thank God, ’ . . .

It is almost too good news to be true, although those not versed in legal quibbles felt that your claim was both legal and equitable, and *must*, in due time, be conceded. Yet, I would thankfully learn

<sup>1</sup> See p. 260.

that the case is ended, and that there is to be no appeal to keep it open longer.

I mean to be in Edinr. (Cockburn Hotel) on the 8th August, and will that day try to see and congratulate you on the blessed determination you have shown, all along, not to be put down by mere brute, unmanly force, but to compel justice to be done.

I am grieved that this should have cost you and your friends such shameful trouble and expense, but know, that this loss to you, will be the cause of myriads of dear women thanking God for having won a victory that will do more for their welfare and happiness, temporal and spiritual, than is now perceived but by a very few. . . .

May God be with you and your friends, and speedily fill the land with true women like you, so that no woman may need to keep secret for an instant a single pain, because she can only tell it to men.

Very sincerely yours,

J. MACKENZIE, M.D.,  
Provost."

" Wednesday, July 31.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Will you allow me to add my hearty congratulations to those with which I doubt not you are now being overwhelmed, on the success of your brave and patient conflict with prejudice and injustice? I think the question is now practically settled.

Thanks for your kind letter I am very glad you liked St. Andrews. Believe me with much respect,

Yours very sincerely,

A. K. H. BOYD."

The letter that follows is from one who was to become an invaluable champion.

" 16 Wimpole Street.

July 27.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Allow me to congratulate you most heartily on the decision of Lord Gifford, which establishes the rights of the lady students at Edinburgh.

I will do what I can to get your interesting little book noticed in the *Lancet*.

I do hope that the Conservative party in the profession will now have the sense to give way with a good grace.

Believe me, dear Miss Jex-Blake,

Yours very truly,

FRANCIS ED. ANSTIE."

The next is in the shaky handwriting of an invalid :

“ MY DARLING,

I was so delighted to have your letter with the grand news. I had not dared expect anything so good. From my heart I thank God and rejoice. I feel so comfortably well, no aches or pains whatever. May God bless and prosper my darling.

YOUR LOVING MOTHER.

Shall I give a copy to Nurse of *the* book when we part ? ”

“ Riffelberg.

July 30th. 1872.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

I am delighted to see in *Times* of 27th, just arrived, that Lord Gifford has given a judgment entirely in favour of yourself and the other lady students. I congratulate you heartily and only hope it is final.

I am here 8,400 ft. above the sea, having found it impossible to get fresh in England, . . .

I hope your legal perils are over ; and, though one has regretted that so much legal work prevented your own medical start, it has been well worth all you have gone through, or yet may go through, to open the Profession thoroughly to women.

As soon as you have completed your training, you have in my opinion nothing but success before you : and, within 12 months of settling in London as a properly qualified Physician, you will find it easy to make £2000 a year, and impossible to avoid doing a very large amount of good in making it. . . .

Your affectionate brother,

T. W. J.-B.”

It was on the occasion of this visit to Switzerland that Mr. Jex-Blake made the acquaintance of Miss Agnes M'Laren —on the top of the Eggishorn ! It chanced one day that he ran down from the summit to assist a fragile little lady up the last steep climb, and, in the course of subsequent conversation, lent her a guide-book, in which, to her great surprise, she found the familiar name of Jex-Blake.

So the Eggishorn heard all about it.

Yes, friends were kind, and more than kind ; but, as before, the “ man in the street ” rejoices one's heart :

DEAR LADY,

“ Glasgow. 30th July, 1872.

I beg respectfully to convey my sincere thanks to you for the gallant stand which you have made against those parties whom I

may term Medical Monopolists, and to express my delight at the success which have attended your efforts.

Your address and ability in thwarting the selfish purposes of said parties have endeared you to every liberty loving individual in the civilised world, and I sincerely hope you will long be spared to benefit suffering humanity by your experience and knowledge—knowledge which you have pursued under such tremendous difficulties, but the possession of which cannot fail eventually to raise you to the very pinnacle of your profession.

I am,

Yours very respectfully, . . .”

The following lines, written and sent to S. J.-B. a few months later by a well-known Edinburgh citizen, may be taken as a sample of much clever and spirited doggerel on both sides of the question :

“ I do rejoice, Miss Jex,  
 The gods have heard your Prex,  
 To vindicate your Sex,  
 By passing a new Lex,  
 Though that does sadly vex  
 Professor C., senex,  
 Who plays the part of Rex,  
 But may become an Ex,  
 Because he won't annex  
 The females to his Grex.”

## CHAPTER XV

### PAYING THE PRICE

ALL through that autumn S. J.-B.'s mind must have been simply seething with the manifold interests that claimed her attention.

"If anybody ever deserved a rest, you do," writes Miss Stevenson, "and I most earnestly hope you will take a thorough one. I do not think *any of us* are able fully to realize the importance of Lord Gifford's decision to all men and women in all time coming."

"I am truly glad that something is definitely settled at last," writes Miss Bovell from Paris, "and not least for *your* sake. I do trust you may have much less worry in future, though I fear the 'separate classes' will still prove a source of trouble. Perhaps some time hence the British Medical Profession, as well as the British Public, may be sufficiently advanced to throw aside the unscientific scruples which happily appear to have no existence here. . . ."

I suppose you will be going in for your Professional in October? I wish you all possible honours. I trust your mind is now sufficiently at ease for you to work at books, but you will take a holiday in the country first, will you not?"

The difficulty of arranging classes was so great that a good many of the students had scattered for the summer months. Mrs. Chaplin Ayrton, as well as Miss Bovell, was in Paris; Miss Massingberd Mundy and Miss Dahms had gone to Dr. Lucy Sewall at Boston, and Miss Pechey was working at the Lying-in Hospital in Endell Street.

"Oh, Lucy, I'm so tired of it all!" S. J.-B. had written to her friend a month or two before this. "When those children went to you a fortnight ago, I did so wish I could have gone and been rested and nursed for a few months!"

But I'm sure you will see how utterly without choice I am,—that I *must* stay at my post as long as I can stand.

But I am getting more and more doubtful whether I myself shall ever finish my education. I think when once the fight is won, I shall creep away into some wood and lie and sleep for a year.

However all that is beside the question."

A letter from Miss Pechey—written in September—takes a sterner tone than is her wont. After reporting about her work at Endell Street, she goes on :

" You have never told me how you are getting on with your exam. subjects ; such silence is very ominous, and I'm afraid you haven't been doing anything at them. You really must, if you intend to go up in October, for it is by no means child's play getting up three such different subjects, and it would be simply *awful* if you went up and didn't pass. . . ."

Here the writer has obviously dried the ink, and sat looking at the space that remained, appalled, we may suppose, by the contingency she has called up.

" Don't you like me to lecture you ? " she concludes finally, and passes on to another subject.

There certainly were not many people who dared to ' lecture ' S. J.-B. The mingled love and fear with which her juniors (and not her juniors only) regarded her scarcely comes out in the correspondence, though one gets more than a glimpse of it in the following letter from one of the two who went to Boston, the humourist and *enfant gâtée* of the little circle :

" DEAR MISS PECHEY,

I write to you for several reasons, the one chiefly worth mentioning being that I want you to give some messages to Miss Jex-Blake, as, however busy you are, you are not likely to be so busy as she is, and therefore a letter is less waste of time to you. I believe though at the bottom of my heart that my real reason is that I am, even away from her, frightened of her. See how deep the feeling is. (The writer proceeds to relate a perfectly fantastic dream.)

Miss Jex-Blake, as you know, has written to Dr. Sewall, advising me to stay in Boston this winter ; the Dr. is so good as to say she will keep me with her, and I am quite willing to stay, so unless my father and mother object, that is settled. . . .

What joyful news that lawsuit news has been. I have had letters of rejoicing from many folks, but I declare I am chiefly glad

for Miss Jex-Blake's sake, and I hope now she sees some prospect of a quiet winter. Of course there is still much to do, but she has put a great piece of the road behind her. Is it not so? And I assure you the general question was becoming lost to sight by me in the particular one of her success and rest.

If Miss Jex-Blake comments on my hand, tell her I do write my copies, I do remember her rules, and only fall into this style when a little tired as at present. . . .

I have seen now Dr. Sewall use forceps three times, and it is impossible to see anything prettier. . . . She uses any sort of instrument beautifully. I should like to see her conduct some large operation. I think well-done surgery is fascinating, and I never saw anyone handle an instrument so easily and so securely. I should feel safe whatever she was going to do to me or mine. . . ."

Of course S. J.-B. saw the letter,—though the dream was a most audacious one—and it made her quite homesick for the old Boston life.

"DEAREST LUCY," she writes,

It is just a year since we parted, and I do so want to see you again. Miss —— makes me quite envious with her descriptions of her happiness in Boston and of the goodness of 'my doctor.' Will you come over with her in the spring? . . .

I am just going to set hard to work for 5 weeks in preparation for my 1st Professional Exam., which comes off about October 22nd. It would never do for *me* to be plucked! In fact I shall not go in unless I feel pretty well prepared when the time comes. Please thank Miss Call for her note to me, and tell her I wish she could have come to Edinburgh."

She did set to work hard, but events could scarcely be called propitious. On the strength of Lord Gifford's judgment, she was renting a small house to serve as a medical school, arranging for the winter's course of teaching; and, especially, trying to get an Anatomy lecturer recognized by a body of men, who—rightly or wrongly—did not mean to recognize him. Meanwhile editors showed themselves increasingly glad to get her work—journalistic work—not only on subjects connected with her special struggle, but about anything that called forth her gift for clear and incisive writing: and all the money she could earn in this way was not only welcome, but actually needed to keep things going. Although she was extraordinarily economical, as we have seen, her generosity

and her large and businesslike way of dealing with things always gave the impression of larger means than she possessed ; and many appealed to her for help who would have been amazed to learn how narrow her margin was.

" I am glad of both your articles," writes Mr. Russel about this time, " but the *beginnings* of both are de trop.

If I see a topic you would care to handle, I shall be prompt to let you know."

" I am much obliged by your MS., which will duly appear as a leader tomorrow," writes another editor.

Her book, too, was exciting no small interest, and the consequent letters, enquiries and reviews <sup>1</sup>—very lengthy reviews in some cases—were a preoccupation in themselves. Any day might bring the opening up of a new vista.

" Sept. 11th.

DARLING MOTHER,

I have but a moment to send you a piece of news that I know will be very welcome, viz , that A Scotchman resident in India called on me last night, asked how matters were progressing, said the battle was being gallantly fought, and departed after stating mildly that he would send us ' a thousand pounds at once and more if needed,' that the fight might not fail for want of money ! The money is worth a great deal, but the moral effect is almost more, as the man is an absolute stranger and cares simply for the principle.

Probably now we shall get a lot more.

Yours lovingly,

SOPH.

His name is Walter Thomson, he had just read my book. (Not a bad 2s. 6d. worth, was it ? ) "

It is impossible to exaggerate the reverence—" respect " is too weak a word—with which S. J.-B. throughout life treated the money that came to her in this way. It was infinitely more precious to her than possessions of her own : and the amount of the donation made no difference. If it

<sup>1</sup> The following is a fair average specimen of the cordiality with which the book was received :—" So convincing is the argument, so obvious the conclusions to which it leads up, that one fairly wonders, after putting down the essay in which they are enforced, how it should have come to pass in this nineteenth century that it should be necessary for any such essay to be written."—*Liverpool Mercury*.



was not to be used immediately, it was invested with the greatest care and forethought; every penny was strictly accounted for; and no farthing expended on administration, or on any kind of work involved (railway journeys and so forth), was allowed to come out of the fund itself. There never were any "working expenses." All that was done for love.

More gifts on this scale did not follow forthwith, but her lecture and the book that followed it were bringing in a return that was worth even more. They were arousing interest among men who might be able to assist the cause in a bigger way than had yet suggested itself.

"I wonder," writes Miss Wolstenholme, "whether you are aware how deeply interested Mr. Stansfeld is in your question, and how warmly disposed to help you by legislation or in any other way."<sup>1</sup>

There follow a number of suggestions as to the amendment of the Medical Act of 1858.

Meanwhile the University had appealed to the Inner House against Lord Gifford's judgment, and—after hanging fire for long months—the case at this juncture became imminent.

It was in the midst of all this that preparation for the professional examination went on.

Of course the task ought not to have been a formidable one. S. J.-B. had done excellent class-work in the subjects required, and they had been simmering in her mind for years; but everyone who has watched the career of many students knows that that man stands the best chance of acquitting himself well who, having got his subject up, goes in for the examination straightway, before the natural process of selection and assimilation in his own mind emphasizes this item and discards that, as the case may be. The knowledge one wants for an examination is not the knowledge that becomes one's working equipment for life.

The "last straw" for S. J.-B. was the distressing illness of a very dear friend in the course of those five precious weeks,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stansfeld was President of the Local Government Board.

and finally we come without surprise to the following entry in the diary :

" Sunday, Oct. 6th. Rather out of heart. I can't get courage or sense for the Organic Chemistry, and must leave it till E. P. comes; and the Botany seems so desperately voluminous! My head seems tired,—I *can't* make it work more than an hour or so at a time, . . . But somehow my fatalism makes me think I *shall* get through, when E. P. comes and quiets me,—she comes Thursday, 10th."

" Oct. 11th. I've had such bother about Anatomy rooms, etc., and shall have to organize about Fund, etc.

Things seem to *crowd* on me so. And other people get such nice long holidays!—oh, dear! Well, as Robertson says, everything has its price. . . .

Then H. [the Anatomy teacher]. The Court refused him flat on Monday, on ground of 'no evidence of qualification'! He on Tuesday is to send in his diplomas and other testimonials, and I have to get them copied and printed, etc.

My own Botany stuck fast,—I nervous and shaky again,—feeling strength go out of me drop by drop.

If only the 22nd were *well* over!

E. P. came back yesterday, dear child,—so loving and good."

At this point S. J.-B. breaks off to record the—very indifferent—achievements of the new students in their preliminary examination!

" Oct. 22nd. Professional Exam. . . . Did good paper in Nat. Hist.,—fair in Chemistry, poor in Botany. Went down to Falkirk to sleep.<sup>1</sup>

" Oct. 23rd. Came up for Practical Chemistry Exam. White Millar met me and worried me for [law] papers. Head dazed,—Crum Brown let me up [? off] till another day."

Well, there is no use in " spinning out the agony." S. J.-B. was rejected in her examination. With a mental endowment obviously far above the average in either sex, she found herself, after all these years of study,—so far as any practical result was concerned—absolutely at the foot of the ladder. She had nothing whatever to show for her work: she had failed in a test that almost any schoolboy can pass,—and the eye of the civilized world was upon her.

There is no denying that it was bad to bear, and the tragic

<sup>1</sup> To visit the friend who had been ill.

part of the matter was that she could not bring herself to believe that—in the subject of Natural History at all events—her paper had been fairly treated. So many petty difficulties had been thrown in her way all along, so little magnanimity had been shown her by some of those in authority, that her fighting instinct rose almost automatically to the encounter. What could this be but simply one effort more on the part of the enemy to defeat her *per omne fas et nefas*? <sup>1</sup>

About this time Professor Huxley seems to have expressed to some mutual friend his sympathy with the women students; he had refused—quite definitely, but with obvious regret—to come to their assistance by examining their proposed Anatomy lecturer <sup>2</sup> when the University of Edinburgh refused to do so; and Miss Pechey now took upon herself the difficult task of asking his opinion upon the Natural History paper. It was a great venture from every point of view, and certainly shows how confident S. J.-B. was in her view of the case.

“*Vor den Wissenden sich stellen*—” is an admirable motto, but the standard of examination in Natural History in Edinburgh at that time was certainly not the standard demanded by London now, and many a creditable Edinburgh student of those days might have cause to congratulate himself that he was not examined by Huxley.

“He was very kind about it,” writes Miss Pechey, “and I had a long talk with him. He thought it would be difficult for H. to get anyone to examine him, as even Ellis would not like to constitute himself an examiner. I think he has rather altered his idea of the honesty, etc., of the Edinr. Professors, but he said such conduct was inexplicable to him. However, although I expect he thought I I was giving him a one-sided statement, I think he considers us the aggrieved party.

At first he would not look at the papers, but when he had asked me about them, he said he would look over the Natural History, and although he was very kind about it, his verdict was unfavourable. Of course I have no doubt that they would have passed a *man* on your paper, but still you must have them extra good before you can make any fuss about it. . . .

<sup>1</sup> See extract from *Lancet*, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> See *Huxley's Life*, i. 387.

I hope you won't worry yourself about the papers, as I hope we shall have plenty of leisure so that we can go over the subjects again in a proper way: it would have been a wonder if you could have passed in the midst of all that worry. . . . God bless you, darling."

As we know S. J.-B. had more worries on hand than the sore question of her examination papers. The Appeal in the famous case of Miss Jex-Blake *v.* the Senatus was really before the Court of Session now, and she was "up till past 12 revising the proofs" for the daily papers.

"Sunday, Nov. 3rd. Word from E. P. (who went to London Wednesday) that Huxley didn't approve my Nat. Hist. paper. So fight for 'pluck' given up.

Poor Nelly O'B. lost her father a few weeks ago."

Apparently she wrote to report progress to her brother the same day.

"The College,

Cheltenham. Nov. 4. 1872.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

You have come to the right decision without a doubt. Probably they were sharp upon you, but to *prove* injustice in an examiner is a hopeless task. They are evidently very bitter, and apparently not scrupulous; but to my mind that was not the point; for, in writing to you<sup>1</sup> I had only to consider what was the wise course for you; and it seemed to be exactly what I advised and what you have done.

I am very sorry, and so is Hetty, for the mishap and the loss of time: but you can turn it to benefit: and all's well that ends well, as your cause will end certainly.

Your affectionate brother,

T. W. J.-B."

"The Elms.

Monday, 4th November.

MY PRECIOUS DARLING,

I am not all surprised, and so glad to hear that there is another opportunity in April. I had said I had no doubt they would floor you if they could. Your mind and time have been so engrossed that you cannot be very angry with yourself. I quite think I have felt for you more than you have for yourself. . . ."

[The dear old Mother, with the sword in her heart!]

"I am getting on so nicely here. I hope you will not have any lawyers to consult with about other pressing matters, nor articles

<sup>1</sup> The previous letter has not been found.



*H. T. Wells 1862*

*Emily Walker p. 20.*

*Maria Emily Jex-Blake*

*from a drawing in chalks by H. T. Wells R.A. 1862*



to write when you take up study for April. I shall like to know when you begin (probably not till February) that I may ask help where it is promised to be given. I hope my darling has a little breathing time now, and will take every care of herself, as I will of her baby.

Ever your loving Mummy,

MARIA EMILY JEX-BLAKE.

It is best for me to write little."

Meanwhile enquiries poured in on every side. The following paragraph appeared in a well-known Weekly :

"The question of the admission of Women to medical degrees in Edinburgh University has been rather unexpectedly solved, at least for the present. Miss Jex-Blake, a foremost champion of the movement, has actually been 'plucked' in her examination and sent back to complete her scientific studies."

This paragraph was cut out and sent to S. J.-B. by other papers and by many individuals as well, with a request for an explanation, or, as they graciously put it, "for the means of authoritatively contradicting it."

Norfolk cousins who had been mildly loyal and sympathetic at a distance, were roused to positive incredulity. The delightful Sarah of the girlhood reverts to the old affection and the old playful names :

"Wimbledon.

Dec. 14th.

DEAR OLD MAN,

I want you to write and tell me all about yourself, and why you did not pass your examinations. There must be a reason why you did not. I want you to tell me, for I hear all sorts of things, and want to know the truth. Send me a Scotch paper about you, for I never see anything in the English papers for or against you—only facts [!] . . .

Write to me like a good man.

Ever your affectionate,

S[ARAH] J.-B."

Yes, things were pretty black. So black that one is not in the least surprised to hear that at this time Miss M'Laren decided to throw in her lot with the women students. Retiring and delicate though she was, the following letter written on

one of her propagandist Suffrage tours, is evidence that she brought sufficient moral grit to the new life :

“ Strachie, [?] Argyllshire.

Nov. 10th. 1872.

I wish so much that you could have joined us yesterday by balloon, so as to have had this delicious day in the country,—besides the pleasure of being together. The pure air would have refreshed you very much,—and it is so lovely. Yesterday it rained in torrents. . . . I was so glad you were not with us, for I found I had promised more than I could perform,—only a pleasant drive of two hours ! Imagine our horror when we found that the steamer advertised to sail from Helensburgh to Dunoon was broken down and could not go,—and we were told that it would be impossible for us to manage the journey. Of course we *had* to find out a way to go, and it was to drive 3 miles, then to ferry, then to drive 4 miles, then to catch a steamer, then to have the 2 hours' drive originally expected ! . . . and only to reach this at 7—half an hour after hour of meeting !

It was out of the question to put meeting off, for there was no telegraph, and the people had come 6, 8, or 9 miles. They knew something must have happened to delay us, and waited patiently. We had to hurry to the meeting, and found a large schoolhouse crowded with people, and some half dozen dogs, and dimly lighted by 8 candles ! It was *so* funny ! And they were so enthusiastic. . . .

I have been thinking a great deal about joining you, and the conclusion I have come to is to tell Papa and Mama that I would like to *try* to study if they would give their consent.

If I felt I had a vocation for medicine, it would make me bolder, but you know that I cannot honestly plead that. On the contrary I have very grave doubts of my capacity for it, especially for the preliminary years of study, and they might very probably prove to be lost years. . . .

No, the attractions to me would be a definite sphere, and an independent one, and being associated with you in work of any kind.

It would be a great happiness to me to be with you, and to believe that I was a help to you however small.

But then, I cannot but believe that you must before long have the greater help of having Miss Du Pre with you, and, in the meantime, till she can come, you may be sure I will be as much as possible with you.”

A delightful correspondence ensued between Miss M'Laren and Miss Du Pre, who knew each other but slightly :

“ As you cannot be with Sophy,” writes Miss M'Laren, “ I would like very much to be with her, for she does really deserve all the help



she can get when she has so much to do. . . . It would, as you know, be a great happiness to me to be with her, but I would not mind for myself at all. If you could only be with her, I would be quite happy not to be, feeling that it was not right for me to risk making family discomfort, just for myself. What do you honestly think? I would not of course think of troubling you about my concerns except as they concern Sophy."

"All my instincts are against causing family sorrow and trouble," writes Miss Du Pre in reply. ". . . but I cannot but think that in your case the trouble would not be permanent.

I think myself that studying new and difficult sciences and trying to help Sophy at the same time would be more than your strength would stand,—at least I know I could not do it myself. Though, on the other hand, it might be still more difficult to study at home where all sorts of family habits and calls upon one's time make it so hard to do anything thoroughly.

I believe, if I were you, I would try to wear away by degrees the opposition of my parents, perhaps by going to help Sophy for a month or so, and then coming home again, being willing in the meantime to be present at any dinner party when they particularly needed my help, etc. I do think that people hate a plan so much less when the thought of it is no longer new and startling to them. . . . I cannot express to you how glad I shall be if you can see it to be right to go to Sophy, for I think your presence and help are exactly what she needs and needs sorely too. But you must not think that I *only* care about it for her sake, for it would be a great pleasure to me to think that you were enjoying her company and friendship."

Of course Miss M'Laren carried her point, and, if she never quite succeeded in persuading herself of her "vocation," she left a large *clientèle* of patients in no doubt at all upon the subject.

## CHAPTER XVI

### END OF THE BATTLE IN EDINBURGH

THE year 1873 is not one of the most dramatic in the history, but no other has a more impressive record of work done, of resolute determination to try every door, and to *keep on trying*.

It was becoming increasingly clear that—whatever the immediate issue of the lawsuit might be—a wider appeal must be made. Even S. J.-B. began to see that “no decision in our favour can give us the good will of the Medical Faculty”; and Mr. Stansfeld’s warm and appreciative interest in the question seemed to open a new door of hope. From this time forward the recurrence of his fine clear handwriting in the correspondence (brief though his letters are) is a constant reminder of how “Providence rescues and saves His elect inheritance” as “the dear Newman” would have said, though in another connection.

Mr. Stansfeld knew Professor Masson well, and probably began his acquaintance with S. J.-B. in no ignorance of her *défauts*,—the *défauts* that made so many timorous; but, like Masson, he was a strong man; like Masson he thought Carlyle was right in holding that “on the whole we make too much of faults”; and to the end of the long history he rejoiced wholeheartedly in the magnificent acumen and strength of Sophia Jex-Blake.

S. J.-B. had made his acquaintance at the time of her lecture, and now, after some little correspondence, she saw him again, and received his introduction to some of his colleagues.

We quote from diary :

“ Dec. 10th [1872] To London. At Cordery's till 13th.

11th Wednesday. Saw Stansfeld at Whitehall. Then Simon, who, though not very sanguine as to value of women doctors, is quite clear they must have a chance. Suggests that the Colleges *could* not refuse to examine us. Lord Ripon also kindly,—quite inclined to make Medical Act as dependent as possible on Registration. Lowe marvellously civil. Very glad to see me, was quite clear it was a case for legislation. If we lost the lawsuit, he would consult with Stansfeld, and do all he could.

Tuesday, 17th. (Dear old man's birthday,—would have been 82!) To Yaxham. Mother fairly well.

For next 10 days stayed much in bed, read *Gil Blas*, etc., in utter dearth of books. Worried by letters and telegrams from Edinburgh.

Thursday 26th. Started back for Edinburgh. Carriage to myself whole way. Arrived

Friday 6 a.m. Slept an hour or two. Then 4 hours' cab and canvassing; and so on for next week.”

“ Monday, Jan. 6th. 1873. Infirmary meeting. We apparently beaten by 279 to 271—pending scrutiny. Turner and Lister waved hats and hurrahd ! ”

“ Feb. 10th. The piety of the Infirmary Managers actually obliged them to turn us out of Sunday visit, at least ' for the present.' Cowan<sup>1</sup> delightfully indignant for once at ' breach of faith '.

Feb. 16th. He went to Infirmary during Sunday visit; and went away, telling Mrs. Thorne oracularly that ' he had seen quite enough for his purpose '.

Feb. 17th. Monday. He made a tremendous row at Managers' Meeting. Said that the previous day he had visited the wards and ' had never seen a more truly Christian, more truly Sabbatic sight, than the ladies at the sick-beds.' By 10 to 6 votes in again.”

Such were the ups and downs of daily life.

The question was raised at this time of having one or more women on the School Board, and S. J.-B. took up the matter enthusiastically. It was useless to remind her that she had more than enough on her hands already. Here was a matter in which she really could serve. And a great occasion it proved. Even those who were children at the time have not forgotten the wild excitement in Edinburgh over that election,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Provost.

and the lift given to the whole woman movement when the two lady candidates—Miss Phoebe Blyth and Miss Flora Stevenson—appeared on the list second only to the Roman Catholic priest, who had, of course, all the suffrages of the faithful.

“ You and Miss Blake must have half killed yourselves in getting a Committee with such names as you have,” Miss Blyth had written.

“ If you and Miss M'Laren had not gone in so strongly for my interests,” wrote Miss Stevenson, “ I should have found myself *very* much lower.”

So perhaps it was worth while, for the place taken by the women on the list was a weapon of good fighting force for the future.

It was a helpful distraction too for S. J.-B. herself, and at that moment the constant pressure of unsatisfactory difficulties and worries—some few of these latter, of course, created by herself—was very wearisome. Always something trying to do, and never anything to show for it,—that was the record of her life at the time. Here is a heart cry such as one seldom gets from her now :

“ Sunday, May 18th. “ —Oh, dear!—for some brightness and freshness and pleasure to break the long grey wait and work!—Nothing's wrong,—I'm fairly well, and by no means unhappy. I've the real essentials of happiness,—love and work,—but the fruition of both seems so far away!

And I want 3 or 4 days of bright sunshine,—rides and drives, ices and champagne!—easy luxurious life for a few days' change.

Ah, well! Some day I hope to have just such a bright easy home or nest somewhere—and to find brain and body workers to take to it for the 3 or 4 days' rest and change! How one needs to *experience* needs in order to understand them!”

There are some perhaps who will read this entry with no little feeling when they remember how, long years after, she realized this ideal in the home of her retirement, Windydene.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “ . . . And now a flood of memories of sweet Windydene brings tears to my eyes. No fear there of rowdy ricscha coolies in a narrow alley quarrelling over the right of way—nor rattle of carriages with their annoying official bell ‘Clear the way’ up to 2 a.m.—but just silent peace. My heaven will certainly have to be silence for a space. But Windydene

But the saving sense of humour was never less than dormant. She seldom has time to quote jokes in the diary now, but here is the very next entry :

" May 23rd. From Life of Barham. Dr. Thos. Hume charged 7s. 6d. instead of 5s. for death notice, because of ' universally beloved and deeply regretted.' To surly clerk,—' Congratulate yourself, Sir, that this is an expense to which your Executors will never be put ! ' "

The mood was not quite evanescent, however, for the anxious Mother reads it between the lines :

" 13 Sussex Square,  
28 May.

DARLING,

I fear you were very weary when you wrote ; Mother's heart is constantly with her little one, and yearning for some little word of her health or her interests. Though I don't want to be selfish and have her write *often*,—when she does write she must mention herself and how she is getting on.:

H. [a former maid] is paying me a little visit. She looks very poorly and she jumped at my offer to come here for a week. . . . She asked about you, and I lent her your book. She wishes enough there were a lady doctor for her to consult.

Ever your loving Mummy,

M. E. J.-B."

One is glad to know that the women students were having a course of lectures on Medical Jurisprudence from Dr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Littlejohn that term,—with all the delightful excursions, topographical and mental, which that course involved. No one who has had the privilege of the same experience can regard the history of that summer as a trial without compensation.

Meanwhile the lawsuit was dragging its weary course. One cannot be surprised that the University should have appealed against Lord Gifford's decision. If appeal be made to law at all, one must get the last word of the law,—especially if,

contains . . . and the Doctor, and I remember talks over the drawing-room fire, and those incomparable evenings in the Doctor's Study, and as these thoughts make one both weepy and sentimental, I had better stop."

*Extract from a letter from Dr. Lillie Saville, Tientsin, Jan. 7th, 1911.*

in the last resort, public funds are available to pay for it. There were still lurking possibilities in that little word "vir," and it might yet be shown that the University had done an illegal thing when it admitted the women in the first instance. If that proved to be so—and it was the *crux* of the whole case—the University (so it was argued) must be held excused from all responsibility towards the women students themselves.

But, if one refrains from blaming the University, one cannot sufficiently admire the behaviour of the women students as a whole during those trying days of uncertainty. While the younger members of the little band were pursuing their education where and how they could, the seniors were striving on every hand to find some open door or to unlock one that was closed. Birmingham was at least discussed, with its possibilities; St. Andrews, Durham, and the various centres in Ireland were visited and worked diplomatically, and for a time not without apparent prospect of success. It is pathetic to go through the endless reams of correspondence—vital once with hopes and fears—that was destined to end, for the moment at least, in nothing.

In June S. J.-B. and Miss M'Laren went on a mission to Newcastle, and they had scarcely left Edinburgh before Miss Pechey, who had just returned, sent the following report:

" 15 Buccleuch Place,  
Edinburgh.

June 17th. 1873.

DARLING SOPH,

I was going to write to you yesterday, but was overcome with sleep, the result, I suppose, of getting up at 5 o'clock. Last night Millar sent a copy of the Consulted Lords' Opinion with a note to say that the case would be put on this week, and that the proceedings would occupy only a few minutes—merely formal. He is to let me know when it comes on. Ormidale, Mure, Mackenzie and Shand are dead against us, contending that the Court had no power to make the regulations. Deas, Ardmillan, Jerviswoode and Gifford only in favour of the regulations holding good and our right to graduation,—but *not* a word as to the regulations being enforced, and we are still left at the mercy of the individual professors.

'That being the case, this coloured individual will take to the

woods.' We must look either to Newcastle or St. Andrews. My only care now about the decision of the other judges is with regard to the expenses. . . .

I hope the Newcastle people are behaving well."

Individually they were behaving well of course, and individually the applicants saw them. Two of S. J.-B.'s drafted petitions have been preserved :

" Station Hotel,  
Newcastle. June 19th. 1873.

GENTLEMEN,

Relying on the liberality with which the College of Science of the University of Durham has been thrown open to women, I venture to request that you will pursue a similar liberal policy with reference to your College of Medicine, and will admit to it those women who are desirous to enter the medical profession, and for whose education absolutely no provision exists at this moment in Great Britain.

If it is thought desirable that separate classes should be established in any of the subjects of medical education, I am prepared to guarantee for such classes the payment of whatever minimum fee may be fixed by you, and I am further in a position to state that, if your College is thrown open, at least fifteen women will at once enrol themselves as students.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Yours obedly,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE."

" June 23rd. 1873.

DEAR SIR,

As I understand that some of the Medical Professors feel a difficulty in arranging for the education of women, while others are quite ready to do so, I venture to suggest whether it would not be possible to admit ladies tentatively for a single term to the classes of such teachers as are prepared to receive them, pending a final decision of the whole question.

I think I mentioned to you that those among us who have studied longest, have attended all the classes required for the Durham licence, except those of Midwifery, Materia Medica and Therapeutics, and that if these classes could be given in the winter session they might present themselves for the April examination. After the experience of such a tentative session, it might with greater certainty be decided whether or not permanent arrangements could be made.

Indeed, even if it should be thought impossible to make any such partial arrangement for instruction, it might be a matter for con-

sideration whether the Medical Council (in conjunction with the Durham authorities) might not agree to *examine* women with a view to the licence, if they presented certificates of having attended all the necessary classes, and if they paid the fees for one session at Newcastle, even without attending classes there, in case such attendance should be found impracticable.

Commending the whole question to the most favourable consideration of yourself and your colleagues, I remain,

Yours obedly,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE."

At least she and Miss M'Laren were not kept waiting long in suspense. On the very same day the answer was despatched :

" University of Durham College of Medicine,  
Newcastle on Tyne.

June 23rd. 1873.

DEAR MISS BLAKE,

I am requested to forward you a copy of a resolution passed unanimously at an extraordinary meeting of members held today.

' That the members of this College, at an extraordinary meeting, having considered the question of opening the Classes of the College for the education of women, decide that they cannot consent to the application made, either as to education or as to Examination for Licences and Degrees.'

I am,

Yours very truly,

W. C. M. ARNISON, M.D.,  
*Secretary.*"

St. Andrews seemed more hopeful. Professor Campbell, as we know, was more than favourable; so was Professor Baynes; there is a thoroughly encouraging letter from Principal Tulloch at this time as to the prospects; and Professor Birrell wrote "in a friendly spirit to the cause which has been ennobled by the rare spirit with which you and your friends have fought a hard fight in its defence."

One wonders whether he had the faintest idea *how* hard the fight had been.

In any case opposition proved too strong, and nothing was done at St. Andrews.

One must remember that the full equipment of the medical side of the University was a big financial undertaking; and,



although the women were prepared to bear their share, they were naturally unwilling to do this without some pledge that they would not be left stranded in the first emergency. Moreover, they were anxious not to lose time, and above all things St. Andrews was unwilling to be hurried.

Dr. King Chambers urged the women to get their classes somehow—anyhow, and then to “practise boldly as unregistered practitioners who are ready to submit to examination when called upon.”

A heroic piece of advice all round. One hopes the unregistered practitioners would be allowed breathing space “when called upon” to refresh their recollection—for instance—of the preparations of opium!

Meanwhile Mrs. Thorne was working hard to arrange classes in Edinburgh, and—failing the University degree—to secure for women the Licence of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons—a privilege which was actually granted some dozen years later. She and others were also enquiring about the possibilities of the Apothecaries’ Society of London and the Apothecaries’ Hall of Ireland, and, with a view to this, S. J.-B. went the length of securing a legal apprenticeship to her old friend and teacher, Mr. Salzmann of Brighton, who was most anxious to help her if he could. In fact no stone was left unturned.

The women students were really so restrained, so admirable, through all this, that it is a positive relief to come upon the following outburst some months later from Miss Pechey :

“ Langham, Colchester,  
October 12th. 1873.

MY DARLING SOPH,

Since I saw you I have indeed suffered many things of many physicians, and my temper is no better but rather worse. It is, however, gradually working down to its normal again. If I could only have spoken my mind when they talked their conceited bosh about their infinite superiority, and said,—‘Do you know what a poor fool you are making of yourself?’—it wouldn’t have been so hard; but to sit still, smiling benignantly, when men, commonplace enough, goodness knows, in everything but their uncommon stupidity, boasted of their mental capacity!—it was no wonder that, having to bottle it all up, while I mused the fire burned. They are so like

the fools that David had to contend with that I can't help quoting him."

After reporting progress, she goes on: "Still I would not have Mrs. Thorne stop in her arrangements for classes in Edinburgh, as I think we have no chance, the influence of the medical men being so much against us.

Yes, I am curious. I wonder what it is. Perhaps another hopdog? The other died this morning,—poor thing, it had had to go too long without food, and even fresh hops did not revive it.

Please give my love to Scrap. . . .

I will telegraph to you when I hear from S.

Yours lovingly,

EDITH."

Meanwhile the great decision of the Edinburgh Lords had been formally given. The Lord Justice-General, being Chancellor of the University, gave no judgment, but the Lord Justice-Clerk and four others, including all the remaining judges of the First Division were in favour of the women students. The seven remaining judges, including Lord Mure and Lord Shand, were against the women students; so the case was lost by the usual "narrow majority."

The adverse judgment was based mainly on the opinion that the University Court had, in 1869, done an illegal thing in admitting women to the University at all, and on this ground the authorities were held excused from all responsibility towards the women themselves.

As we look back on the episode after all these years, the point that stands out is the brave and luminous judgment of the Lord Justice-Clerk, of which the following is, from our point of view, the most interesting passage:

"To deny the women students the degree which was essential to their entering the profession, and with a view to which they had studied, on the pretext—for it was no better—that no such end was ever contemplated, was entirely unjust and unwarranted; and that all the more that all the evils said to be connected with the admission of females to the University attached only to the study which was permitted, while the honour could injure no one, and was only valuable as the passport to the medical profession, with which, as a body, the defenders had no concern. That this question of graduation, from whatever cause, was in reality the sole matter in dispute, was sufficiently evident from the pleading of the defenders them-

selves. No doubt they devoted a large portion of their argument to prove that women never had been, and never ought to be, admitted to University study ; but in the sequel they disclosed with sufficient frankness that if the pursuers would have contented themselves with mere certificates of proficiency, and would have abandoned their claim for graduation, they might possibly have fared better. This alternative implied university study, and, therefore, as graduation was the cardinal point in the case, his opinion was that, on completing the curriculum as matriculated students, the pursuers were entitled by the existing rules of the University to be admitted to graduation, and, indeed, he had found little of argument addressed to prove the contrary. This, in his opinion, was sufficient for the decision of this case. It was, however, maintained by the defenders that the University Court had no power to pass these regulations ; they said that by the constitution of the University no woman could be admitted either for study or for graduation, and that the regulations and all that has followed upon them were therefore a mere nullity, and could receive no effect. He thought this answer entirely irrelevant. Questions might no doubt arise between the superior and subordinate powers in the University as to the legality of the former's orders, and these might legitimately be called in question. But, when a student had entered the University, and had duly conformed to the rules on the faith of which he entered, it would be no defence on the part of the Senatus to his claim to graduate that the rules under which he had been admitted were liable to legal objection. The duty of the Senatus was to obey the *de facto* law of the University, and any other principle would be not only subversive of academical discipline, but would lead to the greatest injustice, as he thought was the case here. The matriculation of the student created an implied contract between him and the University authorities that, if he complied with the existing rules, they would confer the benefits in the hope of which he resorted to the University. They could not, after the student had performed his part of the engagement, refuse to fulfil theirs, on the ground that the contract was made under rules which it was beyond the power of their academical superiors to make. They could not compel the student, as a condition of his graduation, to take upon himself the defence of the laws of the University ; his sole duty was to obey them, and if their lawfulness was disputed, that must be done in a question with those who made them, not with the student who trusted to them."

The women students were ordered to pay the expenses of the appeal : and thus ended the hard fought "Battle in Edinburgh."

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT

How far S. J.-B. was depressed in mind and body by the events of that wearing fight, we can fairly guess. But nothing had happened to disturb in the smallest degree her faith,—her philosophy of life. She never doubted that she was fighting the battle of the Lord; but—greatly though she hoped, sure though she felt of final victory for her cause—she was always, in the background of her being, absolutely prepared for the defeat of any one of her plans. In the thick of the combat, she seemed so engrossed that comrades and onlookers were wont to say,—“Defeat will kill her,” but this was a complete misunderstanding of her attitude. The moment defeat came, it was accepted as simply the will of God, though it well might be that God still meant her to try again.

In the occasional great affairs of later life it was positively startling to contrast her apparent inability to recognize another side to the question at issue with her instant acceptance of an adverse decision when it came. But for the vital record we now possess of her youth, most people would have had no clue. She was not ordinarily taken for a religious woman; but it is simply true that the watchword of her life—passively and actively—was *Fiat voluntas tua*.

She was one of those who pray; but she would have thought it wrong to pray for the success of a definite scheme, for the life of a friend, even—in the hour of her greatest need—for the renewal of a broken friendship.

And indeed there was always some comfort at hand, quite

apart from the highest philosophy. To the end of her life the words were often on her lips, "You see we had such *excellent friends*"; and though some few adherents were estranged because they thought the battle was being fought too pugnaciously, others became increasingly impressed by the extraordinary constancy shown by the fighters, and, in particular, by the protagonist's rare and individual type of unworldliness, an unworldliness which, just because it was individual, often made life rather difficult for her supporters.

Here is a letter from one of the Edinburgh professors, who in the early days had begged S. J.-B. not to speak harshly of an Alma Mater of which she would yet be proud, and who, later, had congratulated her on a book which "tells a very sad and disgraceful story, and tells it clearly and temperately and effectively,—all the more effectively because your justifiable indignation is kept well within bounds":

"Edinburgh, 21 Oct. 1873.

DEAR MADAM,

I send you herein a cheque for five pounds towards the law expenses of the lady medical students in the recent trial.

If I had the misfortune to be a member of the University Court, I should think myself bound in honour to pay my individual proportion of the whole expense incurred by these ladies in consequence of their supposing that this learned Court knew the extent of its own powers. Horace's words, '*Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi,*' may in this case be rendered, 'The University Court blundered, and the Ladies are mulcted in the costs.' If any sense of justice is still extant in this country, the result must be, not only the payment of these costs by public subscription, but a more than ever energetic agitation for the overthrow of male monopoly in the medical profession.

Yours most truly,

W. B. HODGSON.

Miss Stevenson."

Immediately after the legal decision had been given, the *Spectator* took up the question in an article "Women's Wrongs at Edinburgh," of which the following sentences give the gist:

"To canvass the legality of the judgment itself is alike beyond the present writer's competency and his wish, though it may be

permitted to remark that the best known names are found in the minority, and that the reasonings on the other side, while turning on a very narrow principle, are exceedingly discursive and inconsequent.

. . . The Senate included some staunch friends of the lady students, and about an equal number of resolute opponents, but the indifferent majority who swayed the action of the body appears to have had no aim except to hush up a troublesome affair. Their policy was to do all they could to oblige the applicants, meanwhile trusting to the chapter of accidents to escape the difficulties that might come after."

This was shrewd and true.

Within a few days a long and exhaustive review of the position and its possibilities, from the pen of Mrs. Garrett Anderson, appeared in the *Times*, in the course of which the writer urged that the time was not ripe for the medical education of women in Great Britain, and that "in no way could women better serve the cause we desire to promote than by going to Paris to study medicine, and returning here as soon as might be to practise it." "Never," she said, "was there a case in which the truth of the adage, 'Solvitur ambulando,' was more likely to make itself felt." [In the spirit of Professor Hodgson's translation of Horace, one may say, in fact, that "the difficulty might be solved by crossing the Channel."]

Of course S. J.-B. did not agree with her, and she wrote a detailed reply<sup>1</sup> which Jupiter supported with a leading utterance in his own name. He was not enthusiastic about women doctors at all, but in this particular difference of opinion he gave his vote for the "equally deserving, but hitherto less fortunate aspirant to the position of a legally qualified practitioner."<sup>2</sup>

S. J.-B. knew more of the hidden springs than anyone, and she did not consider that the time had come to give in. She

<sup>1</sup> Appendix E.

<sup>2</sup> "In this case, as in most others, those who say they want a thing must put their own shoulders to the wheel in order to obtain it, and must be prepared to back the soundness of their opinions. If only twenty women annually could be added to the ranks of the medical profession in this country, the expediency of the addition would be speedily removed from the domain of controversy, and the expression, 'Solvitur ambulando,' which Mrs. Anderson calls an adage, would be applicable to the case."

*Times*, August 23rd, 1873.

who had borne the brunt of so many disappointments was still full of hope. She wanted her own country to give her this thing. Above all she felt that "so long as no means of education are provided at home, only a very small number of women will ever seek admission to the profession."

"This last consideration," she says, "was to me conclusive."

"I greatly admire your letter to Mrs. G. Anderson," wrote Professor Hodgson, "and I am truly glad to see that you are not so despondent as I am. The passive power of resistance on the part of those who hold a position is terribly difficult to overcome. It is not mere *inertia*; that would be bad enough. Ultimate success I do not at all despair of, but individual life is short and the journey is long and arduous."

Both *Times* and *Spectator* spoke severely of the behaviour of the University, and on September 1st an *apologia* appeared from the pen of the Principal. It was just the letter one might have expected from an able, urbane, scholarly gentleman; he scanned the whole history "as we do our own poetry, laying stress on the right syllables and passing lightly over a halting foot." It would have been a fine and conclusive defence,—if Jupiter had not allowed a poor overworked medical student to answer it. The two letters represent two conflicting schools of historians, the one sweeping, picturesque, probable: the other definite, statistical, true. The former is certainly the easier to read. The correspondence is so essentially typical of many of the "disputes" S. J.-B. had with others in the course of her life that it is given in full in the appendix.<sup>1</sup>

"I have seen the Venerable Principal's letter," wrote a distinguished lawyer from Uig, "for even in these uttermost parts of the earth the *Scotsman* has reached me, and I need not say what I thought of it. I read also with great satisfaction your thorough demolition of the learned and venerable and inaccurate gentleman, and the *Scotsman's* excellent punching of his head."

<sup>1</sup> Appendix F.

S. J.-B. spent part of that summer holiday visiting Norfolk cousins, and she took the opportunity to read a paper on her special subject at the Social Science Congress at Norwich, under the auspices of her friend, Professor Hodgson, who was President of the Education Section.<sup>1</sup> Here she made two friendships of great value,—one with Miss Louisa Hubbard, whose sister, Lady Rendel, had been S. J.-B.'s schoolfellow; the other, even more memorable, with Miss Pauline Irby, who was just entering upon her heroic and self-sacrificing life work in Bosnia. In October S. J.-B. returned to Edinburgh to clinch the arrangements Mrs. Thorne was making for the winter session.

It is one more instance of the extraordinary, dogged perseverance of those women that during that winter session the lectures were delivered to women as before by Edinburgh Extra-Mural lecturers, the subjects being *Materia Medica*, Pathology and Midwifery. S. J.-B. attended these lectures when she could, and took honours in all of them; but she was already in correspondence with Dr. Anstie and others as to the possibility of opening some school for women in the larger and more impersonal milieu of London. As a matter of fact, the whole centre of interest had changed. The question was now potentially before Parliament,—not indeed as a question of practical politics to be decided by the rank and file, but as a matter for private discussion by a few men of courage and vision.

“It was necessary,” wrote Mr. Stansfeld in reviewing the history three years later,<sup>2</sup> “to appeal to a yet higher tribunal. Such appeal might have been made on the question of law to the House of Lords; but that would have meant further indefinite delay and further heavy expense, and then, if the result were favourable, a probable refusal of the university to act on their ascertained powers. It was necessary to *secure* the admission of women to medical study and practice,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Houghton was President of the Congress. In a letter to his wife, dated October 3rd, 1873, he says, “Miss Jex-Blake and Mrs. Grey both spoke capitally.” Lord Houghton's *Life*, vol. ii. p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> “Medical Women,” by the Right Hon. James Stansfeld, M.P., *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1877.



and not merely to ascertain that one out of nineteen examining bodies could admit them if it liked. Miss Jex-Blake and her friends determined to widen their appeal, to base it on the ground of right, and to address it to Parliament and to public opinion."

As early as August 1872 Sir David Wedderburn (on behalf of Sir Robert Anstruther) had moved that the vote for the Scottish Universities should be reduced by the amount of the salaries of the Edinburgh Medical Professors. He explained that the motion was brought forward in order to lay before the House the course followed by the authorities of the University of Edinburgh, but that, in view of the fact that the Lord Ordinary, had, a few days before, given a judgment in favour of the ladies, he hoped the University would accept the decision as final and as indicating to them their duties in the matter; and he would therefore refrain from pressing the motion to a division.

When the University appealed against the Lord Ordinary's decision, and got it reversed on appeal, Sir David Wedderburn, on July 29th, 1873, gave notice that he would, early in the following session, bring in a Bill to grant to the Scottish Universities the power they were now supposed not to possess, to educate women in medicine and to grant to them the ordinary medical degrees.

It was highly desirable, of course, to secure Government support for this Bill, and in October we find S. J.-B. in correspondence with the Home Secretary. There is a long letter marked "Private" in which Mr. Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke) expresses his view of the matter, and asks her to let him know what course she proposes to follow. Shortly after, we get the following:

" Secretary of State,  
Home Department.  
Oct. 13. 1874.

MY DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I have done what I can to forward your views. I should think you would be met by the same legal difficulty in Ireland as in Scotland. But though it may not be very agreeable to my constituents I should have no objection if this were the only obstacle to introduce an enabling Bill giving all Universities the power if

they please to confer medical degrees or indeed any other degrees on women.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

ROBERT LOWE."

Clearly she was eager to follow up the opening, for ten days later he writes again :

"I am afraid I cannot commit the Government to introducing the Bill without consulting them. I will do so at the Cabinets which will take place next month and tell you the result."<sup>1</sup>

"The matter has been discussed to-day," writes Mr. Stansfeld on Dec. 1st, "but nothing is settled; I apprehend difference of opinion. . . ."

I should advise personal communication with members of the Government before January Cabinets. A concise but complete and temperate statement in favour of legislation would, I think, be useful."

So, early in January, S. J.-B. went up to London to interview ministers and others.

"Jan. 7th. Wednesday. Mr. Lowe, 4 p.m. Very cordial and courteous. Would certainly bring in a Bill if his colleagues allowed him,—very doubtful if they would,—if not, would help Wedderburn all he could, 'and I can do a great deal.'

Thought Enabling Bill more hopeful than compelling Medical Boards to examine."

"Jan. 10th. Saturday. In morning at Museum, looking up Charters of Colleges, etc.

2 p.m. Sir J. Lubbock. Pleasant and friendly,—non-committal rather. Would talk with Wedderburn,—'generally agreed with him.'

At 4 p.m. Stansfeld. Friendly as ever. Thought Selborne's opinion most important."

After a few days spent with Mrs. Jex-Blake at Brighton the tale proceeds :

"Tuesday, 20th. At 1 p.m. saw Lord Aberdare,—quite friendly,—'should heartily support Bill.' Was quite willing that Bill should come from his office, by Forster.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lowe's advocacy was strengthened by a fine memorial presented to him at this time by 471 graduates of the University of London, praying that the benefits of the University should be extended to women. This memorial was secured through the exertions of Dr. Alfred Shewen.

2. p.m. Grant Duff, friendly but not encouraging as to his power to help with Cabinet.

Wednesday 21st. Saw Thos. Hughes, 10 a.m. Very friendly. Would speak to Forster, etc. . . .

Thursday 22nd. Breakfasted with the Russell Gurneys. Very friendly. He quite ready to put his name on back of Wedderburn's Bill. On the whole encouraged to get special Exam. and practise in spite of Act, if no legislation to be got.<sup>1</sup>

11 a.m. Lady Selborne—'knew nothing about' our question,—laughed at the idea of my seeing the Chancellor—but listened fairly to what I had to say,—seemed impressed by the facts and by the attention of the other ministers,—promised to report fairly what I had said.

Not specially courteous or gracious, but I think honest."

"8.30 p.m. express from King's Cross to Edinburgh.

Friday 23rd. Illuminations, etc., for Duke of Edinburgh's wedding day.

Saturday, 24th. Dissolution! What next?"

It was only too true. The time of reaction had come after a long period of reforming energy under Mr. Gladstone, and now—failing to find an adequate rallying cry for his party—he dissolved Parliament and appealed to the country. In the confusion of the moment the Home Secretary did not forget the women students.

"MY DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I am sorry to say that in the present state of things it is quite impossible for me to bring in a Bill on your subject or indeed on any other. I don't think you will find much difficulty in getting a man.

I congratulate you on your brother's appointment.<sup>2</sup>

Very truly yours,

R. LOWE."

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<sup>1</sup> "I was very much troubled by your last letter," wrote Dr. Sewall a month later, "for the idea of your beginning to practise without a diploma seems to me such a mistake. It appears to me that by practising illegally in that way, you will be giving up all you have been fighting for, and will be opening a way that some women who have not studied thoroughly may use; and there will be no way of your showing the public the difference between your qualifications."

<sup>2</sup> To the Headmastership of Rugby.

This was followed on February 10th by a letter from Mr. Stansfeld :

“ DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

The Conservatives will certainly come in and for a long time.

I should have thought that Russell Gurney might not improbably now be placed upon the Bench. I don't suppose that a political appointment would suit him ; unless it were that of Speaker and I have not heard his name mentioned for it.

I think you can't do better than ask him, saying at the same time that you cannot but see that the coming political change may make it out of his power to comply.

It is all very extraordinary and mortifying.

Yours truly,  
J. STANSFELD.”

The suggested letter was roughly drafted forthwith :

“ To Russell Gurney.

Will you forgive me if, at such a busy and engrossing time, I venture to trouble you about our comparatively small affairs, very important as they are to us.

You are, of course, aware that Sir David Wedderburn is no longer in Parliament,<sup>1</sup> and I suppose it is quite certain that the present Government must go out, so that Mr. Lowe cannot at least introduce the Bill as Home Secretary, and thus on both hands our prospects are at an end.

I venture, however, to rely on the kind interest you expressed in our cause, and to ask you whether it would be possible for you to induce the Conservative Government to take it up, or, if not, whether we might hope for your personal help still farther in the matter,—if you do not take office, as I hear you may. I think Mr. Lowe would be willing to help us as a private member, and it occurred to me as possible that you and he might take up the Bill jointly so as to conciliate both sides of the House.

I am personally very ignorant of political matters, and of what could and what could not be done. I shall feel it the greatest possible favour if you will kindly tell me how far you can help us in this matter, and will give me any advice on the subject which may occur to you. It is of extreme importance to us that the Bill should, if passed at all, be passed as soon as possible, as it will at any rate be difficult enough to make arrangements in time for next winter's session, and we can ill afford to lose another year.

I trust that you will at least excuse me for thus troubling you.

Yours truly obliged,  
S. J.-B.”

<sup>1</sup> Sir David Wedderburn did not offer himself for re-election.

A most gracious answer to this arrived without loss of time :

“ Queen’s Hotel, Hastings,  
13th. Feb.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Although politically opposed to Sir D. Wedderburn, yet for your sake and for that of the cause which he so faithfully supported I can sincerely regret the loss of his seat.

I really do not know what course to advise you to pursue. My absence from Parliament during nearly the whole of the two last Sessions makes it more difficult for me than it would have otherwise have been.

I should think that it would scarcely be possible to get the new Government as a Government to take up the measure. Coming in at the time they do they will be sure to take up as few measures as possible. If a Bill is brought in by Mr. Lowe or anyone else I would not only support it but use any little influence I may have with the Ministry to induce them not to oppose it.

The state of my health is such that I cannot undertake to take charge of the Bill. I have come here in order to get a little rest before the Meeting of Parliament and I am under positive orders from my doctor to avoid all extra work.

I fear indeed that during the next Session I am likely to be a somewhat useless member.

I shall always be ready to consult with you, though at present I confess that I do not see my way.

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

RUSSELL GURNEY.”

It was characteristic of the vicissitudes of S. J.-B.’s life at the time that within a few days of receiving this letter she had a telegram from Mrs. Jex-Blake’s physician at Brighton : “ Your Mother is very poorly. I should like you to come.”

This was delivered at 8 p.m., and it is needless to say that she started by the night train. A fortnight of anxious nursing followed ; but her affairs were not forgotten :

“ Local Government Board,  
Whitehall. Feb. 24. 74.

DEAR MASSON,

I have heard, of course, also from Miss Jex-Blake. I won’t say ‘ No ’ at any rate at present.

First I will see Lowe and ascertain his mind ; and then I should like to see if someone more acceptable to Dizzy cannot be found. I think one must look around one first in the new Parliament, before deciding.

Is not the Bill you propose simply one enabling Universities to grant Degrees to women ; or what else do you propose ?

Whether it is good or bad I should tell you that the wirepulling and newspaper doctors *hate me*.

Yours ever,

J. STANSFELD."

" Feb. 25th. 74.

DEAR MASSON,

I have seen Lowe about your proposed Bill.

He is ' heartily ' for it, but thinks that he and I had better support and not originate. Just now, he says, whatever we do will probably be considered wrong, as the tide is against us, and for this reason none of these Bills should be *introduced* by any of us ex-cabinet ministers. Moreover if any of them are to pass they must be made as little unacceptable as possible to Dizzy & Co., which means that they had better be proposed and seconded by men on either side of the House—one on one side and one on the other—but not by us.

I must say that the more I think of it the more I find this reasoning sound. And I am prepared to *advise* therefore that you should not ask either Lowe or me.

As to myself there is another special reason, to which I have already referred, why it might be more prudent not to choose me, viz. that ' the doctors ' hate me ; and tho' I can't see exactly how that fact might operate, it might at least be admitted that it might operate unfavourably, and that therefore it would be safer to look elsewhere.

I won't write to Miss Jex-Blake yet, but will wait to hear from you what you think.

Of course I would willingly support and help.

Yours ever,

J. STANSFELD."

" 10, Regent Terrace, Edinr.

Feb. 26, 1874.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I have had two letters from Mr. Stansfeld, which I enclose. The second, you will see, is less favourable than the first, though not absolutely conclusive. In reply I have expressed my belief that the second objection—that about his relation to the ' doctors '—can matter little, inasmuch as we can't expect anyone who takes up the cause to be a darling of the doctors or to remain one<sup>1</sup>; but on

<sup>1</sup> We must never forget that a minority of doctors had been helpful all along. Years before this a petition to Parliament in favour of the women had been signed by nearly two hundred.

the other objection I have not felt able to say much against the experienced instinct of Mr. Lowe and himself. On the one side there may be a good deal in their feeling that for an ex-minister of the Gladstone Cabinet to move the Bill may move Disraeli to criticism, if not to opposition; on the other it seems essential that the lead should be taken by an eminent and faithful man. You will weigh the whole matter in London and consult.

I daresay it will be best not to publish the Memorial to Disraeli till the receipt of it is acknowledged. I have all the renewed signatures<sup>1</sup> now except the Edinburgh ones; and these, I hope, will be completed today or tomorrow.

Yours very truly,

DAVID MASSON."

"Stoke Lodge,  
Hyde Park Gate, W.  
Feb. 28. 74.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I could see you either on Monday or Tuesday afternoon. But where? For the Local Government Board knows me no more.

I shall be working at the Athenaeum on Monday afternoon, and could therefore easily call on you anywhere in town.

I could see you *here* on the Tuesday and could make any time convenient, but the morning would be most so.

Pray let me know.

I enclose Mr. Lowe's and Mr. Russell Gurney's notes. You have heard from Masson, I presume. I wrote after seeing Lowe. But I will postpone telling you of our interview till we meet.

Yours truly,  
J. STANSFELD."

A sharp little illness made it difficult for Mr. Stansfeld to pursue the matter for a week or two, but finally we get the following:

"15 Gt. Stanhope Street, W.  
March 21.

DEAR STANSFELD,

I am quite ready to take up the case of the women students if a good Bill can be framed, and I shall have to see you on Monday at the House.

Ever yours,  
W. COWPER TEMPLE."

[Telegram] "March 23rd. Cowper Temple, Great Stanhope Street to Miss Jex-Blake, 15 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh.

Can you tell me a lawyer who knows the subject and will frame the Bill or advise about it."

<sup>1</sup> The Memorial had been originally addressed to Gladstone.

This was apparently followed by a letter, for, at the earliest possible moment on March 24th, S. J.-B. sent down a note by hand to her solicitor :

“ DEAR MR. MILLAR,

An eminent M.P. has undertaken to bring in an Enabling Bill to *enable* Universities to educate and graduate women on the same terms as men, and I have just got a letter asking me to send up a draft of such Bill. As you are the best authority on such matters I should like to see you at once about it, and should be extremely glad if you could sketch out a draft beforehand, as time is of the greatest moment.

Could I see you if I called between 12.30 and 1 p.m. ?

Yrs. truly,

S. JEX-BLAKE.”

The Draft Bill seems to have been posted that afternoon, and the following day another telegram arrived :

“ March 25th. Rt. Hon. Stansfeld, London, to Miss Jex-Blake, 15 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh.

I have seen Mr. Cowper Temple and we advise you to come and see him.”

So of course S. J.-B. travelled up to London next day.

[Diary] “ March 26th. Summoned up to London about Cowper Temple’s Bill. He very kind, plenty of good will. . . . Stansfeld admirable. Gurney do., only from health inactive. Lowe, Gallio-like.”

A day or two later S. J.-B. dined with the Cowper Temples and details were threshed out.

“ I am so glad,” writes Miss M’Laren, “ that you have succeeded so well, and find Mr. Cowper Temple such a nice man and energetic besides,—and trust all may go well. I am not afraid of opposition at all, but what I do fear is that at this late season it may not get through.”

To Miss Jex-Blake :

“ Broadlands.

April 15.

. . . Mr. Ewing consented when I explained the Bill to him, and his name with that of Mr. Gurney and Dr. Cameron are on the back of the Bill. I am not very sanguine of success if a serious opposition should be manifested, but I have hopes that the moderation of the measure may have the effect of not calling forth the latent antagonism that exists against the cause.



But whether the Bill passes or not, it must advance the cause, for at least we shall have a good debate on the subject.

I talked to Sir W. Maxwell when I first thought of undertaking a Bill and I found that he took the view that in his representative position as Rector of Edinburgh University he ought not to take a part in a question in which there is so much difference of opinion and warmth of feeling. I have fixed Friday 24th for the second reading, but am not at all sure that it can come on that evening as there will be many questions before it.

I return to London tomorrow.

Yours—[illegibly],

W. C. TEMPLE.

The names on the back of the Bill are

Mr. Cowper Temple,  
Mr. Russell Gurney,  
Mr. Orr Ewing,  
Dr. Cameron."

There was much discussion as to the desirability of keeping quiet about the Bill, and allowing it to slip through, if possible, without arousing all the energies of the opposition.

" 10 Regent Terrace,  
Edinburgh.

April 1, 1874.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Best thanks for your letter. From what it says and from what I had heard before to the same effect from Miss M'Laren, I have not the least doubt of the practical wisdom of the limitation of the Bill to the Scottish Universities. The difficulty of taking such differently-constituted Universities along in the Bill has struck me so far ; but I had not thought of the special difficulty that might arise from jealousy of the divided powers of the University of London. But, while *our* Bill goes on alone, there is no reason why the other universities should not be *moving*, each for itself, and all such movement would help ours.

I am not so sure of the policy of *silence* about our Bill. Miss M'Laren will have told you that Dr. Lyon Playfair has alarmed our people here by informing them of it, and asking their opinion. There is a Committee on watch with power to call a *Senatus* meeting when the Bill is perfectly known. Possibly, when they see it, they may feel inclined to do nothing, seeing that it only legitimises the power the University thought it possessed when it passed the regulations ; but no one can tell. All that Dr. L. P. wanted was advice for himself ; and nothing, even of that kind, can be done collectively,

except by Senatus—as the Committee is for observation only. Still the matter is public; and *individuals* may be at work. Also the fact and drift of the Bill have been mentioned in the newspapers, e.g. by the London correspondent of the *Glasgow Mail*. If, in these circumstances, you are of opinion that the memorial to Mr. Disraeli may be published, please return my copy with the signatures; and I will send it to our *three* papers here—where perhaps it ought to appear first. But you will, of course, act with the advice of Mr. Cowper Temple and others; and I won't publish till you give the word. Anyhow it might be best to return the memorial to me. A telegraph from you would then tell me to publish any day—if not immediately.

Yours very truly,

DAVID MASSON."

" April 15, 1874.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

After reading today the *Scotsman's* report of the introduction of the Bill, and observing how quietly and cautiously it seems to be framed (' to remove doubts as to the powers ' etc.)<sup>1</sup> I have thought it better not at once to publish the memorial. If there is any possibility that the Bill will be let through without opposition, our memorial, as more strongly expressed, might interfere with this. At all events I have thought it most prudent not to be in a hurry, but to wait a day or two till we see how Mr. C. T.'s Bill is received among the probable enemies. Very likely they will move against it somehow,—secretly if not publicly; and, if we find this, then our memorial ought to come out as a contribution to the argument. You will perhaps hear how Dr. Lyon Playfair and Mr. Gordon act in London: I will observe here. Perhaps I am prudent in excess; but, once the memorial is out, it is past recall.

Yours very truly,

DAVID MASSON."

" 83 Belgrave Road, S.W.

16th April, 1874.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

The bill has been introduced by Mr. Cowper Temple, and my name is one of those on its back. If it could be smuggled through it would of course save a great deal of time and trouble, but I am afraid it is of no use to think of that. The moment it is published the bill will be telegraphed to all the Scotch papers, and every

<sup>1</sup> " A Bill to Remove Doubts as to the Powers of the Universities of Scotland to admit Women as Students, and to grant Degrees to Women."

professor in every university, and almost every medical man throughout Scotland, will perceive its drift. Moreover you must remember that the Lord Advocate is member for Glasgow and Aberdeen University, and will have to keep his constituents well posted up in everything affecting their interests. If I see anything concerning the measure in the Scotch papers, I shall forward it to you, and meanwhile remain

Yours very sincerely,

CHARLES CAMERON.

Miss Jex-Blake."

So the glove was thrown down, and, as Dr. Cameron had predicted, the news of it was instantly flashed from Dan to Beersheba. In a very short time 65 petitions in favour of the Bill were presented to Parliament, three of these being from the Town Councils of Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Linlithgow. There was also one from the City of Edinburgh, and one from 16,000 women. The most important, perhaps, was from twenty-six Professors of Scottish Universities, including eight (out of fourteen) Professors of the University of St. Andrews,—among them the Rev. Principal Tulloch,—and thirteen Professors of the University of Edinburgh. If Glasgow was poorly represented in number, the women had all the more reason to be proud of the weight of the two names,—John and Edward Caird. There was also a petition from those Edinburgh lecturers who had actually taught the women.

Against the Bill there were four petitions :

1. From the University Court of Edinburgh.
2. From the Senatus of Edinburgh University.
3. From the Medical Faculty of the Senatus (probably identical with 2).
4. From the University of Glasgow.

The second reading of the Bill was fixed for April 24th, but at the urgent request of Dr. Lyon Playfair, member for the University of Edinburgh, it was postponed to a later date ("in order that his University might have time to consider the subject"!) when the pressure of business made it impossible to secure any day: or, as Miss M'Laren had predicted, it failed to "get through." And so the whole question was practically shelved for another year.

There was an interesting debate on the motion, however, on June 12th, 1874, when able speeches were made by Mr. Cowper Temple, Mr. Stansfeld and others,—the two members for Edinburgh (Town and Gown) providing an almost dramatic contrast.

Mr. M'Laren (Town), hard-headed, shrewd man of business, bluntly declared that "if it were a question to be decided by the intelligent inhabitants of Edinburgh, nine-tenths would vote in its favour. . . . If two or three of the professors would only take a voyage round the world, the whole question would be satisfactorily settled before they returned. (Laughter.) Where the male students paid three or four guineas for each class, the ladies paid eight or ten guineas, so that money was no obstacle. There was no difficulty, in fact, except want of will, and that arose from medical prejudice,—at least that was the opinion of the great majority of the people in Edinburgh."

Dr. Lyon Playfair (Gown), scholar, courtier, man-of-the-world, had a harder task. Even *Punch* was moved to sympathy with him "as one in a perplexity between his constituents and his convictions."

In any case the whole question had entered on a new phase, there was fresh enthusiasm for the cause, and, on the other hand, those who had looked upon the idea of women doctors as an amusing absurdity, were roused to perturbation and alarm.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE LONDON SCHOOL OF MEDICINE FOR WOMEN

It is a terrible thing for a hasty, impulsive, faulty human being to be placed as S. J.-B. was at this time, in a difficult position—on a slippery ridge, as it were—in the eye of the whole world. It has been said before that few people ventured to “lecture” her: she liked to hear the truth, and, when her friends were prepared to risk all, she took their faithful dealing magnanimously, often nobly: but somehow she made adverse criticism very difficult. It was said of her that she would have made an excellent advocate,—she had so keen an eye for the strong points of her own position and the weak points of those of her adversaries; and it is only fair to say that, in conversation with her, many people might well be simply carried away. In a sort of *esprit d'escalier*—or *jugement d'escalier*—they might see the other side of the question, and sometimes they wrote a qualifying letter to say so; but we know how few people are prepared in life to take that amount of trouble in a matter that does not intimately concern themselves. It is so much easier to sympathize with those who confide to us their troubles and difficulties, and then to vent our *jugement d'escalier* on the man we meet in the street below. In the course of her life S. J.-B. got more than her share of that kind of sympathy.

We have seen that, in the matter of her examination the year before, she did not admit the justice of her rejection. She was supported in this attitude by the opinion of three or four lecturers and examiners in the subjects for which she had entered, who had read her papers and had cordially

pronounced them—in writing—to be up to or above the pass standard. Hundreds of people had, of course, expressed to her their belief that she had not been fairly treated, and their sympathy had steadily intensified the impression in her own mind. She would have accepted Huxley's verdict loyally, if *all* the papers handed in at that examination could have been submitted to him. No one who reads one paper only can possibly say—except by an exercise of faith in his fellow creatures—whether worse papers have been accepted and better rejected, or no. It would have been strange indeed if Huxley had not had that amount of faith in his colleagues.

From the moment of Dr. (afterwards Sir Wyville) Thomson's appointment to the Chair of Biology, S. J.-B. had dreaded him as an examiner, on the ground that he was altogether adverse to the women. "You will receive no insolence from *him*," Professor Tait had written to her in 1871, "but I fear that is all I can say, though it *is something*." And previously, "although he is not in your favour, he is not a man to take any mean or unfair advantage."

She ought, of course, to have accepted this judgment once for all as that of a just man, but from the time of her examination the conviction that she had been unfairly treated never wavered, though the whole matter was, she thought, a thing of the past forever.

In a great controversy, however, nothing may ever be safely assumed to be a thing of the past. It seems to be buried forever, but it lies at the mercy of any chance turn of the spade.

And this brings us back to the point where Dr. Lyon Playfair, "in a perplexity between his constituents and his convictions"—those constituents meaning to all intents and purposes the "two or three Professors" for whom the Member for Edinburgh had recommended a voyage round the world as a means of solving the whole difficulty—Dr. Lyon Playfair had so availed himself of the machinery of Parliament as to shelve the whole question indefinitely.

One quite realizes that by this time it was war to the knife on both sides, and one refrains from unduly criticising either; but it is S. J.-B. whose life we are considering, and there

can be no doubt that for her—overworked and overstrained as she was—the situation was very hard to bear.

And now the discussion in Parliament, literally bringing the question “into the range of practical politics,” had stirred up all the latent objection to the idea of women doctors, and had brought every weapon into play. One can dimly conjecture the number and variety of assaults that must have been made on the leading newspapers, and it is small wonder if some of them were sorely unsettled, so much so that “the pulpit spake pure Canterbury in the morning and Geneva in the afternoon.”

Even the *Times* began to talk of “all the delicacies and best charms” of woman’s nature, and took occasion to say in a leading article, “It is a little amusing, indeed, that one of the Ladies who had rendered herself most conspicuous, should after all have failed under the test of examination.” The writer did not add—perhaps he had not been informed—that three of the fellow-students of that conspicuous Lady had successfully passed the examination in question in a previous year; but the playful taunt—if taunt it was—was more than the generous spirit of one of those successful candidates could stand. She wrote an impulsive letter, mentioning S. J.-B. by name, and explaining that it was “devotion to our cause which led to her failure,” that “she had borne the brunt of the battle, and had spared her fellow-students all the harass and worry of the struggle, and had thus enabled them to enjoy the leisure requisite for passing their examinations.”

Of course the writer should have consulted S. J.-B. before sending this letter to the *Times*, but apparently it never occurred to her that the defence might not be acceptable to the one defended. In any case, the letter came upon S. J.-B. like a thunderbolt, and she committed the great and crowning mistake of her life,—she wrote a letter to the *Times*, implying in effect that in the matter of the examination, she did not believe she had been fairly treated.

It was quite a temperate letter from her point of view, but—as her brother had said—she was throwing pebbles at a fortress, and, what was worse, throwing them under the gaze of the whole civilized world.

If Professor Crum Brown had done the Women's Cause a service by denying to Miss Pechey the name and privileges of Hope Scholar, S. J.-B. had now repaid that service to him and his colleagues, full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.

Under the mighty Ægis of the University of Edinburgh, the examiners replied, and Professor Huxley himself entered the controversy in defence of his friend, Dr. Wyville Thomson, who was away on the "Challenger" Expedition at the time.

Miss Pechey was only restrained by prudent friends from publishing a generous letter in which she expressed her conviction that, if Professor Huxley had examined the Edinburgh students, 90 per cent. of them would have failed, and she added a paragraph which shows at least how differently a great institution may look when regarded from two different points of view :

"It is really amusing to those who know anything of the constitution of the University to find [the Examiners] gravely suggesting that [S. J.-B.] could have appealed to the Medical Faculty, the Senatus, and the University Court. The names have an imposing sound, but, when one comes to consider, the Medical Faculty resolves itself into the medical examiners, the Senatus (at that time of the year, before the arts professors had returned for the winter) into the Medical Faculty, whilst the University Court is in reality the mouthpiece of one member who I fear would turn a deaf ear to any appeal from Miss Jex-Blake."

Well, there it was! If the cause could have been killed, this mistake might probably have killed it. If S. J.-B. could have been crushed, this mistake would have crushed her. But the cause was intensely vital, and S. J.-B. was tough.

One falls back once more on Newman's brave and comforting words :

"The very faults of an individual excite attention—he loses, but his cause (if good, and he powerful-minded) gains—this is the way of things, we promote truth by a self-sacrifice."

S. J.-B. was just starting on her holiday when the correspondence took place, and, although Miss Stevenson and Mrs. Thorne both wrote to tell her of the "irreparable"



damage it had done, most of her friends and supporters were disposed to let her enjoy her holiday—if she could—in peace.

So, in the silence and repose of a sojourn in Perthshire, she laid her future plans.

As early as December 6th, 1873, Dr. Anstie had written to her :

“ DEAR MADAM,

I am afraid I do not see my way to any practical plan at present.

“ At Westminster it is quite possible that my colleagues would consent to *separate* classes. But the fatal objection is want of space ; and I could not, I feel sure, persuade them to try the experiment of mixed classes.

I fear there is no way, except by the ladies raising money enough to found a school for themselves. In *that* case I, and I think others, would be willing to go out of our way to afford them *teaching*. But the difficulties about clinical teaching seem very great.

I will talk the matter over with my colleague, Mr. Cowell, and write to you again. . . .”

“ 16 Wimpole Street,  
Dec. 12th.

DEAR MADAM,

Three or four days of complete prostration with influenza have prevented me from finding time to talk with Mr. Cowell.

But as regards the Westminster Hospital School I think it very unlikely that any proposition would be entertained with regard to surrendering our position as teachers of *male* students. . . .

I think (so far as I can at present judge) that your best course would be to take some premises in London, and build a thoroughly good school, fit for first-class teaching of the theoretical courses. I believe if that were done you would get teachers. And with that solid evidence of sincerity and energy in your work I believe the hospitals, or some of them, would give way and grant you hospital practice.

But this is only my first crude idea. Believe me,

Yours very faithfully,

FRANCIS ED. ANSTIE.”

It is impossible to over-estimate the whole-heartedness with which Dr. Anstie took up the cause. There are numerous letters in which he records the various advances and checks which he experienced in the course of his advocacy. For a

time he had hopes of inducing his own School to admit women, but the matter got wind, and an adverse medical paper raised all that latent opposition with which the pioneers were becoming so familiar. From this point of view the discussion in Parliament did, for the moment, as much harm as good, and finally we find Dr. Anstie writing :

" 16 Wimpole Street,  
July 2.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

For the moment we are thoroughly defeated, and it may be well to rest on our oars for a little time. You will probably have heard of the rejection by the Senate of U. L. of the proposition about degrees, and I wrote to tell you that I also found it was impossible to induce my colleagues at Westminster to open a female department of the School.

I think there is nothing for it now but to make up your minds to form a school for yourselves. Were that once done I do not think there would be any very great difficulty in obtaining clinical instruction and in becoming recognized by some of the corporations.

I am sorry to have had no better luck as your champion. But there is no doubt just now for some reason or other, a strong current of adverse opinion. As I said before I think you and the other ladies should take counsel with your friends, and (without renewal of the discussion in public) should set to work upon the scheme of a school.

I feel little doubt that, if you could show the positive evidence of energy and resource afforded by the establishment of a separate school in London, you would get both sympathy and teaching help.

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

F. E. ANSTIE."

Mr. Norton, too, of St. Mary's Hospital, assured S. J.-B. that " a thoroughly good school might be organised, apart from the existing schools, but with friendly lecturers gathered from any or all of them." This suggestion obviated the very real difficulty of getting fresh lecturers " recognised."

Mrs. Anderson still thought the time was not ripe: Mrs. Thorne was in Paris<sup>1</sup>: the other students were scattered far and wide for the holidays. From every point of view it seemed

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Thorne on her return tried to dissuade S. J.-B. from making the attempt; but, on finding how much had been done, she gladly coöperated in raising funds.

imperative that the winter session should be secured: so, with the help of the two men mentioned above and of Dr. King Chambers, S. J.-B. simply did the work herself.

The record is brief enough,—there has been no entry in the diary since June 23rd: no reference to the *Times* controversy at all:

“August 11th. Tuesday. To London in one day [from Perthshire]. To Hampstead. Rested one day.

August 13th. Thursday. To Anstie and Norton. Both encouraging and helpful.”

Follows another of those sheaves of blank pages which always indicate intense activity or preoccupation; and her book, *Medical Women*, just touches on “an almost incredible amount of search, enquiry and disappointment”; there are various stray lists of lecturers, possible, probable and certain; and then we proceed without farther entry to:

“Sept. 15th. Actually signed lease and got possession of 30 Henrietta<sup>1</sup> Street. Rigged up some kind of beds and slept there that night,—Alice coming from Wales to help me.”

Here there is a footnote:

“Miss Irby also came for a night one day this month,—grand, quiet, strong.”

Another blank page or two, and then:

“Oct. 9th. Friday. Entered into 32 Bernard Street,<sup>2</sup> Mother and all. (She nearly extinguished by mattress!)

Oct. 12th. Monday. Opening of London School of Medicine for Women.”

There is no farther entry till 1875. We owe to a stranger, however, the following pleasant description of the School as it was then:

“For the early existence of an institution like this School of Medicine no more appropriate home could in all probability be found within the wide area of London than the curious old house in Henrietta Street. In a central position, within easy reach of museums and libraries, but retired from the bustle of noisy thoroughfares, a

<sup>1</sup> The name was afterwards changed to Handel Street, and then to Hunter Street.

<sup>2</sup> The house S. J.-B. had taken as her private residence.

range of spacious rooms stretches a long front towards the green sward of an old-fashioned garden. Apartments admirably adapted for the purpose of lecture halls 'give,' as the Americans say, from underneath a broad verandah on this pleasant outlook. Cosy in winter, cool in summer, and undisturbed by the sounds of external life always, these rooms should be highly favourable to philosophic contemplation. In the upper story—there is only one above the ground-floor—are several smaller apartments suitable for museums and reading-rooms."—*Daily News*, March 13, 1877.

How deep was the impression made upon Miss Irby by that brief visit we gather from a letter written twenty years later (on July 5th, 1894) :

"I was on the point of writing to you after the prize-giving at the London School of Medicine for Women. A visit to those premises always recalls to me those few days with you when you stood there alone in almost bare walls, establishing the fort. You would wish nothing better than that the School should go on as it is going on, friends and foes being drawn into it. But I always *burn* with the recollection of your first days there."

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE RUSSELL GURNEY ENABLING ACT

It was at this stage that Mrs. Anderson's help was so invaluable to the great venture. She had an assured position—social and professional—in the metropolis; and her name carried the weight that belongs to a sane and shrewd and able personality. It is impossible to over-estimate the good she had done to "the Cause" by simply showing that a woman *can be a reliable and successful practitioner*. She had founded a small hospital for women; but she still thought that the time for the creation of a good medical school for women had not come,—that it would have been better to wait till public opinion was more distinctly in favour of women doctors: and she would have fostered the growth of public opinion by encouraging women to obtain foreign degrees, and to practise in England as unregistered physicians and surgeons.

She was strengthened in this position by the fact that S. J.-B. was not the Founder she would have chosen: she judged the Edinburgh campaign by its net result as regarded the immediate object at which it had aimed, and, so far as Edinburgh University was concerned, that net result was failure. There were those, moreover, who assured her, not without a measure of truth, that Miss Jex-Blake's impulsiveness ("want of judgment," "want of temper," she told S. J.-B.) had done great harm in Edinburgh. She and her informants alike failed, perhaps, at the moment to realize how that same impulsiveness (mistakes and all) had formed the picturesque element that made the popular appeal,—how

that same impulsiveness had roused and had borne the brunt of the latent opposition which must have manifested itself sooner or later under the wisest management.

There is abundant contemporary evidence to this effect. Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi wrote from America :

“ You have fortunately been able to interest a much larger and better class of people than have ever bestirred themselves in the matter here. The list of governors of your School is quite imposing. You at least have had the advantage attaching to a conspicuous battle with real and dignified forces engaged on each side ; whereas here,—this question, as so many others, has rather dribbled into the sand.”

Miss Pechey, too, after delivering a lecture in Yorkshire a year later, wrote :

“ I couldn't conclude without saying that all we had done towards opening up the medical profession to women was due mainly to Miss Jex-Blake, who had got all the abuse because she had done all the work,—in fact all along she had done the work of three women or (with a grin at the phalanx of men behind)—of ten men ! This brought down the house.”

“ Mrs. Garrett Anderson is a fine instance of an individual success,” said one of the physicians who assisted the movement in those early days ; “ but Miss Jex-Blake fights the battle, not for herself, but for all.”

Of course an individual success cannot but assist a movement of the kind quite as surely as any other contribution.

One thing the two pioneers had in common,—a fine honesty and truthfulness : much plain speaking passed between them : and, if it had been possible for two such different natures to see things eye to eye, no want of candour or breadth of view on either side would have prevented it. Here is a sample of their correspondence :

“ Hampstead.

21st August, 1874.

DEAR MRS. ANDERSON,

If I kept a record of all the people who bring me cock and bull stories about you, and assure me that you are “ greatly injuring the cause,” I might fill as many pages with quotations as you have patience to read, but, beyond defending you on a good many occasions, I have never thought it needful to take much notice of such incidents, still less to retail them to you.

Nor do I much care to know whether or no certain anonymous individuals have confided to you that they lay at my door what you call "the failure at Edinburgh,"—inasmuch as the only people really competent to judge of that point are my fellow-workers and fellow-students, such as Professor Masson, Professor Bennett, Miss Stevenson, Mrs. Thorne, Miss Pechey, Dr. Watson, and Dr. Balfour, and I do not fancy that it is from any of these that you have heard the comments in question.

It can, as I say, serve no purpose whatever to go into this sort of gossip which is very rarely indeed founded on any knowledge of facts; but, quite apart from any such discussion, I am more than willing to say that if, in the opinion of a majority of those who are organizing this new school, my name appears likely to injure its chances of success, I will cheerfully stand aside, and let Mrs. Thorne and Miss Pechey carry out the almost completed plans.

So much for your second objection [to joining the Council of the School] which I have taken first, because I feel that the other is for your own consideration and Dr. Anstie's, and that it is needless for me to say anything on the point.

In conclusion let me say that I never said it 'did not signify' whether you joined the Council (though I *did* say that I believed the School was already tolerably secure of ultimate success.) I think it of very great importance, both for your credit and ours, that there should, as you say, be no appearance of split in the camp, and I should greatly prefer that your name should appear on the Council with Dr. Blackwell's and those of the medical men who are helping us.

Believe me,

Yours truly,

'SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE.'

So Mrs. Anderson joined the Council, taking no part in the daily life and work of the School, but bringing to the new venture excellent qualities in which S. J.-B. was lacking, among them the valuable gift for bearing in mind who are the people worth conciliating,—the people with whom one simply must not quarrel.

S. J.-B., on the other hand, brought an amount of practical capacity and experience which the reader can estimate for himself. We have seen what she expected—and got—from her solicitor in the matter of the draft of a Parliamentary Bill: it is not to be supposed that she was less successful with printers, nor with plumbers, carpenters and others. She knew exactly how quickly a proof might be expected in an emergency,

and she knew what the printing ought to cost. If there was anything about the printed page that struck the eye as "odd," she had her finger on the technical defect in a moment, and saw that it was put right. She loved drawing up specifications for tanks, etc., and making her drawing to scale: carpentry was an unfailing joy,—nuts, bolts, staples, screws were as familiar to her as were bourgeois, pica, leads, and other mysteries of the printer's craft. "I like working for the Doctor," an Edinburgh joiner said in later years, "she knows what she wants, and she knows when it is well done"; but of course it was only a competent and conscientious workman who could rise to this view of the case. Fortunately life provides a good many of these: when S. J.-B. met one, she valued him as he deserved.

Recalling the early days of the School at a meeting of the Governing Body more than twenty years later, Mr. Norton said:

"Miss Jex-Blake had come to him in 1874 after leaving Edinburgh, and he had then expressed the opinion that if funds were raised and a school established of which all the teachers were recognized by the Examining Boards,—the Apothecaries' Society would be obliged to admit its students to examination. By the middle of October Miss Jex-Blake had succeeded in obtaining £1300 and in renting 30 Handel Street for the purposes of a School of Medicine for Women. It was her great energy which succeeded in so promptly carrying out the work of starting the School."

"Mrs. Anderson said she recollected that in those early days she had been timid and had considered the time had not yet arrived for establishing a separate School of Medicine for Women. To organize a School on the slender sum of money raised by Miss Jex-Blake required great optimism. . . ."

So it did. It required much more than optimism. It required a unique capacity for directing and supervising every atom of work done, a unique capacity for getting a full and fair penny's worth out of every penny, a unique capacity for finding workers who would put their shoulder to the wheel, and do things for love. Chief of these workers always was herself.

After the first Prize-giving Miss M'Laren writes:

"L[ouisa] S[tevenson] and I have just been saying that no one but you could have done all that work on Wednesday. But indeed



there is almost nothing that you don't do better than everyone else."

Few even of S. J.-B.'s opponents would have denied that this was true. In everything connected with Board and Business meetings she was an expert. To say one had been trained under her was for many years an invaluable testimonial among those who knew. Her enthusiasm was combined with a clear-sighted grasp of every detail of the situation. Repeatedly one finds Cabinet Ministers and other busy people saying,—“ I won't look at the documents till you come and give me the thread,” “ I can't begin to write the paper till you come and talk me into it,” or words to that effect.

Valuable qualities these : but not necessarily the qualities that create the pleasantest possible atmosphere for those who have been in the habit of slipping through life easily. There must have been a good many then as later who would have been glad on occasion to deal with someone a little less business-like.

In any case the thing was launched, Mr. Norton accepted the office of Dean<sup>1</sup>; there was a staff of able lecturers ; and twenty-three students joined during the first year. Mrs. Anderson and others brought much needed financial help ; Lord Shaftesbury distributed the prizes at the end of the first winter session ; and Lord Aberdare presided at the first meeting of the Governing Body. So far all went well.

Many were the congratulations from Edinburgh and St. Andrews, mingled naturally with regrets that the little social centre at 15 Buccleuch Place seemed permanently broken up. Professor Lewis Campbell and Principal Tulloch were sure the situation as regarded their University had been greatly simplified by the creation of a good School ; and Dr. G. W. Balfour wrote :

“ I only regret that you will be so far beyond my reach that it will be impossible for me to coöperate actively in your future education,—though I shall always be very glad to do anything I can for you.”

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<sup>1</sup> To the great loss of the medical women—as to many besides—Dr. Anstie died suddenly on September 12th.

This was one of the rare blank cheques on futurity that are destined to be redeemed to the last farthing.

Professor Masson, too, was keen as ever.

“ 10 Regent Terrace, Edinr.

Oct. 23, 1874.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I had purposed when in London to give myself the pleasure of a visit to the new premises, and to hear from yourself all about the school and its prospects; but I was up on the business of some researches, and had to spend my days, almost to the last, at the British Museum or Record Office. One day I had a glimpse of you in a cab passing the British Museum gate, but too fast and too far off to be stopped. Mrs. Masson who is to be in London for a few days more will certainly make her way to Henrietta Street.

I was very glad indeed to hear of so much success in organizing the new School, and glad also to hear several medical men I met in London speak of it not only approvingly on their own account, but also with a kind of conviction that it would settle matters. Are there not several rocks ahead however? And what about the Apothecaries and their disposition? May they not be acted upon by those opponents in the profession whose opposition is now likely to take the form of permitting women to qualify themselves under a different title to that given to men. The conservatives of the University of London Senate will probably promote this current of opinion.

With best regards to all Edinburgh friends with you,

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

DAVID MASSON.”

Dr. Masson had put his finger precisely on the difficulty. It was still necessary to secure two indispensable conditions of success,—1. Qualifying Hospital Instruction, and 2. Recognition by some Examining Board. It is clear that even Mr. Norton had no idea when he first espoused the cause how great this double difficulty would prove. Application was made to every one of the nineteen Examining Boards, and to every one application was made in vain. The Hospitals proved equally obdurate. “Why should *this* University be the *corpus vile*?” Dr. Lyon Playfair had asked in Parliament the year before: and this very human and comprehensible cry was doubtless echoed by every Examining Body in the land.

S. J.-B. was determined not to let the public forget the question, and in March 1875 she had an article in the *Fortnightly*, which Mr. Morley (now Lord Morley) had accepted very cordially.

"It will give me the most entire satisfaction," he wrote, "to join the Governing Body of the New School of Medicine for Women, and I shall not grudge whatever time may be necessary for taking part in its proceedings. I thank you for your invitation."

Once more the hopes of the women centred in Parliament. On March 3rd, 1875, Mr. Cowper Temple again brought forward his Enabling Bill, and a long debate ensued, but the Bill was lost by 196 votes to 153. On March 25th he returned to the charge with a Bill to permit the registration of the degrees of the Universities of France, Berlin, Leipzig, Berne and Zurich, where such degrees were held by women. This was simply an extension of a concession in the Medical Act of 1858, by which any persons in practice in England with foreign degrees *at that date* were allowed to register. It was found impossible, however, to obtain the support of Government to this measure, and no day could be secured for a second reading, so the matter was again deferred.

It was not to be expected that the students would go on indefinitely taking theoretical classes that led to nothing, and the future was beginning to look dark when at last a step forward was made.

Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Cowper Temple, and Mr. Russell Gurney were all the kind of friends with whom one would go tiger-hunting, and no one of the three showed any intention of backing out. On the 16th of June, in answer to a question of Mr. Stansfeld's, Lord Sandon admitted in the name of the Government that the subject of the medical education of women, only very lately submitted to Government, demanded their consideration; and he undertook that it should be carefully considered by the Government during the recess, so that they should be enabled to express definite views with regard to legislation upon it in the next session.

In the meantime Mr. Simon, in the name of the President of the Privy Council, had addressed a letter to the President

of the General Medical Council requesting the observations of that Council on Mr. Cowper Temple's Bill, and indeed on the whole subject of the admission of women to the medical profession.

The General Medical Council took up the question at last in all seriousness, and the discussion lasted three days, during which many remarkable things were said on both sides. Finally a report was adopted and presented to the Privy Council to the effect that,

“ The Medical Council are of opinion that the study and practice of Medicine and Surgery, instead of affording a field of exertion well fitted for women, do on the contrary, present special difficulties which cannot be safely disregarded ; but the Council are not prepared to say that women ought to be excluded from the profession.”

In the autumn of 1875 a fresh hope was raised, owing to a really brilliant suggestion of Mr. Simon's. He bethought himself that those doctors who wished the women to have a different qualification from that of men might be willing to allow them to enter for the Licence in Midwifery of the College of Surgeons. Now this Midwifery Licence, strangely enough, was a regular qualification, involving the same medical curriculum as the M.R.C.S., and entitling those who held it to put their names on the Medical Register, and to practise legally with full rights as doctors. There was no reason why those women who had a complete set of certificates from Edinburgh should not go in for it at once, and forthwith become qualified general practitioners. It was not a very dignified way of entering the profession, but it did seem to be a way.

“ Thursday, Nov. 11th. Today saw Simon again. He thinks they would admit us for Midwifery Licence with present certificates, —not for M.R.C.S.—though expressly same [certificates] required in Regulations. Better to get on the Register *anyhow* it seems to me ?

Only, could it choke off anything better ? Hardly. If told that was open and refused, half our case gone. Besides any *existing* Exam. better than a special one.

Shall ask K[ing] Ch[ambers] tomorrow.

Nov. 12th. Homme propose ! K[ing] Ch[ambers] out of town. . . .

To see Sir J. Paget tomorrow.

Bertie<sup>1</sup> been here today. Quite agrees; get anything you can,—ask for more by and bye.

In fact one's position would be far stronger after one's certificates had been accepted for the one,—when identical are required for the other. Ah, well! *Qui vivra verra*—many things! . . .

Saturday, Nov. 13th. Sir J. Paget this morning,—with Dr. A. He very kind and courteous, infinitely more of a gentleman than most.

He decidedly of opinion that we could not get admitted to the M.R.C.S., but probably might to the L.M. He at least evidently thought we ought, and thought most of the Council would think so too. They meet apparently on Dec. 14th, and he advises us to send in application before that, and then, if granted, we can be examined by end of December.

Fancy an Exam. in Midwifery *only* putting one on the Register! . . .

Tuesday, 16th. Saw Sir James Paget again at his request. He thinks we had better not apply before the meeting, but give application to Critchett to present, if desirable at the time. . . .

Wednesday 17th. Saw Critchett. Most friendly and whole-hearted—willing to raise the question of M.R.C.S. if we liked, but I advised one step first, then leverage for next. . . .

Chambers not quite satisfied about L.M. but thinks it on the whole best for the cause ('perhaps not for yourselves,') to take it if we can."

So those three brave women, Mrs. Thorne, Miss Pechey and S. J.-B. proceeded to rub up their Midwifery, and meanwhile the authorities of the College took the opinion of counsel as to their legal power to grant or refuse the application. If no one else prospered by that long and wearing struggle, certainly the lawyers did! On this occasion they earned their salt by declaring "that the College had power to admit women under its supplemental charter, and could be compelled by legal process so to examine and grant certificates, . . . that the Medical Act clearly considered a holder of such certificates a licentiate in midwifery, and as such entitled to register."

"Friday, 21st. Jan. My 36th birthday. Just half my life since I began independently. So curious to look back on cogitations of 18th birthday! But even then I had a presentiment of 'sunshine and storm.'

<sup>1</sup> Miss Bertha Cordery, now Mrs. S. R. Gardiner.

It seems as if this year was really to gain (tho' in rather mesquin shape) what I have been fighting for in England for 7 years—Registration.

College of Surgeons on 7th Jan. decided on advice of their counsel, Mr. Beaver, that they could not exclude women from the licence in Midwifery,—so we three seniors have sent in our certificates, etc.—given to Critchett on application on Dec. 4th,—presented by him on Jan. 7th."

On March 17th, the women were told that their certificates had been accepted, but, on the public announcement of this fact, the whole board of examiners resigned. In relating the circumstances a year later, Mr. Stansfeld wrote that "since then there had been no examiners and no examination."

"Perhaps after all it is as well," wrote Miss Pechey from Birmingham, where she now held a post at the Women's Hospital under Mr. Lawson Tait,—“perhaps after all it is as well, as it gives us a stronger case for Parliament, and that licence would have been a sorry thing to practise upon. . . .”

After suggesting a great scheme of a new "National University," she concludes,—

"I suppose you can't think of any way in which I could earn some money? I am beginning to wonder what I shall do when I leave here: I can't begin to practise till I have had more midwifery.

"I have only one other resource to suggest now this College of Surgeons has failed, viz., that I should go over to Ireland, take that Licence in Midwifery and then try to force the Registrar to register it,—if he would not do so at once, by legal measures. *Qu'en pensez-vous?*

Yours aff.

E. P."

This is simply quoted to show the state—not indeed of despair, but of desperation, which these gallant women had reached. One can sympathize with this *cri du coeur* from S. J.-B.'s diary:

"Here comes Miss Irby's note this morning,—wanting a hospital for the wounded at Serajevo. . . . Oh, dear, how I should love to go! It would probably be just the making of me as a surgeon,—and I have such a sort of wild feeling of wanting to 'break out,'—of having been *sair hadden* down by many bubbly jocks,—by the

constant fighting, by Mother's frequent illnesses, etc., etc. I feel as if it would be an intense relief to break right away into half savage parts and do hard rough work—and breathe!

And then how nice it would be with Miss Irby. . . . I want to get away from mental strain and excitement,—to bodily hard work.

And what magnificent practice it would be!

“ U. D. P. against Serbian idea. Thinks my Mother would die in my absence and I never forgive myself.

Also I should hurt ' the cause ' by doctoring men.

I doubt both propositions, but can't disprove either.

My brain is in a sort of dull ' waiting ' condition,—' *quo Deus vocat.*' Well, isn't that best? Yes, if *thoroughly* honest.

I suppose the constant worry and constant thwarting have made me almost wild to break away for a bit. I feel somehow as if my mind were all strained, and this better than anything would give it back its tone.”

Miss Irby's idea came to nothing for lack of funds, but in any case, of course, S. J.-B. could not have gone. It was she who held in her hands all the parliamentary threads, and she was looking anxiously for some practical outcome from Lord Sandon's promise of the year before. On January 14th, however, Mr. Cowper Temple wrote :

“ DEAR MISS BLAKE,

The Government are not prepared to tell me whether they will introduce any Bill next session on the subject of the medical registration of women, and therefore it will be necessary for me to bring in my Bill again at the commencement of the session. . . .”

S. J.-B. thought it worth while, however, to remind the Government tactfully of their promise, and she had learned by bitter experience to keep every possible iron in the fire. So a deputation from the London School of Medicine for Women, headed by Lord Aberdare, and including herself and Mrs. Anderson, waited on the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, Lord President of the Privy Council. The mission was ably voiced by Lord Aberdare, Mr. Stansfeld, and Mr. Forsyth, M.P., Q.C., whose name now appeared on the back of Mr. Cowper Temple's Bill; but, although courteously received, the deputation elicited no farther encouragement.

In these circumstances, Mr. Cowper Temple again introduced his “ Foreign Degrees ” Bill, but fortune did not favour

him in the matter of the ballot for dates, and, in the meantime, S. J.-B. writes in her diary :

" Saturday, May 13th. Saw Russell Gurney [who was now Recorder of London]. Found Government had intimated to him that he should bring in Bill *enabling* all nineteen bodies,—to be shown to General Medical Council on 24th.

*If this passes !*

*Might graduate at Edinburgh after all."*

On the 5th of July Mr. Cowper Temple's Bill came on for second reading; but was withdrawn after debate upon a statement from Lord Sandon that the Government were prepared to support the Recorder's Bill. Even then anxiety was by no means at an end, for the Government were not prepared to make the Bill their own and find a day for it, and any persistent opposition would have been almost necessarily fatal to its passing at so late a time. One can picture the surprise with which S. J.-B. received the following letter :

" 8 Palace Gardens, W.

21 July, [1876].

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I saw Lord Shaftesbury yesterday and he intends to give notice on Monday to move the second reading on Tuesday.

The third reading will probably follow in a day or two.

All that we shall then have to wait for will be the Royal Assent.

Always sincerely yours,

RUSSELL GURNEY."

On August 12th the Bill became law. Henceforth no University nor Examining Board could be in any doubt at all as to its own powers. Those mysterious depths were at least no longer " an uncharted sea."

On August 7th Miss Pechey writes :

" Has our Bill received the Royal Assent ? If so, I suppose Mrs. Thorne and I might apply any time to Edinburgh, though I don't suppose she would consent to say what I intend to. I mean simply to ask them whether now they have the power, they intend honourably to fulfil the contract they made with me in 1869. It does not matter to me when I send in the question, as we can't be examined, I believe, till next April. Isn't it so ? But of course we had better not apply till the Arts Professors are back.

Ever yours affect.

E. P."



Edinburgh, however, did not prove encouraging even to its own matriculated students, so Miss Pechey—accompanied by Miss Shove—went to Ireland in September to see what could be effected there. She was very cordially received, though many with whom she had to deal were quite unaware of the existence of the all-important Baby Act; and one can imagine the joy with which, after much labour, she wrote to report that both the Queen's University and the King's and Queen's College of Physicians had consented to examine women, subject only to their complying with the ordinary regulations. "Miss Pechey has done wonders," wrote Mrs. Thorne.

The University regulations required attendance at four courses of lectures in one of the Queen's Colleges (at Cork, Belfast and Galway), and four professors at Galway agreed to deliver these; but, owing mainly—as happened so often!—to the opposition of one influential man, the Council of the College interposed and vetoed the arrangement.

Fortunately the Irish College made no difficulties, and to that body belongs the credit of being the first to grant to women—and above all, to *these* women—the long-deferred privilege of Registration. "I cannot realize," wrote Mrs. Thorne to S. J.-B. a few weeks later, "that an examining body is absolutely open to us." "You have been the main-spring of the seven years' struggle, and to you we are all deeply indebted for the result."

Before passing on, we must record one pleasant distraction which that summer had afforded in the appearance of Mr. Charles Reade on the scene, deeply interested in "the fight," and very anxious to obtain materials for his *Woman Hater*. There are numerous letters from him to S. J.-B., asking information about this happening and that: and he spent many mornings at her house, studying the archives. The novel achieved no small success by running its course in *Blackwood's Magazine*, within the very gates, so to speak, of the enemy's citadel.

## CHAPTER XX

### AT LAST

WHILE all this business was pending, Miss M'Laren, rendered incredulous by her long family experience of parliamentary life, that a Bill introduced so late could really pass—had written glowing descriptions of the advantages offered by Berne, and Miss Pechey had almost resolved to go there for the M.D. As the regulations of the Irish College were exacting in the matter of hospital work, she resolved to carry out this intention in any case as a preliminary measure.

"I shall be very glad," she writes, "of another *good* winter's hospital. I hope you will join me in this, so that we may keep together. I think I should send in the Berne degree here [in Ireland] when I had got it."

The two friends were most desirous that Mrs. Thorne should join them on this expedition for old sake's sake; but family claims made this impossible.

Well, it was something to break away, even thus far, and be mere students again. For the moment S. J.-B. and Miss Pechey may almost be said to have been resting on their oars. Nothing more arduous was required of them than preparation for professional examination!

It was on Wednesday, November 1st, that, accompanied by Miss Clark (now Dr. Annie Clark), they entered Switzerland, a white world, as it chanced, for snow had already fallen. The diary begins again almost from the moment of arrival:

"Excellent déjeuner [at Bernerhof] 12.30. Then I lay down. E. P. and A. C. went out exploring. Wonderful energy of youth!"

They all proceeded at once to interview professors (Professor Masson had sent a delightful introduction), and forthwith began to attend lectures and clinics, and to complete the theses which had been begun in England. S. J.-B. took as her subject Puerperal Fever, she having unhappily experienced an outbreak of that disease at Boston. The thesis was clear and exhaustive at the time, but of little permanent value, as the infective nature of the fever was not yet recognized, and treatment everywhere was mainly on a wrong scent.

She suffered terribly from neuralgia, the result of past and present strain, and work proceeded with difficulty. On December 20th Miss Pechey and Miss Clark went home for Christmas.

The diary has been brief and painful reading, but the writer revives just in time :

" Tuesday [Dec.] 26th. Nearly seven hours' work. Splendidly well. Accepted for examination Jan. 10th.

Thursday 28th. Slept splendidly. For first time for weeks without anodyne.

Wednesday. N. Schultz called. Very nice. To walk with me before exam. next Wednesday. Rather made me nervous with her pity.

Friday. . . . Letter from U. D. P., begging me not to hurry—'if I fail it can't be kept secret.' Are they all in league to shake my nerves?

Saturday [Jan.] 6th. E. P. still in London. Glorious day.

Tuesday 9th. From 5 a.m. rather nervous—got better in day—and did 9 hours' work. Good head all through—thank God!

10 p.m. How very happy or very wretched I shall be this time tomorrow! I really feel as if I ought to be able to pass as far as knowledge goes,—tho' not brilliantly,—but I am in despair about Langhans, and in less degree about others.—Still they will surely manage not to pluck me for mere want of German! Yesterday I felt almost as if I should fail, tonight I hope I shan't, but with trembling. . . .

Eh, dear, if I succeed, how I shall (half) laugh at past funk!—if I fail, I feel as if I need never laugh again. (And yet, played patience half an hour just now rather than be beat—'ill to beat' not a bad motto!) And, if I'm not beat,—fancy this being my last night without M.D.!

Wed. 10th. Nothing from E. P. or A. C. Wonder if latter has come.

Very curious my sort of duplex feeling, (a) If I could only feel sure of passing, I should pass,—i.e. not being nervous. (b) If I felt sure—I should be sure to fail, (superstition!) A sort of unworthy Setebos feeling, I think.

Undertake for me!

And He has! Thank God! Every exam. fairly creditable, which is worth twice a scratch.

Now to see how much better an M.D. sleeps than other people!"

" 13th Jan.  
Brighton.

MY DARLING,

Words cannot express my thankfulness at your success, and release from anxiety. I did not fear because I did not see why they should be unjust, but I am more than glad that it is settled.

I ought to have scolded you some days ago for more grapes. I am very forgetful, and I really sleep so well that I do not require them.

Well, dear, I am quite unsettled with the good news. Hoping to meet so soon, and with great congratulations from Tom, and Hetty, and Carry, and more love than a letter will take, ever your loving Mother,

MARIA EMILY JEX-BLAKE.

I heartily echo your 'Thank God.' I am so thankful I cannot settle."

A few weeks later Miss Pechey and Miss Clark also passed the examination.

"You will like to hear," writes Miss Pechey, "that Professor Hidber told Miss Clark that the Professors were much pleased with your exam. and said it was evident that you had studied well. It is more satisfactory, I think, to hear it indirectly like that than if they had told you so.

Miss Clark says she is very glad you answered better than I did. So am I: I only wish I had answered better for the credit of my countrywomen."

It still remained to get on the English Register through the newly opened portal of the Irish College. S. J.-B. and Miss Pechey spent some time in London, reading and attending the Brompton Hospital, where Dr. Symes Thompson proved very helpful.

There is a sheaf of blank pages in the diary, and then :

“ *Sunday, May 6th. Rugby.*

‘ One fight more,—the worst and the last ! ’ Oh, dear, if I pass this Exam. I shall deserve all I may get if I ever go in for another !

Since Nov. 1st.,—indeed one might say since September 1st.,—hardly a day of rest and respite, but brain worked at highest pressure—often when almost a blank.

Now it is over and ‘ waiting for the verdict. ’

Off tonight for Dublin with E. P. Dr. A[tkins] also to join. ‘ Omne ignotum pro magnifico. ’ The various tests loom vague and large. Diagnosis at bedside,—horrible,—though enormously helped by Brompton experience. Recognition of drugs and things under microscope. 4 written exams. 2 hrs. oral, etc., etc.

I feel as if I really had fairly mastered my subjects and must know more than the average medical practitioner just fledged,—not to say have more sense.

But the stake is so enormous. A pluck would be so perfectly awful after all antecedents.

But in spite of my work, my brain is wonderfully well and clear.”

“ *Monday, May 7th. 9.45 p.m.* Books closed after 4½ hours’ reading and examination,—not to be opened probably till all is over !

Be the fates propitious,—as I really think they ought, . . . I the most comfortable of the three. ‘ Where angels fear . . . ? ’ No,—I rather think on the principle of ‘ While the child, etc. ’

‘ I’ve done my utmost,—and results are God’s. ’

One is thankful to record that results were safe in His hands (as indeed S. J.-B. would have said they must have been whatever the examiners had decided). Two or three days later the three women, with a number of men, were solemnly summoned to the Board Room,—“ repeated declaration after Registrar, then signed book, and Dr. Hayden, as Vice-President, took the hand of each and ‘ admitted ’ us ! ”

“ Oh, dear, after long travail, good repose ! ”

“ All dreadfully overwrought and tired. E. P. and I came to fisticuffs over Mrs. A.’s Memorial to London University. Pair of fools ! ”

A characteristic telegram went off at once to Mrs. Jex-Blake :

“ Success just declared for all three of us. ”

And within an hour this was followed up by a letter :

" . . . We are all so happy ! The Exam. has been pretty stiff.  
Yours lovingly,  
S. L. J. B. M. D. L. K. Q. C. P. I."

The waiting Mother sends a mere scrap by return :

" I don't know how to be thankful enough that all is so well thro'.  
Nothing will seem a trouble now. God bless you,  
Ever your loving Mother.

*All going well with Pony, Turk, me, etc."*

And on the heels of this all the other congratulations pour in. " If I could I would ring the bells from Bow to Beersheba," writes a friend and patient.

One almost feels that, if the bells had known the whole story, they would have rung of their own accord.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL

THE friendly reader will feel, without doubt, that the year 1876-77 had done something to justify its passage, so far as the women were concerned, but the year 1876-77 was giving more than this. S. J.-B.'s main ideal, "Not me but us," remained to be realized. The fundamental requisite, training in a large General Hospital, was no longer practically attainable in Great Britain. A handful of women had scaled the coveted height by means of steps cut, as it were, in ice that melted behind them. It remained to prepare a permanent way for those who were following on. And the year 1876-77 was destined to give this too.

Mrs. Anderson and others had been endeavouring to obtain admission for women students to some of the wards of the London Hospital, and for a time their efforts had seemed likely to prove successful. They ended in the failure to which all the patient workers were becoming so accustomed, but meanwhile "that which was for"—the women—"was gravitating towards them."

Before the end of 1876 Mr. Stansfeld had written :

*" Private.*

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I will bear the London University in mind as soon as I see anybody. . . .

I met Mrs. Garrett Anderson at dinner the other day ; she did not seem to have much hope or plan about the School in any way.

I have however something to tell you that I think you will be rather pleased to hear. Mrs. Stansfeld and I went to Clapham

today to call on the Hopgoods, with whom we had become friendly at Whitby: and Mr. Hopgood is Chairman of the Board of the Grays Inn Lane Hospital. We found them both *with us*, but strange to the question.

I am to send Mr. Hopgood something to read, and he is to consider whether anything is possible there; he *does not appear to be in awe of the staff*.

Just as I had begun to talk the Editor of the Contemporary Review [? Nineteenth Century] came in and listened and then expressed general sympathy in a timid way, but asked me if I would write him a paper shewing a practical way and outcome; and I undertook at once to do so.

The paper I can manage though I am glad to think I shall be likely to see you before I send it; but in dealing with Mr. Hopgood I very much wish you were here. . . . What time in January shall you be back, probably time enough for us to act together in the matter.

Yours truly,

J. STANSFELD."

In subsequent letters Mr. Stansfeld writes:

"Jan. 5th. 77. I shall not consult anyone if I can avoid it. I think you and I have the best chance of managing it alone."

"Jan. 13. 77. I congratulate you seriously and sincerely; it was time to get that particular anxiety off your mind, and to be M.D. at all events. . . .

I will defer what I may have to say till we meet; but we'll win and no mistake."

"Stoke Lodge,  
Hyde Park Gate, W.  
Thursday evening.

[Feb. 9th. 77.]

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I have your letter, but feel a little doubtful about seeing Dr. Chambers until after Sunday when I am to see Mr. Hopgood.

You may judge of what that interview should be, how hopeful and how critical, by his letter just received, which I copy on the other side.

I think that you ought to be with me on Sunday if possible. I see there are plenty of trains.

We might be with him say at 3 p.m. If you would come here and lunch at 1.30 I would drive you down.

Pray telegraph reply tomorrow that I may write and let him know.

Yours truly,

J. STANSFELD."



Follows the copy of Mr. Hopgood's letter :

" I shall be at home all Sunday and glad to see you. . . . We dine at 5.

I see my way so far clear that on receiving a formal application from your Association it shall be without delay submitted to our Weekly Board,—and I think they will forthwith summon a special meeting of the Committee of Management, whose *decision will be final for the current year!* My wish may be father to the thought, but I think that if you can make some such proposition as that we talked of we have a good prospect of success.

My wife feels such a deep interest in the success of the movement that she wished me to say that if you think it desirable to form a guarantee fund, her name may be put down as a subscriber or guarantor to the extent of £100."

There is no record of that interesting and critical Sunday, but all seems to have gone as Mr. Stansfeld would have wished, for a week or two later Mr. Hopgood writes to S. J.-B.,—" I heartily wish that every success may attend this movement,—if so I know to whom it will be chiefly due."

During S. J.-B.'s preoccupations the School had been in other hands.

On March 13th Mr. Stansfeld writes,

" DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

Have you noticed the article in the Daily News of today on the London School of M. It is not written in our interest,—you are not mentioned and I not much ; but there is a list of names rather new to me, omitting, however, Lord Aberdare, a true friend.<sup>1</sup>

It looks as if tomorrow were pretty certain.

Yours truly,

J. STANSFELD."

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<sup>1</sup> A very true friend was Lord Aberdare. Here is a delightful letter written a few months later :

" Glen Tulchan, Advie, N.B.

June 23. 1877.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,—I yield to your request—an annual subscription of £10. 10s. for 5 years, including the present—but with the same *Caveat* which St. Peter made to Pope Gregory when he prayed that that virtuous heathen Trajan might be admitted into Paradise viz ' that you make no more such requests.' For I find extreme difficulty in refusing applications for so good a work, and my ' engagements ' are heavy. By this post I must send a reluctant refusal to the hardworking promoter of an excellent work.

Ever sincerely Yours,

ABERDARE."

Close on the heels of this letter came a telegram :

" Mar. 15th. Right Hon. J. Stansfeld, London, to Miss Jex-Blake  
13 Sussex Square, Brighton,

London Free Hospital have unanimously accepted my proposal.  
Come before ten o'clock Saturday. I go out half past ten."

Once more there was great rejoicing, and Mr. Stansfeld forwards to S. J.-B. a cordial letter from Mrs. Anderson :

DEAR MR. STANSFELD,

" March 19. 77.

As I was not able to join in the cheer which I am glad to hear was given for you at the School on Saturday, will you please accept my very heartiest thanks for your grand success at Gray's Inn Road. We all owe more to you than to anyone. I do not imagine there will be any difficulty about the £700 a year for five years. I shall hope to be able to contribute £50 a year as my share.

Yours very truly and gratefully,

E. G. ANDERSON."

One thing more that wonderful year had given. Miss Edith Shove, who had accompanied Miss Pechey on the mission to Ireland, had made formal application to the University of London for admission to medical examination and degree. In February Mr. Smith Osler moved in the Senate that her request should be granted, and the motion was carried by 14 votes to 7. The majority consisted of the Chancellor (Lord Granville), Vice-Chancellor (Sir John Lubbock, M.P.), Lord Kimberley, Dr. Billing, Mr. Fitch, Sir William Gull, Mr. Heywood, Mr. Hutton, The Master of the Rolls (Right Hon. Sir G. Jessel), Right Hon. R. Lowe, M.P., Mr. Osler, Sir James Paget,<sup>1</sup> Lord Arthur Russell and Dr.

<sup>1</sup> The following interesting letter shows that Sir James Paget's attitude at this time was not that of a partisan but of a just man :

" 1, Harewood Place,  
Hanover Square, W.  
Feb. 26. 1877.

DEAR MR. STANSFELD,

I intend to go, if possible, to the Meeting of the University Senate on Wednesday that I may vote against hindering the entrance of Women into the Medical Profession. I think them sadly mistaken in wishing for it, but I see no sufficient grounds on which they can justly or usefully be excluded.

Believe me most truly yours,

JAMES PAGET.

The Rt. Honble. James Stansfeld, M.P."

William Smith. The minority consisted of Lord Cardwell, the Dean of Lincoln, Mr. Goldsmid, Sir William Jenner, Dr. Quain, Dr. Sharpey and Dr. Storrar.

S. J.-B. received the intelligence in the following note from Dr. Archibald Billing, the father of the profession, who had taken his own degree at Oxford in 1818 :

“ 34 Park Lane,

1/3/77.

“ DEAR FRIEND,

All right. I was at my post and gave my opinion rather freely. We had a majority about two to one, but you shall have the minutes as soon as printed. Some of the medicos rather recanted.

Yours sincerely,

A. BILLING.”<sup>1</sup>

One last storm was raised in Convocation about the action of the Senate, on the ground that it dealt with the Faculty of Medicine only, but this final obstruction only proved the truth of Mr. Stansfeld's wise dictum that when the hour for reform has come all that opponents can do is to widen its character or to precipitate its advent. On January 14th, 1878, a new Charter admitting women to *all* degrees was laid by the Senate before Convocation, and was carried by a majority of 241 to 132.

So much good that year had brought—that *annus mirabilis* 1877—one must not be surprised if it brought some evil also. And, to S. J.-B. personally, it dealt one heavy blow. The School, as her Mother said, was her living child. She had conceived it, brought it forth, tended it, fought for it,—done most of the daily work it involved, with the help of a lady secretary she herself had trained. Until she was a qualified doctor, however, she did not wish her name to appear either on the Council or on the Governing Body. In all the early papers it occurs only as Trustee.

But she had always looked forward to her registration as something that would initiate a new order of things. That platform gained, and the dust of the struggle and fight left behind, she expected to take officially, as Honorary Secretary,

<sup>1</sup> This letter may probably have been written to Mr. Stansfeld.

the position she had filled hitherto without any recognition at all. Up till now she had been constantly harassed, driven,—striving for something that always receded when it seemed within her grasp. No wonder if she had often been hasty, high-handed, difficult. Now all that, so she thought, was past. We recall the dreams and ideals of her youth,—how she had longed to organize some fine new school for girls, of which, conceivably, she might be worthy to be the head.

“ I am beginning to hope, Mother! If I only suffer enough—and I don't believe mine will ever be a smooth or easy life—I may yet be fit to *be* the head for which I am looking so earnestly.”

We have seen with what searchings of heart she laid aside this ideal for the long struggle of her medical career; but from first to last she never laid aside the sympathetic interest in her colleagues and juniors which was perhaps the most striking characteristic of her professional life. Is it strange if she now looked forward to a realization of the whole dream?

In any case that realization was not to be. Her enforced absences in the matter of her examination had given people a chance to do without her. We have seen that they had not always found her particularly easy to work with. “ You wouldn't let me muddle, and you wouldn't let me dawdle, and how *could* I be happy? ” one of her “ daughters ” used to cry in the radiant success of later years: and although it would not be fair to generalize this into a solution of the whole difficulty, it goes a long way to account for it. There were those who were thankful that things should be done a little less efficiently and more easily,—thankful to have a little more say in matters for which they felt themselves partially responsible. There were those who looked forward with sinking of heart to the time when S. J.-B. would return and really take up the reins.

We have seen repeatedly that she never realized the strain of “ difficulty ” in her own nature, and she always had a cohort of loyal supporters; but she must have heard—or guessed—something of what was going on, for she wrote to Mr. Stansfeld that the task of being Honorary Secretary was too onerous to be undertaken except at the unanimous wish

of those concerned. Perhaps Mrs. Thorne—Dr. Atkins—Mrs. Anderson—would care to undertake the task? Probably she knew for a fact that the two first named would refuse it; and it must have seemed impossible that Mrs. Anderson—overwhelmed as she was with other work—would entertain the suggestion.

S. J.-B. was still in Ireland when the question came up. Mrs. Thorne proposed S. J.-B. as Honorary Secretary, and someone else proposed Mrs. Anderson, both nominations being duly seconded.

Mrs. Anderson was in a difficult position, and said so frankly. She did not wish to take an unfair advantage over her colleague; but if it was to be for the good of the School—?

Mr. Stansfeld and the Dean (Mr. Norton, who was always S. J.-B.'s staunch supporter) were somewhat at a loss, and so no doubt were others; it was not an easy situation for anybody. After some talk the meeting was adjourned. Everything pointed to Mrs. Anderson's election.

But, when it came to the point, this was more than S. J.-B. could stand. Many lesser people would have accepted the situation gracefully, concealing any heartburning they might have felt, but this was just what S. J.-B. could not do. It was partly a personal question, of course. With every desire and effort to be fair, Mrs. Anderson had always looked at S. J.-B.'s life and work through the wrong end of the telescope, so to speak, and it is not easy to appreciate fully the people who make no secret of the fact that they take that view of us.

But the personal question was not all. We remember how warmly S. J.-B. had spoken of her colleague in the old days, as "running where I crawl,"—how she had triumphed in every stage of her colleague's success. She honestly felt that Mrs. Anderson was already too fully occupied to undertake so big a job,—felt that, humanly speaking, Mrs. Anderson *could* only lend her name, and do the work by proxy.

And even that does not exhaust the subject. The truth is that S. J.-B., to the day of her death and with all her faults, was an incorrigible idealist; and Mrs. Anderson, rich though she was in excellent qualities, seemed to her to be lacking in

certain capabilities of insight and imagination which outweighed everything else.

“Put me utterly aside if need be!” she had cried in the self-surrender of her adolescence.

And now she was taken at her word. But it was not easy to see the “need be.” For a time it was blotted out by the bitter experience of personal opposition.

It was a painful situation all round, but like so many painful situations, it called forth something fine. Mrs. Thorne was *persona grata* with all parties, and finally Mrs. Thorne stepped into the breach and allowed herself to be elected Honorary Secretary of the School.

“About the best possible,” wrote S. J.-B. in her diary, “with her excellent sense and perfect temper. “So much better than I.”

It involved a definite sacrifice, for, although Mrs. Thorne had taken all her classes with distinction, she had only passed one professional examination; and she was not one of those who are content to scrape through. She had aimed at a London degree, and had even talked of taking her whole course over again in order to fulfil every requirement. Dr. Sewall had long since singled her out as “*the doctor*” in potentiality among the English medical women.

Already family claims had made her pause. This new claim, combined with the others, proved more than she could withstand. She cast aside her own ambitions, and made the success of the School her main object in life.

“Sweet Sackermena and her isles!  
See how many yards and miles  
It takes to walk round Sackermena.”

A breezy way this of paraphrasing the more familiar passage:

“*Tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem.*”

But what one really wants to express is,—See the amount of work, the number of people it took to achieve this one bit of human evolution! Even the many names in this book are culled from a great multitude.

It was S. J.-B. who opened the subject boldly up, and forced the whole world to discuss it. It was she who—in the eye of the whole world—led the Edinburgh fight to its unforeseen sequel in Parliament and in the opening of the London School.

Miss Pechey was a loyal and stimulating comrade throughout, disarming opponents by the personal charm, intelligence and humour which eventually opened the Irish College and gained the actual concession of the right of registration.

Mrs. Thorne contributed a fine undercurrent of stability. It was not her way to write picturesque letters that lend themselves to quotation, but it was mainly owing to her that the London School became a lasting and conspicuous success.<sup>1</sup>

*Pari passu* with all this, as we have seen, and antecedently to any of it,—Mrs. Anderson was quietly showing the English world that a woman can be a reliable and successful doctor.

Fine records all four, and surely no less fine was the brave, wise, unwearied championship of Professor Masson and Sir James Stansfeld, without whom—humanly speaking—nothing could have been achieved at all.

Sir James Stansfeld would not have allowed us to draw the line there. In an able sketch of the whole movement up to 1877, in the *Nineteenth Century*, he concludes his survey with the following significant words :

“ One thing more remains to record. These pages will, I think, have presented to the reader’s mind evidence of a tough and persistent and continuous struggle. Such struggles do not persist and succeed, according to my experience, without the accompanying fact, the continuous thread, as it were, of one constant purpose and dominant will. Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake has made that greatest of all contributions to the end attained. I do not say that she has been the ultimate cause of success. The ultimate cause has been simply this, that the time was at hand. It is one of the lessons of the history of progress that when the time for a reform has come you cannot resist it, though, if you make the attempt, what you may do is to widen its character or precipitate its advent. Opponents,

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<sup>1</sup> In later years, as Dean, Mrs. Anderson did much for the enlargement and development of the School.

when the time has come, are not merely dragged at the chariot wheels of progress—they help to turn them. The strongest force, whichever way it seems to work, does most to aid. The forces of greatest concentration here have been, in my view, on the one hand the Edinburgh University led by Sir Robert Christison, on the other the women claimants led by Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake. Defeated at Edinburgh, she carried her appeal to the highest court, that most able to decide and to redress, the High Court of Parliament representing the Nation itself. The result we see at last. Those who hail it as the answer which they sought have both to thank, in senses and proportions which they may for themselves decide.”<sup>1</sup>

It would be easy to close on this note, but it is on the earlier part of Sir James Stansfeld's conclusion that one prefers to dwell. A tough and persistent struggle is indeed recorded in these pages—it was only on working through the vast mass of original documents that the present writer formed the faintest conception how tough and persistent that struggle had been—and yet what will strike the reader most is that it was emphatically *not* a “one man fight.” S. J.-B. never said “I” in connection with it. “You see we were so splendidly helped,” was her almost invariable comment on looking back.

And she *was* splendidly helped. Not only by her fellow-students, by friendly professors, by the Editor of the *Scotsman*, and by those who would fain have been her patients. All that one was prepared to find. The amazing thing is the way in which—when all of these were almost paralyzed by the strength of the opposition (yes, and by her mistakes)—*help came from somewhere*. It might be the working-man, sending her a shilling to represent his sympathy, or the statesman in a London club, throwing down his newspaper with the determination that that woman should be baited no longer. In any case help came.

Truly, as Sir James Stansfeld said, the time was at hand.

And Newman is perfectly right when he says that, if the individual be powerful-minded and the cause good, the mistakes actually help. They increase the talk, increase the interest, help to make the picture that appeals to the popular

<sup>1</sup> *Nineteenth Century*, July 1877.



imagination, till what has seemed to be the eccentric action of a single individual spreads out in waves that envelop the whole earth.

Writing exactly forty years after the events just narrated—at a moment when women doctors are proving so vital an asset to the nation and to humanity at large—one realizes the difference it would have made to the whole world if Sophia Jex-Blake had been content to qualify abroad and to slip on to the Medical Register somehow, instead of throwing the gates wide open for all who were to follow her.

Reference has been made above to her love of poetry, and of all her poems there was none she was wont to recite more solemnly than Kipling's *Explorer* :

“ Yes, your ‘Never-never country’—yes, your ‘edge of cultivation’  
And ‘no sense in going further’—till I crossed the range  
to see.

God forgive me! No, *I* didn't. It's God's present to our nation.  
Anybody might have found it but—His Whisper came to  
Me!”



*PART III*

MY fame is in the hands of others. I have weighed in a nice and scrupulous balance whether it is better to serve men or to be praised by them, and I prefer the former.

SYDENHAM.

(Quoted in S. J.-B.'s commonplace book.)

HAVE I named one single river? Have I claimed one single acre? Have I kept one single nugget—(barring samples)? No, not I.

KIPLING.

YOUR goodness must have some edge to it,—else it is none.

EMERSON.

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DAYS IN PRACTICE

THE dramatic days were over. The task that now lay before S. J.-B. was to pick up all that remained of herself after the conflict, and settle down to practice. It is a solemn moment in the history of any doctor when he or she deliberately takes in hand the issues of life and death: mistakes can no more be avoided in this than in any other walk of life, and yet the consequences here are so much more *apparently* important.

And if it is a solemn moment for any man or woman, it was surely not less so for her who for years had been a city set on a hill. In the course of the long struggle youth had quite slipped away; her best energies were spent; her nervous system was overstrained beyond the possibility of complete recuperation. If George Eliot could say with some truth that she began *Romola* as a young woman and ended it an old one, how much more might S. J.-B. have said this of her education in medicine. Perhaps the coward in her would gladly now have shunned the conflict altogether.

Small say was allowed to that coward at any time, and at this juncture few even of S. J.-B.'s friends realized that—as regarded output of energy—she had already done a life's work. No one would have been surprised if she had died a few years before, in the stress of the fight; but the human memory is short, and, as she had survived, almost everyone now looked upon the toil of the last ten years as simply the introduction to the volume. She was now expected to show how great a success a woman doctor can be.

First came the anxious question where to settle, and, while she meditated on this, she was making good, at Brompton and wherever she could find an entry,<sup>1</sup> the deficiencies in her hospital education.

Her original plan had been to settle in London, to foster the School she had founded, and at the same time to be within easy reach of her Mother,—the Mother for whom she would at any moment in her life have thrown up every hope and plan that guided her.

There is no doubt that this would have been in most respects the ideal arrangement. There is room for everyone in London. In those days it was absolutely essential for a woman doctor to settle in a town large enough to allow for the overwhelming proportion of patients who declined to take their lives in their hands, so to speak, by trusting one of their own sex. Even if the patient herself was willing to lean her whole weight on an untried plank, husbands and mothers stood in the way. Indeed there were girls who reckoned it the prime luxury involved in earning their own living that they became free to employ the doctor of their choice—a woman.

It is true that patients—and still more their male relatives—were readier to trust S. J.-B. than they would have been to trust most other women. Her inherent motherliness was not weakened by any aggressive femininity; but on the other hand it is not to be supposed that she was any less alarming than she had been as a student. No doctor ever inspired greater enthusiasm and devotion than she did, but it was on the whole the few to whom she appealed. Her vein of tenderness lay too deep for the casual eye to see; and many were afraid of the occasional high-handed imperious ways and the disregard of what people were likely to say.

“It was like being lifted on a comet's tail,” writes a patient to whom she had been called in an emergency in March 1878, “when you came in, strong and swift, with your eagle wings, getting over distances in a third of the time other people take to do it.”

<sup>1</sup> We hear of her visiting the Middlesex, Moorfields, the Royal Free, the Cancer, and the Children's Hospitals.

This is admirable, and describes what many felt, but although being lifted on a comet's tail is exactly what many patients want, the treatment is not universally applicable.

London, then, would probably have supplied S. J.-B. with a larger practice than she could have worked ; many friends, and particularly her brother, were keenly anxious that she should settle there ; Mr. Norton always regretted her departure ; but, now that the School had been taken out of her hands, it seemed inadvisable that she should remain as a looker-on. The difficulty was to find another place big and representative enough : she dreaded the great midland towns. After much consultation, she decided on the last place on earth she might have been expected to choose,—on Edinburgh.

It was partly the bracing climate, partly the beautiful drives, partly the many friends who had stood by her so gallantly, that led to this spirited decision, but on the whole it was a mistake. The smoke of the conflict was still hot, and some of those who had admired her most had admired her for qualities which were not what they sought in a physician.

Moreover, she was the last person on earth to play up to the expectations of the community in which she lived. The Edinburgh of those days was a more conventional place than Edinburgh is now, and doctors above all were expected to conform to a particular standard. There was a general impression that piety paid and that an interest in missions was a great help to success in practice.

“ You never will succeed unless you conform to these usages,” said a friend : “ You might have Edinburgh at your feet if you would go to church regularly and show yourself a religious woman,” said another.

It is needless to say that these were not the arguments to use with S. J.-B. Never, moreover, since the far-off school-days in which she had given a highly-valued shilling to “ the Jews ” had she taken any interest in missions. That vein in her was worked out, or transmuted into something else. The more she read of the old religions—and she did read—the more she found in them to admire and respect,—the more it seemed to her that they were the fitting medium for the training of the people to whom they had been given.

It must be frankly admitted too that she continued to see such questions in the atmosphere of the particular Evangelical school in which she had been brought up ; in recognizing the evolution of the individual—of herself as an individual—she failed to recognize the evolution of the medium ; and her life was so full of active beneficent interests as to leave scant time for the consideration of questions that did not at first sight appeal to her,—that did not seem to be her job.

In the Edinburgh, too, of those days, the ordinary people who “counted” were the people who liked things done “just so.” It disturbed their sense of the fitting, for instance, that S. J.-B. should pay professional visits, driving herself in a pony phaeton. Altogether she was too big, too untrammelled for the post. What was wanted was the woman who is a credit to any cause she may adopt. There are plenty of them now-a-days.

Finally, S. J.-B. realized from the first that, with her limited physical resources, she could not combine a social with a professional life. Hospitality is a poor word to describe the manner in which her door stood open to the few she loved, to those whom she thought she could help, to all in whom she recognized any sort of spiritual kinship ; but from ordinary social engagements she stood aloof. She refused invitations to dinner,<sup>1</sup> or made excuse to leave so early that she might better, perhaps, not have gone ; she declined to be lionised in any way ; and she was apt to snub those whom she suspected of wishing to know her from motives of curiosity.

We must not forget how different she could be from all this,—how radiant, how sympathetic, how full of humour and fun. “What a comfort it is,” writes a patient at this time, “to see your dear supporting face !” “You always come as Hercules did to Alcestis,” writes another. “Emily and I have often spoken of your ‘How are you?’ being like his, ‘I am here to help.’”

<sup>1</sup> For the same reason she went but seldom to the theatre, unless an actor whom she greatly admired visited Edinburgh. When Henry Irving was there she would go as often as three times a week, and usually take a little party of friends. Louis XI. was, in her opinion, his masterpiece. For Miss Terry she had, like all the rest of the world, a great admiration. Of Ristori she used to speak almost with bated breath.



Nor am I working up to the avowal that she was a professional failure : she was not : in many ways she was a great success. But if Edinburgh—like Cousin Ellie of old—could have made “even a slight alteration” in her, she might almost indeed have had the town at her feet.

She took the house 4 Manor Place, and in June 1878 she put her plate on the door and began. Three months later she started a small dispensary. Her professional isolation was great : Dr. Pechey was at Leeds ; the other medical women were in London or farther afield. A doctor in the early days is sorely handicapped if he cannot discuss difficult cases and questions with his contemporaries and seniors. S. J.-B. never had, except for a few days at a time, the daily chit-chat—what students call the “shop”—that is so helpful ; but she was not allowed to suffer. Dr. Heron Watson, Dr. George Balfour, and Dr. Angus Macdonald supported her with a chivalrous loyalty of which it is difficult to write calmly even now. They encouraged her to appeal to them at any time : they put the whole wealth of their learning and experience at her disposal ; and—what was not a matter of course in those days—there was not a single question in all the complicated domain of medicine which they would not discuss with her as frankly as if she had been a man. It must be borne in mind that in her own special subject, the diseases of women, her equipment was all that could be desired. It was not for nothing that she had worked for two years under Dr. Sewall at Boston. If adequate training had been available, she might have made a great gynæcological surgeon, for she had great calmness and presence of mind in an emergency, and her hands, though full of character, were small and deft. Dr. Sewall always regretted the waste of her potentiality in this respect.

The following extracts are from letters written during the first few months of practice :

To her Mother,

“MY DARLING,

I know you will be pleased to hear that I yesterday received fees which just completed my first £50,—earned in Edinburgh in

less than three months,—and that in what they call the “empty” season. And what pleases me still better is that everyone of my patients has done well. Several have left my hands practically recovered, and those who are still there are all going on satisfactorily. And as among them were two cases to which I was called when the patient was described as ‘dying’ (and both got well) I think I may very well be content. I have had 23 patients (nearly 100 visits) at my private house, and about as many more at my Dispensary, which has only been open a fortnight; so I don’t think there is much doubt about the ‘demand’ nor about my prospects.”

To Dr. King Chambers,

“I feel I am learning a great deal from the large variety of practice here. You will see from the enclosed paper that I have the help and support of four<sup>1</sup> of the best medical men in Edinburgh, and they are all excessively kind in giving me advice and help as often as I want it. No one ever had better friends and I doubt if anyone ever liked a profession better than I like mine.

I find that each of my cases involves so much reading and thinking that I am almost anxious they should not multiply too fast.”

To Dr. (now Sir Thomas) Barlow to whom she had commended a young colleague,

“March 24th. [1879.]

DEAR SIR,

I thank you very much for the kind response to my note which reached me this morning. I feel sure that you will find Miss K. grateful for your kindness and most anxious to benefit by it. I have had repeated cause myself in my own Dispensary work to be thankful for the various lessons I learned from you and Dr. Lee.

Thank you also for the kind interest you express in my personal success, which indeed is all that I could desire. I have about 25 or 30 patients at the Dispensary every day that it is opened, and I also have a much larger private practice than is usual at so early a date. I have not yet been established here in practice quite 9 months, and I find that I have already had about 400 visits to or from private patients, which I think you will allow shows the ‘demand’ is a real one.

As you refer to the ‘general question of lady doctors’ you must allow me to say that I am quite sure it would have your support, from at any rate one point of view, if you had the least idea of the

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<sup>1</sup> The three mentioned above, together with Dr. Peel Ritchie. In later years, of course, she would have added to the list,—notably the names of Dr. (Sir Thomas) Clouston and Mr. C. W. Cathcart.

amount of preventible suffering which women bear with rather than consult men in special cases. . . .

Now I do not care for a moment to argue whether this feeling is right or wrong; . . . if the feeling exists it should be distinctly recognized as an element in the question; and I am quite sure that you would be one of the very first to desire that every possible remedy should be brought to such needless suffering.

In the same way I never care to argue at all about the relative capabilities of men and women. I mean to try to do my own work up to the very best of my power, and that is all that really concerns me. I cannot imagine any work nobler or more perfectly fascinating, than that of medicine, and I am very thankful to be allowed ever so small a share in it."

To Mrs. Henry Kingsley,

"I have full as much work at my Dispensary as I can manage, indeed I am pretty well used up on those days, but I always enjoy them.

I am just going to begin a course of lectures which I hope may be successful.

It is hard work altogether, but nothing to the old worries."

Hard work indeed it was, especially when one bears in mind that she was urged at times to undertake confinements at a very considerable distance,—as far off as Yorkshire. Moreover, being a woman, she had of course the cares of housekeeping, and S. J.-B. always took her housekeeping very seriously.<sup>1</sup> She was herself a good cook and an excellent manager, and her staff were expected to carry out her methods and principles loyally. If they happened to be lazy and unprincipled, or even easy-going, their tenure of office was likely to be brief. Her comfortable home—in common with all the other gifts of the gods—meant nothing to her unless she could share it. How heartfelt was her hospitality may be gathered from the following letters:

"August 15th. [? 1878.]

DEAR MISS IRBY,

Welcome home again! I saw in yesterday's paper that you had reached England, and was going to write when your letter came. I shall be delighted to see you again! I expect to be here all autumn

<sup>1</sup> The invaluable Alice had retired from service to join a sister in Wales. She and her mistress continued to correspond till the end.

and winter (with the exception of a few days) and shall be only too glad to have you whenever you like best to come. Only do manage to give me at least a week, and let me know which time suits you best as soon as possible, so that I may make my plans suit yours.

Several people are most anxious to meet you, so I will ask them to dinner, etc., when you fix a time; but I hope you won't accept invitations much (you are sure to have dozens) as I do want you to get a little rest while with me, and I want to take you drives about Edinburgh,—the country is so lovely. I shall tell everybody you will be too tired to go out much.

Would you like a public meeting here? I daresay it would help, though most residents are away at this season.

Yours affectionately,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

DEAR MRS. THORNE,

" June 16th. [1879.]

I hear that your two girls are coming to Morton next week. Don't you think it would be very wrong to let them travel so far all alone? Don't you think it is clearly your duty to come and stay a week or two with me when you arrive? I should like so very much to see you again at something like leisure, and also to show you my Dispensary and all and sundry I am doing here. So many Edinbro' friends would like to see you! *Do* try to come if only for a week or two!

I remember that the 'wonderful woman' went to London and back for 24 hours once, so she can't mind travelling! In haste

Yours sincerely,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

DEAR MRS. THORNE,

" June 18th.

I shall be really *delighted* if you will come down with your girls and spend a week or two with me while they are at Morton. You and I have never had any really quiet time together since our student days, and I cannot tell you how much I should enjoy some talks with you, and how glad I should be of your advice about lots of things in my Dispensary and otherwise. Dr. Sewall you know always said you were *the* doctor among us, and I quite believe it. I wish so very often that I could ask you about things."

To a colleague in London she writes a month or two later :

" Your thanking me so much for a very moderate amount of good nature shown to Miss X., makes me wonder how you *expect* one to behave to people who are ill and poor. I am sure you yourself act

upon the 'aux plus déshérités le plus amour' principle? Seriously I have done very little for her beyond what I should have done for anybody more or less in her position, except perhaps half a dozen drives and dinners which I promised 'pour l'amour de vos beaux yeux' before I saw her.

I am afraid you must think me a very ungrateful person in my turn, for I don't *say* a quarter as much about your various kindnesses to me and my friends."

She always had a word of brave and wise advice for colleagues who appealed to her:

"I am inclined to think you had better send Miss Z. off to Australia. I am sure Miss Du Pre will gladly do her part if you write to her about it. She is now at 'Surbiton, S.W.,'—no farther address required.

I think you are *quite* wrong to think you will 'not forgive yourself' if the plan does not succeed. I have long ago come to the conclusion that 'efforts are ours, results are God's,'—and, if you don't like that phraseology, you can paraphrase it as you like, so long as you acquiesce in my conclusion that we are *not* to blame or worry ourselves if things go wrong when we have done our best.

How I wish we could sit by that upstairs window and have a chat over it all!"

"No, life isn't a bit of a failure, and you wouldn't think so if we could get ten days' holiday together up in the highlands!—don't I wish we could!—for I am very tired too.

I've got to go off to Yorkshire in a few days to attend ——'s patient. . . .

My coachman got drunk last week, and I turned him off at an hour's notice, and had to see to the stable myself for a day or two!—My whole household has been upside down, and in the midst of it my dear old Turk died last week, but quite quietly and without pain. I have a new page, and a new cook, and a new groom,<sup>1</sup> and am going to have a new housemaid,—don't you pity me?—Still I say 'Life is good,'—Can you have better testimony?"

Her advice on occasion could be fairly drastic:

"Yes,—I know about Miss W. *Why* do you *let* her stay 1½ hours with you? At the end of five minutes I should take out my watch and say,—'Now I have just ten minutes more for you,—is there anything you want to say?' That's the way to treat those sort of folks. I am not 'too good for this world.'"

<sup>1</sup> In place of the "coachman"; she never had both.

Here is a rather amusing answer to a question from Dr. Pechey,—‘ Why do you recommend Vermouth ? ’ ”

“ DEAR EDIE,

I sent off my two cards to you too hurriedly to answer about ‘ Vermouth ’ !—but now let me say at my leisure that I never heard anything more beautifully illustrative of the way stories are ‘ evolved.’

The one and only occasion when I made acquaintance with Vermouth was when one day, during a hurried call at Mrs. Nichol’s, the dear old lady in Mr. F.’s presence, offered me some Vermouth as something new she had got, and insisted on my tasting it,—which I did, and said I thought it ‘ very nice,’ as in duty bound ! Neither before nor afterwards have I either seen or heard of it ! It really *is* nice, I think,—in the orange bitters line,—but further I know nothing about it, and certainly never recommended it in my life—nor expect to.

My professional life is, I find, largely a crusade against tea and alcohol, so certainly I am not likely to preach up new liqueurs—if this is one.”

To Dr. Sewall she writes,

“ Oct. 8th. [1879.] . . . I have a very charming little brougham, which my Mother gave me ; and a beautiful horse, quiet as a lamb and strong as a bull, from Miss Du Pre. Altogether it is an extremely smart turn-out, and I should like so much to show it to you ! I hope I shall this summer. You *must* come then if possible,—it is so hard to be apart so many years !

I am so sorry my Father’s carriage is worn out. That little gift was such a pleasure to him and almost the last thing he did. I think the letter in which he told me he had paid the money to my bankers was the very last I had from him—dear old man ! . . .

Dr. King Chambers gave the inaugural address at our School this year, I moved the vote of thanks to him,<sup>1</sup> as it was my one day in London. I will try to send you a report.”

Later she writes,

“ I have rather a sore heart today, for dear old Turk has just died in my arms. . . . He seemed about as usual today, but rose from where he was by the kitchen fire, walked into the scullery and fell over. They fetched me, and he gave just two gasps in my arms

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<sup>1</sup> This was probably *not* the occasion of which she writes in her diary,—“ S. J.-B. made very nice speech in moving vote of thanks,—only forgot to thank much ! ”

and died. It seems a bit of one's life gone, when he had been in it for 13 years!—and a Boston bit too."

"Nov. 29th. 1879. . . . We are in great excitement here with the visit of Gladstone to Edinburgh,<sup>1</sup> and his speeches. I send you two papers today, to show you how he alludes in one speech to the sympathy of women with his cause,—I have written a short letter in today's *Scotsman* asking if it would not be better that they should be able legitimately to express that sympathy through the Suffrage. . . . How I hope and trust to see you here next year!"

Apparently Miss Pechey did not think Gladstone's appreciation of women sufficiently adequate to be worth acknowledging, for a few days later S. J.-B. writes to her,

"I like Gladstone much better than you do, or I shouldn't have written as in the *Scotsman*, but no doubt he is wrong about women,—his wife's fault however, I fancy. Miss Irby went to stay with them for a day or two last year, and I know he admires her hugely,—perhaps she may be a means of grace to him."

It was about this time that the opinions of a number of representative women were collected on the subject of the Suffrage. S. J.-B. at first declined to respond, but, on Miss Irby's remonstrance she wrote the following lines, which are quoted here because they represent fairly the calm and decided attitude she took upon the subject throughout life :

"If I correctly understand the British Constitution, one of its fundamental principles is that Taxation and Representation should go together, and that every person taxed should have a voice in the election of those by whom taxes are imposed. If this is a wrong principle, it should be exchanged as soon as possible for some other, so that we may know what is the real basis of representation in this country; if it is a right principle, it must admit of general application, and I am unable to see that the sex of the tax-paying householder should enter into the question at all.

The argument respecting the 'virtual representation' of women under the present system seems to me especially worthless, as it can be answered alternatively thus:—If women as a sex have exactly the same interests as men, their votes can do no harm, and indeed will not affect the ultimate result; if they have interests more or less divergent from men, it is obviously essential that such

<sup>1</sup> This was the celebrated visit to contest the County of Midlothian,—a "triumphal procession"!

interests should be directly represented in the councils of the nation. My own belief is that in the highest sense, the interests of the two sexes are identical, and that the noblest and most enlightened men and women will always feel them to be so; and, in that case, a country must surely be most politically healthy where all phases of thought and experience find legitimate expression in the selection of its parliamentary representatives."

As regards the medical education of women S. J.-B. never for one moment lost interest in the movement as a whole. If her hand was no longer on the helm, she never deserted her post on the bridge. A new Medical Bill was on the *tapis* at this time,—a Bill which—very rightly—made it essential that all doctors should hold a qualification in both medicine and surgery. As, however, no College of Surgeons would examine women (who nevertheless had gone through the required surgical *training*), this Bill would have had the result of placing women on a different and inferior footing to men as doctors, and the hard-won steps that had seemed to be cut in the solid rock would have melted away once more.

The General Medical Council, in its suggested amendments to the Bill, proposed to establish a special Board for the examination of women, and to admit them in the end to a separate register! It was the old "strawberry jam labels" over again. Moreover in order to conform with the requirements of this Board a woman must be in a position to assert that she had received *no part of her education* along with men,—a requirement that at once ruled out all the women who were enjoying the great privilege of studying at the University of Paris.

So there was small encouragement even now to relax that keen look-out on the bridge.

In Dr. Heron Watson, who was at that time President of the Edinburgh Royal College of Surgeons, S. J.-B. had a keen and sympathetic adviser, and with his approval she wrote to her former supporters, Mr. Stansfeld, Lord Aberdare, Lord Ripon and others, begging them to keep a watchful eye on the interests of the women. Early in the spring of 1878 she had urged Mrs. Anderson to write to two or three of the



London daily newspapers on the subject, while she herself undertook two or three more ; and on April 19th she writes again :

“ DEAR MRS. ANDERSON,—It occurs to me that it would be well for the 8 registered women to send up a distinct protest against the new Medical Bill to strengthen the hands of our friends in both Houses.

I have made a rough draft of what I should propose, and enclose a copy to you, while also forwarding one to Mr. Stansfeld. Before doing anything further I shall wait to hear what you and he think about it, and whether you have any alterations to propose.

If the plan is adopted, can you tell me how we can get Dr. Blackwell's signature ? There is no great hurry, as the petition need not be presented for three or four weeks.

Yours truly,

S. JEX-BLAKE.”

To Mrs. Thorne she writes some months later,

“ I had a long talk with Dr. Watson yesterday, and he tells me the Government is likely to drop the Medical Bill for this session. I shall be rather sorry if they do.

If they do *not*, I hope you will make a point of ‘ keeping the run ’ of every proposed amendment, and of watching very carefully how each may affect women. I should look out very sharp if I were in London, but here it is impossible to do so with sufficient efficiency and promptitude ; so please don't let anything slip. The matter is almost more important than School affairs, and even friendly M.P.'s are too busy to be trusted and often they don't see the bearing of phrases. Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Cowper Temple or Dr. Cameron, could any of them get papers for you, but they need reminding.”

Amid these manifold interests life ran its course in the early years of practice. The happiest times were those when Miss Du Pre came to stay with her friend, and it was the dream of S. J.-B.'s life that these visits might develop into constant companionship. No one who was not a doctor ever took a more sympathetic interest in medical questions than did Miss Du Pre : her advice in difficult social and professional problems was invaluable ; and then there was her delightful sense of fun ! “ The only witty friend I ever had,” S. J.-B.

says about this time. And, added to all was her sheer goodness and interest in the poor.

"32 at Dispensary," writes S. J.-B. in her diary. "One or two so hungry and forlorn that they went to my heart. Oh, dear, if only J. [Miss Du Pre] were here to do her half of the work!

No motto of mine that over the Venice monastery; 'O solitudo, sola beatitudo!'"

It is needless to say that Miss Du Pre's visits were as long and as frequent as the many other claims in her life made possible, and in her absence she entered as of old into every detail of her friend's life.

Of course this friendship could not but take in great measure the place of the old enthusiasm for Octavia Hill, though the latter never died.

In May 1877 someone had told S. J.-B. of the "terrible trouble" Miss Hill was in. "Oh, dear," she cried in her diary, "I'm ashamed of the first sort of thrill of triumph that she should know how it hurts!"<sup>1</sup>

"My life is full and complete again," she writes in April 1878, "if somewhat greyer for all the past pain; and, if I can have J., the former things may abide in shadow till the day of restitution of all things. I can't but believe that *some* day, *some where*, I shall learn what it all meant,—even now one sees in some measure 'why it could not be otherwise.'

It is at any rate a grand thing that, over and through all, each has kept on at her work and done yeoman service."

"Dear L. E. S. turned the tide, gave me back the beginning of strength and life, physical and mental, and since then for the last 12 years I have stumbled steadily onwards,—gaining in strength and calm and hope,—till at length I can feel a wholesome life of my own—quite independent of the old pain,—with a very dear hand in mine, and with a grand life of work and struggle against disease before me."

On the last night of that year she writes:

"'Tarry thou the Lord's leisure,' . . . 'and He shall strengthen thy heart.' . . .

I believe profoundly in the 'that He might be able to succour'. One does learn through pain what one never learns without,—and,

<sup>1</sup> It was not till later—not perhaps till she saw that regrettable number of *Fors Clavigera* that S. J.-B. had any clear idea what the trouble was.

hard as it is to *feel* it, I suppose one knows the ' power of ministration '—the ' Lo, I come ' is higher and more than even the personal happiness.

So—take and use Thy work.

What is the use of *talking* about presenting ourselves a ' living sacrifice,'—and then moaning over pain,—wanting to ' freeze on a warm night ' !

Oh, dear !—one's own littleness.

Well, God teach and guide us all."

A few weeks later she comes to the end of the volume, and writes in a sunnier vein :

" Yet surely,—' hitherto He has helped us '—Look at beginning of this book,—or stronger still look back some 17 years and see how the light has arisen out of darkness,—and shall it not grow and grow.

I fully believe ' God is very merciful to those who suffer *young*. How much harder the other way.

And much to be thankful for in health. No neuralgia,—very great return of brain power. . . .

Who can look forward ?—who dare plan ?

Domine dirige nos ! "

## CHAPTER II

### LAST ILLNESS OF MRS. JEX-BLAKE

So far S. J.-B.'s success in Edinburgh had been on the whole greater than most of her friends had anticipated. The experiment could never have been made, had not Mrs. Jex-Blake agreed to spend her winters in Edinburgh. S. J.-B. was a good deal blamed by other members of the family for urging this arrangement ; but it must be borne in mind that although Mrs. Jex-Blake was in fairly good general health, she was subject to sudden alarming attacks of illness which had repeatedly brought her daughter hundreds of miles in hot haste to the sick bed, regardless of the studies, or the still more important affairs she was leaving behind.

Modern methods would have grappled with the illness at its source long before the patient had reached her present age, and a radical cure might have restored her to perfect health : as it was she lay under a sword of Damocles, and was regarded as a more delicate woman than she really was.

It was impossible for S. J.-B. to embark on medical practice under these conditions ; so the Sussex Square house was given up, and the old lady—who elected to have her own *ménage*—divided her time between her daughter in Edinburgh and her son at Rugby.

“ You have always been different to me from my other children,” she said to S. J.-B. ; and, if she spoke with a consciousness of the sword in her heart, the words were mainly a tribute to her younger daughter's untiring devotion, and remained in later days the source of comfort they were meant to be.

Towards the end of April 1881 Mrs. Jex-Blake went south, leaving her daughter more reluctantly than usual. It was only those who knew S. J.-B. very intimately who were at all aware of the effort it sometimes cost her to get through each "day's darg," and to keep a bright face turned to her patients and a brave face to the world at large. She was more tired than usual at the end of that winter, and Mrs. Jex-Blake was well aware of this.

The usual series of love letters passed between Mother and daughter :

" Eastfield,  
April 30th. [1881].

OWN DARLING,

I am really well, but feel only half of myself without you. I am *very* good,—I sleep well, eat well—*two* hot dinners a day,—but, as I was very tired, keep my room, it is so much easier to be quiet there. Florence quite mothers me. . . .

You may be sure Dobbs is most attentive—and backs anything she advises with the

*Dr.'s wishes. . . .*"

" 4 Manor Place,  
Edinburgh.

May 1st.

. . . Many thanks for your dear little letters, but you mustn't scribble too much to anybody!—Such sweet leaves in' today's note!

Yes, my darling, I miss my dear old lady *very* much, but we are both going to be very good, and get quite strong for our reunion in September. I shall be very grateful to you if you keep up your 'two hot dinners' honestly, and all the rest of it. . . . It breaks my heart to find you run down as I do year after year when I come to fetch you back again.

I don't know exactly when Ursula comes, but you will hear from her.

Dr. M'Laren is back,<sup>1</sup> and so vexed to have missed saying 'Good-bye'!

Yours lovingly,

SOPH."

Towards the end of June Mrs. Jex-Blake was less well, but the doctor who attended her saw no cause for anxiety. On the 28th, however, alarming indications of the old enemy

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Agnes M'Laren had taken the house adjoining S. J.-B.'s.

showed themselves suddenly, and he telegraphed to S. J.-B. to come immediately. There was one more rush south "on eagle's wings," but fortunately this time S. J.-B. had the companionship of Miss Du Pre, with whom she reached Rugby at 2 a.m.

The patient had been given up by the doctor and by all, and even S. J.-B., when she saw her, thought she was dying; but she fought for the precious life with every fibre of her being, refusing to own defeat and absolutely regardless of her own health. For ten days and nights she scarcely left the room. The doctor in attendance was only too glad that she should have a free hand, and after a few days they sent for Dr. King Chambers, in whose skill S. J.-B. had almost unlimited faith. His visit proved reassuring.

"Her life hung so evenly on the balance when I left," he wrote next day, "that I was obliged to acknowledge to myself that my trust in her recovery was a sanguine one. Please one line about her, and, if it is a favourable one, I shall answer it by a little advice to yourself, which you will in that case be in a condition to take."

On July 7th all looked well, and S. J.-B. felt the wonderful supporting power of hope, but, on the following day, there was a sudden turn for the worse, and at half past six in the evening, the patient passed quietly away.

The event is recorded in the diary by a great sheaf of blank pages, with a pathetic notice from the *Times* in the middle of them.

That is all, but constantly for a year, intermittently for many years, the diary recurs to the old longings and regrets, the gropings and questionings, the heart-searching and tears, that have followed every great bereavement. The reader of the preceding pages will not need to be told that S. J.-B. drank the cup to the dregs.

There were not a few who had lost in Mrs. Jex-Blake their dearest friend, but everyone's first thought was of her younger daughter.

"I do hope," writes that wise Heron Watson, "that you are not overborne by over much sorrow."

"No human being loses what I do in her," S. J.-B. wrote to her friend, James Cordery, and this was perfectly true. No one had loved her Mother as she had; no one else had the same cause; and no one else had the same appalling capacity for suffering.

It is interesting to note that of many beautiful letters of sympathy there is not one that strikes the reader as more truly comprehending than does Mrs. Anderson's:

" 4 Upper Berkeley Street, W.  
July 13th, 1881.

DEAR MISS JEX-BLAKE,

I have seen with very great regret the notice of your sorrow.

Knowing as I do how very close and tender was the tie between you and your Mother and also what a fine and ennobling influence she must have been to all within her range I am very full of sympathy for you. It is always very sad to break away from the past by losing one of these main links with it, but in your case there is very much to increase your sense of this. You have not (as so many others unhappily allow themselves to do) outlived the tenderness of the relationship. I hope that after a time it will be a comfort to you to remember this and to recal how happy she was in having so much affection from you.

I was very sorry to find I had written on business last Sunday at such a time.

Yours very truly,

E. G. ANDERSON."

S. J.-B.'s own letters are calm and restrained, of course. To her assistant in Edinburgh she writes,

" July 11th.

. . . Thanks for your kind note, and [your Mother's] kind thoughtfulness.

But nothing would grieve me more than needlessly to part a Mother and daughter who still have each other, and I beg her to remain with you at least as arranged until the end of this month during which time I shall almost certainly remain here and try to get rested.

It was a hard battle,—it was bitter to fail just when we seemed winning, but I believe it was her wish to go. On Thursday I heard her murmur quietly, 'Oh, Father, I pray Thee take me home,'—and now all is peace.

Yours sincerely,

S. J.-B."

About the work in Edinburgh S. J.-B. had no anxiety at all. It was her way, when she trusted people, to trust them whole-heartedly, and she had absolute confidence in the assistant who had worked with her for more than a year. Well, indeed, she might, for she was extraordinarily fortunate in that gallant-hearted and faithful young helper, whose only fault seems to have been that she threw herself too completely, too conscientiously, into everything she undertook,—her chief's work and interests, together with her own studies and laboratory experiments.<sup>1</sup> S. J.-B. never realised what a responsibility her very trust was to one wholly worthy of it.

In any case the double burden on the young shoulders proved too great, and there was a sudden and tragic breakdown ending in death.

One wonders how S. J.-B. bore the double shock. She had fancied herself "girt with the girdle of him who has nought," when the second blow fell. She always said herself that she never could have won through but for Miss Du Pre, who simply carried her off to quiet places and tended her and brought her gradually back to the possibility of beginning again.

The practice in Edinburgh was given up for the time. There was nothing else to be done. Miss Ellaby took up the threads and finished them off as well as a stranger might; but there was no medical woman free to remain and fill the niche. It was hard on the practice.

In later years S. J.-B. met Mr. Frederick Myers, and she was induced by her impression of him to read his *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, when it appeared some time later. She was deeply interested in the book, and her mind was open on the subject always; but she "tried the spirits" severely. "No human being," she said one day in the course of an earnest talk, "could strive to come into touch with one gone before more earnestly than I tried to come into touch with my Mother. I used to lie awake at

<sup>1</sup> She was working at the solubility of fats, and the ether fumes were supposed to have proved insidiously poisonous.



night concentrating every faculty on the effort. But I got no response."

Her diary became her great outlet again in those dark days, in some places almost, as of old, a very cento of beautiful or poignant thoughts from the treasure-house of her memory; but that was never the side she turned to the world, though intimate friends got glimpses of it that startled them. One guessed it too from her anxiety to spare others the pain she had suffered herself.

"Don't you ever go through the farce, dear, of thinking you haven't been good to me," she said to a friend years after this; and, although throughout life she often spoke hastily and over-sharply, she never spoke a word that might poison the night-watches for those she left behind. Coventry Patmore's terrible poem <sup>1</sup> could never have been inspired by her.

To one of her nieces she writes :

"Sept. 2nd, 1881.

DEAR — ,

I found the enclosed treasured among Grandmamma's most valued papers, and I am sure you will like to have it back and to see how she kept and cared for it through so many years. . . .

I think all your life it will be a pleasure to you remember how much you added to her happiness and helped to take care of her during the last few years. She always said you were 'a little mother' to her.

Your affec. aunt,

S. J.-B."

<sup>1</sup> "Poor Child."

## CHAPTER III

### PATIENTS AND FRIENDS

It was hard to go back to the house in Manor Place, so full of associations, and, as soon as might be, S. J.-B. and Miss Du Pre removed to Bruntsfield Lodge, a roomy, rambling old house<sup>1</sup> with a shady, high-walled garden, standing high on the south side of Edinburgh, overlooking Bruntsfield Links. The sunny rooms and the possibility of stepping out into quiet greenness were worth a fortune to the strained nerves and over-active brain.

"You will be glad to hear that I am much stronger," S. J.-B. writes to Dr. Sewall in September 1883, "and am sleeping excellently. I have just begun also to take short rides, and I do not think they tire me too much."

Here then she began the life of comparative seclusion and active beneficence which was to last for sixteen years. The keynote of her existence was sharing, taking others with her, and the joy of sharing this comfortable house and garden was very great.

Miss Du Pre's absence is the occasion for some playful letters written quite in a patriarchal spirit :

"August 25th. [1883.]

... I have had an addition to my family as well as Mrs. B.,—though it isn't yet in the *Times* first column,—viz. a delightfully comic small dog, white with one black eye, whom I have christened Toby, and whom I bought from the Home for Lost Dogs for the large sum of 2s. 6d. The police take stray dogs there, and if no one

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<sup>1</sup> This house is now the picturesque nucleus of the Edinburgh Hospital for Women and Children.

claims them, or buys them, they are killed ; so this little fellow has escaped by the skin of his teeth, in virtue of his supposed excellences in the cat-chasing line !<sup>1</sup> Has cottoned up to me most amusingly—followed me about all day, and whined at the door when shut out. . . .

The two boys are delighted, of course,—especially A., who declares Mr. Toby to be the moral of a dog for whom his late master ' wouldn't take £100.' Nice profit wouldn't it be if I clear £99. 17s. 6d. !

Lest the household should be too full, I have sent off a member,—viz., White Angel, to grass for a week at Currie,—H. being so overjoyed at being let ride him out that cook declared he ' couldn't eat his lunch ' ! He walked back (6 miles) in 1¾ hr., not bad, was it ?

Miss A. is coming tonight,—Mrs. J. went this afternoon. By the bye on Thursday she asked me to ' see Baby for a minute,' and I found the child white and out of sorts, rather feverish, etc., and overjoyed Mrs. J. by prescribing ' a little Bruntsfield'. So she has been out here for 2 days, tumbling in the hay and delighting Ann's heart. She is so fond of children.

I also sent Mrs. S. off to Brackenrigg yesterday, as I decided she did want a change before beginning a winter's work. The fare was 17s. 4d., and I gave her the rest of £4, which will pay everything for 10 days, with 5s. or 6s. to spare. I haven't heard from her yet, but I am sure she will be in the seventh heaven.

Probably she will see Miss Anthony there,—she went the previous day. . . .

I think it *was very* good of you to ask for the Baring votes ! . . ."

" Sept. 4th.

. . . Mrs. S. lunched here today, and says she feels infinitely better for the change,—things no longer worry her in the same way. She tells me that the red-room gentleman was back,<sup>2</sup>—and that being confined to bed one day, he evidently heard Miss Anthony haranguing on Women's Rights in the next room,—and Mrs. W. told them that he had asked ' when those two ladies were going,—for he heard enough to know they were men-haters, and *he* was a woman hater ! "

" Sept. 9th.

I've had another addition to my family,—*not* a permanent one this time ! A. J. was very anxious not to catch scarlet fever so as to be thrown back for his examinations, etc., and so I have taken him in for a few days, and given him ——'s room upstairs. (Do

<sup>1</sup> S. J.-B. made great friends with the birds in her garden, and cats were accordingly taboo.

<sup>2</sup> S. J.-B. and Miss Du Pre had visited the same hotel that summer.

you think W. is in any danger?) He seems a very nice lad, but by no means strong. He is so very pleased with the quiet,—he says he can sleep *so* much better. Now a lad of his age ought to be able to sleep in any row!”

“ Sept. 13th.

. . . The grapes are getting on famously, some will be ripe within a week I think, but they will be rather small this year.”

“ Sept. 23rd.

You needn't have asked so meekly for '2 or 3 grapes'. We have cut none yet, but when they first began to colour, the most forward bunch was dubbed 'Miss Du Pre's,'—and for the last 10 days the household might be seen every morning with upturned chins gazing to see 'if Miss Du Pre's bunch is ready',—H. going up the ladder and hanging in all sorts of odd positions to look at it all round.

The combined wisdom has decided to cut it tomorrow—in spite of a red berry or two which won't get right,—so probably you will get it on Wednesday morning by P.P. Be sure to tell me how it travels.”

The first few months in the new house were a time of comparative leisure, and S. J.-B.'s friends received letters less telegraphic in their succinctness than they afterwards tended to become. The following is to Mrs. Brander, who (when Miss Isobel Bain) had accompanied S. J.-B. to America :

“ Sept. 26th. [1883.]

DEAREST BEL,

I wish you could peep in and see my new house now that it is fairly in order. I think the quiet and airiness will be of very great value to me. I have felt much better since I came here . . .

You have so often wished for good medical women in India that you must now be pleased to have your wish granted. I don't know if you know Mrs. Scharlieb who is just entering on practice at Madras, but, if you don't, I wish you would go and call on her, and give my card. I do not know her personally, but I have corresponded with her, and respect her much for the gallant way in which she got her education, first at Madras and then coming to England to perfect herself. She passed the very difficult examinations of the University of London (M.B. and B.S.) with great distinction, and won the gold medal in Obstetrics from the whole University. . . .

Have you heard also that Dr. Edith Pechey is going to settle at Bombay? She has been invited to do so by a committee of native gentlemen, who guarantee her an income and find her a hospital. . . .

I am very sorry to lose her from England, but very glad to have so admirable a representative in India. She always wins golden

opinions and does such excellent work. I do hope the Government will do something for her. I have just written to Lord Ripon about her.

You know I suppose that Mr. Fawcett has appointed a medical woman (Miss Shove) as medical officer to the women post office clerks, with £350 a year. It is an immense step in public opinion.

I am getting on very well here, but I begin to feel I am getting old. My hair is so grey! . . .

Dear old Mrs. Brander came to see me the other day, looking as nice as ever, . . . I think I care more and more for old people's happiness as compared to young, though the world is hard enough for them too sometimes,—and hardest of all I sometimes think for the middle-aged folks who have outlived the spring and energy of youth and not reached the calm of age. How much pain one sees in the world!

I hope *your* life is getting easier and happier every year, dear child. Tell me all about yourself some day. . . .

Yours affectionately,

S. J.-B."

She was planning a new edition of her book, *Medical Women*, at this time, and she wrote to Mr. Osler to ask for statistics as to the percentage of women, as compared with men, who had so far passed the examinations of the University of London. In reply to his information she writes:

" Feb. 3rd. 1884.

DEAR MR. OSLER,

I can hardly express strongly enough how grateful I am both to you and to Mr. Milman, for the very valuable tables of numbers sent me. . . .

Please do not doubt for a moment that I quite agree with you that it is unfair to compare 'picked women' (i.e. really in earnest) and 'unpicked men'. I have said so repeatedly. But you must remember that a *very* few years ago I had a very hard fight to get it admitted as a possibility that *some* women *might* do as good work as men. In 'Visits to American Schools' (published 1867) I wrote with at least sufficient diffidence,—'Whether most women would be capable of the amount of study required, for instance, for one of our University degrees, I really do not know,' etc. My one contention has been all along,—'Give a fair field and *try*'—and no one can exaggerate the gratitude that all women ought to feel to the University of London for giving that field.

At the same time, while quite conceding that 'percentages' need correction by certain considerations on the men's side,—youth,

want of choice, etc.,—you must not forget that women are quite as much weighted in other ways,—e.g. by the greater reluctance of parents to spend money on their education, and the more inconsiderate claims made on their time, etc., at home, inferior early teaching, etc., so that after all one set of difficulties go far to balance another.

From a medical point of view my chief anxiety now is how women are going to stand the strain ; I am *very* much afraid of seeing the movement discredited by the breakdown in health of girls who begin too young, or with inadequate physical stamina, or who try to 'burn the candle at both ends' by combining society or home duties with serious study.

However, I must not trespass longer on your time and kind patience, and with repeated thanks, I remain,

Yours very gratefully,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

This subject of the education of girls had been brought prominently before her mind by the breakdown of a rarely gifted young friend. S. J.-B. had some great talks on the subject with Miss Buss and others, and she wrote to various papers about the danger of over-pressure. "The head-mistresses have a difficult problem before them," she says, "but it has got to be faced."

As a matter of fact the problem was destined to be solved abundantly in due course by the development of games and physical culture generally,—all that side of life for the lack of which she herself had suffered so terribly.

She was specially interested, of course, in the daughters of her old friends, and, of these, Hermione Unwin and Katie Ballantyne held a special place in her regard. To the former she writes :

" July 29th. 1884.

MY DEAR HERMIE,

Thank you for sending me your examination papers. I am very glad that you passed so successfully. What now interests me most is to know to what use all this work is to be turned, for after all knowledge is noblest when it becomes an instrument of work beyond itself. Have you any tastes or wishes, or any thought of any special kind of work ?

I daresay that after all this study the best thing you can do is to rest on your oars for six months or a year, but during that time I hope you will be thinking in what way you can turn yourself to

best account. There is so much that needs doing in the world, and it is such a privilege to help in the doing of it. I hope you will write and tell me when you have any definite thoughts on the subject.

I have already had my holiday for this year, having spent June in driving about (with the white pony) in the Perthshire highlands with my friend, Miss Du Pre. I think there is hardly any kind of holiday that rests one so much. You should persuade your Father to take you all in a waggonette, a long drive into Scotland or to the English Lakes. If you should decide on Scotland, I should hope to find this house used as a stopping-place. I think I could take you all in pretty comfortably.

Remember me very kindly to Mr. Unwin, and believe me

Yours very truly,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

Here is an interesting letter to an old friend whose husband's distinguished career separated her for the time from a dearly-loved daughter :

"I much enjoyed seeing her for the flying visit which was all she vouchsafed me, and I am *delighted* to see how very much she is improved,—very much more healthy in mind and body all round. . .

She amused me much by plunging headlong into some theological difficulties,—which reminded me of how she (aged 6 !) used to harass you about the Trinity. Her great trouble seems to be that she can't feel sure the world is governed by a beneficent and omnipotent God,—she thinks there is so much pain in it which wouldn't be allowed unless God either *didn't wish* to help it, or *couldn't* help it. That has never been my difficulty,—I have always had such a devout belief in the possible blessing of pain,—

' Because all noblest things are born  
In agony.'

Do you remember Miss Cobbe's hymn ?

However she asked me if I felt sure the world was governed, etc., and I said frankly that I hadn't absolutely made up my mind,—that it seemed to me we had very small means of being 'sure' of anything,—but that I thought, if there was a Ruler both good and all powerful, it was at least perfectly conceivable that He might allow all the pain, etc., partly because the very theory of free will involved possibilities of evil with its consequences which not even Omnipotence could avert, and partly because He might see that pain was at any given moment the very best thing for the person who suffered it.

Then she went off to,—Did I think it *possible* that any Being could follow out the lives of millions of creatures at once, etc.,—

to which I said that certainly I couldn't conceive how it should be possible; but neither could I conceive many other things that yet we knew to be scientific truths,—e.g. that our whole earth could be swallowed up in one of the 'spots' of the sun, and not fill up the spot, and that that very sun is only a unit in a myriad of worlds whose immensities simply reduce us to silence.

However I didn't mean to inflict a *réchauffé* of all this upon you, though I think you will like to know how the child's mind is working. Let it work!—being in a wholesome atmosphere of love and labour, she will learn all sorts of practical replies to theoretical difficulties, and come to no harm."

Interesting, as bearing on the above, is another letter written to someone else about the same time:

"It is a double principle with me never to bring forward theological questions, and never to seek to change the opinions of anyone who is satisfied with his or her own; and on the other hand to be always ready to say exactly what I think myself about any given point to any intelligent person who cares to ask me the question, and to say frankly where I feel that I know nothing. I do not think anyone can possibly be more conscious than I of the immense vastness and difficulty of questions that the general public answer glibly offhand, and of my own utter incompetency to decide in the abstract 'what is truth'. Practically I think one is generally able to see one's own duty day by day, and probably Browning is right—

'... more is not reserved

To man, with soul just nerved

To act tomorrow what he learns today.'

Beyond that, I suppose that all that any of us can do is to be very chary of either asserting or denying, but to strive to keep our whole souls open to every ray of light we can get, and hope some day to learn everything that it is needful for us to know. Personally I am always getting to feel that opinions matter less and less, and motives and feelings more and more.

Excuse this long dissertation and believe me,

Yours sincerely,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

In December 1885 she writes to Miss Du Pre:

"Yes, we shall miss poor old X. sadly. It does seem pathetic, doesn't it?—and yet don't you think it is something to be taken away just when you *have* attained your highest ambition?... The first thing I thought,—as it almost always is,—was, I wonder what he thinks now that he 'knows what Rhamses knows'. It



always does strike me so very curiously when someone who has never, I suppose, thought half as much as I about the mysteries of life and death, goes in in front of me,—if there is any ‘going in’. I thought it so very strongly about Vanderbilt. How *will* he get on where everything isn’t reckoned as on the Stock Exchange ? ”

Although the new house was certainly not in a central position, S. J.-B.’s practice steadily grew. As the first woman doctor in Scotland, she had, as she had told Sir Thomas Barlow, numerous cases that had long gone untreated, and she was the recipient of many a pent-up confidence. The Edinburgh that criticized her would have been surprised if it had known some of the secrets that lay, so safely, in her keeping. She was often called upon to be a Mother Confessor, and, although she always declared that “one profession is enough for one person,” her practice was by no means so rigid in this respect as was her theory. Many strange problems were discussed in that quiet consulting-room, with its book-lined walls and green spaces outside. To the end of life her impulsiveness led her into mistakes for which she had to suffer, but her advice to others was extraordinarily sane and good. Yet the idealist in her never slept. “I took Colani from the shelf,” she says on one occasion, “and read, ‘Cast *thyself* down,—for the devil can suggest ; compel can he never.’ ”

She was often asked, too, to take a resident patient who wished to have her own suite of rooms and sometimes her own attendant. More than one of these patients became personal friends.

She of course received high fees for cases of this kind, but she often had resident patients who paid no fees at all. Some governess who could not get well in dreary lodgings would be simply wrapped up in blankets and carried off in the brougham—or was it on a comet’s tail?—a messenger having been sent up to the house,—“Have blue room ready in half-an-hour. Am bringing patient.”<sup>1</sup>

“I wonder,” writes a patient at this time, “if you have any idea how pleasant it is to be lifted on somebody’s shoulders and carried

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<sup>1</sup> “Ah,” said an old servant in later years. “We did see life in that house ! ”

away from the shadows of your own life into the brightness of theirs. No I do not think you can have; you do not seem to have dwelt in the shadows."

And another writes,

"I know you will believe me when I say that I have rarely, if ever, been so *supremely* happy as during the past few weeks. The feeling of peace and comfort was so delicious, and I only wish I could prove myself just a little worthy of all I have enjoyed."

We have seen how on one occasion she took in a lad who could not afford to risk incurring the infection of scarlet fever. On another occasion, when visiting a patient, she was asked to see a boy of ten, who had unluckily fallen ill while paying a short visit to the house. His hostess did not understand boys, and he was having an uncomfortable time. His plight roused all the boy—and there was plenty of it—in S. J.-B. She carried him off, mothered him, took him for drives when she could, got him well, and apparently made him happy. At all events, when the time came to say Goodbye, he flung his arms round her neck and kissed her!

There are some men who are born with an instinctive knowledge of the right thing to do in unusual circumstances.

Most useful was the comet's tail in cases where some over-worked brain was on the point of a breakdown, where a worry was developing into an *idée fixe*, and threatening to drive the patient mad. S. J.-B. would carry the patient off, regardless of possible developments more disconcerting even than an outbreak of scarlet fever in her house, tend her, feed her up, make her sleep, sympathize with her, bully her, laugh at her, till the patient was ready to fall into line and laugh at herself. Some of these "cures" were extraordinarily rapid and complete, and there is no record of a single failure.

She never heard of any over-weighted woman or child without asking herself whether she could lift the burden.

"DEAR CARRY,"—she writes to her sister about this time—"... I don't like the idea of our teacher looking 'pale and anxious',—do you know if she has any special troubles?—or is likely to be



*from a photograph by M.G.S.*

*Emery Walker ph. sc.*

*Sophia Jex-Blake*



short of money? Has she relations with whom she spends her holidays? or is she at Bettws now?—When do the holidays begin and end? What pay has she now?—Has it been raised lately?—What is her name and nation?

A sad number of questions, but very short replies will suffice.

Your aff. sister,

S. J.-B."

It was partly because she had so many guests of this kind that she made it an absolute rule that none of her servants were to receive gratuities from visitors,—a rule that some of the visitors disliked extremely, and even refused to submit to. Such cases sometimes led to an amusing breeze of correspondence of which the following is a sample:

"SIR,

Well acquainted as I am with your many and great iniquities, I confess that I did *not* expect you wantonly to abuse our humble hospitality by deliberately inciting our household to rebellion against constituted authority as distinctly announced to you by written warning on the mantel-piece.<sup>1</sup> Manifold as are the notorious vices of the Conservative mind, I *had* supposed it to have some slight reverence for law, national or domestic. In future I shall know better.

Sir, the humble but incorruptible member of my household whose integrity you sought to corrupt, begs me to re-enclose to you the accompanying lucre (2s. 6d.), of whose history you so falsely pretended yourself ignorant, and as I see no reason why I should be impoverished in consequence of your evil doings, I request you to repay me on your return from the continent the commission charged by H.M. Government (*viz.* ½d.) upon the enclosed remittance.

I am Sir,

Yours more in sorrow than in anger,

S. J.-B."

The postal order was indignantly returned, with a request to do what she liked with it, so she at once sent it to the London Society for Women's Suffrage, directing the secretary to forward the receipt to her refractory Conservative guest!

Notwithstanding this, and other differences of opinion, he paid many more visits to her house, and for the future contrived usually, at least, to elude her vigilance.

<sup>1</sup> "On est prié de ne rien donner aux domestiques."

She used to consult him in all sorts of legal difficulties, and he replied with unfailing patience.

“DEAR JAMES,”—she wrote on one occasion,—“I want to make a codicil, leaving some money to . . . , the income to her for life,—the capital between her daughters. Will you please tell me the simplest words in which I can do this?”

In sending a rough draft, he inserted the words,—“if only one such daughter.”

“Of course I can put in ‘if only one such daughter,’ if you like,” she replied, “but at present there are seven!”

The initial mistake, of course, was hers, and it was a kind of mistake that was very unusual with her.

Her correspondence was very large,—so large that she never had time to write a “proper letter about ‘Shakespeare and the musical glasses,’” as she would have said. To her most intimate friends she wrote with spontaneous charm,—letters circumstantial, tender, nonsensical, as the case might be. “Do you *ever* write any letters that would look well in your memoir?” asks Miss Du Pre. “I begin to be anxious about that book. It seems to me that it will be so fearfully dull,—unless your diaries . . . prove to be amusing.”

On the other hand, strangers consulted her about manifold schemes and perplexities, and she always asked herself how she could help.

“Dear Madam,” wrote one of these, “As you sit alone in the evening with the curtains drawn, imagine that a woman steals into your room, *hunted to death by men*. I am that woman. . . .”

Even this sensational beginning did not put S. J.-B. off, and it was weeks before she allowed herself to be persuaded—by Dr. Pechey and Miss Du Pre—that the case was one for Dr. Clouston rather than for her.

But it was in her Dispensary, with working women and girls, that one saw her, perhaps, at her best. She was so vital, so sympathetic, yet so full of humour and common sense that the regular provident patients were devoted to her. They knew there was nothing to be gained by arguing.

“ Well, I must just take my scolding,” they would say resignedly. So keenly did she sympathize with their difficulty in following out her directions in their own homes that in 1885 she added a few beds to the Dispensary, and thus formed the nucleus of the Edinburgh Hospital for Women and Children, which has since grown to great things and has been honoured by a visit from the Queen.

Where the case was serious, and the remedy lay in the husband's hands, S. J.-B. always took the bull by the horns. “ Ask him to come and have a little talk with me,” she would say breezily. “ Tell him I can see him at such and such hours.” And he would come !

She was admirably fitted for work of this kind. No woman was ever more strictly fair. An injured husband was no less—and no more—sure of her sympathy than was an injured wife.

And, of course, it was the old and feeble who at once found the radiant side of her.

“ The thanks and blessings of old J. G.—85—bring a rush of tears,—‘ Ah, somebody be good to my old lady ! ’

And yet I suppose she may be ‘ old ’ no longer, but young and strong and bright, and sorry for *my* weakness and weariness,—

‘ waits on the hills of Paradise  
For her children's coming feet.’ ”

She seldom rose quite above this sense of effort and weariness, though few would have guessed it. “ I always get so much good from being with you,” writes Lady Jenkinson,—“ body and soul—especially soul. . . . I wish *you* would 'fess when you feel downcast.”

In her inmost circle, of course, she did 'fess, pretty often. “ Not strong enough for the place, John,” she used often to quote whimsically from *Punch*. And here is an interesting bit of heresy in a letter to Dr. Sewall —

“ I don't at all agree by the bye with your theory that ‘ there is nothing like work for producing real happiness.’ I don't find that it has even any tendency to produce it, though of course one *must* work if one is able. ‘ Otherwise she drops at once below the dignity of man,’—so says Aurora Leigh.

To quote Mrs. Browning again,—‘ What's the best thing in the world ?—Something *out of it* I think.’ ”

The reader will not need to be told that the poetry of her nature had not been crushed out by that long fight. Far from it: All through the strenuous days she had been supported by the very poems she had repeated by the fireside in Sussex Square, but the store had grown till her repertory must have been nearly unique. To many passages from the Psalms and Isaiah, George Herbert, Trench, Alford and others, she had added a harvest from Whittier, Emerson, Lowell and divers less known American poets. She loved her Tennyson and Browning too—*Abt Vogler* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*—but indeed the “poetry book-case” included a very catholic range, from Macaulay’s *Lays* to Swinburne and Christina Rossetti, with a corner for Jean Ingelow and for Mrs. Hamilton King. We have seen the store she set in her youth on some of Sadie’s Poems. No one who has ever heard it will forget how the “pathetic voice” would repeat :

“Is it so, O Christ in Heaven, that the highest suffer most?  
That the strongest wander farthest, and more hopelessly are lost?  
That the mark of rank in nature is capacity for pain,  
And the anguish of the singer makes the sweetness of the strain?—  
‘I have many things to tell you, but ye cannot bear them now.’”

or again,

“No, no, by all the martyrs, and the dear dead Christ;  
By the long bright roll of those whom joy enticed  
With her myriad blandishments, but could not win,  
Who would fight for victory, but would not sin.

By these our elder brothers who have gone before,  
And have left their trail of light upon our shore,  
We can see the glory of a seeming shame,  
‘We can feel the fulness of an empty name.’”

It was recitations like this that formed the nucleus of the “incomparable evenings in the Doctor’s Study” to which Dr. Lillie Saville referred (see pp. 390-1, footnote). When life was not too exacting—and sometimes when it was—such evenings were very frequent, and they were a great refreshment after the burden and heat of the day.

She derived much relaxation, too, from the best of the unceasing current that flows through the circulating libraries.



Her brief criticisms of books are often interesting. She was disappointed in George Eliot's *Life*, because the long series of letters was not sufficiently welded together by narrative. Of the Carlyles she agreed with Mrs. Oliphant that "there was a great deal of love on both sides,—with very raw nerves." Of two books she confessed to Miss Du Pre that she "sobbed over them like a baby,"—one was *Laetus Sorte Mea*, the other *The Little Pilgrim in the Unseen*.

## CHAPTER IV

### PUBLIC LIFE

It is not to be supposed that the "cataracts and breaks" were a thing of the past. There were many who found S. J.-B. a delightful person to work with, but even they had no difficulty in seeing how it was that others had a different experience.

"But the Doctor is *nearly always right*," said one of her assistants in later years, "when she differs from other people." And this was perfectly true. She *was* nearly always right; but the few times she was wrong were sufficient in many quarters to give the dog the proverbial "bad name."

Moreover, one must frankly admit that her rightness was often too uncompromising, too business-like, too far in advance of what other people could be expected to agree with, too inconsiderate of ordinary human frailty. "You treat other people like pawns," Miss Du Pre used to tell her, but, although she quoted the remark, she never seemed really to grasp it.

During the first few years of her life at Bruntsfield Lodge she took a great interest in local women's questions. She was a moving spirit in the organization of one or two large suffrage meetings, and in the laborious propagandism and canvassing involved in the election of women as poor law guardians. Evidence of the thoroughness of her work persists to this day; but it was not always appreciated by the Edinburgh ladies who coöperated with her. They thought her so big and masterful that nobody else got a chance. It was just as well that her own special work absorbed her more and more. In 1884 she had written for Macmillan (at the instigation of her friend Mrs. S. R. Gardiner) a useful little

book on *The Care of Infants*, which was warmly received by the profession and by a considerable public, and she was steadily taking notes for a second edition of her *Medical Women*, which should bring the narrative down to the date of publication.

Public affairs, too, demanded their share of interest. That weary Medical Bill kept cropping up at intervals, and S. J.-B. was often appealed to privately by members of parliament and others for information and advice. They were well aware, of course, that her main interest was to safeguard the rights and privileges of women, but they also knew something of her mental acumen and thoroughness of method. Moreover, she was unconnected with any of the great vested interests which constituted the great stumbling block in the way of any Bill. There is a telegram extant addressed to her by the President of the Edinburgh College of Physicians who had gone up to London to watch the debate,—“Please wire Mr. Stansfeld to be sure to be here in time to secure dropping of bill proposed.”

Towards the end of 1884, the Edinburgh Extra-Mural School made an effort towards incorporation, and memorialized the Privy Council to grant them a Charter. S. J.-B. was anxious to take advantage of this opportunity to raise again the question of the admission of women to medical education in Scotland, especially as, by this time, the various missionary bodies were quite alive to the importance of the subject.

“The Free Church are also willing to move,” she writes to Mr. Stansfeld on November 20th, “and they wish to memorialize the Privy Council direct, and to request that any Charter granted may *not exclude* women, but make it at least optional for the College to admit them. To my intense amusement the request has just come to me that I will ‘draft’ such a memorial, but I have not the remotest idea how even to address the Privy Council!”

It was not only the Free Church that asked her help. The lecturers, mindful of her power of enlisting the sympathy of statesmen in the past, also begged her to use her influence in high quarters, and, through the National Association, to present a petition to the Privy Council. Mr. Stansfeld was

helpful as ever, advising her to interview Lord Carlingford, from whom she had a gracious reception. "But the primary condition must be," she writes to Dr. Littlejohn, "that the Charter distinctly commits the College to the admission of women on equal terms. If this is not approved, the whole thing falls to the ground."

The reader of the foregoing chapters might not unnaturally be prepared to hear that the College was duly incorporated, and that the women were left in the lurch; but it was the unexpected that happened. The effort of the Extra-Mural School to achieve incorporation failed, but the examining bodies for which the School existed, the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, decided a few months later to admit women. We may reasonably suppose that the renewed discussion of the whole question had not been in vain, but, so far as S. J.-B. was concerned, it was a case of the seed cast into the ground, which springs and grows up "he knoweth not how." On March 17th, 1885, she writes to Dr. Pechey :

"Meanwhile I have two splendid pieces of news to send you, if they have not yet reached you,—viz. (1) The Irish College of Surgeons has not only opened all its examinations, and even its fellowships, to women, but also all the classes in its School,—making separate arrangements for Practical Anatomy only. (2) More wonderful still, the Scottish Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of Edinburgh and Glasgow (now combined to give one 'Triple Qualification') have decided *without a division* to throw open all their examinations to women. I am exceedingly surprised, for though I heard an application had been made, I thought there was little hope of success, and took no trouble about it. However, so it is, and I hope to have classes opened in the Extra-Mural School (and perhaps in connection with St. Andrews) next winter. Somebody has left St. Andrews (subject to a life interest) a legacy of £50,000 on condition of admitting women. So you see all round 'Pigs is looking up.'

Mrs. Russel was here for a few days a fortnight ago, and is as nice as ever."

This great advance gave a fresh impetus and point to the publication of *Medical Women*,<sup>1</sup> which was duly achieved a

<sup>1</sup> *Medical Women*, by Sophia Jex-Blake, M.D. Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier. The book has long been out of print, but, as a storehouse of facts, it is largely drawn upon by all writers on the subject, including the author of the present volume.

few months later. It called forth a great sheaf of congratulatory letters from those who remembered the old days.

"Of course," wrote Dr. King Chambers, "future generations will think it necessary to season your arguments with the traditionary grain of salt; but the facts are so clearly and calmly stated that they will be accepted absolutely. As to the character of the movement itself, the future must give it."

"I am glad I was always a steady, if humble, adherent to the side of justice before its cause was popular," wrote Professor Charteris. "I hope that you will long and increasingly enjoy the position that you had such a hard fight to win. You got all the buffets for many a day."

And Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell :

"I am sorry that we have lost you from London. We much need that combination of unselfish activity and wise combination of practical qualities which we find in no other of the leaders of the movement."

"What a change," says Dr. Heron Watson, "has come over the spirit of the Medical Corporation since the story of your efforts in the cause first appeared."

And this—finally—is from a generous letter from the Revd. William Pechey :

"If Edith is entitled to the praise of having borne, as you say, 'an excellent part' in the movement you narrate, she would, I am sure, be the first to join me in saying that you alone can fairly say: '*Quorum maxima pars fui.*'"

But the mention of Dr. Pechey's name reminds one of a delightful letter she forwarded from her little friend Rukhmabai (now Dr. Rukhmabai) who, needless to say, was *not* one of those who remembered the old days.

"Girgaum,  
23rd June, 1886.

MY DEAR MISS PECHEY,

I herewith return . . . one of your books (The Roman Singer), with many thanks. I looked it all over just enough to know the purport of the story, which I found contains nothing but mere *love* matters.

I shall return the other book (Medical Women) in a few days. It is so very interesting to me that I don't like to drop a single word of it while reading. It gives me a great comfort as I see the *truth* won the victory at last, though you had to suffer so much even in

a country like Europe. I would never have believed if some common person were to tell me, that the people there were so against to allow women to study medicine. . . .

Yours affectionately,

RUKHMABAI."

S. J.-B. was interested too at this time in the development of a volume for the publication of which she had been responsible in the first instance,—that most useful gazetteer, *The Englishwoman's Year Book*,—the success of which has unhappily never been comparable to its merits: and she continued to advise and help the first editor, her friend, Miss Louisa Hubbard.

In 1886 she was asked to deliver one of a series of Health Lectures in Edinburgh, and of course she consented gladly,—her special lecture being addressed to women only. The lectures were free, and the lecturers unpaid.

When arrangements were far advanced, she found that the Committee proposed to charge one shilling for admittance to her lecture, and she promptly rebelled. She wanted all her Dispensary patients and all their friends to come and hear what she had to say, and the charge seemed to her to do away with more than half the good of her lecture. It was represented to her that a charge was also to be made for the corresponding lecture to men only, but she did not consider the cases identical. In any case the men's lecture was no affair of her's.

Mrs. Trayner (afterwards Lady Trayner) was an important person on that committee, and she and Lord Trayner had a great respect and cordial regard for S. J.-B. They understood her, and they wanted other people to understand her too. They were most anxious that she should waive her objection to the shilling charge, partly and especially because she was coöperating in the matter of the Health Lectures with men doctors, and they—the Trayners—wanted her to show herself gracious and conciliatory.

S. J.-B.'s reply to Mrs. Trayner's letter is characteristic of her attitude at that time:

"Pray thank Lord Trayner warmly for his kind interest in me and the medical women generally. I think, however, that he

somewhat over-estimates the importance of what the men doctors may think one way or the other. You and he will remember that all that we have gained has been gained in the teeth of nearly all of them, and if they have failed to hinder me hitherto, they are certainly powerless to hurt me now. . . . I am willing enough to shake hands with them if they wish it, but you must remember that it is I and not they who have the old sores to forgive. . . .

I am sure you will understand that I say this merely because I want you to understand that my position is probably one of the most independent in Edinburgh,—I want nothing from anybody and I fear nothing from anybody. I mean to do in this, and larger matters, what seems to me right, to the best of my lights, and I have long ago learned while doing so to leave consequences to take care of themselves.

With hearty thanks for your kindness, believe me,  
Yours very truly,

S. JEX-BLAKE.

Pray excuse this hasty line, written at the end of a long day's work."

If this seems written in an ungracious and reprehensible spirit, the reader must bear in mind the fire the writer had come through. And after all what is it but a somewhat pagan rendering of St. Paul's "From henceforth let no man trouble me. . . ."

In any case the Trayners were not of the kind to take offence. Their interest in S. J.-B. and her work remained unbroken. Lady Trayner visited the Dispensary more than once and took on as a regular pensioner a brave old patient with a disfigured face, who appealed to her sympathies more than most.

The lecture was free, and proved a great success.

"You will like to know," writes S. J.-B. to Miss Irby, "that my lecture went off very well, the hall (which holds nearly 2000) was crammed to the doors and stairways, and I lectured from slight notes, much better, Ursula says, than if I had read a lecture.

I have already had 4 new patients in consequence."

It now remained for women to avail themselves *de facto* of their admission *de jure* to the Royal Colleges. "I trust," wrote S. J.-B. in a letter to the *Times*, announcing the fresh step gained, "I trust that classes will now within a few

months be re-opened in Edinburgh. With a view to definite arrangements for the ensuing winter session, I shall be very glad to receive the names of any ladies desiring to study in Scotland." A few days later she wrote to the secretary of the Extra-Mural School, who happened to be an old ally.

" Bruntsfield Lodge,  
March 17. [1886].

DEAR DR. MACADAM,

I have already had nearly a dozen letters from ladies wishing to study Medicine in Scotland, so it is clear that the demand is real and considerable.

Can you give me any printed statement about the classes, etc., in the Extra Mural School? . . . Of course I know that if separate classes were required much greater expense must be involved, but I sincerely hope that most of the lecturers may be willing to admit women in the ordinary way. If so, I believe that a considerable number would join the classes next winter. If you would kindly let me have a list of the Lecturers, and would tell me when the next meeting is to be, I might (if you thought it desirable) see some of them before the meeting. I wish very much that the matter could be favourably decided next month, as this would give us time to make arrangements, and get up a good class, etc.

Would it not be well for you before the meeting to get an official letter from the Registrar of the Irish College of Surgeons stating that women are admitted to all the ordinary classes (except Practical Anatomy) at Dublin?

To turn to another subject,—can you tell me the chemical nature of the fluid contained in " Fire-Extinguishing Grenades," etc. Are they really reliable?

Yours very truly,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

It is clear from this that she had not the smallest intention nor wish to found a separate School of Medicine for Women; but her hopes as regarded the lecturers were doomed to disappointment. On the whole they showed themselves enlightened and helpful, but they declined to admit women to their ordinary classes.

They were quite willing—some of them—to lecture to women separately, but one could not expect first-rate men in rising practice to devote an hour or more of precious time daily without more adequate remuneration than the fees of



the first handful of women students were likely to represent. There must, of course, be a sufficient guarantee to make the undertaking worth their while, and the students were assuredly not in a position to provide that guarantee; so S. J.-B. made herself responsible for it at once.

For the first year the women attended separate lectures at one of the men's schools, but it soon became obvious that separate premises, in which students could study and dissect, and change their dress, and generally make themselves at home, were, if not absolutely necessary, at least highly desirable.

Now it happened that, in the days of the old struggle, in a moment perhaps when hope ran high, S. J.-B., Miss Louisa Stevenson and Miss Du Pre had bought the famous old premises in Surgeon Square, which had been a medical school for generations. Here Robert Knox had lectured to his students, and the place had thrilling and sinister associations with Burke and Hare. When all hope of education in Edinburgh seemed finally blighted, these premises had been let to various tenants, but S. J.-B. had never lost sight of the possibility that they might some day be used again for their original purpose.

So now the old place was repaired and cleaned and painted and heated,—under the personal supervision of S. J.-B. and one or two friends, at small cost as regards money, but with lavish expenditure of brains and good will.

It was necessary, too, that hospital instruction should be provided, and to this end, S. J.-B. approached the authorities at Leith.

“The very large number of students at the Edinburgh Infirmary,” she wrote to Dr. Struthers, “make it almost impossible that women should there get opportunities of study, and (as there is no other suitable hospital of sufficient size in Edinburgh) I am anxious to ascertain whether the Directors of the Leith Hospital would entertain the idea of admitting them to opportunities of clinical study in their wards.

If so, I should be glad to make any arrangement as to fees that may be desired by the Directors; or if they preferred it would at once guarantee fees to the amount of 200 guineas yearly.”

Her application was warmly supported by Mr. R. Somerville, and others of the Directors, and after a long series of letters and interviews, the negotiation was completed.

“Every night I am quite as tired as is safe,” she wrote to Miss Irby, who had begged for a postcard, “and yet every day I have to omit half a dozen things that cry out to be done. However I *do not mean* to break down again, so I simply do what I can and leave the rest.”

Little by little the School became more of a corporate thing. A resident secretary was necessary, of course, so S. J.-B. hit on a likely person<sup>1</sup> and trained her. Caretakers (man and wife) were found to look after the premises. A library was provided, and, as soon as might be, anatomical and Materia Medica museums. No one who has not lived through the founding of a medical school can form the faintest idea how much it means. S. J.-B. had been over the ground before, and may be supposed to have realized what she was undertaking.

She had Dr. Balfour's help from the first, and a tower of strength he proved: by degrees a committee was formed: but from first to last the responsibility rested to all intents and purposes on her shoulders.

The position, too, on which the whole thing rested was curious. The School was not recognized as such. Each lecturer was recognized individually. At any moment any lecturer in the Extra-Mural School was free to open a rival class and cut the ground from under S. J.-B.'s feet.

The new venture, moreover, had all the disadvantages inherent in a new creation. It had no senior students, none even, at first, who had gone through the wholesome discipline of the modern High School: it had no tradition. By the sheer necessities of the case, S. J.-B. was compelled to be senior student,—to be tradition.

For ten or more years the School did excellent work, but the instability of its foundation proved too great. Whether the “lion-hearted”<sup>2</sup> pioneer, with her extraordinary bent

<sup>1</sup> S. J.-B. never had a more loyal and devoted helper than the first secretary of the School, Miss Janet Black.

<sup>2</sup> The adjective is applied to her by Charles Reade in *The Woman Hater*.

for arranging detail, could in any case have made a success of the venture, under such difficult conditions, when the heroic days of initiation were over, it is impossible to say. The reader will not need to be told—S. J.-B.'s bitterest opponent never denied—that she put into the venture infinitely more labour and sympathy and affection and brains than she need have done,—and there were those among the students who came near to appreciating these qualities as they deserved. But of course there were others—as at Mannheim of old—with whom a cheaper personality would better have served the turn.

For a year or two everyone was happy and contented, and then the crash of temperaments came. There is no need to tell the story in detail. Some of those concerned were young, and some were foolish, and there are some concerning whom one's lips are sealed. The original difficulty was complicated by side issues that never could be fully threshed out. The actual story seems interminable, and sometimes insignificant enough, but the principle underlying it is of the real essence of tragedy. Enough to say that at the end of a year or two, S. J.-B. found herself confronted with a form of opposition which no one in authority would cheerfully have gone to meet,—a form of opposition peculiarly trying to one of her temperament. Supreme tact might have weathered the storm,—and it must always be remembered that, on many occasions in life, in this connection and in others,—she evidenced a tact that was all but supreme. In any case she failed here. Opposition classes were started in due course on a cheaper basis, classes in which the central controlling power was purely nominal. There was endless propaganda; some sort of organization was got together: everybody who had a grudge against S. J.-B. remembered it now; her faults, mistakes and deficiencies—particularly her want of enthusiasm for missions—came back relentlessly upon her head: and she found herself (as Thring has said of "every consistent worker on principle"), "put in the position of opposing what she had always worked for, and her opponents posing as the workers." Professor Masson and Miss Louisa Stevenson, both of whom had

considered the founding of a Scottish School at this moment premature, wrote to her in grim amusement at some of the names which now appeared in support of the cause.

Let it be conceded for all the concession is worth, that in a sense S. J.-B. brought the difficulty upon herself. Once again something was required of her which a smaller person could have given, but which she could not give. The tragic element lay in this that she never saw where she was at fault. She was conscious of an honest purpose and of unwearied unselfish endeavour. What more could one ask? So many people succeed who give much less than this! She even yielded on a good many points—when yielding was too late.

What strikes one most on looking back is the extraordinary loyalty with which most of the students rallied round her when the split came.

When one of the lecturers (who had striven, like so many others, to make "even a slight alteration" in her) congratulated her on the "brains" she had retained in the School, she responded characteristically:

"*And the heart.*"

"And the heart," he agreed.

Some of the lecturers were even finer. "The terms you name are quite satisfactory," wrote Dr. Aitken when things were at quite their worst, and S. J.-B. could no longer guarantee an adequate emolument. "I would take your students without fee of any kind before I would see you beat, so you need not let the matter give you any concern."

And Dr. (now Professor) A. J. Thomson, when he heard she was leaving Edinburgh, wrote:

"I have always felt, if I may dare to say so, that your part has been like that of a general who won a great battle and then rode away, leaving the achievement with the ungrateful. Happily you know how many of us are neither ungrateful nor ignorant."

But finest of all was the effect on S. J.-B. herself. She fought on, of course,—that was in the nature of her,—and loyal supporters were many;<sup>1</sup> but, although the long

<sup>1</sup> The Marquis of Bute and Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff (Under Secretary for Scotland) are among the best-known names in the company of those who did their best to help her.

struggle to keep the better School going,—to get it improved, endowed, affiliated to the University of St. Andrews,—absolutely wore her out, she never became embittered and she never really lost her buoyancy. When Queen Margaret College opened a medical side in 1890, one might have thought it was the last straw, especially as it meant the removal of eight of her students whose homes were in or near Glasgow, but in this case her loss meant the progress of the cause, and she rejoiced in it wholeheartedly. It was delightful to see the happy terms on which she and Miss Galloway worked in sympathy until and beyond the final closing of the Edinburgh School.

So she always retained her gallant front. If she thought sometimes of "that weary School" she never spoke so: she always saw in it the ideal of what it was going to be. Success was always just round the corner so to speak, all but within reach; but success, in the form in which she looked for it, never came.

Success there was, of course, "not its semblance, but itself." Honest work always means success. The brief life of that School was the seed-time of much fine work that would otherwise never have been done. Its students have acquitted themselves nobly in many parts of the world. And on the principle that "he who watereth shall himself be watered," it did much for S. J.-B. It gave her a little band of juniors who in some measure understood her, who responded to her ideals, who were proud to assist her and to reckon themselves her disciples. The interest she took in them individually was amazing. No trouble was too great that would forward their interests in any way. As the years went on, she seemed to forget herself altogether in their successes. She lived anew in their lives. Her whole nature grew and mellowed, though it could not change. And one is glad to record that never again to the end of life did she suffer the weeks and months of loneliness that had darkened the early days of her professional career.

## CHAPTER V

### RE-OPENING OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY TO WOMEN

It seemed better in the previous chapter to explain at once that, after a brief run of prosperity, the history of the Edinburgh School of Medicine for Women was chequered by a long fight against heavy odds ; but no one who visited the stirring bee-hive at Surgeon Square would have guessed at the struggle that underlay its cheerful aspect. And, fortunately, there were many strands in S. J.-B.'s life besides the struggle for her School. In a doctor's experience there must always be much to interest and cheer, and S. J.-B.'s range was wider than that of the ordinary doctor. Editors were no less glad of her work than of old. In the autumn of 1887, she wrote to the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, offering him a paper on Medical Women which should supplement the one contributed by Mr. Stansfeld ten years before. Mr. Knowles replied immediately that he would be delighted to receive such a paper from her, and "the sooner the better." The article duly appeared in November of that year.

At her little hospital she had a series of residents, some from the London School and some from her own, whom one can fairly describe as picked women,—keen and competent and loyal ; and she enjoyed and appreciated these as they deserved. More and more, too, people sought her opinion and advice on every subject of real human interest. One doctor—a complete stranger—even wrote from far wilds to ask whether there was any lady studying in her School who she thought was likely to make him a suitable wife. He was coming home, but his leave was short, and he would be

glad if she would save time by paving the way for him as far as possible. I am afraid the students never even heard of this opportunity!

How far she was from discouraging a true marriage may be gathered from the following letter to one of her former residents for whom she had designs in the way of more ambitious work, and who wrote in some trepidation to confess that she was engaged to be married:

" May 30, 1895.

DEAR MISS —,

I was very glad to get your letter of March 10th, and very much interested in all your news. I may set your mind at rest by saying at once that I am not going to scold you about your engagement. I hold most strongly that ' Love should still be Lord of all,' and that if two good people love each other heartily in the right way, they ought to marry under almost all circumstances. I don't believe in vows of celibacy for medical women any more than for any one else. Women are women before they are doctors.

At the same time I am afraid you are rather sanguine in hoping that you will be of more use in your profession married than single. It is not the husbands that are the obstacles to practice, but the babies. If a woman becomes a mother, I certainly think nothing outside her home can have, or ought to have, so much claim upon her as her children.

However I think it constantly happens that we plan out one kind of life for ourselves, and then that another is shaped out for us, and we must believe, if we believe in a God at all, that the wisdom that decides for us is greater than our own.

So long as we act up to our highest light, I think we need not trouble ourselves about results. . . .

With all good wishes, believe me,

Yours sincerely,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

That this was no new attitude on her part we learn from a letter written many years before to Miss Bertha Cordery. " You are quite right in thinking that I do not by any means as a matter of course congratulate people on their marriage, but when you say that ' having met, no other result was possible,' I think you express the essence of a good marriage with the terseness worthy of the distinguished historian.<sup>1</sup>"

<sup>1</sup> The " distinguished historian " of course refers to Miss Cordery herself.

This seems the best place to say one word about the special interest S. J.-B. took in her Hindu students. The first of these, Annie Jagannadham, was a young woman of such fine and finished character that her early death, soon after her return to her native land, was a matter for infinite regret, but scarcely for surprise. When she qualified as a doctor, S. J.-B. wrote to the *Spectator* to point out the desirability of sending back Hindu women educated in England to minister to their own countrywomen; and her letter called forth a gratifying response from Mr. James Cropper of Ellergreen (who had been interested in S. J.-B.'s first application to the University of Edinburgh many years before) offering to found a scholarship for Hindu women at her school. This was accordingly done, and a series of Hindu students was the result. Differing from each other in many respects, they were alike in one thing, and that was a real gift for understanding and appreciating their Dean. They seemed to find the Mother side of her by a sort of instinct.

"I cannot tell you," wrote one who had failed in an examination abroad, "how much your kind letter comforted me. When I was happy I wrote to other people; but when I was in distress I wrote to you and was soothed, for failure did not seem so hard when you were satisfied with my work."

When Rukhmabai came to Edinburgh for her Final Professional Examination, she was S. J.-B.'s guest, and a strong mutual admiration and friendship was the result.

In accepting the chairmanship of the School, Dr. Balfour had made it almost a stipulation that S. J.-B. should personally undertake the teaching of Midwifery, and, in consequence of this, she was the first woman to be recognized as a lecturer in the Extra-Mural School. As a matter of fact, her special technical training was necessarily out of date. Dr. Balfour probably looked upon Midwifery mainly as a subject that successful physicians leave behind them, and did not realize that greater strides had been made in the teaching of this subject than in any other. However, S. J.-B. was a born teacher, as we know: she worked hard: and she had the able coöperation of the late Dr. Milne Murray, whose attitude



towards her in this connection was one more of the splendid loyalties bound up in the story of her life.

And one cannot talk of loyalty without recalling a characteristic letter from Dr. Pechey, written when she received the news of S. J.-B.'s appointment :

“ Hip Hip Hooray !!  
Hip Hip Hooray !!!  
Hip Hip Hooray !!!!!

In the very place where we were stoned and beaten 18 years ago. Well, I am glad to have lived to see the day. Just when your paper came, I was feeling life a burden.

Do you think they would let me lecture on something—Shakespeare or the musical glasses—when I come home *if ever* I do. When you want an assistant let me know.

I don't know when I have felt so pleased and elated and especially that it should happen to *you*, it is so appropriate. Isn't Mrs. Thorne very pleased and everybody else? . . .

Dear Sophy, I *am* so pleased, more than if some one had left me a million of money, though I do have to look hard at every anna now before letting it go!”

“ Thanks for your very hearty congratulations,” S. J.-B. wrote in reply,—“ . . . Selfishly, I regret it very much, for I have no idea how to find either the time or the strength (or knowledge) for the course, but I suppose I must just do the best I can.

Of course if you were here you could have the pick of the lecturer-ships in the School, and after one precedent, they couldn't refuse to recognize you : but the pay would hardly keep your Highness in hairpins.”

The idea of having her old friend in Edinburgh dwelt in her mind nevertheless, and some time later—in May 1890—she wrote :

“ By the bye if you do decide to leave India next year, and if it could possibly be made to fit in with Mr. Phipson's plans,<sup>1</sup> I wish with all my heart that you could see your way to come and settle in Edinburgh, and take up with your splendid energy the very wide field in Scotland that is almost ripe to harvest. My strength is about spent, and besides you have elements of social success that I never should have. You are far more of a woman of the world and a far more able diplomatist. My Hospital will never develop in my tired hands, but I believe you might make a splendid thing of it ; and at the same time I believe you would have a capital

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Edith Pechey had married Mr. H. M. Phipson of Bombay.

west-end practice almost immediately, and of course a lectureship if you cared to have it. Think this idea over thoroughly before you decide against it.

Yours sincerely,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

The feeling that her time of work was drawing to an end was intensified by the news of the death of her friend, Dr. Lucy Sewall. This was the last heavy bereavement she had to face, and she took it hard. To her friend, Mrs. Brander, her "eldest daughter," she had written a month or two before the above correspondence with Dr. Pechey :

DEAREST BEL,

" Feb. 27. 1890.

For the second time I have to send you terribly bad news. My dear friend, Dr. Sewall, has been as you know in bad health for the last 4 or 5 years, and last month she was seized with a very severe attack of bronchitis, from which she never regained strength, and she passed away ' very peacefully ' on Feb. 13th.

Though I have seen so little of her for some years back, it is a great blow to me,—the greatest I have felt since 1881.

How I hope that she is again with the mother and father she loved so very dearly. Indeed she has never really rallied, I believe, from her father's death (at 90) a year ago.

A whiter sweeter soul never lived, and her memory ' smells sweet and blossoms in the dust.'

I cannot write more today, but I could not let you hear it from anyone else.

I hope you got the little book I sent you at Christmas. I could not write but it carried much affection to you.

Yours affectionately,

S. J.-B."

For the *Englishwoman's Review* she wrote an account of this " strong and gentle soul," quoting the lines Whittier had written about her ancestor. " I enclose the whole verse about Judge Sewall," she says to the Editor, " in case you have room for it. It might almost word for word have been written of his far-away descendant.

' Walks the Judge of the Great Assize,  
Samuel Sewall, the good and wise.  
His face with lines of firmness wrought,  
He wears the look of a man unbought,

Who swears to his hurt and changes not ;  
 Yet touched and softened nevertheless  
 With the grace of Christian gentleness,  
 The face that a child would climb to kiss !  
 True and tender and brave and just,  
 That man might honour and woman trust.' "

S. J.-B.'s hands might be tired, but the eye on the bridge was as keen as ever. She had been aiming from the first at some sort of reinforcement from St. Andrews, and in 1888 Lord Lothian's Bill had seemed to open a new door of hope.

DEAR MR. STANSFELD,

" May 10th. [1888.]

The Bill of which I wrote is the ' Universities (Scotland) Bill,' which has been introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Lothian. I believe it has not yet come down to your House, but I am very anxious, when it does so, that attention should be directed to the clauses about women and about 'affiliation of Colleges,' which latter might solve our problem, e.g. if our Edinburgh School were affiliated to St. Andrews.

I shall be most grateful if you will talk about it beforehand with members likely to be interested, and if possible speak on it also.

Yours always gratefully,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

The previous day she had written,

DEAR LORD ABERDARE,

" May 9th.

I am extremely obliged for your very kind letter, and shall be *most* grateful if you can make Lord Lothian's acquaintance, interest him in our subject, and introduce me to him. I am very anxious to secure his favourable attention, and that of the Commission, and I am sure that your introduction would give me the best possible chance. I am most anxious not to lose the present opportunity to bring our needs to the front.

With renewed thanks,

Yours very truly,

S. JEX-BLAKE."

When the Bill was passed and Commissioners appointed, she laid before them a memorial in support of the desired aims, and in June 1891 she was summoned to give evidence in person. On June 28th she wrote to Miss Du Pre :

" I had to appear before the University Commissioners last Wednesday, and if possible I will send you a proof of my examination. It

was very satisfactory, as the Chairman (Lord Kinnear) said they were satisfied that it was desirable and necessary to give medical degrees to women in Scotland."

To another friend she had written a week earlier,

"By the bye you will like to see the enclosed proof of my evidence last week before the Universities Commission. Miss E.-L. made me tell my class about it next day, and they clapped warmly; and then, after the lecture, as I was going out, they gave me another round. I stopped and said,—'Oh, is that for Univ. Commission?' 'For you, Doctor!' shouted Miss Moorhead."

The whole matter, as is usual with such things, ran a leisurely course, for on April 27th, 1892, she writes again,

"... I had one very amusing experience on Monday. The Scottish Universities Commission has been issuing some 'Ordinances' to which serious objections are taken, and among others a flaw has been found in the Women's Ordinance, which we want to have remedied. All the objecting bodies were to meet together, so Dr. Balfour and I were summoned by enclosed solemn document to appear to represent our School, and it *was* amusing to find myself an invited delegate, at whose entrance the Chairman rose and came forward with outstretched hand, in the awful University Court Room, where our case had over and over again been tried by a hostile authority, and lost, without an opportunity for a word in our own defence.

Sir Robert Christison looked down from the wall, and it made me almost chuckle to think what *he* would have said!

Sic transit! *How* the world moves!

I have just heard this morning of a legacy of £100 for our Hospital, and probably something for the School, though (from vague wording) that is less certain."

At this time the great hope—as so often in the past—lay in the direction of the University of St. Andrews, but the hope proved illusory once more. In reading the history, one feels again and again as if St. Andrews University had been surrounded by some strange magic circle, for it happened on numberless occasions that when everything seemed settled, and every difficulty had been laboriously overcome, some unsuspected link in the chain gave way, and endless exertion was rendered null and void. So it seems to have happened now, for in June 1894 we find S. J.-B. writing again to Miss Du Pre:

“ I have been desperately busy this week, chiefly at the University or with University people, as circumstances have led to my very suddenly applying to have our School recognized by the [Edinburgh] University Court, which really seems possible, Calderwood and Watson both being members of it. The story is a long one, arising out of complications at St. Andrews.

I enclose a copy of my Memorial,—please return it. It comes up tomorrow before the Court.

Watson said so very kindly that he hoped it would pass, if only that I might have rest from my long labours,—wasn't it sweet of him? A quarter of a century is a long time ! ”

So the old warrior gathered herself together once more and made a last appeal to the University Court of her own Alma Mater to grant to other women the privilege that could never now be her own. She reminded them that in 1869 the same Court had conceded the principle of admitting women to graduation in medicine, that that principle had never been disallowed by them, and that the problem of its practical accomplishment had been under the consideration of the Court ever since.

It cannot be said that hope ran high even now. It had always been a saying among Scottish students that Edinburgh would be the last stronghold to yield; but the tide everywhere was on the turn. After full consideration of the subject, the Court rose nobly to the spirit of the resolution passed by their predecessors in 1869, and in October 1894 made public their determination to admit women forthwith to graduation in medicine

The National Association for Promoting the Medical Education of Women, which had done such excellent service after its foundation in 1871, had for some years ceased to exist; “ At the present time many of its members had passed away, and others were widely scattered, but it seemed desirable to those women who had always been members of it, and who were still resident in Edinburgh, that some congratulation should be offered by them to Dr. Jex-Blake, for the great victory that had been achieved by her in the opening of the degrees of the University of Edinburgh to women after a struggle extending over exactly five-and-twenty

years.”<sup>1</sup> So on Saturday, November 3rd, 1894, these honourable women met together and presented the following address :

“ We, the undersigned, women members of the original National Association for the Medical Education of Women, resident at this time in Edinburgh, desire to offer to you our warm and hearty congratulations on the brilliant success you have achieved in securing the opening of the Edinburgh University medical examinations and degrees to women students. We know that it was largely due to your great ability and knowledge that the enabling Bill of 1876 was passed, which put it into the power, if they so willed, of each of the nineteen examining bodies of the United Kingdom to admit women to qualifying examinations, and which was the foundation of the success on which we congratulate you to-day. Many who worked with and under you in the old days have passed away. We who are left take this opportunity of expressing to you our appreciation of the great sacrifice you have made of time, and strength, and money, to win for younger women in their own country a complete medical education crowned by a degree. To have done this in Edinburgh we regard as a success of which you may be justly proud. (*Signed*)—Elizabeth Pease Nichol, Anne H. Calderwood, Grant A. Millar, Flora C. Stevenson, Phœbe Blyth, Sarah E. Siddons Mair, Emily Hodgson, Charlotte Geddes, Agnes Craig, Anne B. Foster, Hannah Lorimer, M. G. Paton, Priscilla Bright M'Laren, Elizabeth Stuart Blackie, Elisa Carlile Stevenson, Mina Kunz, C. M. Charteris, Margaret Wyld, Eliza Wigham, Jessie M. Wellstood, Euphemia Millar, Eliza Scott Kirkland, Maggie A. Rose, Augusta G. Wyld, Helen Brown, A. A. Skelton, C. M. Edington, A. Edington, Amelia R. Hill, Mary Burton, Louisa Stevenson.—*9th October, 1894.*”

Before leaving the subject of S. J.-B.'s active life in Edinburgh, it may be well to sum up some of her main characteristics as a doctor and as a citizen, though to a great extent these have already become evident.

First, was her great deftness in any kind of manipulation. It was interesting to see her outshine in this respect so many of the trig and dainty women who at one time or another, worked under her.

Second, was her readiness in emergency. The grass never grew under her feet. It is on record that she had finished some minor operation before her anaesthetist knew that she

<sup>1</sup>The quotation is from Miss Louisa Stevenson's speech in presenting the address.

had begun. An amusing instance of her readiness occurs in a chance episode with her carriage-builder. It was not unusual for her to have little rubs with this man. He and his subordinates had difficulty in living up to her ideas of punctuality, and no doubt they considered her a bit of a nuisance.

One day she called to remonstrate about something and found "the Governor" in great distress from a splinter of steel which had become imbedded in his eye.

"I'll take it out for you," she said, and, turning to the men, added, "Bring a chair."

The chair was placed by her direction in the best light obtainable, *i.e.* on the gallery surrounding the carriage yard, in full view of the men and horses below. She made the patient sit down, and, standing behind him, produced a surgical needle from her instrument case and with its curved convex edge deftly removed the splinter.

It was all done in the twinkling of an eye. Very simple, but very characteristic.

And it would have been awkward if she had failed.

Third, was her refusal to let a patient die. No doctor wishes to lose a case, but with S. J.-B. it was a matter of definite personal struggle.

One day in the comparatively early days of practice, she came in very late to lunch, having been urgently detained with a private patient. She was anxious about a case in her little hospital—a surgical case which had developed medical complications—and she sent a messenger down for news.

"Just sinking," was the pencilled reply from the resident. Dr. — and Dr. — [the consultants] have been here, and have given her up. We have ceased to worry her with food."

"*Ceased to worry her with food!*" One saw the summer lightnings on S. J.-B.'s forehead. "Tell Charles to bring the brougham round immediately." Within half an hour the beef-tea was being administered by her own hand; and there was no more talk of "not worrying the patient with food." She was worried until she not only rallied, but got her foot on to the ladder of a slow and sure recovery, a recovery that

meant just everything to the husband and children who were anxiously awaiting the mother's return to the little home.

As a neighbour and citizen S. J.-B. had certain outstanding *qualités*, which, with their corresponding *défauts*, have never tended to make the possessor of them universally popular. She considered it a public duty to uphold as far as lay in one person's power the general standard of proper behaviour and efficiency in the community. She had no use for sluggards and shirkers. "Here's the Doctor,—mind yersel'!" a cabman was heard to say when he and a gossiping mate had allowed their vehicles to sprawl right across the highroad just as the familiar pony-chaise came in sight. No postal service ever deteriorated in her vicinity. If lesser officials failed to listen, she appealed to the Postmaster-General, and she accomplished many minor reforms by which her neighbours profited as much as she did herself. Assuredly she was no grumbler, but she considered that those who make it their aim to slip smoothly through life, leaving to others all the irksome work of protesting, are—to say the least—acting an unheroic part. She agreed that all things come to him who waits,—and come through the exertions of those who have not been content merely to wait. The callow upstart official was apt to fare badly at her hands, but if the official happened to be an elderly woman at—say—some isolated country post office, one saw S. J.-B. at her best. She would steer the way gently and patiently through some simple transaction that seemed involved enough in those wilds; and, if she was met by a flash of interest and intelligence, her appreciation was great. "Why we'll make you Postmaster-General!" she has been heard to say, leaving a beaming face behind her as she gathered up the reins and drove away,—a visitant indeed from another world.



## CHAPTER VI

### DRIVING TOURS. ANIMAL FRIENDS

ALL through the years of work and conflict, S. J.-B. had looked forward to her "Sabbatical year," when, with a clear conscience, she could retire from active life, and share with others the rest and seclusion she longed for. As early as 1892 she had written to a cousin in New Zealand about a visit from her brother, who had been examining at Fettes :

"Today he is gone south again. His life at Wells must be very quiet and restful after the hard work of Rugby.

I am beginning to think that I must soon wind up my work and rest. I have worked about as hard as anybody could for more than thirty years, and I think I have almost done my share. There are young people coming up now to do the medical work,—we have about 130 women on the British Register,—in 1865 when I began to work there was only *one* !"

Some months later she seems to have written in the same vein to the old aunt in Norfolk, for Mrs. Gunton replies in a holograph letter of four beautifully-written pages :

"You must not talk of being tired with your occupation at *present*. Consider what a *chicken* you are ! On the 11th of November I was 93."

How difficult to find any ground of comparison between those two lives, grown on the same stock, the one of 52 and the other of 93 !

The opening of the University degrees to women cleared the ground a good deal, but there were still three great difficulties in the way of retirement. The first was the Hospital.

S. J.-B. was aware, as she had written to Dr. Pechey that it "never would develop in her tired hands," but before passing it over to her juniors, she was anxious to use her name and influence for all they were worth in the way of raising money to constitute a small endowment, and justify building, or at least a removal to larger premises, "The one thing that I do long for still," she wrote, "is to see a thoroughly good Women's Hospital officered by women established in Edinburgh."

On the whole it was hard work. She wrote many letters in vain, but, little by little, she gathered a few thousands: and there were, as usual, some pleasant surprises by the way. Her old friend, Mrs. Arthur, when asked for £100, promptly responded with a cheque for £500, and some of those who gave little gave with a few words of gratitude and appreciation that lifted the gift quite out of the region of shillings and pounds.

A greater obstacle, perhaps, than the Hospital was the sheer difficulty of winding up and getting away. S. J.-B. had begun life as an early Victorian girl with an exceptionally strong hereditary tendency to store and treasure all sorts of things great and small. Almost in the twinkling of an eye she became a modern woman with a correspondence that ran to dozens—sometimes hundreds—of letters in a day,—a modern woman with no leisure at all for the always distasteful work of weeding out and destroying. She was always giving, but she never seemed to give away the things of which she would be well rid. Moreover she always did things on a massive, great-spirited scale. If a number of copies of any document were wanted, it was better to get it printed,—and, if you were getting it printed, it was safer and cheaper to get 500 or 1000 copies while the type was up. You never knew how important that particular document might become. If any article was nearly worn out, buy a new one by all means,—but keep the old one too in case the new one should break down.

And so it came about that in her roomy old house, with its spacious attics and cellars, things were stored and stacked and forgotten until their volume was almost incredible to those who had not seen it.

And finally there was the great question where to settle. She never lost her love for Edinburgh, and she was often tempted to choose a house on the outskirts. On the other hand, she had always dreamed of growing figs and peaches on a sunny south wall in her beloved native county of Sussex: and how was she to find just the right house in Sussex? So the time slipped away, and she had one illness after another, and it often seemed to those nearest her as if the Sabbatical year would be spent on the other Side of the River.

She took holidays more and more frequently, however, and rejoiced increasingly in the work of those who took her place. "My daughters," "my girls," "my young doctors,"—how proudly she used to say it! Her face the day five of them were "capped" at the University was a thing to be seen. And if she was an absolutely un-self-sparing worker, she knew better than most how to make holiday; indeed her holidays were as characteristic as everything else she did and was. She hated publicity, hated the noise and bustle of trains, so a driving-tour was her ideal of happiness and refreshment. Her chaise had been specially built for the purpose; with space in front of the dash-board to accommodate two small valises, abundant room under the seats, and other incidental conveniences that one only discovered by degrees. Little by little she had made a fine art of her preparations. The list of compact necessaries was always at hand, and the so-called "work-box" alone contained in a condensed form resources for emergencies of all descriptions. The groom had his own kit behind, and woe betide him if his tools were not at hand when a shoe came loose or a nut needed screwing up.

The strain of packing was apt to be considerable for everyone concerned, and it lasted for the first mile or two of the journey. Then gradually it melted away. She would draw a deep breath and give herself up to the delightful sense of freedom. "Oh, isn't it good to be away!" "It seemed yesterday as if we never should get off."

She always elected to go for the first night or two, if possible, to an inn she knew. She asked so little, but it had to be just the particular little that she wanted. No "much" could take the place of that.

“Thank you, that is very nice,” she would say breezily, after surveying the rooms in some unknown inn where she hoped to stay for more than a night. “Now will you open the windows, and give us both some more towels and one or two little tables, and take away the ornaments in the sitting-room. We want room for our books.”

Sometimes the people were aghast, but much, much more often they entered into the spirit of the thing and gave her just what she wanted. She had a great knack of carrying them with her. She was so easy-going in most ways, “because of course,” as she used to explain, “one is not responsible for inn servants as one is for one’s own.” And some few inns became to her a real haven of refuge,—Rumbling Bridge, under old Mrs. Macara; Fortingal, in the old days, under Mr. and Mrs. Menzies; and—above all latterly—(under Mrs. Beattie), her beloved Gordon Arms at Yarrow where she and Miss Du Pre had perforce taken refuge one day in a storm, little thinking what a sanctuary it was often to prove.

“Yarrow, with all its snows and storms, has answered splendidly for both of us,” she writes to Miss Du Pre in April 1896, “and we shall return on Saturday much refreshed and strengthened. I have been walking a good deal as well as driving. There seems something specially restful about this country,—and this inn is as good as old Fortingal, in rather a different way.”

The showy inn where one got no real comforts and where the cooking was bad, was of course the object of her special detestation.

Many times she drove all over Perthshire; she went as far north as Loch Maree, and, on one occasion at least, she drove all the way from Brighton to Edinburgh arriving, by the way, to find a patient on the door-step, and that patient a dowager countess! As a rule the horse and chaise were put on the train from Carlisle to Rugby.

And the woods and hills seemed the very home of her spirit. More than anything else they brought the poetry to her lips,—Whittier’s *My Psalm* very frequently in later years,—she did so love those “robes of praise”—and his *Autograph* too,—

“Hater of din and riot,  
He lived in days unquiet—”

But always most frequently of all, perhaps, Mrs. Browning's couplet,—

“ The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number,  
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.”

Of course there were hardships to be faced too,—as one reckoned hardships in those days! Often the rain came down in sheets when one was half way across a shelterless mountain pass; or one drove unexpectedly into deeper and deeper snow till it even happened that the groom had to borrow a spade from a neighbouring cottage, and dig a way out of the drift. Not infrequently night came on before a suitable inn had been found,—for it is by no means every country inn that has stabling,—let alone a lock-up coach-house,—and one drove mile after mile with a tired horse and diminishing hopes.

In all such minor emergencies the indomitable spirit rose to meet the occasion. One well nigh forgot the ageing woman and saw only the gallant-hearted boy. She loved driving across a ford, though in some of the Highland rivers it is highly desirable, if not necessary, to know the lie of the ground beneath, and to choose just the right *détour* or zig-zag.

In the neighbourhood of Woking one day when the floods were out, she stopped to ask the way, and was informed that the route she proposed to take was under water and dangerous. It would have been awkward to change plans at that stage, so S. J.-B. drove on, though the water gradually rose above the axles.

Presently a meek voice was heard from the groom behind. “ He said it was dangerous.” But S. J.-B. did not hear.

She was never foolhardy, but she did love the off-chance of an adventure, and there would have been danger often if her nerve had given way, or if she had not had a thorough understanding with her horse. In the moment of emergency one saw what excellent comrades they were. She knew how to get the last ounce of pluck and endurance out of him in case of need.

It was all made up to him when the strain was over! That hot mash on reaching the inn was the first thing thought of,

and on a trying day there was always a snack of some sort for the groom before the inn was reached, so that the thought of his own supper might not bulk *too* largely in his general view of life and duty.

She was the friend of all her horses, and was never happy with one that failed to respond. Blinkers and bearing-reins were an abomination to her. She even objected to brass, and refused to use the smart be-crested harness that came to her from her father's stable.

Her first favourite was White Angel, a pony. Professor Wilson had helped her to choose him for a driving-tour in her student days. She hired him several times and finally bought him. When she was at Berne for her degree, he lived in her Mother's stable at Brighton. "Angel and Turk send their duty," Mrs. Jex-Blake used to write. "Master Turk says, 'Very dull Christmas without Missis. He don't think much of Switzerland.'"

White Angel was badly named,—he was a lovable creature, but far more of a sprite than an angel. There was never any harm in his mischief, and she used to recount his pranks with the greatest delight. Above all things he hated to be beaten. Going up Corstorphine Hill, he would not allow even a pair of horses to pass him. He would allow them to come close up, and then he would throw up his heels and race to the top as if the chaise had been a nut-shell. And she enjoyed his spirit far too much to check him.

He continued this practice up to a period of life when most creatures place comfort above such expensive luxuries; but there came a time when he had to give in. Then, as he heard younger hoofs gaining on him, he would turn his head with great dignity and look the other way, refusing to see that he was being outdone.

Very early in the days of practice, Blackbird came to reinforce him, replacing a smarter, more troublesome horse whom S. J.-B. passed on to Dr. Pechey: and on the whole Blackbird was her dearest horse friend. He was such a gentleman, so willing to coöperate with her, and if necessary to exert himself only too much on those occasional long days in the Highlands. She never could see that he was growing

old and ceasing to be a credit to her,—indeed she seldom could see that of anything she had cared for. No flower that had brightened her writing-table was allowed to spend its last hour on an ash-heap. So Blackbird remained king of the stable, doing an occasional easy job, till the remonstrances of S. J.-B.'s friends prevailed against even that, and he was lent to a farmer friend to fill an easy place in the country.

Everyone meant well and kindly, but the farmer lent him after a time to a less soft-hearted dairyman, and one day when S. J.-B. went out to visit her old friend, she found him rheumatic and broken-kneed and lean. She said scarcely a word, but asked to be left with him in the stable. She had taken out a feed of beans, Blackbird's special weakness, and she gave him the feeding-bag herself,—then put her arms round his neck and sobbed.

A day or two later Blackbird went to whatever place is reserved for such good and faithful friends.

There was Austral, too, the favourite of her later years,—a gentleman in every sense of the word,—his father and mother both in the Australian stud-book. The father was Oxford, the mother Uproarious, and the colt had been cleverly named Undergraduate. It was S. J.-B. who changed his name: she probably thought it inappropriate to a horse of eight or nine years; and indeed it was a word that for her was too full of associations.

No other animal came anywhere near horses in her estimation. Cats she disliked. In the old student days she had gone to see Miss Pechey at the home of the lady whose children were fortunate enough to have her for their governess. In the course of dinner, a spoiled and cherished family cat leapt gently on to the table, coming between S. J.-B. and the person to whom she was talking. Without stopping to think, S. J.-B. put out her arm and brushed the cat on to the floor.

When, some thirty years later, she was recalling how she had wondered whether so pretty a girl as Miss Pechey *could* have nerve enough to study medicine, and how she had been informed by one who knew that the pretty girl was "calm as an ox," Mrs. Pechey Phipson grimly intervened,—“I assure

you I was anything but calm when you swept that cat on to the floor ! ”

S. J.-B. laughed. And her laugh was a thing to hear,—especially when the old jokes and the old stories were recalled,—a hearty musical laugh that brought such wholesome tears to her eyes, and that would not allow her face to set into really tragic lines.

But there is something more to be said about her dislike to cats. After lunch at Bruntsfield Lodge, it was her custom to gather up the bits of bread that were left and take them out to the lawn to feed the birds. She loved to see the creatures flying towards her the moment she appeared, and no cat was ever tolerated in the grounds.

One evening in early summer, when she came in from her work to a high-walled garden all shimmering with promise, a half-grown kitten stood in the way. “Shoo !” said S. J.-B. “Go away ! Who allowed that cat to be here ? ”

Everyone trembled,—except the little intruder. It looked S. J.-B. full in the face, and held its ground.

Of course it was turned out, but a few days later she saw it in the same place, leaping at a moth in the sunshine. And that time nothing was said.

And a few days later still, when she had passed beyond the garden into the house, the kitten walked forward to meet her. This really was too much ; but when she protested, the kitten simply looked in her face and smiled.

So it was allowed to remain under due restrictions, until one night S. J.-B. was awakened by a loud sneeze. She struck a light, and there, on the shoulder of the sofa at the foot of her bed, calmly reposing on a big woollen shawl, with its eyes fixed on her in gentle protest against the open window, was the kitten.

It was simply uncanny. Of course it was only a kitten, but to S. J.-B. it was always more. “It must have known me in a previous incarnation,” she said. So she called it Karma, and before many days were over it was a favoured and lovable member of the household, taking all sorts of liberties in the most attractive way, and even lying unforbidden on her lap. “Li'l cat !” she used to say affectionately.



There is one more animal friend worth recalling, though pedigree and admirers he had none,—the Nameless Dog at Bordighera.

S. J.-B. had gone to Bordighera in the winter of 1897-98 with a friend who had been ill, and greatly did she enjoy the almost unfailing sunshine. She seldom made acquaintances under such conditions, but two delightful Irish ladies proved irresistible, and a pleasant *partie carrée* was the result. Every day S. J.-B. used to walk with one or other of her friends through the unlovely main street and sit for hours on the rocks at the Cap, watching the waves tumbling about on that fine bit of coast.

One day, in passing through the somewhat squalid town, she was stopped by a brawl among a few dogs,—a poor half-starved pariah was being set upon and robbed of some morsel it had contrived to pick up. Never was a more unwholesome-looking object than that dog,—with a coat utterly out of condition,—wounds in every stage of refusal to heal,—and an eye so mauled and battered that only a sanguine prognosis could have associated it with the idea of any special function in the future. The poor wretch showed no fight, but slunk away as soon as its tormentors would let it go,—a pitiful craven, utterly beaten in the struggle for life.

Next day it was seen again, slinking about in some bye-way, afraid of everyone who came near. Of course S. J.-B. had a crust in her pocket, and of course the dog got that crust, in spite of rivals and in spite of its own groundless fears. Next day it was looking out, and from that day the crust never failed. Little by little the natural vitality of the creature began to gain ground; he became something like a dog, and able to hold his own. His wounds healed, and he soon could forage a bit for himself; but he never forgot to look out for S. J.-B., and he never refused her crust. He began to walk with her to the Cap, and to lie at a respectful distance till she was ready to go home.

One day when she was confined to the house, he appeared on the steps of the hotel. The waiter of course gave him a greeting that in former times would have driven him well on the road to San Remo; but now he held his ground. "What

on earth does he want?" said the man. "Oh," said one of the others, "it's Miss Blake's dog." At that moment S. J.-B. came downstairs to *déjeuner*. She fetched him half her roll from the dining-room, and the waiters might grumble as they pleased.

From that time the dog formally constituted himself her body-guard, and quite a creditable body-guard he was, with two good keen eyes always on the look-out, and a coat worth wearing. He had positively acquired a "presence." He waited for her every day at the hotel gate, and he walked proudly in front of her to the Cap. No other dog dared to come near. No beggar ventured to molest. The very purveyors of inlaid jewellery had to keep their distance.

At last—just before she left the Riviera—the Nameless Dog secured a large bit of strongly smelling fish. There would have been a free fight for it in the early days, but no other dog disputed his possession of it now. He can't have been overfed, poor fellow, even then; but he brought his coveted trophy to S. J.-B. in triumph, and laid it at her feet.

I am afraid he missed her horribly, and of course she could not explain to him and say Goodbye,—as no doubt she did to Blackbird. But she left behind a creature able to stand on his own legs, and show a brave face to the world: I am not sure that she didn't leave behind the germ of a soul.

And, while this little story is scrupulously true, it tells in a humble parable many episodes in the life of S. J.-B. that were known to very few.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SABBATICAL YEAR

It was that winter at Bordighera that gave her strength and energy for the final uprooting. The autumn of 1898-99 was spent on a driving tour of 1100 miles through the S.E. counties of England in search of a suitable house. She set about the search in her usual business-like way,—pasting into a book all the likely houses from the agents' lists, rejecting at a sweep all within ten miles of London, all above or below a certain price and acreage, all that fell short of the desired level above the sea, all that were in a town, or that advertised their proximity to a railway station. The tour was then planned to include as many as possible of those that remained.

There were a few unusual disqualifications. One house that attracted her belonged to the Rector of the parish, who refused to let to a Roman Catholic or a dissenter, and, although S. J.-B. was neither, she did not wish to be subjected to any test. Another house—more strangely still—was only to be let to someone who would carry on the evangelistic meetings in an out-building. "What if I were to take the house and preach Buddhism?" she said.

Finally she decided on the house which she afterwards named Windydene, near the village of Mark Cross, on the Forest Ridge of Sussex, some five or six miles south of Tunbridge Wells. "It is neither a new or an old house," she wrote to her friend, Miss Keily,—“built probably some 50 years ago,—very comfortable and airy, and with pleasant garden and shrubberies, a good kitchen garden

(much neglected of late) and about 8 acres for pasture and hay."

Having put various negotiations and alterations in train, she returned to Edinburgh for the final winding-up.

And there was much in those last months that lingered pleasantly in her memory. In June 1898 the British Medical Association had met in Edinburgh, and S. J.-B., like most other doctors, had kept open house. Some thirty medical women were present at the meeting, and, before it broke up, Dr. Jane Walker organized a dinner under the presidency of the old Edinburgh pioneer. Mrs. Garrett Anderson and Mrs. Scharlieb were among the guests. As always, S. J.-B. spoke very happily, and a number of those present got for the first time something like a just impression of her personality.

Early in 1899 a Farewell Reception was given in her honour by the Committee of her Hospital, and some happy inspiration made the occasion not only a social success, but a gathering of unique interest. The majority of the large company were in evening dress, but the Dispensary patients were encouraged to look upon the Reception as their affair too, and they came in what dress they had. Moreover, it was no mere "meeting," it was a real "party," with refreshments galore in a side room, and no compulsion to listen to more speeches than one was in a mood for. The Marchioness of Bute, President of the Hospital, who was ill, was represented by one of the Vice-Presidents, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson. Lady Victoria Campbell made a point of being present, as did the Countess of Moray, and many patients, colleagues and allies of all sorts.

It was Professor Masson who moved the resolution of the evening :

"That this company, remembering all that has been done by Dr. Jex-Blake so preëminently for the medical education of women, and for the opening up of the medical profession to women, both here and elsewhere, take this opportunity of congratulating her on the present evidence of the success everywhere of the cause which owes so much to her powerful initiation and persevering advocacy ; and regrets that the occasion should also be one of farewell."

Dr. Balfour felt inclined, he said, to quote the words of the old song :

“ Dost thou remember, comrade old and hoary,  
The days we fought and conquered side by side  
On fields of battle, famous now in story ? ”

He indicated apologetically that the words were not wholly appropriate, but S. J.-B. speedily set his mind at rest on that score. She felt old and hoary enough.

Dr. Peel Ritchie recalled how he had begun to help the women students simply from love of fair play, with no enthusiasm at all for the cause, but how he had been gradually worked up to a warmer feeling and interest ; and Dr. (afterwards Sir John) Sibbald confessed that he had taken no part in the old conflict at all ; but acknowledged gladly that his original dislike to the whole thing had gradually given way as he had watched the life of the protagonist, with increasing admiration, appreciation and . . . ”

At that fine silence he left it.

A bouquet of roses was presented by Dr. Jessie Macgregor, one of the most brilliant of S. J.-B.'s students ; and a basket of flowers by Winifred Beilby, daughter of a lady who had been a member of Committee for many years, and a patient from the first.

Yes, it was a great send-off, and S. J.-B. was simple-hearted enough to enjoy it all like a child.

There were other tokens of recognition too,—among them a presentation from a great number of women doctors, and another from the Dispensary patients.

There is no doubt that Dr. Sibbald voiced the opinion of many in his tribute to S. J.-B. For years she had lived among the Edinburgh people, driving about in her quiet brougham or unpretentious pony-chaise, and retiring to the high-walled garden. In a way they could not but get to know her. They might like or dislike her, but she went on her way, doing her work absolutely without ostentation, welcoming publicity when it seemed likely to forward her aims or the welfare of the community, shunning it absolutely as a matter of private taste.

With most of these whose opinion was worth having, opposition and dislike were simply worn down. She was impulsive, she made mistakes and would do so to the end of her life: her naturally hasty temper and imperious disposition had been chastened indeed, but the chastening fire had been far too fierce to produce perfection. She held out at times about trifles,—failed to see that they *were* trifles—and at times she terrified people more than she knew. Above all she cared nothing for the praise and blame of any but those whom she respected or loved. Of her indeed it might be said that she heard the beat of a different drummer. But there was another side to the picture after all. Many of those who regretted and criticised details were yet forced to bow before the big transparent honesty, the fine unflinching consistency, of her life.

“ Yes, it was simply greatness,  
 There was nothing else I could say,  
 I had hedged my path more straitly,  
 But [hers] was the kinglier way.”

It remains only to give some picture of S. J.-B.'s life in retirement. Dr. Clouston had shaken his head when he heard what she proposed to do. It was a great risk to give up a life packed with work and interest for one of leisure.

“ I am not going to be idle,” she had said. “ I am going to farm.”

“ Then you'll lose a lot of money.”

“ I can't lose much on ten acres.”

“ *Ah!* ” He seemed to indicate that ten acres was not enough; but as a matter of fact S. J.-B. reaped now all the advantage of that love of detail which had so often proved a snare. “ Windydene ” had been unoccupied and more or less neglected for some time, so there was abundant scope for an enterprising “ Squire.” And the situation was as choice as even the county of Sussex can provide. From the terrace one looked right across to the South Downs, and even Fairlight was supposed to be visible on a clear day. The garden had been ideally planned on ground that fell away rather steeply to the south. It had spacious lawns

cunningly planted, some of the trees being of real value and beauty.

Beyond the lawns were shady paths and all sort of unexpected openings and surprises ; and beyond these again were the meadows hedged with blackberries, and carpeted in spring with cowslip and ladies' smock. From the meadows one passed through to the woods, and so to the whole billowy stretch of the Weald, with its varied foliage, its blue lights and chasing shadows, its lakes of white mist in the still summer mornings.

S. J.-B. had seen the place first in November. She actually took possession in May, when the red chestnuts were in bloom and the woods full of bluebells.

" 'The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places' ;" she said, " 'I have a goodly heritage' ;" and the words were constantly on her lips till the end. Kipling's "Sussex by the Sea" might have been written for her, so gratefully did she take possession of it.

" Each to his choice, and I rejoice  
The lot has fallen to me  
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—  
Yea, Sussex by the sea ! "

Her first care was to institute a fruit garden, building a south wall and planting vines, figs, peaches, nectarines and apricots. In the course of a few years her strawberries in particular had acquired quite a reputation.

She started a dairy too, and supervised it herself. It was a real joy to her to have cows in the paddock and to produce her own cream and butter. The hay-making and the harvest supper were great events in the year.

But long before she had got as far as this—before the house was more than tolerably straight after the great flitting—she was inviting guests to share the joys of the spring and summer. All through the later years of her life she had the intimate daily companionship she prized so generously, but her doors stood open always as of old. "Windydene is a Mecca," one of the younger medical women said, and there were those to whom it was a Mecca and something more. From S. J.-B.'s old fellow-students down to some unknown girl graduate, they came from all parts of the world. We

have seen what Dr. Lillie Saville thought of life at Windydene, and indeed Lady Jenkinson's "soul and body, especially soul" often finds an echo. A woman doctor who met S. J.-B. first at that British Medical Association dinner in Edinburgh writes years later :

"Thinking it over, I see that the best new influence that came into my life during the last seven years was the Doctor's young fresh interest, her enthusiasm, her breadth of mind, her spiritual force and faith, and her strong original wisdom."

But it was not only women doctors who came. Literary folk were guests too, and, above all, the old friends, whatever they had chanced to become. Miss Du Pre, Lady Jenkinson, Miss Catharine Elliott-Lockhart, Miss E. Cordery, Mrs. Gardiner, Mr. James Cordery, Mr. Phipson and Dr. Pechey Phipson, Mrs. (Dr.) Mears, and many others. The arrival of Dr. Agnes M'Laren from her season's practice on the Riviera was one of the events of the early summer ; she always came by Newhaven and so to Crowborough, where S. J.-B. faithfully awaited her. A still earlier event in the year was the arrival of Miss Caroline Jex-Blake, "when the primroses were out," and her joy in the meadows and woods was a thing that only those who knew her could conceive.

Little enough entertainment in the ordinary sense was offered to the guests at any time. Breakfast in bed was an unfailing institution for tired workers, and most of the guests were tired workers. There was fruit and cream to heart's content and beyond it ; there were long leisurely drives uphill and down dale through that beautiful country,<sup>1</sup>—plenty of chess for those who were worthy of chess,—unforgettable evenings round the study fire ; and at all other times—stated meals apart—an almost unlimited choice of books,—and liberty to do as one pleased.

S. J.-B. used to say that her one extravagance at Windydene was journals and books. She had always been a book buyer, and books were more essential than ever now. New shelves had to be put up every year or so. Her collection of recent

<sup>1</sup>"I took her to see the pixies," writes S. J.-B. to a friend, in June, "I don't think she did see any, but she greatly enjoyed the woods, etc."



novels alone induced a well-known publisher to say that she ought to have a testimonial from authors and publishers. There was a certain amount of practical benevolence in this. In Edinburgh she had often said that an important part of her treatment of patients was the lending of suitable novels, and at Windydene she often had twenty or thirty books out at a time. Her taste was catholic in the extreme, but she specially appreciated among others *Peter Ibbetson*, *San Celestino* and *Out of Due Time*; and—like so many distinguished people—she keenly enjoyed detective stories, especially for reading in the watches of the night.

She had lost none of her love of poetry. The "poetry book-case" had an honoured place as of old; but, as she sat in her big chair by the fire, she had a revolving stand filled with special favourites within reach of her right hand, and, on her left (in the angle of the chimney-piece) a tiny set of shelves brought from the corresponding nook in her Edinburgh consulting room, contained her Mother's Bible and a few other chosen friends.

But the range of her purchases during those later years was very wide: almost at random one recalls Blomefield's *Norfolk*, all Father Tyrrell's works, a whole library of books on social problems,—industry, poverty, labour, etc.—and a fine copy of *The Book of the Dead*.

She retained her old interest in what one may call the polemics of religion, and this was intensified by a delightful and unexpected friendship of those later days.

She had not been many weeks in Mark Cross before some mutual friend suggested that she might care to know the Roman Catholic priest—a man, as it chanced, of scholarship and culture—following up the suggestion with the loan of a book which the priest had published some years before.<sup>1</sup> A few days later S. J.-B. wrote the following letter:

DEAR SIR,

" June 15th [1899].

I have been reading your book on Reunion with very great sympathy and admiration; and, if you care to call on an elderly

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<sup>1</sup> *Steps towards Reunion*. The book had been put on the Index Expurgatorius.

woman who is not of your creed, I should be very glad to have the honour of making your acquaintance.

I expect to be at home tomorrow afternoon, or could fix any day except Monday, next week, if more convenient to you.

Yours truly,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE, M.D.

Rev. Father Duggan."

It did not strike the looker-on as a specially likely combination, but it was the unlikely thing that happened. The Revd. Father Duggan became one of the most welcome guests at Windydene. He and his dog, Caesar, used to drop in almost every Sunday afternoon for strawberries on the lawn or tea round the study fire. I don't pretend that Caesar took any interest in the strawberries—possible rabbits were a more absorbing subject—but he did enjoy his bowl of tea, especially when a lump of sugar remained at the bottom as a *bonne bouche*. He was the centre of interest when his turn came, and, when the anticipated "crunch" was heard, the general laugh of sympathy never failed. They were just happy children together,—the Dog, the Reverend Father and the old Pioneer, and now the world is the poorer for the loss of all three.

There were great talks on those Sunday afternoons; it was no uncommon thing to see three versions of the Bible and half a dozen volumes of the *Encyclopaedia* lying about at the end to witness to the interest of the discussion. There was much borrowing and lending of books,—and no obvious change of view on the part of anyone except in the direction of increased tolerance and brotherly kindness. A very simple anecdote will give as good an idea as any of the nature of the friendship.

Father Duggan had been the lender of Canon Cheyne's *Commentary on the Psalms*, which he had just reviewed for a daily paper.

"I won't pretend that I read the whole of it," said S. J.-B. in returning the volumes. "In fact"—with a sparkle of mischief,—"I noticed when it came that only about a quarter of the leaves were cut."

"Yes," he admitted tranquilly. "I did think of cutting a few more before sending it up to you,—but I didn't."

"Ah, no!" she said. "You were an honest man."

She was on excellent terms, too, with the local doctors: they looked forward to a chat when they met her in the country lanes, and, if, when she left Edinburgh, there had been any hatchet left to bury, their boyish camaraderie would soon have compelled her to bury it. "I confess I had a prejudice against women doctors," one of them said after her death, "but she disarmed me completely."

The life at Windydene was not unbroken. The clay soil in that wooded garden was not conducive to the health of a rheumatic person like S. J.-B., so several brief winters were spent at various places on the Riviera, and one in Portugal, mainly in the Sacred Forest at Bussaco. At Carqueiranne in Provence one of the editors of the *Matin* was a fellow guest, and he proved another unexpected comrade. It must have been a matter of some surprise to him to meet in that unlikely place, an elderly English gentlewoman with a grasp of the range of European politics and a facility for discussing it in excellent French.

It was at Carqueiranne that she and the intimate friend of those days met Mr. Frederic Myers and Professor William James, and here too there was a pleasant *partie carrée* for some days with Professor and Mrs. Gardiner who were on a cycling tour in the south of France. Professor Gardiner had several times been S. J.-B.'s guest in Edinburgh, when his researches brought him north to inspect some unique document among the archives there, and it was a pleasant change to meet when both were in purely holiday mood.

In the late Autumn of 1909—in spite of increasing physical disqualifications—she made a last driving tour to her beloved Yarrow.

It is needless to say that she never lost her interest in the happenings of the world. She had latterly a profound distrust of Germany, and was an eager reader of the articles on this subject in the *National Review*. *The Riddle of the Sands* was a novel that she helped to circulate widely. Her name appeared pretty frequently in the correspondence columns of the *Times*, sometimes in connection with Woman Suffrage, more often in unavailing protest against the endless

“joy-riding”—degenerating into the sheer lawlessness of the “road-hog”—that was making the loveliest English lanes a nightmare of dust and danger.

It was to the *Times*, too, that she sent her last tribute to the most heroic of her Edinburgh friends in the old days of the “fight.”

SIR,—It seems impossible to let the grave close over the mortal remains of Professor Masson without one word of heartfelt gratitude from those whom he befriended so nobly in 1869 and the following years. Our struggle with the University was hard enough as it was, but without his help and that of half a dozen other men it would have been impracticable. I feel that it is really quite impossible to do justice to the chivalry, the unselfishness, the constant readiness to espouse the unpopular cause, and to fight in its foremost ranks, which characterized Professor Masson, and it would take far too much of your space to say even a fraction of what could be said of the aid he gave us in that great battle.

But I beg you at least to allow me to say that those so deeply indebted to him will never forget him, but hold his memory in love and reverence as long as they live.

Yours obediently,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE.

Windydene, Mark Cross, Sussex, Oct. 10 [1907].”

The suffrage movement was always near her heart, though she never grew restless or impatient over the long delay. She never approved of tax-resistance, and militant methods made her uneasy, though she admitted that they had given the cause a prominence that nothing else could have done. Looking back in 1879 on her own fight she had been able to say, “We seemed led all the way; certainly our aim was straight at the end [before us], but ‘highly and holily’ too. I never minded dirt of others’ throwing, but I don’t think I ever smirched my own conscience.” It was in her favour that the Editor of the *Spectator* broke through his stern rule of excluding all letters advocating the extension of the franchise to women. “Our respect for so eminent a lady makes it a pleasure to publish Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake’s letter.”

It was this question of the suffrage, too, as we shall see, that brought her for the last time into touch with Octavia Hill.

S. J.-B.'s outer circle had never suspected her of being "religious," and even by the fireside she spoke less perhaps, rather than more, on the subject as time went on; but the old quotations kept flashing up to witness to the fire beneath. She was always profoundly interested in any genuine profession of faith, any real conversion or perversion. Several of her friends joined the Church of Rome in those later years, and she was one to whom they always felt the need of justifying themselves. They felt sure of an underlying sympathy, however she might disapprove. Often, of course, she declined to take the matter too seriously. To an old student she wrote :

"I am not at all shocked at your Sunday programme, but I must say I am amused at your going to a dissenting chapel."

And again :

"I don't trouble myself much about who goes 'over to Rome' and who does not. After all for each one,—'To his own Master he stands or falls,' and what we must ask of each is to act to the best of his lights.

But I think 'subterfuging' implies dim lights."

Her own attitude grew steadily simpler, enriching the vital elements of her Mother's creed with the wisdom and experience of her own life. As time went on she disliked increasingly to be classed with those whose attitude towards religion is one of indifference. Even before she left Edinburgh she had written to an old school friend, in acknowledgement of a book by another schoolfellow :

"To speak plainly then it strikes me as crude and superficial,—as the work of a person who has caught up passwords rather than of one who has struggled through the conflict of thought personally. It reminds me forcibly of the old proverb, 'Qui pauca considerat facile pronuntiat.' The deeper we go into problems, whether social or religious, the less possible it seems to me to pronounce about them offhand.

In theology you would, I suppose, rank me among the Agnostics, as I feel very strongly how little we *know* on such subjects, and that the truly scientific aspect of mind is one of suspension of judgment; but I have no sympathy at all with C.'s attacks on Christianity and the alleged motives of its advocates, and still less with her estimate of the character of Christ.

The programme of Socialism strikes me (so far as I understand it) as unworkable, because it ignores a great many of the facts of human nature; and I am sure you are right in thinking that the true path of progress lies in gradual improvement, and gradual removal of unjust restrictions, rather than in sudden violence and revolution."

To a much more intimate friend she had written about the same time :

" Yes, I think — is what I should call an Agnostic, but perhaps you from lordly heights of orthodoxy don't appreciate that that differs ' *toto caelo* ' from an atheist; and that it is one of the most offensive of errors,—and one frequently made from culpable carelessness,—to substitute the one for the other."

Her appreciation of the Bible increased—and it had always been an exceptional appreciation;—but there are two quotations that stand out in one's memory as belonging to her in a special sense. She always appropriated to herself with great fervour the prayer of Agur:—" Two things have I required of thee . . . : Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

And more than once, after quoting the words from Isaiah:—" Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones," she added almost under her breath,

" I am not sure that that is not the finest thing in the whole Bible."

But while she was one of those to whom the Old Testament makes perhaps a special appeal, it was not by accident that at the time of her death, and for years previously, the words were fixed above the mantelpiece, both in her study and in her bedroom,—" Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

- Some years before leaving Edinburgh, S. J.-B. had a heart attack which caused Dr. Balfour grave uneasiness, and,

although she rallied in the course of a week, similar attacks kept recurring at considerable intervals. On one occasion at Windydene she was unconscious for several hours, and finally "came out of blackness" to ask with great calmness, "Well, what do you suppose has happened?"

Within a week of this attack she started for the Riviera.

It is probable that she never fully realized the seriousness of these cardiac signs and symptoms; but, in one way or another, death knocked at her door pretty frequently during those later years.

In 1901-2, she suffered from a mysterious and anomalous "growth," for which a leading London surgeon refused to operate on the ground that she was a bad subject. She was not sorry for the refusal, but the enemy grew with appalling rapidity, and it became increasingly clear that something would have to be done. All through the period of uncertainty she went on with her life absolutely as usual. "I did wake up one night in a horror of great darkness," she confessed, "wondering what was going to happen; but very soon Whittier's words came into my mind:

" I know not what the future hath  
Of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death  
His mercy underlies. . . .

I know not where His islands lift  
Their froned palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care."

And then I just turned over on the other side and went to sleep again."

"How thankful we should be," she said on another occasion, "that we don't know what is before us. Life is hard enough, it would be much harder if we knew."

When a friend remarked on her courage, she said,—and this was a remark repeated many times before the end of her life,—"No, no. I have been brave sometimes in my life, but not now. There is nothing to be brave about now."

In response one day to a warmer expression of admiration, she almost cried out in protest,—“*Oh!* . . . God be merciful to me a sinner. That is what one feels more and more.” Then, after a pause :

“ ‘ Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,  
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace—  
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned  
Unto my fitting place.’ ”

Another day she said, “ My life here will not be much longer, but I feel that I have not reached the end. I have learnt a great deal, and I have a great deal still to learn. Unless one has absolutely *refused* to learn, one must get the chance to learn more.”

Her friend quoted Thring. “ My creed is life. Blessed is life the King, etc.”

“ Ah,” she said, “ I don’t know that it will be *better* than this life, but it will give us the chance to learn fresh things.”

It was on that occasion that she looked death in the face while still in full possession of her powers—“ ‘ I laid me down with a will,’ ” she said—; but for the moment the sacrifice was not required of her. When the malady reached a point at which surgical interference was at worst a necessary palliative, she proposed to ask two of her own old students to come and undertake an operation. It was represented to her that it was scarcely fair to put so great a responsibility on them,<sup>1</sup> so she wrote to her friend, Mr. Cathcart of Edinburgh, asking him to come and undertake the case. He came at once, of course, and the operation proved a triumphant success.<sup>2</sup>

So life was given back to her just as she had laid it down, and the remaining years were in some respects the happiest and most peaceful she had known. She renewed her youth, though in truth she had never grown old, and lived more than ever in the life of her “ girls.” She had always said, “ Not me, but us.” Now more and more the “ us ” came

<sup>1</sup> At that time very few women had come into the front rank as surgeons.

<sup>2</sup> Her old fellow student, Dr. Annie Clark, who had graduated with her at Berne, came from Birmingham to give the anaesthetic.



into the centre of her scheme of life. Perhaps her last ambition was that some British University should give her its honorary degree, but her friends only realized this when she had already laid the ambition down. "I shall never have a University hood," she said once or twice quite simply. All the more she enjoyed the glories of the young women doctors who were coming on. She listened to their accounts of what they had learned and of what they had done with an admiration that was nothing short of poignant in its simplicity. Her own share in the whole thing simply dropped out. At most she would say when some gifted visitor was gone, "Wonderful the work she is doing! Well, I did help a little bit once upon a time, didn't I?"

It was when one of her old girls seemed face to face for the first time with that most bitter disappointment in a doctor's experience,—the loss of a patient for whose life one has fought with repeated recrudescence of hope in the teeth of despair,—that S. J.-B. wrote one of her last letters:

" Windydene,  
7 p.m. March 19th. 1911.

DEAR CHILD,

I *am* so sorry for you, and I think of you so much! It is an experience that has to come to all of us who live in our work,—and we must believe 'we shall see in heaven why it could not be otherwise.'

Meanwhile 'the Healer by Gennesaret shall walk thy rounds with thee.'

When it is all over,—for I suppose that is now the end,—I think you should come down here for a few perfectly quiet days. We shall be so glad to have you.

Yours sincerely,

S. J.-B."

There was, of course, one visitor whom she would fain have welcomed to her "pleasant places." She had followed Octavia Hill's life with unflinching interest, and had subscribed to the Derwentwater scheme, and to other of Miss Hill's beneficent works. In July or August 1910 a letter opposing the extension of the suffrage to women appeared in the *Times* above the signature of Octavia Hill. S. J.-B. replied to the

letter, regretting that Miss Hill should have "given the support of her honoured name" to the negative side of the controversy. The *Times* did not often refuse a communication from S. J.-B., but on this occasion her letter was not inserted. Perhaps the trifling episode called up memories too insistent to be stilled, for a day or two later she wrote to her old friend :

" August 5th. 1910.

Windydene, Mark Cross, Sussex.

DEAR,

I wrote enclosed mainly as an answer to yours in the *Times*, and as it has been sent back to me, crowded out, I send it to you,—to show you another old woman's point of view.

I am rheumatic and lame now, and cannot go about much, but I wish you would come down and spend two or three days with me here on the Sussex hills, and we would thrash out this Suffrage question—surely one of us ought to be able to convince the other !

And I *should* like to see you again !

Yours sincerely,

S. JEX-BLAKE.

I grieved greatly with you in your loss in June."<sup>1</sup>

Miss Octavia Hill had allowed herself no "sabbatical year," and she was flagging in harness. Her life had been spent in unremitting service of her fellow men. She answered her old friend's letter, but she could not respond. One has no difficulty in understanding her attitude now. A conventional meeting would have been useless, and anything else would have involved a greater upheaval than most people are willing to face as life goes on.

And it well may be that she had acted wisely all along. As Mrs. Jex-Blake had said many years before with that strange *prevision* that is given sometimes to the pure in heart,—“God has two great works,—one for her, one for you.”

Those two great works could never have been combined.

And, indeed, no one with a disposition like S. J.-B.'s can go through life without losing friends. She might have said with St. Teresa,—“For one thing, the devil sometimes fills

<sup>1</sup>Miss Miranda Hill died in June 1910.

me with such a harsh and cruel temper; such a spirit of anger and hostility at some people, that I could eat them up and annihilate them." But, as in the case of St. Teresa, the obverse side of the medal was a capacity for loving that can seldom have been surpassed in our human nature. "Went not my heart with thee . . . ?" she used to say: and it did,—not only with those nearest to her, but with all who appealed to her mother-heart. The comforting letter was written, in spite of all fatigue and inconvenience, at the earliest possible moment: the box of flowers, the grapes, the wine, the cheque, the open hospitable doors,—all seemed messengers waiting for their turn, like the swift-heeled servants of the Fairy Queen.

No appeal ever came to her that she ignored. The Charity Organisation Society was familiar with her name; and great sometimes was her disappointment when those she wanted to help were pronounced hopeless or unworthy. Nothing that she loved ever grew old. Her friends, her horses,—even the purely material things to which she was attached—grew more beautiful in her eyes as their market value decreased. She always parted deliberately with the flowers that had stood by her hand. No one was ever allowed to throw them away as a matter of routine, and often she would raise them to her lips before putting them in the fire.

St. Teresa's love no doubt was a more transcendent thing. It was her lot to live in an age of faith. S. J.-B. often quoted Whittier's *Autograph*:

" If of the Law's stone table,  
To hold he scarce was able  
The first great precept fast,  
He kept for man the last.

Through mortal lapse and dulness  
What lacks the Eternal Fulness,  
If still our weakness can  
Love Him in loving man ? "

There are those of whom Teresa herself said :

" They may have more merit in His eyes than their more favoured neighbours, because their obedience and their faith and their love

have cost them more. Their Lord deals with them as with strong and valiant men, appointing them travail and trouble here, that they may fight for Him the good fight of faith, and only come in for the prize at the end."

No portrait gives any adequate idea of Sophia Jex-Blake. Someone who saw her first in 1886 writes :

" Although too stout in figure, she had a fine commanding presence, and one was struck at once by the exceeding *comeliness* of her face. It was strong, wise and benevolent, capable of an extraordinary range of expression. The brow was ideally shaped, broad and serene in repose, though always liable to the summer lightnings that one half admired, half dreaded. Her hair was growing white, but the eyebrows remained black till the end, and the eyes, both by nature and by the long discipline of life, were extraordinarily fine and expressive."

It was twenty years later than this that a girl friend said,— " She has the look of one ' following fearlessly '." Throughout life, the tendency to sadness of expression was wholly contradicted by her smile ; her eyes very readily bubbled over with merriment ; as some reporter had said in the days of the fight, " With those dimples she must be good-natured." When an old servant was shown the final portrait in this volume, she said, " But I want her to look up at me and laugh as she used to do ! "

One does not wish to dwell on the history of the last few months. From the physical point of view it is a familiar story. One by one every medicament lost its efficacy : the failing heart ceased to invigorate one organ after another. But the strong and disciplined will held the shattered tabernacle together. Sometimes acute symptoms forced her to stay in bed for a day or two, but she always struggled on to her feet again at the earliest possible moment and went for the daily drive through her beloved lanes and woods. True that towards the end she noticed these less and less,—drowsed most of the way ; but, if there was occasion to rouse herself and speak to anyone, she did so almost as of old.

" The worst of lying awake at night," she used to say whimsically, " is that one realizes all the mistakes one has

made in one's life." It was not even *lying* awake sometimes : it was a weary sitting up or lying down as each position in turn became intolerable. And often, after only three minutes' unconsciousness, she would exclaim in something like the old happy voice, " I have had such a lovely sleep ! "

Almost to the last day she repeated bits of her favourite poems and psalms,—and nothing gave her so much pleasure as to plan holidays for those who still had a day's work before them. She was infinitely mindful of those who tended her. Almost her last words were,—“ Now do go and have a good rest.”

And so the end came,—suddenly but not unexpectedly. She sat down one day more tired than usual—it was the 7th January, 1912—stretched herself back, and rendered up her soul to God who gave it.

A great wave of feeling arose in the village and round about when it was known that the familiar figure of the old warrior would no more be seen in her Sussex lanes. Perplexed at first, her neighbours of all classes had come in a measure to understand her, to be proud of her,—some of them to love her. With one or two, indeed, she had formed a warm and intimate friendship. There was every token of respectful sympathy and mourning when the little procession made its way to Rotherfield Church.<sup>1</sup>

And that wave of feeling went out over the whole world. Messages and tributes of appreciation and regret poured steadily in. The most beautiful and adequate was the paragraph in the *Pall Mall Gazette* :

“ The woman as Happy Warrior has passed away with the death in her Sussex home of Sophia Jex-Blake. There is scarcely an attribute of the great figure in Wordsworth's poem which she did not possess, with the crowning added happiness of seeing her fame as a noble and successful pioneer in a great movement finally established. She it was, more than anyone else, who compelled the gates of the medical profession to be opened to women. Through years

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<sup>1</sup> By a strange coincidence she lies within a few yards of her old friend and champion, Sir James Stansfeld. See Appendix G.

of hostility and obloquy she never lost heart in her Cause ; and, meeting violence with reason and coarseness with dignity, she won at last. Her longest and bitterest fight was with the University of Edinburgh ; and, later, when Parliament had recognized the right of women to be doctors, it was in that city that she practised for twenty-one years. Since the death of Florence Nightingale no woman has died of whom more truly may it be written, *Bene actæ vitæ recordatio jucundissima est.*

But the reader may find a special propriety in a very simple resolution passed a few days later in an Over Seas dominion :

“ That the members of the University Women’s Club of Toronto do place on record their deep sense of the great influence and noble life of Dr. Sophia Jex-Blake. Now that her distinguished career has closed, they feel that she was the helper of all University women,—and they love her for many reasons.”

THE END

## APPENDIX A

### PEDIGREE OF THE JEX-BLAKE FAMILY

S. J.-B.'s father was one of the Blakes of Bunwell, Scottow, etc., in the county of Norfolk.

A family of Blakes settled at Bunwell in 1620. It is said traditionally that they came from Somersetshire and were descended from the same family as Robert Blake, the great Admiral of the Commonwealth, being probably a branch of the original family of the Blaks, Blaaks or Blakes of Pinnels in the parish of Cawne or Calne, Co. Wilts., there seated as early, at least, as 1400. These families bore the same arms with slight differences, namely, argent a chevron between three garbs sable. Crest; on a chapeau gules turned up ermine, a martlet argent.

In the chancel of Bunwell Church, near the altar rails, is a tombstone with the following inscription :

Under this Stone lyeth the Body of Mr John Blake  
He dyed the 21 of August 1686 being sixtie 4  
Yeares of age and upwards.

Above this legend are the arms of Blake as above : on the chevron a fleur-de-lis for difference.

From this gentleman is descended in direct line all the present family through his fourth son, Robert Blake, who settled at Scottow about 1680, marrying Margaret, eldest daughter of William Durrant of Scottow Hall. Their son, Thomas Blake of Scottow, born November 7th, 1689, married Elizabeth, daughter of John Jex, Esq. of Lowestoft, and the grandson of these last, William Blake of Swanton Abbots, in the Commission of the Peace, and Deputy Lieutenant for Norfolk, having inherited the chief part of the Jex property, obtained on his petition by Royal Licence on August 17th, 1837, that he and his descendants should assume and use the surname Jex in addition to and before that of Blake, and also bear the arms of Jex quarterly, in the second quarter, with those of Blake.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *The London Gazette*, Friday, August 25, 1837.

## APPENDIX B

"WORDS FOR THE WAY."<sup>1</sup>—No. 2. REST

"There remaineth a Rest for the people of God."—HEB. IV. 9.

WHAT is the thing that you wish for most in the world?

I cannot hear your answers to my question, and I do not suppose that everyone to whom it is addressed would answer it in the same way; but I must try and fancy to myself what you would be most likely to say. And first I suppose that each of you would be likely to wish for that of which he has most felt the need.

Some of you, perhaps, who are very poor, would say, "Money." Well, money is a very good thing, and, if we know how to use it rightly, a great blessing for which to thank God when He gives it to us; but you might have money, and yet be far from happy—yet have a great many of your deepest wants unsatisfied. And very many of those who have most money would be the first to tell you that this is the case; and I am sure that with very little of it, it is possible to be very happy if we have some other things.

I hardly think that money is what we should wish for most.

Those of you who are very ill, and who are constantly suffering pain that seems to be always coming freshly upon you, would perhaps say, "Health." Well, that too is a very good and great gift of God's, and those of us who have it should thank Him very much for it, and pity heartily and helpfully those who have it not. But I think that with even this blessing, there may be very great wants left; and I believe that it is possible to be very blessed without it. I do not think that Health satisfies the deepest want of our nature.

And some of you perhaps, who have felt how sad it is to be ignorant of many things that it would be so good to know, and who are longing to learn more about God and His great and wonderful works, might say that "Knowledge" was the gift which of all others you desire.

Some again who have felt how sad it is to stand all alone in this great world, every part of which God has made so dependent on the rest,—who long for some heart to lean upon in all life's troubles, some hand to help to cut a way through them, will say that "Love" is the greatest blessing that it seems to them possible to receive.

<sup>1</sup>The authors have sought to supply a want, more or less widely felt, of simple Tracts, which, while endeavouring to set forth the deepest truths of Christianity, shall avoid the phraseology of certain schools, as jarring on the minds of many.

Those who see any degree of successful effort in the Tracts already published are invited to assist in obtaining for them, and others of the series, such a circulation as may best ensure their usefulness.



I have no doubt that if I were really talking to you, or, still better, could see the thoughts of your hearts, I should be told of many wants which you earnestly desire to have satisfied,—wants, some of them belonging to the lower and some of them to the higher part of that wonderful nature which God has given to us all.

And now perhaps you would like to hear *my* answer to this question I have been asking of you, "What is the thing we most want?" It seems to me that there is one blessing which sums up in itself—which seems to imply or to contain—almost all others, and which, if we go deeply enough into it, does really satisfy all the great wants of our nature. This is *REST*.

Now let us think what Rest is: and see whether if you had that, you would have the deepest part of all your wants satisfied.

You said you wanted Money? Well, was not the comfort which you thought money could give you, just that freedom from care and anxiety which we call Rest?—was it not really for this, and not for the money itself, you longed?

And you wanted Health? Is it not just because health would give you rest from pain and from continual weariness that it seems to you the best of all things? Does not Health for you really mean Rest?

And is it not because there is something that you are always longing to know and understand that you desire so much to have Knowledge? Is not your wish for it founded on the feeling that God gave you a mind and understanding which can only be satisfied by learning and knowing. Do you not really desire knowledge that your intellect may have some firm standing ground?—that it too may have Rest?

And most of all do not you who long for Love, long for it because you feel that to have some one beside you to feel for you and help you, to pray with and work with you through all the labours of this life, is the nearest approach to Rest that we can have on earth, except that deepest Rest which comes through feeling the constant nearness of Him who loves most of all, who "will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. xiii. 5). If then we can but look forward to Rest, are we not sure of having *all* that we need?

And it is just this that is promised to us in the text we read at the beginning, "There remaineth a Rest for the people of God." God knows so well all our wants, and knows so well what will best supply them, that all through the Bible you will find beautiful promises about Rest. Let us look at a few of them. Job in the midst of his great troubles speaks of the future life as that "where the weary are at Rest" (Job. iii. 17). The prophet Jeremiah promises to those who will hear God's will and seek to do it, that they "shall find Rest for their souls" (Jer. vi. 16). Our Lord Jesus Christ

knew well about this deepest want in our nature when He spoke that most beautiful of invitations to all who heard Him on earth, and to all who read His words now, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find Rest unto your souls" (Matt. xi. 28, 29).

And the whole argument of the chapter from which the text we are talking about is taken, is this, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His Rest, any of us should seem to come short of it" (Heb. iv. 1).

But now let us ask what is implied or meant by those last words about "coming short of it?" What is meant by our Lord's telling people that they must "take His yoke upon them" and be "meek and lowly of heart" if they would find Rest? What is meant when Rest is promised specially to the "people of God."

Now, if we believe that God loves us as He does, quite infinitely—more than we can even understand—we may be quite sure that He will always give us every good thing that He can—that He will never put any limit to His promises if He can help it—that He would like to give Rest and all other good things to everyone if it were possible.

We must never doubt for one moment God's willingness to give us all good things, and to do all for us that it is possible for love to do. Remember what Christ says about that, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven know how to give good things to them that ask Him (Matt. vii. 11). And again, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you" (John xvi. 26, 27). And St. Paul tells us that "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32).

So you see that we may be quite sure that if we do not get this great blessing, Rest, it will not be because God is not willing to give it to us.

But there are certain great principles, which we call laws, which govern God's world, which are of the very nature of God's own being, and the more we come to know and realize about these laws, the more we shall find them to be the most wonderfully good and beautiful and blessed ones which could be imagined, and see in every one of them some great and glorious provision for the best possible things, which could not come without them.

Now you know God made man in His own image (Gen. i. 27), and, though man afterwards broke that beautiful image and lost the perfect likeness that God had given him to Himself—as we are told in Eccles. vii. 29, "God made man upright; but they have

sought out many inventions")—still man is so deep a partaker of God's nature, that the truest and deepest part of him is that which is like God and akin to Him, so that St. Paul tells us, "In God we live, and move, and have our being . . . for we are also his offspring" (Acts xvii. 28). Now just because our whole blessedness, and our only hope of returning at last to the perfect image in which God made us, lies in our trying to get nearer and nearer to God, and to become more and more like Him, so that our Lord Jesus bids us "Be perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. v. 48)—just because of this, I say, one of the great and merciful laws of God is that none of us shall ever find any true happiness apart from goodness; and no one can hope for Rest who does not seek it in the way of striving to do God's will. Some one has said that the true Rest of the soul is attained only when God's will is our will. So we are told by Isaiah, that "There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked" (Isa. lvii. 21).

And "the wicked" do not mean those only who do great and shameful sins, which seem very terrible even to us, but all who do not strive in everything to do God's will. Let us look a little more closely at what this will of God's is.

We are told in the Old Testament what it is. Look at Isaiah i. 16, 17, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of thy doing from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." And again, look at Micah vi. 8, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

And when we come to the New Testament, we find Our Lord Jesus Christ telling men who those are whom God blesses—what it is to do God's will:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Blessed are the merciful.

Blessed are the pure in heart.

Blessed are the peacemakers." (See Matt. v.)

And while He says that that man only "shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," who "doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21), He explains that will to be, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself. . . . This do and thou shalt live" (Luke x. 27, 28). So that if that Rest seems to us a great and glorious thing to attain, we must seek it in God's way; we must try to do God's will here, that we may rest in perfect harmony and agreement with that will hereafter.

Is it not a wonderful and beautiful thing that God loves us so much that He will not *let* us be otherwise than good?—that He will not cease to remind us by constant unhappiness and restlessness that we are not fulfilling our highest end, till we strive day by day to come nearer to Him; so that at last, in that great happy day of Rest, there will be no more striving; for “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

Would you like to hear once more those words, which I daresay you know so well, and which tell us better than any others have ever done, *what* that Rest shall be, and how it shall satisfy all our wants at last, as “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard.”

Let us turn to the Revelation of St. John, and hear the description he gives of those who have entered into Rest: “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. . . . And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” “And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.” “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. vii. 16, 17; xxi. 3, 4; xxii. 5, 14).

## APPENDIX C

### CONCLUSIONS FROM “A VISIT TO AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES”

“THE two features of American education which strike an Englishman as characteristic, are, the union of all classes in the same schools and of both sexes in the same colleges; the first being nearly universal throughout the Northern States; the second still exceptional, and as regards public opinion, still on probation.

I. That no disadvantages attend the system of mingling all classes in school can hardly, I suppose, be maintained, though it may be thought that the advantages greatly preponderate. . . . So far as distinctions and consequent separations of rank depend on merely external circumstances, such as wealth and position, I do not believe that we gain much by observing them; but when they rest on real

differences of culture and refinement, the case becomes different, and it does not seem good policy to risk certain loss to one class, without being sure of securing a more than proportionate gain to another. In short it seems to me that, if we can mingle different classes of children in such proportions and under such conditions as to ensure that the higher standard shall prevail over the lower, and the tone of all be raised to that of the foremost few, the measure must be an altogether good one : and I am sure that to some extent and under some restrictions this may be done : but if once the inferior standard of refinement is allowed to predominate, the lower dragging down the higher rather than being raised by it, I fear that no results gained can pay for the loss accruing.

II. With regard to the joint education of the sexes, it seems to be pretty clearly established that, in America at least, this system can prosper for years without any markedly evil effects as to the morals and manners of the fellow-students, and the evidence of most professors and teachers goes strongly to show that, on the contrary, the mutual influence exerted is usually very beneficial.

It seems also to be proved that at least a considerable number of women can undertake and successfully complete the same course of study that is usual for men, and that without more apparent detriment to their health than students of the other sex.

The general issue divides itself into three practical questions : (a) whether men and women shall pursue the same course of study ; (b) whether they shall continue it to the same point ; and (c) whether their studies, if identical, shall be pursued together. . . .

(a) If there is no fundamental education answering to the needs of common humanity, and, therefore, equally necessary both for men and women,—it follows that the difference of sex is more radical and more essential than is the common humanity that underlies it. . . . Women have, I think, from the earliest times, suffered from the fact of men's pretensions to 'evolve out of their moral consciousness the idea of' a woman,—which idea has not by any means always happened to correspond with the facts that might, perhaps, afford a surer guide. . . . It might perhaps be shown that those who, starting with their 'evolved idea' of a woman, deny that the same education may safely be given to each sex because of the vast essential differences of nature, are in point of fact more incredulous of the reality of that difference than those who hold the opposite views. . . . The naturalist will not fear to lay meat and hay before horses and lions, cows and tigers, for neither will the lion be seduced by the offer of hay, nor will the horse and cow lose their distinctive characteristics because they both partake of it. . . .

I do not by any means intend to say that I desire to see the

education of all women made identical with that at present given to men. It must first be proved that that education is, in truth, the best and most desirable for the human being, before we can wish to make it universal. But I do say that what is ultimately decided by the wisdom of ages to be the best possible form of culture for one human nature, must be so for another, for our common humanity lies deeper in all, and is more essential in each, than any differences.

I do not believe that women are to be 'educated to be wives and mothers' in any sense in which it is not equally imperative to educate boys to be husbands and fathers. I believe that each human being, developed to his or her best and utmost, will most perfectly fulfil the duties that God may appoint in each case, and if teachers and parents have ever before their eyes the aim of making good, true, and sensible women, I do not fear but they will also train the best wives and mothers. . . .

(b) I confess that I have been surprised in America to find how much study young women do seem able to accomplish without material injury, but I do not know how much allowance to make for possible differences of national constitution. . . . My own belief, founded mainly on observation of English girls, is, that in quickness of intellect they in no way fall behind their brothers, and that during one or two hours' study of any subject they would be quite able to keep up with them, but that after a certain time their physical powers flag,—sooner perhaps than those of boys,—and that a long continued strain is apt to be injurious to them. I state this opinion with great diffidence, however, for many of my fellow-teachers and friends assert the contrary. . . .

Above all, be the limits of study what they may, let whatever is done be done *thoroughly*, so that the only too well deserved reproach of superficiality and incompleteness may at length be removed from our system of female education. Work half done is not merely unsatisfactory, it is absolutely injurious to the moral and mental health of the worker; and I believe it is better to omit any and every study altogether, than to allow a pupil to skim over it so as to gather together a string of words thereto relating, with no solid meaning or knowledge lying beneath.

(c) The third question,—whether men and women shall pursue their studies together,—I do not much care to discuss, for I am by no means sure of having sufficient data whereon to rest any opinion, and moreover it seems to me not vital to the general issue. So long as men and women can each obtain an absolutely good education, it does not appear very material whether they get it in company or not,—not material, that is, as regards the education, *whatever* may be the case as to the social results. . . .

But one thing does seem to me important, viz. that not merely a similar but an identical standard should exist for all, whether it be the many or the few who avail themselves of it. This fixed standard does exist for men, being represented by the examinations and degrees of the Universities, and that the same facilities should be thrown open to women does seem to me vitally important. I have already said that I should not care to see all women aim at so high a mark; nor do I believe that, for many years, a large number would present themselves for examination. But that those who do, by earnest study, attain to the prescribed standard, should be excluded from recognition of the fact, seems to be manifestly unjust and wrong. Universities hold, I suppose, in some sense a national trust, and that trust involves all possible aid to the cause of education throughout the land."

## APPENDIX D

## THE EDINBURGH EXTRA-MURAL SCHOOL

THE Edinburgh Extra-Mural classes are medical classes conducted by fully qualified and authorized lecturers other than the University professors. They prepare students primarily for the examinations of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, but their certificates are, as a matter of fact, accepted by many examining bodies. The history of the association of these classes with the University is—briefly—as follows :

In 1840 Professor Syme begged the Town Council of Edinburgh, who were then the recognized patrons of the University, to order the recognition of extra-mural classes, an argument for the innovation being "that one of the professors was so comparatively inefficient that many students, after paying his fee and obtaining his certificate of attendance, went to learn his subject elsewhere." In 1842 the Town Council ordained that *four* Extra-Mural classes should be allowed to count for graduation,—the classes to be chosen by each student at his discretion. The Medical Faculty of the University refused to consent to this except on the condition that any student taking such classes should have a year added to his curriculum. The Town Council refused this condition, and the Senatus, supporting the Medical Faculty, referred the matter to the Court of Law. In 1850 judgment was given against the Senatus; they appealed to the Inner House, but the judgment was confirmed in 1852. An appeal was taken to the House of Lords, but again in 1854 the Town Council gained the day. In 1855 the regulations came into operation and have ever since remained in force.

## APPENDIX E

LETTER TO THE *TIMES* IN REPLY TO MRS. GARRETT ANDERSON" TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Times*.

SIR,—I have only just seen the letter from Dr. Garrett Anderson which you published on the 5th inst., and I venture to beg that you will allow me to point out my reasons for thinking she has selected the very worst of all the alternatives suggested, when she advises Englishwomen to go abroad for medical education.

In the first place, I think that Dr. Anderson assumes greatly too much in supposing that all the Scotch Universities are permanently closed to women by the recent decision, especially when notice has already been given in Parliament that a Scotch member will, at the beginning of next Session, bring in a Bill to enable those Universities both to teach and examine female students. Even if no such Bill were announced, it would, I suppose, be open to every Scotch University at this moment to obtain the necessary powers merely by application for the sanction of the Queen in Council, as it was repeatedly stated, both by the defenders in the late suit and by those Judges who gave decisions in their favour, that it was merely the absence of Royal authority for recent changes which rendered those changes illegal. I think there is very good ground to hope that this course may be taken by one or more of the other Universities, even if Edinburgh is content to rest quietly under the imputations on her good faith which can hardly be effaced in any other way.

Even if the Scotch Universities are left out of the question, those of Cambridge and London may well be expected to move in a matter like the present ; or it would hardly seem unreasonable to hope that some of the surplus revenues in Ireland might be applied in one way or other to the solution of the present difficulty.

I think, moreover, that Mrs. Anderson concedes very much more than has yet been proved when she states that the examining bodies, such as the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, ' have the power to refuse to admit women to their examinations and qualifications.' That they have the will to do so may, I fear, only be too probable, but it is at least a very open question whether such power does lie in their hands. I have been assured on very good authority that this is not the case, and at any rate I believe no decision to that effect has ever been given by a Court of Law. Certainly the *primâ facie* assumption would be the other way. The Medical Act of 1858 in no way excludes women from the profession, and two women are actually registered under its provisions. It is, therefore, hardly credible, that when all candidates are by the Act required to submit



to certain examinations, the Examining Boards should at their option be able to turn away all applicants who are not of the male sex, no mention of any such power being contained in the Act itself; nor, I think, need we assume even a desire to exclude women on the part of all the Examining Boards until application has been made to each individually; and this has never, so far as I am aware, been done at present.

I trust, therefore, that I have shown that Mrs. Anderson's advice that all Englishwomen desiring to study medicine should at once expatriate themselves is premature in the extreme; I hope further to show that it is moreover radically erroneous in principle. Even if it should ultimately be proved (as is at present by no means the case) that women cannot obtain official examination in this country, and therefore cannot enter their names on the Register, it would still, I think, be very far from certain that their best plan was to seek such examination abroad, seeing that after having spent years of labour and much money they would, as regards legal recognition, be exactly as far as ever from gaining their end. Mrs. Anderson says that they would at least obtain 'what is denied them in their own country, a first-class medical education.' If it were true that such an education could not be got without going abroad, there would, no doubt, be much force in this argument, but I submit that this is not the case. Without stopping to consider the alternatives brought forward by your correspondent herself—the establishment of a new school for women or the purchase of one of the existing hospital schools—either of which seems to me infinitely preferable, Mrs. Anderson quite overlooks the fact that at this moment medical classes of first-rate quality can be obtained in Edinburgh in the Extra-Mural school (many of whose lecturers stand much higher than the University professors in public estimation),<sup>1</sup> and that with very little trouble a complete curriculum of medical study could be there arranged, without altering any of the existing conditions of affairs. The doors of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary have also been thrown open to women, though under some restrictions, and excellent clinical instruction is given to them there by two of the best and most popular teachers in the city. Can any one doubt that when so much has been secured, and when every year promises increased facilities, it is infinitely better that Englishwomen should study medicine under the direction of their own countrymen, in their own language, and amid the social and hygienic conditions which will occur in their own future practice, rather than in a foreign land, from lecturers who teach in a strange language and in hospitals where all the arrangements and theories vary from those of this country, and where even the types of disease may be so far modified

<sup>1</sup> S. J.-B. was thinking mainly of Dr. Heron Watson and Dr. G. W. Balfour.

as greatly to lessen the value of the instruction for those who intend to practise medicine in Great Britain ?

In point of fact, the question of medical education in this country may be already considered solved, even if we grant the necessity of attending lectures on every subject in the medical curriculum. It is, however, worth remark that many of the very first men in the profession are becoming more and more strongly in favour of free trade in study—*i.e.*, of allowing every student to obtain his knowledge as he pleases, whether from books or from lectures, requiring only final evidence of satisfactory results. It may be that on investigation the present system will be found to rest rather on the 'vested interests' of teachers than on the needs of students, and, if so, the question of medical education for women will be still further simplified. At present, however, it is not needful to argue that question. I have shown that provision for the education of women after the present fashion is to a great extent already made, and that, for purposes of instruction at least, it is quite unnecessary for them to expatriate themselves.

With regard to examination, the case seems to me equally clear. No foreign diploma or degree is at present acknowledged as qualifying for registration in this country, and though it may be well for those who covet such ornamental honours to go through the examinations requisite to obtain them, I cannot see any ground on which it would be worth the while of most Englishwomen to live for years abroad to arrive at a result so eminently unpractical. We live under English law, and to English law we must conform, so far as lies in our power ; if we are arbitrarily precluded from such compliance it is to the English Government that we must look for a remedy. I can imagine few things that would please our opponents better than to see one Englishwoman after another driven out of her own country to obtain medical education abroad, both because they know that, on her return after years of labour, she can claim no legal recognition whatever, and because they are equally certain that, so long as no means of education are provided at home, only a very small number of women will ever seek admission to the profession. I do not say that a woman may not be justified in going abroad for education if her circumstances make it imperative that she should as soon as possible enter upon medical practice ; but I do say, and I most firmly believe, that every woman who consents to be thus exiled does more harm than can easily be calculated to the general cause of medical women in this country, and postpones indefinitely, so far as in her lies, the final and satisfactory solution of the whole question.

It is not an easy thing to remember at all times that

'They also serve who only stand and wait' ;

but I do believe profoundly that at this moment the very best

service we can do to the cause in which we are all interested is to make use of every opportunity open to us in this country to qualify ourselves as thoroughly as possible for the profession we have chosen, and then (refusing resolutely to be driven into byways or unauthorized measures) to demand, quietly but firmly, that provision for our ultimate recognition as medical practitioners which we have a right to expect at the hands of the Legislature. Mrs. Anderson seems to think it hopeless that the present Parliament should 'promote the interests of an unrepresented class,' but it must be remembered that one of the very strongest arguments against granting the franchise to women has always been that their substantial interests are and will be provided for by the existing Government, and a case like the present will certainly afford a crucial test of the truth of these assertions. If they be true, we cannot doubt that Parliament will in its next Session make full provision for a case of such almost unexampled hardship; and if, on the other hand, this be not done, the argument above referred to can hardly be again brought forward when the suffrage for women shall again be claimed.

Let me, therefore, conclude, as I began, by protesting as strongly as lies in my power against this idea of sending abroad every Englishwoman who wishes to study medicine; let me entreat all such women to join the class already formed in Edinburgh, the great majority of whose members are thoroughly of one mind with me in this matter, and who, having counted the cost, are, like myself, thoroughly resolved to 'fight it out on this line,' and neither to be driven out of our own country for education nor to be induced to cease to make every effort in our power to obtain from the Legislature that measure of justice which we imperatively need, and which is, in point of fact, substantially implied in the provisions of the Medical Act of 1858.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE.

15, Buccleuch-place, Edinburgh. Aug. 8."

## APPENDIX F

LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY,  
AND S. J.B.'s REPLY

LADY STUDENTS AT EDINBURGH

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Times*.

SIR,—In your article on the medical education of women, under date the 23rd inst., you give utterance to reproaches against the University of Edinburgh, which appear to me to be undeserved,

and which I feel sure you would not have admitted had the full circumstances of the case been before you. May I be allowed as briefly as possible to indicate what seems to me to be a correct view of those circumstances? You say:

“It was next thought that an opening for female medical students might be found or made at the University of Edinburgh, and a few were for a time actually received there. The Professors, however, were greatly divided upon the question, and those who were opposed to the necessary concessions threw every possible difficulty in the way of those who wished to make them. After much quarrelling and litigation, and after transactions which reflected very little credit on the University, a legal decision adverse to the ladies was finally given by a bare majority of Scottish Judges, and will remain binding unless carried by appeal to the House of Lords. Under these circumstances the ladies were placed in a position of great hardship and difficulty.”

I acknowledge and regret the hardship and difficulty of the position in which the ladies referred to have been placed; but this is owing to the state of the law of the land as interpreted by the Court of Session, and not to any discreditable transactions on the part of the University. I admit the manifestation, during the history of this question, of a partisan feeling both for and against the medical ladies, to some extent within the University itself, but far more in the outside public of Edinburgh; but I confidently assert that the main body of the Professors were not partisans on either side, and that the general feeling was a desire to give facilities for medical study to women, so far as this could be done consistently with the maintenance of academical good order. Again, it must be remembered that the Professors do not constitute or govern the University. The governing body is the University Court, consisting of eight members (of whom only one is a Professor), headed at present by Sir William Stirling Maxwell, as rector. I utterly deny the appearance of any unworthy feeling in the way in which this Court dealt with the questions relating to female medical education which came before it.

The University was solicited in 1869 to admit ladies, as an experiment, to the lectures of Medical Professors. There was a certain amount of opposition to this request, but the feeling of the majority in each of the constitutive bodies of the University was in favour of conceding under necessary restrictions what was asked. In one of the debates on the subject it was indeed suggested that such a concession should not be made without clearly ascertaining beforehand whether we had the power of ultimately conferring degrees upon women, should it be found on experiment that they succeeded in completing their medical curriculum and in passing the examinations.

But such a delay was deprecated by the supporters of the application ; it was urged that such an inquiry would be premature, as what was asked for the present was only that trial might be made of ladies in the capacity of medical students. I need hardly point out that these representations were dictated by the policy of "getting in the thin end of the wedge." And far better for all parties, more prudent, and more consistent with the dignity of the University, would it have been, had we resisted this policy, and refused to take any step before endeavouring to ascertain our powers in respect of the graduation of women. But the University Court yielded to an impulse of liberality, and proceeded at once to frame regulations forbidding mixed classes, but permitting any professor of medicine to hold separate classes for the medical instruction of women. The applicants appeared satisfied with what was done for them ; and I must say that it would then have been in their power to ascertain beforehand how many of the Professors were prepared to institute classes for them. The ladies must not now throw on the University all the blame of their disappointment, for they were not without sufficient warning that only a limited number of such classes, far short of a full curriculum, would be provided for them. The regulations said not a word of graduation or of a full course of study ; they were merely permissive, and, as had been requested, tentative. But the ladies preferred to enter at once upon such lectures as they could get, trusting, apparently, to the chapter of accidents. To several of the Medical Professors it would have been impossible to open full course lectures for ladies, in addition to their ordinary duties. Some had already on hand the teaching of more than 300 students, not only by lectures, but also by daily demonstrations for many hours in the laboratory or dissecting-room. Others had extensive and important medical practice to attend to, being sought out by patients from all parts of the country. Altogether three of the Medical Professors opened classes for ladies, and of these one has had his health seriously broken down by the labour, and the two others have both declared that the burden of such extra duty was more than they could continue to bear.

Under these circumstances, the medical ladies applied that substitutes might be appointed to lecture to them in the place of such Professors as might be unable, or unwilling, to give them instruction. Now, for the first time, the University determined to seek legal advice. An impartial statement of the case was drawn up and submitted to the Solicitor-General for Scotland, with the question whether such measures as the ladies now asked were within the competency of the University ? The opinion of the Solicitor-General was very strongly given, and went even beyond the exact point inquired on ; it was to the effect that any step tending towards the

graduation of women would be beyond the powers of the University. This opinion paralyzed the action of the University. The University Court informed the ladies, on further application from them, that it was debarred by this opinion from promoting their graduation until the legality of such graduation could be established, but it offered to make, in the meantime, arrangements for their full medical instruction, and it was suggested to the friends of the ladies that an amicable suit should be instituted with a view of ascertaining the law. These offers were rejected, and a suit was brought by the ladies against the Chancellor and Professors of the University, which has terminated, thus far, in a judgment that it is not within the powers of the University to confer a degree upon a woman.

This, Sir, is in brief the history of an unhappy affair, in which the University certainly made the mistake of consenting to an experimental arrangement which was strongly urged upon them, and for this it has been most severely punished. But I doubt if there is anything in what has occurred which can be called a "transaction reflecting little credit on the University," with one exception—namely, that on one occasion some of the students misbehaved themselves and insulted the medical ladies. But I must say that this lamentable occurrence was occasioned by those ladies having transgressed the regulations of the University Court, and having joined a mixed class in anatomy under an extra academical lecturer. This outraged the feeling or prejudices of the students.

In conclusion, Sir, I sincerely sympathize in the earnest appeal made by Miss Jex-Blake, in the very able letter which forms the subject of your article, to the Legislature to take up the consideration of the medical education of women. It is a subject well worthy the attention of the Legislature, and one which can only be properly dealt with, as a general social subject, by the Legislature. Whether or not an University is a suitable institution for the medical instruction and examination of women is a wide question on which I will not venture to enter. But, however this be decided, all other Universities of the United Kingdom must share in the decision of the University of Edinburgh, and this University will loyally bear her part in carrying out whatever Parliament may ordain as expedient. In the meantime, under considerable obloquy, she can at all events claim to have contributed something in the way of experience to the elucidation of the question.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

A. GRANT, *Principal.*

*August 27.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Times*.

SIR,—As Sir Alexander Grant, as representative of the University of Edinburgh, has thought fit to lay before your readers a statement respecting that University and its lady students which is, to use the mildest term, imperfect in the extreme, I trust to your justice to allow me to supplement his narrative with such additional facts as he has not thought it desirable to make public.

Sir Alexander states that in 1869 the University was "solicited to admit ladies as an experiment to the lectures of the medical professors," and further on speaks of the regulations as being, "as was requested, tentative." He implies that all that followed was in compliance with this request, the claim to graduation being altogether an afterthought on the part of the ladies. Now, the real fact is that in March, 1869, I personally did request admission to medical lectures on these terms, but though the application was granted by the Senatus it was refused by the University Court on the express ground of the inexpediency of making any such "temporary arrangement in the interest of one lady." About three months later four other ladies joined me in making a new and altogether different application—viz., that the University "would sanction the matriculation of women as medical students, and their admission to the usual examinations, on the understanding that separate classes be formed for their instruction." At the same time (June 21, 1869) I addressed a formal letter to the Lord Rector of the University urging the same proposal, and asking that, if separate classes could be formed, women should be "allowed to matriculate in the usual way, and to undergo the ordinary examinations, with a view to obtain medical degrees in due course."

Our new proposal was successively submitted to all the different authorities of the University, and received the assent of all—viz., of the Medical Faculty, the *Senatus Academicus*, the University Court, the University Council, and the Chancellor—and, after five months of consultation and consideration, regulations were, in November, 1869, framed and issued "for the education of women in medicine in the University," these regulations being henceforth incorporated in the official University Calendar. The first of these regulations states that "women shall be admitted to the study of medicine in the University"; in the fourth regulation exceptional provision is made for "women not intending to study medicine professionally"; and the sixth regulation ordains that "all women attending such classes shall be subject to all the regulations now or at any time in force in the University as to the matriculation of students, their attendance on classes, examination, or otherwise."

As the decision by which a bare majority of the Scotch Judges absolved the University of Edinburgh from all responsibility towards its matriculated lady students rests on the assumption that the University Court exceeded its legal powers in passing the above regulations, it may be worth while to state that the University Court comprised at that time the then Lord Advocate of Scotland (who is now Lord Justice Clerk), and also the previous Lord Advocate, Mr. Gordon, and that the regulations in question were confirmed by the Chancellor, who happens to be, as Lord Justice General of Scotland, the highest legal authority in the country. It is certainly a tolerably striking instance of the "glorious uncertainty of the law," that the two highest Judges in the land should concur in an action which is subsequently declared by a majority of their brethren to be illegal.

Sir Alexander further goes on to suggest that we might have ascertained beforehand how many of the Professors would be willing to hold separate classes for our benefit. The answer to this is two-fold. In the first place, no less than four of the medical Professors have been changed since my first application was made, and in every case the change has, as regards our interests, been for the worse. One of those Professors whose loss we have most to deplore is Sir James Simpson, whose generous liberality made him always ready to espouse the weaker cause, and whose strong sense of justice would have made him always our strenuous supporter in the councils of the University. Had he been spared, it is, indeed, more than possible that the whole history of the past four years would have been different. On these losses it was impossible for us to calculate; nor could we (before we learnt the full bitterness of professional rancour) have foreseen that those Professors who were themselves unable or unwilling to teach us would absolutely refuse their assent to every one of the alternative measures by which others might have been enabled to give us the necessary instructions. It is hardly necessary to allude to your correspondent's rather apocryphal statement that the stupendous labour of giving two lectures a day (which is habitually undergone by Professors in the Arts Faculty) has ruined the health of one medical Professor and seriously endangered that of two more. Suffice it to say that these facts are, to say the least of it, quite new to me, and that, did space permit, I think a very different version of the circumstances might be given.

As Sir Alexander has thought fit to refer to the students' riot in November, 1871 (though to my mind it is very far from the most discreditable episode in this history), I think it right distinctly to deny the interpretation he puts upon the event. It is true that the riot did occur while we were attending an extra-mural class of anatomy (we having utterly failed to obtain a private class, though



we had offered a fee of a hundred and fifty guineas for one), but the rioters were, with few exceptions, not our fellow-students at all, but a mob of University students who had been summoned together by a missive circulated in the University class-rooms. The real truth was that the riot was deliberately got up simply and solely in the hope of frightening certain friendly infirmary managers from admitting us to their wards, and perhaps also of frightening us by showers of foul words and of street mud from pursuing our studies any further. Fortunately, the chivalrous device was not permanently successful in either direction.

I pass on, however, to notice the statements made respecting the recent lawsuit and the events immediately preceding it. Sir Alexander says that when the University "for the first time sought legal advice" the authorities obtained an opinion adverse to the ladies' claims from the Solicitor-General. As that opinion has never been published, there is no opportunity for its discussion; but Sir Alexander appears entirely to forget the fact that an opinion to the exactly contrary effect was delivered by the Lord Advocate of Scotland, who takes official precedence of the Solicitor-General, and that that opinion was not only submitted to the University Court, but published more than once in the newspapers and elsewhere. In that opinion the Lord Advocate stated distinctly that he believed the University to be not only able, but distinctly bound, to complete the education of those ladies whom it had invited to matriculate, and that all necessary arrangements for that purpose could legally be made. It will thus be seen that the above opinions at any rate neutralized each other, and that, had the University willed it otherwise, it certainly need not have been "paralyzed" by one of them.

It is further stated that the University Court informed the ladies that, by the opinion above referred to, "it was debarred from promoting their graduation until the legality of such graduation could be established, but it offered to make, in the meantime, arrangements for their full medical instruction"; and, further, that such offer was rejected by the ladies. Both these statements, Sir, I distinctly deny. I have at this moment the whole correspondence before me, and I fail utterly to find in it any such offer as that alleged. The only thing that in any degree gives colour to Sir Alexander's assertion is a passage occurring in a Minute of the University Court of January 8, 1872, which is as follows:

"The Court are of opinion that the question under reference has been complicated by the introduction of the subject of graduation, which is not essential to the completion of a medical or other education. . . . If the applicants in the present case would be content to seek the examination of women by the University for certificates

of proficiency in medicine, instead of University degrees, the Court believe that arrangements for accomplishing this object would fall within the scope of the powers given to them by section 12 of the Universities (Scotland) Act. The Court would be willing to consider any such arrangements which might be submitted to them."

On receiving a copy of this Minute I pointed out that certificates of proficiency, not being recognized by the Medical Act of 1858, would be quite useless to us; but added that, "As the main difficulty before your honourable Court seems to be that regarding graduation, with which we are not immediately concerned at this moment, we are quite willing to rest our claims to ultimate graduation on the facts as they stand up to the present date, and in case your honourable Court will now make arrangements whereby we can continue our education, we will undertake not to draw any arguments in favour of our right to graduation from such future arrangements, so that they may at least be made without prejudice to the present legal position of the University."

In answer to this letter I was informed that "If the names of extra-academical teachers of the required medical subjects be submitted by yourself or by the Senatus, the Court will be prepared to consider the respective fitness of the persons so named to be authorized to hold medical classes for women who have in this or former sessions been matriculated students of the University, and also the conditions and regulations under which such classes should be held."

I, of course, replied that we would willingly prepare and submit such a list (though your readers will notice that this simply amounted to all the arrangements being thrown upon us students, and not in any degree made by the Court), but requested first to be assured that, "though you at present give us no pledge respecting our ultimate graduation, it is your intention to consider the proposed extra-mural courses as 'qualifying' for graduation, if it is subsequently determined that the University has the power of granting degrees to women." In reply I was informed that the Court would do nothing of the kind; that we might, if we pleased, take all the trouble and expense of finding teachers, and might "submit" their names to the Court, but that in no case would the Court take any measures for making their teaching of any practical use to us from a University point of view. Your readers will therefore judge of what value was the boon that we are alleged to have rejected—I had almost said the trap that we were fortunate enough to have escaped!

I am sorry to have paused so long over this point, but the assertion of your correspondent was so amazing that it seemed essential that the real facts should be laid before the public. I should be only too glad if your space would allow you to publish the whole corre-

spondence, of which I forward a copy for your own perusal. Should any of your readers desire, however, to ascertain more of the facts, they will find the correspondence fully given in the notes to a little book called *Medical Women*, published last year by Oliphant & Co., of Edinburgh, to which also I may refer for a detailed account of the whole struggle of the first three years at Edinburgh.

I notice that Sir Alexander Grant thinks it well to omit the fact that, when we were at last driven to assert our rights in a court of law (and I may remark that no proposal for an "amicable suit" was ever made to me or to any of my fellow-students by the University authorities, and therefore none was ever "rejected" by us), an unhesitating decision in our favour was given by the Lord Ordinary, before whom the case was tried, his Lordship also finding the Senatus liable for three-fourths of our expenses. The University refused, however, to accept this verdict, and appealed the case to the Inner House, where they at length succeeded in obtaining a judgment in their favour from a bare majority of the Lords of Session, the whole costs being in this case thrown upon us. Perhaps you will kindly allow me, however, to quote the following passage from the judgment of the Lord Justice Clerk, who adhered to the decision of the Lord Ordinary, and who had himself been Rector of the University when we were admitted as students.<sup>1</sup> . . . I may mention that an abstract of the whole recent lawsuit has been published as a sixpenny pamphlet, and may be obtained from Mr. Elliott, 67 Princes Street, Edinburgh.

Apologizing for so large a trespass on your space,

I remain, yours obediently,

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE.

## APPENDIX G

### PERMANENT MEMORIALS OF SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE

In St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh,—a brass tablet placed by the Very Rev. T. W. Jex-Blake :

"Sacred to the Memory of Sophia Jex-Blake, M.D., by whose energy, courage, self-sacrifice and perseverance the Science of Medicine and the Art of Healing were opened to Women in Scotland."

In the Edinburgh Hospital for Women and Children, placed by the Committee and friends,—a medallion of cast bronze mounted

<sup>1</sup> The passage has already been quoted, pp. 396-7.

on a slab of verde-antique marble : on the medallion, surrounded by a wreath of laurel, the family crest and motto :

Bene praeparatum pectus.

And below this the inscription :

“ In affectionate remembrance of Sophia Jex-Blake, Founder of this Hospital, to whose large courage, insight and constancy the admission of Women to the Profession of Medicine in this Country is mainly due.”

On the family monument at Ovingdean, near Brighton :

SOPHIA LOUISA,  
YOUNGEST CHILD OF THOMAS JEX-BLAKE,  
AND MARIA EMILY, HIS WIFE.  
DOCTOR OF MEDICINE,  
FOUNDER IN 1874 OF THE LONDON SCHOOL OF MEDICINE FOR WOMEN,  
AND IN 1888 OF A SIMILAR SCHOOL IN EDINBURGH,  
WHERE SHE ALSO FOUNDED A HOSPITAL FOR  
WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN 1886.

“ Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

In Rotherfield Churchyard, where her body was laid,—a grey granite cross, bearing the words :

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE, M.D.  
BORN 21ST JANUARY, 1840.  
DIED 7TH JANUARY 1912.

“ Then are they glad because they are at rest, and so He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.”

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