

SISTERS IN LAW.

"O, woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy and hard to please,
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

Amended in 1927 to read:

"And during all those busy hours,
Filled with estates, wills, companies' powers
In closing deals and court work—now
A genuine lawyer thou."

Enough has been written regarding woman as set out in the first paragraph; it is of the amendment we would treat, and we have nothing to say which will indicate any contradiction or incompatibility if the words in the definitions are construed according to well known rules.¹ In passing be it known that by women barristers the expression "my learned friend" is infinitely more appreciated than "Portia"; as women they may discuss the trend of fashions or places where cakes may be purchased just as their brother lawyers ask advice about their Spring overcoats or boast of their gardens, but in the profession they prefer to be known as the vendor's solicitor or counsel for the defence, hoping that the practising lawyers' sex may be of the same importance as their religious persuasion, party allegiance and financial rating.

Of necessity the story of Women in Law must be brief, they have so recently come into the field. Britishers, to whom the Inns of Court and Old Bailey seem as old as Britain herself can scarcely realize that the first woman in the Empire to be called to the Bar was called in Ontario in 1897, and even in that province there is no woman who has been practising for fifteen years.

In the United States of America women lawyers or attorneys as they are called have progressed very rapidly and many occupy important position. Mrs. Willebrandt is Assistant Attorney-General and there are women State, District and Circuit Attorneys, Judges of Juvenile and Supreme Courts and one Law School has a woman President of their Senate.

¹See Maxwell on Interpretation of Statutes page 98, or Craie's Hardcastle, page 73.

English women barristers have just made a beginning in their country as the Act enabling them to practise (The Sex Discrimination (Removal) Act) was passed as recently as 1917. The first woman to be admitted had surpassed all previous records in the Bar Examinations. In the ten years following the enabling Act we read of women successfully pleading cases and on December 3rd., 1926, a woman advocate appeared with a brief in the Privy Council. To indicate the attitude towards women in Law we quote from an article in the *Manchester Guardian* (Weekly) of February 4th, 1927: "It is gratifying to find that so much of the work of the ordinary practising barrister is suitable for women. Some cases, indeed, involving the interests of women and children may be more sympathetically and successfully conducted by a woman. Embarking on the career of a barrister-at-law is attended with great risk, even for a man. The first year, it is said, he lives on faith, the second on hope and the third on charity, so that perhaps to-day a woman has equal opportunity with men of making a livelihood at the Bar. But the early years of the woman practising at the Bar are necessarily precarious. At this point one must add that a sound knowledge of law is a splendid qualification for many posts now open to women, as well as the traditional stepping-stone to a political career. Prejudices against women in the profession are breaking down."

Canada has quite a number of women barristers, although approximately half the number who are qualified give up the active practice for matrimony—a regrettable fact as far as this article is concerned, but too complicated to discuss here. Some women lawyers are associated with large firms in the cities, others are in partnership firms and a small group practising by themselves, carrying on just as men are—handling the different branches of law, which make up a general practice, mixing in the life of the community, taking part in election campaigns and interested in civic affairs. During the past year in Ontario women barristers could be heard in the Courts from Police to Appellate and a Toronto paper quotes its Ottawa correspondent as follows: "And it is no longer a front page news item if a Portia appears in a Canadian Law Court." In spite of this encouraging newspaper note Law is a pioneer field for women although prejudice is fast disappearing and people are acknowledging that women practise Law for precisely the same reasons as do their fathers, brothers or cousins and with as much earnestness and ambition. Possibly there are a few gentlemen—even in the profession who speak disparagingly of women lawyers and in the next breath quote the Statutes of Ann, Elizabeth and Victoria. Have

patience, they too will be overcome by logic, but not, we trust, of the school which reasons thus;

All men are logical

Women are not men

Therefore women are not logical.

The history of women in Law is like that of the Dominion of Canada, relatively short and concerned with a comparatively small group of people; however, like their country Canadian women lawyers hope to add to their numbers and achievements—striving meanwhile to emulate the good sportsmanship of their brothers, to be learned in the Law and to continue indefatigable in maintaining the British justice of which they are so rightly proud.

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THE CYNIC'S TESTAMENT.—According to the *Atlantic Monthly* the following is an excerpt from the will of a Wall Street man which has recently been probated in New York State:—

To my wife, I leave her lover and the knowledge that I wasn't the fool she thought I was.

To my son, I leave the pleasure of earning a living. For thirty-five years he has thought that the pleasure was all mine. He was mistaken.

To my daughter, I leave \$100,000. She will need it. The only good piece of business her husband ever did was to marry her.

To my valet, I leave the clothes that he has been stealing from me regularly for the last ten years. Also my fur coat that he wore last winter when I was in Palm Beach.

To my chauffeur, I leave my cars. He almost ruined them and I want him to have the satisfaction of finishing the job.

To my partner, I leave the suggestion that he take some other clever man in with him at once if he expects to do any business.