

Law as a Career For Women

THREE BRILLIANT ADELAIDE GIRLS

(Written Specially for "The Mail.")

South Australia has cause to be proud of its three women advocates. One of them admits that very few girls are fitted to be lawyers. The lady barrister must have plenty of assurance and a logical mind.

A WAY back in the eighteenth century a certain poet wrote of law:—

And sovereign law, that State's collected will, O'er thrones and globes elate, Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill.

You will note that he says "empress," and not "emperor," proving conclusively that he at any rate gave to the gentler sex a higher place than many of his contemporaries.

A prejudice is a cumbersome thing, an obstacle which more often than not takes



MISS MARY KITSON, LL.B.

years to surmount. One of the prejudices which still looms large on the horizon of the present generation is that which would thwart the aspirations of women who feel they are fitted to become members of the professions which for centuries have been considered the prerogative of men.

When facts are presented logically by those who are in a position to speak with authority the natural result should be a change of viewpoint on the part of any who are open to conviction. I have no time for him (or her), "who complies against his (or her) will," for, to continue the axiom, he or she "is of the same opinion still."

But in law, as in every other profession, the greatest factor which makes for success is a sense of the eternal fitness of things, attainable only by the placing of the right individual in the right place. A boy has an undoubted talent for engineering; his father has set his mind on his being a poet, and insists on the lad studying prosody and versifying, with the result that whereas, had he followed his own bent, he might have revolutionised the world by some wonderful invention, he now turns out so-called verse which serves no other purpose than to furnish horrible examples of defective syntax for schoolchildren to avoid. This is perhaps an exaggerated supposition, but it may not be so very wide of the mark after all.

With a view to ascertaining the opinions of those who, though not yet hoary-headed, are even thus early in a position to make statements of value, I sought out Adelaide's three women lawyers and asked them individually to express their views whether the law is a suitable career for girls to adopt. One would scarcely expect them to say it was not, as each of them has chosen it of her own free will, but in every undertaking there are pros and cons, hence my desire to hear what they had to say on the subject.

LAW'S HUMAN INTEREST.

Miss Mary Cecil Kitson, LL.B., was the first woman to be called to the Bar in South Australia. She served her articles with Mr. Justice Poole (then Mr. T. Slaney Poole) and is now a partner in the firm of Johnstone, Kitson, & Olsson.

"It is," Miss Kitson remarked, "now many years since law was a recognised profession for women in Ame-



MISS AILEEN INGLEBY, LL.B.

rica and France, but it is still somewhat of a novelty in Australia. Medicine, science, and arts had all been explored before law was thought of. This was probably due to the fact that the law itself prevented women from entering its precincts, and in part to popular opinion, which chooses to consider law a very dull and dreary study.

"To the outsider it certainly has not the wide human sympathy and attraction of medicine, nor are there wonderful discoveries periodically cabled from one end of the earth to the other to excite new enthusiasm and lure the student on as in the other sciences. At the same time law as a study ill deserves the reputation for dryness it has so long possessed. It has a wide human interest all its own, and offers immense possibilities for social service.

"And why should it be dry? Few consider politics dry, so why should laws in force be of less interest than laws in the making? Ever since women entered the University we have been accustomed to seeing them figuring in the first-class honours list, and the law school is not more difficult than any other.

"Once admitted to practice, there are really two divisions in the profession—barristers and solicitors. A successful barrister requires, besides knowledge of the law, of course, a clear, well-balanced mind. He should be a fair public speaker and a good debater, quick to see an opponent's point—quicker still to combat it. He must have an accurate memory, ready to quote chapter and verse in support of any opinion he puts forth, and, if he is to be successful with juries, he must have an individual forcefulness of character. There certainly are women who have these qualifications and who should succeed at the Bar, but, of course, nothing definite can be said on one side or the other until the experiment has been tried.

"Patience, accuracy, and attention to detail are the chief requirements of a good conveyancer, whose duty it is to make an accurate statement of accurate facts with as little possibility as possible. Every practitioner must learn the art of dealing with human nature and should always be quite upright, but never too downright.

"In most countries a woman would have to make a choice between being a barrister and being a solicitor. In South Australia, however, we are most fortunate, as, on admission to the Bar, one is qualified to practise as a solicitor and also as a barrister should one so desire. There is no reason to stop women, if they wish it, from advancing in wig and gown to the counsel table and using their influence there in support of the cause they advocate. One must remember that there are brilliant, mediocre, and inferior men in



MISS DOROTHY SOMERVILLE, B.A., L.A.B.

every profession and trade, and the same will apply to women."

KNOWLEDGE HARD TO APPLY.

Miss Dorothy Somerville, B.A., LL.B., who served her articles with Messrs. Fisher, Ward, Powers, & Jeffries, and is now managing clerk for Messrs. Isbister, Hayward, Magarey, & Finlayson, voiced her opinion in no uncertain way. She would not advise any girl to take up the study of law casually or as a means of whiling away her leisure moments. It is a very difficult course, and the four years at the University do not constitute the most strenuous part.

"It is much harder after you are through," said Miss Somerville, "to apply the knowledge you have gained, than merely to acquire it."

"Very few girls are fitted, either physically or temperamentally, to be lawyers. She who intends taking it up seriously should, above all things, have an exceptionally strong constitution, especially if she wishes to do Court work. She must be capable of taking a wide survey of the case under discussion, have a logical mind, and plenty of assurance, and must be able to inspire her clients with confidence—not the easiest thing in the world."

LAWYERS CANNOT BE CYNICS.

Miss Aileen Constance Ingleby, LL.B., was articled to her father, Mr. Rupert Ingleby, and is now his managing clerk. She pointed out that perhaps there is something in heredity, for the three women who have been called to the Bar in South Australia are the progeny of those who have been connected with the profession in one way or another.

"I think," said Miss Ingleby, "that the study of law and the practice of it as a profession is a wonderful education for a woman. It changes one's philosophy of life and makes one look for the good that is unquestionably in everyone. It is an impossibility for a lawyer to be a cynic, for one comes into such close contact with one's clients and receives their confidence to such an extent that one becomes more human thereby. A woman who intends to become a lawyer must have her emotions well under control and must not be squeamish. The gently-nurtured girl does not necessarily have her feelings hurt when listening to sordid details, for the personal element disappears in office work."

CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT.

The third concert of the 1923 season of the Elder Conservatorium was given in the Elder Hall on Monday evening, in the presence of an appreciative audience, which included Lady Bridges. It took the form of a chamber music recital, and a programme of great interest was admirably presented. In the opening number, "String Quartet in F Flat," Opus 125, No. 1 (Schubert), the performers were Miss Sylvia Whittington, A.M.U.A. (first violin), Miss Kathleen Meehan, A.M.U.A. (second violin), Miss Clarice Gmeiner (viola), and Mr. Harold Parsons, Mus. Bac. (violin cello). The work is one of great charm and consists of allegro moderato, scherzo, trio, adagio, and finale allegro. The beautiful figures were finely illustrated, and the artists played with good tone and delicate shading. The haunting poetry with which the writing abounds was nicely emphasised, and the treatment throughout was sympathetic and artistic. A group of songs, presented by Miss Hilda Gill, A.M.U.A., with Mr. Harold Wilde, F.R.C.O., as accompanist, made a decidedly popular contribution to the evening's programme. Miss Gill fully maintained the high standard which has won for her such general favor. Each of the works selected served to display her rich contralto voice to advantage. The items were:—"La Procession" (Cesar Franck), "The Silent Town" (Sibelius), "Damaek Roses," and "The Faithless Shepherdess" (Roger Quilter). So delighted was the audience with the rendering of the bracket that an encore number was insisted on, and Miss Gill responded with C. Scott's well-known "Lullaby." The concert was brought to a close by a really distinguished performance of the "Trio in C Minor," Opus 5 (Max Bruch), by Miss Whittington, Mr. Parsons, and Mr. George Pearce (piano). Each of the three movements was brilliantly given. In the opening andante, molto cantabile, the violin and violoncello set a high standard in introducing the principal theme, and this was maintained through the whole work by each of the instruments. An appropriate dignity was imparted to the composition in the more majestic parts, while a graceful liquidity marked the allegro assai. In the final movement, presto, the brilliancy of the writing was appropriately illustrated. The difficult piano parts were played with a finished and masterly technique and true appreciation of the composer's intention. Equally good work was also done in the violin and cello divisions.

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LAWN TENNIS.

Inter-Varsity Women's Championship.

The competition for the Inter-Varsity Women's Lawn Tennis Championship of Australia for 1923 was started at Adelaide University courts on Monday. Unfortunately, the weather was squally and showery. Notwithstanding unfavourable climatic conditions, however, some high-class play was witnessed. The visiting teams were from Melbourne (holders), Sydney, and Brisbane. The Adelaide and Sydney representatives opened the competition, and they will conclude their rubbers to-day, and the Melbourne and Queensland players will make a start. Each side has to contest four doubles and eight singles against each of their opponents. The winners and losers will play off. Sydney at present has a big advantage over Adelaide, having won the two doubles rubbers and the three singles rubbers played, and having the lead in the fourth singles rubber. Luncheon was provided in the University Boatshed by the University Women's Union, the President of which (Dr. Dorothea Pavy) extended a hearty welcome to the visiting teams. Details of the play:—

SYDNEY V. ADELAIDE.

- Doubles. Misses L. Bickerton and E. Hunt (S.) beat Misses G. Ure and L. Morris, 3-6, 6-4, 8-6. Misses G. Jones and P. Miller (S.) beat Misses M. Hardy and J. Taplin, 6-3, 6-3. Singles. Miss Bickerton (S.) beat Miss Hardy, 6-1. Miss Hunt (S.) beat Miss Ure, 6-3, 6-1. Miss Miller (S.) beat Miss Taplin, 6-4, 6-1. Miss Jones (S.) beat Miss Morris, 9-7. Rubber unfinished.