

# PROFESSIONAL WOMEN TELL OF HANDICAPS

## Each Having Attained Success in Her Career, Lawyer, Actress, Physician, Writer and Teacher Tell of the Bars Which Were Placed in Their Path Solely Because They Were Women.



Inez Mitholland Boissevain  
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that, with the exception of the New York Infirmary for Women and Children, there was none that would admit me. And at the New York Infirmary the training, though admirable, was not general, but chiefly gynecological, which was not what I wanted just then.

"So I began a canvass of all the hospitals of New York City. I was armed with letters and introductions, for a great many people were deeply interested in the success of my experiment. Chief among them was Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi, one of the founders of the New York Infirmary and a pioneer physician and suffragist.

ous things of life in an expert, careful and keen-sighted way. "But when the man stops to think, and the woman, too, she will say: 'Oh, this man has had more practice in law or in medicine, therefore he will be likely to have more skill than the woman who has less frequent cases.'



Edith Ellis Furness



Nixola Greeley Smith



Dr. Emily Dunning Barringer

**THE** Handicaps Now Placed on Professional Women" was the topic that inspired various members of the Feminist Alliance to reveal the struggles they had undergone to achieve success in an outer world that was, until recently, man's own. Lawyer, actress, physician, writer, teacher, one after the other, they told of the handicaps they had been forced to fight against in their professions—just because they were women.

It was at the home of Mrs. Joseph Wise, 35 West 74th Street, that this professional women's meeting was held last Thursday evening. And all of the feminists whose names stand for something were there. Inez Mitholland presented the woman lawyer's side of the question; Edith Ellis Furness told of the struggles of the actress and the woman playwright in a man-made world; Emily Barringer revealed the handicaps of the woman physician; Nixola Greeley-Smith, of the woman journalist, and Henrietta Rodman told of the handicaps placed on the teacher.

The meeting was held under the auspices of the Feminist Alliance and a Committee on Married Women Teachers, consisting of Mrs. Marion B. Cotler, Mrs. Rheta Childe Dorr, Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Mrs. Marie Jenney Howe, Mrs. Alice Duer Miller, Mrs. Nina Wilcox Putnam, Mrs. Uden Mills Reid and Mrs. Norman de R. Whitehouse. The feminists listened proudly to the protests, for, after all, each of the speakers, as well as many in the audience, had made good in her profession in spite of the "handicap of being a woman."

Miss Nixola Greeley-Smith, who presented the case of woman in journalism, is employed by a newspaper syndicate to spread the cult of feminism, and she receives a distinctive salary for doing this agreeable work. It is, therefore, interesting to know where in lie the faults of a system which seemingly favors her, and Miss Greeley-Smith showed the Feminist Alliance how insidiously the world of man has choked the blossom of journalism for women.

**Women Journalists Write as Men Dictate.**

"The field of journalism is more open to women than are many of the other fields," she declared. "But they have never gone very far in it. They may do work which men deem suitable for women, and no other. They may write about cooking; they may write about dress. And they may write on one other subject—sex. They may have interviews with well known people. But they must discuss sex. And they must see sex as man sees it, not as they really find it. And they may talk about it in the way in which man has prescribed for them. They talk about their 'erring sister' and what she wants. They never talk about what they want. Ellen Key said that there are women who want motherhood regardless of marriage ceremonies. She did not say: 'I want to be absolved of pasts, just as my husband is.'

"Of course, when I believe in one standard of morality, I do not mean a low one. I mean one better standard. There are, however, women who do believe that certain rights are denied them. They want pasts. But they do not say so. They speak of other women who want them. To most women the prohibition of ages has finally become inhibition. To others it has become unjust discrimination."

**No Women Executive Journalists.**

There are no city editors, there are no managing editors and there are no editorial writers among women. "Why?" said Miss Greeley-Smith. "Why, because they are women. That is all. Women who write must write about love, and pour out sweet sugary stuff. That is the only sort that man likes to receive from them. You know man is of the sentimental sex. The best sub-sister is always the man. The woman sees the facts and the real truth of the matter. The man

### FEMINISTS WHO TELL OF THEIR UPHILL STRUGGLE TO SUCCESS.

riders out joyfully on his sentiments. A few of them have broken loose, and write articles which are editorials in all but the form in which they are presented, but they must be signed by the woman's name in order to show the world that they are her opinions being expressed, not those of the paper. For who would care to be represented by a woman?

"But there is a more fundamental reason than that," she said. "Most women are not fit to be anything else. Men say women are not as creative, artistically, as men. My surprise is that they have done as much as they have. You know you can't set a person to reading hymns and only hymns all his life, and then ask him to lead a political campaign. Likewise, if a woman is only to be interested in what woman wears, and what she cooks, and in the differences of the sexes, she cannot be expected to have opinions on big general questions of the day." It would be senseless to chain an animal and then chide it for not running loose.

**Playing Man's Game.**

That women lack originality she forcibly denied. "Men have invented their game. We must not only play this game, which they like, but we must play it according to their own rules. We have nothing whatever to say about it. They tell us to do this and that, and we obey. We know that what they want is the only thing they will sanction. Originality means oblivion. It is the quickest route to the wastebasket. They would not like our individuality a bit at first. We should be too apt to call a spade a spade."

**Passed Examination with High Rating.**

"This was terribly disheartening after all my work. Nevertheless, though this decision was irrevocable, I decided to take the examination just the same, for I felt that merely to have a woman take it would establish a valuable precedent and be at least a beginning in bringing the matter before the public. This permission was not revoked, but I was told that my rating would not be published as the others were. I afterward learned that I had stood high enough to obtain a position had I been a man."

**Woman Actress Presents Man's Interpretation.**

Mrs. Edith Ellis Furness, actress, playwright and producer, took a gloomy view of the actress's lot in the man-made world of the theatre.

"A woman has no chance at all in the theatrical profession," she said, "because, whichever way she turns, she is up against some man. She may not give her own interpretation of a part, but has to accept the male director's or manager's. She has to appear in plays written and selected by men with no understanding of feminine psychology. The men of the theatre are ignorant of the woman's movement and of the modern viewpoint. They move only among their kind and know nothing of social questions. They make the theatre the most reactionary branch of art."

**Various Hospitals I Had Met Again and Again the Same Stock Objections to My Plea.**

They were as follows:

1. There was no precedent.
2. There were no adequate quarters for women physicians.
3. There would be trouble with the nursing staff.
4. There would be trouble with the woman superintendent.
5. Women were not strong enough physically.
6. Ambulance work was too heavy for them.
7. They had not nerve enough to be house surgeons or to handle alarming hemorrhages.
8. There would be trouble with the men patients.
9. There would be trouble with discipline.
10. It was not woman's work.
11. There would be trouble with the house staff.
12. There would be trouble with the medical board.

**That is the way they will excuse themselves.**

By far the largest class, Mrs. Boissevain pointed out, is that of the person who frankly or otherwise disbelieves in a woman's ability solely because she is a woman. "I find that in law, just as other women in other professions do. In Oxford, when examinations were rated according to sex, it was found that women always received very much lower marks. In art exhibitions women's paintings were ranked lower. Until papers and works of art were sent in anonymously results were far different."

**No Bias at the Bar.**

"But when we try a case there is no prejudice against us. Other lawyers, the judges and the jury are all willing to make allowances and to help us. At least that has been my experience. But that we must work against as strenuously as against anything else. There must be no sex discrimination. What we must do is to agitate and to talk

**Ideal Candidates.**

**Board.** Three Would-Be Teachers.

**Chorus by Board:** Now please don't waste Your time and ours By pleas all based On mental powers. She seems to us The proper stuff Who has a husband Band had enough. All other pleas appear to us Excessively superfluous.

**1st Teacher:** My husband is not really bad—  
**Board:** How very sad, how very sad!  
**1st Teacher:** He's good, but hear my one excuse—  
**Board:** Oh, what's the use; oh, what's the use?  
**1st Teacher:** Last winter in a railroad wreck He lost an arm and broke his neck. He's doomed, but lingers day by day.  
**Board:** Her husband's doomed! Hurray, hurray!

**2nd Teacher:** My husband's kind, and healthy, too.  
**Board:** Why, then, of course, you will not do.  
**2nd Teacher:** Just hear me out. You'll find you're wrong. It's true his body's good and strong; But, ah, his wits are all astray.  
**Board:** Her husband's mad! Hip, hip, hurray!

**3rd Teacher:** My husband's wise and well—the creature!  
**Board:** Then you can never be a teacher.  
**3rd Teacher:** Wait. For I led him such a life. He could not stand me as a wife; Last Michaelmas he ran away.  
**Board:**

### ARE WOMEN PEOPLE? By ALICE DUER MILLER

**YOU NEVER KNOW YOUR LUCK.**

A bylaw of the New York Board of Education says: "No married woman shall be appointed to any teaching or supervising position in the New York public schools unless her husband is mentally or physically incapacitated to earn a living, or has deserted her for a period of not less than one year. Satisfactory proof of such incapacity or desertion must be presented to the Board of Education."

Her husband hates her. Hip, hurray!  
**Chorus by Board:** Now we have found Without a doubt, By process sound And well thought out, Each candidate Is fit in truth To educate The mind of youth. No teacher need apply to us Whose married life's harmonious. (Curtain.)

**ASK YOUR FATHER.**

The New York Board of Education gives as the first cause for which leave of absence may be granted: Serious personal illness of the teacher. We have not yet discovered whether the illness incident to bearing a child is not serious, or not personal.

**OUR OWN ANTI-SUFFRAGE COLUMN.**

(Drawn from letters to "The New York Times" of February 14, 1915.)

**TOO CLOSELY, SOME THINK.**

Party politics deal with the business aspects of government. It is man's business, and is closely related to his personal business.—Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge.

**NOTHING TO WIVES AND MOTHERS.**

With battles to be fought by men, and men's lives to be sacrificed, it would seem only fair that men alone should determine a nation's policy.—J. Howard Cowperthwaite.

**SOME OLD-FASHIONED COMPLIMENTS.**

Rebellious women think they can grow to do all things as well as men. They excel in two things—nursing and singing soprano.—E. G. K.

Men are practical and just, and women are temperamentally impressionable, erratic and very theoretical.—W. F. Quinn, Alderman, 15th District.

A few descriptive terms selected at random: Restless, dissatisfied, wild, shrieking, blatant, loud-voiced, female demagogues and chronic limelight hunters.

**VERY FITTING.**

One grandmother in St. Louis is reported to have been influenced by "The Times" anti-suffrage editorial.

**THE DANGER.**

I pity those with all my heart Who think they play through good and ill, A wise, a safe, a prudent part By standing absolutely still.

They think they're cautious, sure and strong, But sometimes living people say: "This rock has blocked the stream too long, It's time to blast it all away."