

# The Woman Question.

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**I**T is safe to say that never before in the history of the world has the subject of woman been discussed as it is at the present time. It has always been assumed that the female side of humanity should be kept in the background, because woman is the weaker sex. Probably the *general* attitude has not changed; but in the ranks of the best thinkers, the assumption of the inferiority is not accepted as an unquestionable truth. Long usage gives the suggestion the authority of age; but no one will admit that because of its venerableness therefore it is correct. Indeed it might with more reason be declared that its antiquity would suggest its error, especially if the order of progress is "out of error into truth." We certainly have this fact strongly placed before us: that in these days of the highest enlightenment, one of the most advanced contentions is that women have been treated unfairly up to now, and the world's attitude to the so-called "weaker sex" is that this treatment should be rectified.

We have to ask how far we are correct in assigning to women a secondary or inferior place in most of our affairs. That there are differences in the characteristics of the sex is admitted on all hands, but are those differences of such a nature as to warrant the subordinate place which we assign to womankind? For so long have we been accustomed to accept it as perfectly correct that men should manage the affairs of state, take all the prominent posts in educational affairs, perform all the functions of surgery and medicine, and direct all the duties and work of the various professions—concluding that woman's only sphere is the home, that it is taken without question that man is the higher and nobler creature, and woman the weaker and inferior. But it is worth while to ask whether this is justified by facts. Are the differences of the sex of such a quality as to forbid women