

Miss Elizabeth Blackwell, M. D.

A late number of the *National Era* contains a sketch of this young lady's history, which is not only interesting, but is instructive also in showing what can be accomplished by the gentle sex in the way of acquiring knowledge, when stimulated thereto by a proper object. Our purpose however in referring to the case, is not to remark on Miss Blackwell's perseverance or mental acquirements, which are certainly highly creditable to her, but upon the association of her sex with the profession she has chosen.

According to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, this young lady is said to be the first Medical Doctor of her sex in the United States. She is a regular graduate of the Geneva Medical School, having received her diploma from that institution this spring. In the sketch referred to, it is well said that, "her case is naturally enough one of those questionable matters upon which there must be a great variety of opinions." The novelty of the thing is calculated to make one, who gives it but little thought, set it down as decidedly incompatible with the female character, as much so, as is the profession of the law or arms. And then, there is something in the idea of surgical instruments, blood-letting, calomel dosing, and such like things, repugnant to our notions of the delicacy and shrinking sensibility that is the peculiar attribute of women. The retirement and quietude of the family circle are what we suppose to be more agreeable to the female disposition, and where she can with more propriety dispense those blessings which Heaven seems to have made her its agent to distribute.

Yet, for all that, it must be confessed, that in a sick chamber she is a "ministering angel;" and that there are diseases peculiar to females, which should be treated by woman and woman alone. The whole branch of Obstetrics should be left entirely to female practitioners. It is repugnant to our notion of propriety, that any other than female doctors should be engaged in that branch. There are other cases, too, which female delicacy painfully shrinks from consulting a male doctor about. A female doctor would of course direct her studies particularly, and confine her practice altogether to the diseases and cases that are peculiar to her sex. We may be alone in these notions, yet they are sincerely entertained and have been by us for a long time.

We think there should be female Medical Schools, where the science of Medicine and Anatomy could be taught to such as wished to learn the profession. We have no doubt there would be numbers of strong minded women who would avail themselves of such opportunities to qualify themselves for medical practitioners among their sex; and we express our gratification that Miss Blackwell has set an example for others to follow.