

PORTIAS OF TO-DAY.

All Paris, nay, all France, is discussing the interesting case of Mdlle. Jeanne Chauvin, the learned young lady who claims her right to practise at the French Bar. Not only has she passed all the usual examinations which turn the ordinary French lad into a barrister, but she has also obtained the far higher degree of *Docteur en droit*. But here again the would-be Portia is by no means alone, for a considerable number of French girls compete successfully with their brothers in the law schools. Mdlle. Chauvin,

at the probable influence exercised by the Chauvin Portias of the future not only on juries but also on judges.

Although France and the United States between them provide most of the lady lawyers of the present day, there is scarce a country but can bring forward at least one lady barrister.

In 1881 Lydia Poët passed the highest law degree conferred at the Turin University. Twelve years later she was, for a short time, actually allowed to practise. Her right to do so was then taken away; but, nothing daunted, she has now joined her brother, a well-known Italian

prevent her making in time a brilliant career at the Indian Bar.

Another lady whose name is widely known for her legal attainments is the Roumanian Sarmisa Bilcesco. She passed very brilliantly all the Paris Law Faculty examinations, and then returned to Bucharest, where, as a matter of principle and in order to prove her point, she obtained the right to practise, without, however, caring to avail herself of the privilege.

Madame Kempin-Spyri is the daughter of a Swiss clergyman. She passed her Bar examinations some twelve



MDLLE. MARIE POPELIN,
Belgium.



MADAME SIGNÉ SILEN,
Finland.



MISS CLARA BRETT MARTIN,
Canada.



MISS LETITIA WALKINGTON,
Ireland.

however, is the first who has seriously claimed the right of actually practising in the Paris Law Courts.

No section of French professional life is more jealously guarded than is the *Barreau*, the members of which, it will be remembered, claim the proud title from time immemorial of *noblesse de la robe*. Accordingly the young lady's calm assumption that she has a right to enter in an active sense within the charmed circle has thrown every individual connected with the Paris Palace of Justice, from the Judges to

barrister, and though she does not appear in court, she is known to be one of the great authorities on penal law in her adopted country, for the Poëts, as the name implies, are of French extraction.

Finland is represented by M^{rs}. Anna Akesson, who is still on the right side of five-and-thirty, and who has made a very great reputation as a speaker in the Finnish Law Courts. Finland is evidently the happy hunting-ground of the lady barrister, for Signé Silen, although she has

years ago at Zurich, and made a gallant attempt to obtain an authorisation to practise. This, however, was refused her, and some three years ago she settled in Berlin. She transacts a great deal of legal business for the Anglo-American colony. So far, Germany has but one lady barrister, *Fraulein Anita Augspurg*, of Hanover. She belongs to a well-known family of Hanoverian law-givers. She studied at Zurich, and is about to try and persuade the Munich Bar to admit her as a working barrister.



MRS. L. J. ROBINSON-SAWTELL,
U.S.A.



MDLLE. JEANNE CHAUVIN,
France.



MRS. MYRA BRADWELL,
U.S.A.



MDLLE. KATRINE DAHL,
Norway.

the Ushers, into a state of great emotion, the more so that there seems absolutely no legal impediment to her carrying out her design. Mdlle. Chauvin has found a considerable number of gallant advocates quite willing to espouse her cause, notably a distinguished Belgian barrister, *Maitre Louis Frank*, who has written a learned treatise proving her absolute right to practise. He points out that she appears before those who are to decide her fate with many more real claims to consideration than do most of her male

not actually passed all the law examinations, is in active work, and has even pleaded before the Senate of her country.

Nanna Berg, Elsa Eschelsson, and Katrine Dahl uphold the claims of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. The first of these ladies married and retired from practice some time ago; *Fraulein Eschelsson* is famed for her legal knowledge, but does not seem to practise. *Katrine Dahl* became a Doctor in Civil Law seven years ago, and she

Mdlle Marie Popelin is well known in Belgium, where her efforts to conquer the prejudices of the Brussels Bar created a great deal of interest some time ago. She is now one of the heads of the Belgian Women's Rights Party; and as she has not been allowed to pursue her profession, she devotes her remarkable elocutionary gifts to the Cause.

Canada can now boast of a very successful lady barrister. Miss Clara Brett Martin won over the Ontario



MRS. BELVA LOCKWOOD,
U.S.A.



MDLLE. ELSA ESCHELSSON,
Sweden.



MDLLE. NANNA BERG,
Denmark.



MDLLE. SARMISA BILCESCO,
Roumania.

confères; for not only has she obtained all the necessary diplomas, but during the last few years she has conducted with the greatest success an elementary law class in several of the foremost feminine *lycées* of Paris, and she has also written for a considerable number of law reviews and papers; while she claims to be an authority on all the French laws affecting women's life and work.

The Anti-Chauvinists, however, declare that if she is admitted to practise, every intelligent French girl who has a liking for law, and whose parents can dispose of a small capital in her favour, will be able to assume in time the judicial robes. They also assert, probably with truth, that a great many people will prefer to place their legal affairs in the hands of a woman who has proved herself to be competent than in those of a man; and they hint darkly

is making active efforts to obtain leave to exercise her profession.

To Miss Letitia Alice Walkington belongs the credit of having first studied law at a British University. She is a distinguished graduate of Trinity College, Dublin; but she does not seem, however, to have wished to practise at the Irish Bar.

Most of those interested in the higher education of women know something of the curious and instructive career of *Cornelia Sorabji*, the young Indian lady who, after completing her studies with great success at Oxford, spent some time in a London solicitor's office in order to make herself acquainted with the more practical side of law. Since her return to India she has ably presided over a native women's college, but there is, apparently, nothing to

Parliament to her side, and a special law was passed in her favour authorising the Canadian Bar to admit women to all its privileges. So far, this young lady seems to be alone in the exercise of her profession, but the moment we pass over into the United States, the lady lawyer meets us here, there, and everywhere. There is a flourishing league, the National League of American Women Barristers, of which the president, *Miss Florence Cronise*, of Ohio, has had a fine practice during the last twenty-three years; while her sister, *Mrs. Lutes*, in partnership with her husband, a distinguished American barrister, is also well known in legal circles.

Mrs. Belva A. Lockwood, of Washington, was actually the first woman admitted to the Supreme Court of the United States. She is well known as an advocate of