

TO MME EUGÈNE BODICHON, [?28 MARCH 1868]

[iv, 425]

Carclew | Hesketh Road | Torquay.

My dear Barbara . . .

I think Ruskin has not been encouraged about women by his many and persistent efforts to teach them. He seems to have found them wanting in real scientific interest—bent on sentimentalizing in everything.

What I should like to be sure of as a result of higher education for women—a result that will come to pass over my grave—is, their recognition of the great amount of social unproductive labour which needs to be done by women, and which is now either not done at all or done wretchedly. No good can come to women, more than to any class of male mortals, while each aims at doing the highest kind of work, which ought rather to be held in sanctity as what only the few can do well. I believe—and I want it to be well shown—that a more thorough education will tend to do away with the odious vulgarity of our notions about functions and employment, and to propagate the true gospel that the deepest disgrace is to insist on doing work for which we are unfit—to do work of any sort badly. There are many points of this kind that want being urged, but they do not come well from me, and I never like to be quoted in any way on this subject. But I will talk to you some day, and ask you to prevail on Miss Davies to write a little book which is much wanted.

We are uncertain whether we shall stay here more than a week

Ever thine
Marian.