

WILLIAM E. FREDEMAN and IRA B. NADEL

## THE (John Stuart) MILL-ENNIUN: A Note on the Frontispiece

The satirical frontispiece to this number of *JPRAS* is particularly apt in light of the new edition of Max Beerbohm's *Rossetti and His Circle*, edited by N. John Hall, which is noticed under reviews. One of the most famous and amusingly incongruous caricatures in that volume is that depicting the meeting of Rossetti and the publisher John Morley, who has brought John Stuart Mill to Cheyne Walk to meet the artist. Morley is soliciting the artist to illustrate Mill's latest (and last published) book, *The Subjection of Women* (1869). The cartoon depicts a bemused Rossetti attending to Morley, behind whom stands the wimpish and dessicated figure of the dubious author, who holds in his hands a top hat and a satchel. On the wall in the background is a typically fulsome Rossetti portrait of a lady, probably Fanny. "It has recently," Morley says,

occurred to Mr. Mill that in his lifelong endeavour to catch and keep the ear of the nation he has been hampered by a certain deficiency in—well, in warmth, in colour, in rich charms. I have told him that this deficiency (I do not regard it as a defect) might possibly be remedied by *you*. Mr. Mill has in press at the moment a new work, entitled "The Subjection of Women." From my slight acquaintance with you, and from all that I have seen and heard of your work, I gather that women greatly interest you, and I have no doubt that you are incensed at their subjection. Mr. Mill has brought his proof-sheets with him. He will read them to you. I believe, and he takes my word for it, that a series of illustrative paintings by you would etc., etc.

"It is doubtful," as Professor Hall points out in his introduction, "that even illustrations

by Rossetti would have mitigated the violent abuse that the publication of *The Subjection of Women* generated in the press" (35). Mill's work, however, written in 1861 in collaboration with his stepdaughter, Helen Taylor, is regarded as a classic of Victorian feminist writing, and Mill himself was clearly one of the leading champions of women's rights. One of the sponsors of Newnham College (1871) at Cambridge and a staunch advocate of female suffrage, who proposed an unsuccessful amendment to the 1867 Reform Bill suggesting that the word "man" be replaced by "person" (fig. 1), Mill was also influential in furthering the cause of higher education for women, a controversial issue almost as contentious as the suffrage question itself, neither of which was resolved until the twentieth century. One of the provisions of Mill's will was a legacy of £5000 to be paid to the first college to award a degree to a woman. It is one of the ironies in the history of the women's movement that Miss Taylor exercised a codicil in the will and refused to honour his bequest.

Vera Brittain has traced in her "Fragment of a History," *The Women at Oxford* (1960), the sequence of protracted skirmishes and minor victories, often no more than Pyrrhic triumphs, that led finally to the granting of degrees to women in 1920, over forty years after London University (1879) and nearly thirty years later than the Scottish Universities (1893); only Cambridge (1947) held out longer. When the Oxford Congregation rejected women following the heated battle of 1896, *Punch* ran a cartoon entitled *Ladies Not Admitted*, showing a college don blocking the entry to college of a bespectacled Minerva: