

was clearly well developed. Even at fourteen Mary's ambition was to become a doctor. She was following in the family tradition, but was independent enough to resist her mother's inducements to trade on family contacts in Britain. Mary had obviously been brought up to think of herself as the equal of any man. She wrote to her father that she would

hate to be a regular inhabitant of . . . any town in Switzerland or France. . . . Girls can never go out alone with boys, and all sorts of things like this; girls even when engaged have to show their letters to their mother, and when they are married—to their husbands—just think of it. They are so different from us. . . . When you see the men and hear them speak to girls,—there is no respect at all,—just regard them as toys, or as housekeepers and servants—never as equals.¹⁵

The fact that Mary found this attitude different tells us quite a lot about the relationship between the sexes in New Zealand (at least as Mary had experienced it). Furthermore, at fourteen, Mary saw her future fulfillment in being able to work for her own living. She encouraged a young woman whom she met in Germany to study for a degree:

She wants to earn her own living, but her father won't let her as he is rich enough to keep her,—as if the fact that her parents could afford to keep her in luxury made up to a girl for the independence she has in working for her livelihood, and appreciating the money so much the more when she has earned it herself.¹⁶

Although Mary was in Europe primarily to learn French and German and to become acquainted with the great cultural centres of the world, she subjected herself to a strict programme of study, mainly of botany, chemistry and mathematics, turning down social outings and depriving herself of sleep in order to keep to her self-imposed timetable.

When Mary returned to England in 1913 it was with the intention of studying domestic science, an interest which at first glance suggests a lowering of her ambitions. However one must remember that in New Zealand the subject had recently been accorded the status of a university discipline. Mary believed that domestic science should incorporate specialised studies such as medicine—it was 'no piffling play at housework' that she wanted. 'Medicine', she wrote 'is essentially *the* way in which women can at present most advance the cause of Domestic Science in its highest sense.'¹⁷ Given this perspective her pursuing this course was not inconsistent with her long-lived ambition to be a doctor, and it is little wonder that, having made a beginning, it was not long before she turned to the study of medicine proper.

Mary began her medical studies shortly after the outbreak of World War One. The war years seemed to offer opportunities for