

# Ye Gracious Senate

By E. Sargant, 1884

Tune: "The Vicar of Bray"

In ancient days historians tell that bachelors were boys,  
sir,  
And then arose the proctor fell to mar their youthful joys,  
sir,  
Th' accustomed marble rolled no more where marbles erst had  
bounded,  
For children then the toga wore, and babes were capped and  
gownded.

*Chorus:*

*Yet stranger sight for don or ped-  
agogue was never seen, sir,  
Than Girton's buildings blushing red,  
Behind a veil of green, sir.*

When first a daring voice whispered not void were women's  
brain pans,  
The scornful critics all averred that notion was no sane  
man's.  
Yet still in spite of sweeping blame and wholesale  
condemnation,  
A women's College gained a name and local habitation.

*Chorus: Yet stranger sight, etc.*

When on that memorable day the Senate had assembled,  
The crush was such that each M.A. for life and safety  
trembled.  
They gave us rights where formerly we'd scarce been  
tolerated,  
And thereon they no less than we should be congratulated.

*Chorus: For greater sight, etc.*

*This song celebrates another historical landmark. Up to and including 1880 women students could take the Tripos by courtesy of the examiners, but they were unofficial candidates and their names and classes were not published. After the spectacular success of C.A. Scott, who in 1880 took the Mathematical Tripos and was known to have been equal to the Eighth Wrangler, representations were made to the Council of the Senate. A special Syndicate was appointed, in June 1880 and its proposal that the Cambridge Honours Examinations should now be opened to women was duly approved, early in 1881. From that date the University Calendar printed the women's class lists, each year.*

*Verse 1: In the very early days of the University, the undergraduates came up at a much younger age - hence the marbles!*

*Verse 2: In Victorian England it was widely believed that the feminine brain was not suited to serious courses of study.*

*Verse 3: The Grace admitting women to the Tripos was passed by 398 votes to 32.*