



# **Sophia Jex-Blake: A Woman Pioneer in Nineteenth Century Medical Reform (The Wellcome Institute Series in the History of Medicine)**

*Shirley Roberts*

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Sophia Jex-Blake led the campaign that won for British women the right to enter the medical profession. Before taking up this cause she had studied women's education in England, Germany and the United states, and rejected the popular contemporary view that higher education would be wasted on women. Her medical crusade in Britain resulted in women's rights to professional careers and financial independence being more widely accepted.

After years of extensive lobbying, she founded the London School of Medicine for Women in 1874 and two years later, largely due to her efforts, legislation was passed enabling women to take qualifying examinations in medicine. Shirley Roberts shows Sophia Jex-Blake to have been a determined and resourceful pioneer, skilful in winning over both public and political opinion. But she was also an impetuous and at times tactless woman, who could provoke hostility, as well as loyalty. *Sophia Jex-Blake* is a fascinating account of one woman's struggle for equality.

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