

matter than either Mrs. Fawcett or myself; but with all due deference to that respected lady, whose opinions upon other items of philanthropic interest I simply and humbly follow, because I feel sure that Mrs. Fawcett knows something concerning them, or such success as she has achieved would never otherwise have been hers—but I do repeat this, as emphatically and unreservedly as I possibly can, that Mrs. Fawcett has allowed her zeal to overstep her judgment; for one of the many curses of modern London would be the wholesale suspension, if I may use such a phrase, of the work of those thirty and odd thousand children who go such a long way to make up the many battalions of theatrical employés in our midst.

* * *

THE four correspondents who have written adversely to my conclusions have, somehow or other, omitted to answer the very important question I put on this matter in our last number to Mrs. Fawcett and others so interested in the work. I repeat it again, even at the risk of its apparent redundancy. "What will Mrs. Fawcett do with all those children thrown out of their employment?" I may be accused of being sentimental. If making a reiterated appeal to these somewhat inconsiderate, but, nevertheless, enthusiastic busybodies can be called sentimental, I rejoice in the term, for I know nothing at the present time presenting itself to me which has so much responsibility, so much interest, so much sentimentality, if you will, as the prospect, based upon every ground of possibility, of a large number of these little ones being prevented, by needless and vexatious legislation, from earning the few pounds which becomes theirs at the winter season.

* * *

AND in consequence of this I see out in the streets and gutters of this teeming Metropolis of ours thousands of wan-looking, pinched faces, "items of humanity" growing more wan, more pinched, for the want and profits of an employment, never uncongenial, always welcome to them, and all because of an enactment worthy of the most grandmotherly character that was ever contracted.

* * *

FOR the present let me commend the fact to those who may take an interest in the question, that the opponents of the Bill are men and women of a thoroughly practical experience of life as it is—life as it is on the stage, and life as it ought to be; and to these I personally and hundreds of my readers will prefer to leave the arrangement of such matters as the employment of children in theatres.

I OUGHT to have mentioned, in my notes of last week respecting photography, that several well-known ladies have given this branch of work very considerable attention, if I mistake not, among whom I may mention Lady Dufferin, and also Miss Alice Longfellow, a daughter of the great poet of that name. I really should like to see this very interesting occupation more fully extended among those ladies who are seeking a hobby, or even to carry it still further, a livelihood; for it is particularly women's work in every sense.

* * *

I, ONLY this day, have undergone the operation of being photographed, and by a lady, too. The result, as a likeness, is admirable, but the posing, to put it as mildly as possible, is simply atrocious, and thoroughly bears out the statement made by the West End photographer, which I mentioned in the *Record* of last Thursday; but surely this difficulty can be overcome with a little patience.

* * *

WHEN I look around me and take note of the progress of women in the field of work during the past ten years, I simply lift my hands in utter astonishment. Nursing, of course, comes first, then follow postal duties, type-writing, clerkships, shorthand, deed-copying, and a whole host of departments requiring physical rather than mental attention.

* * *

IN all quarters, in all departments of life, we are beginning to see the gradual development of the employment of female labour, and have not the slightest doubt but that, in a not very long time to come, we shall be able to report still further progress in this important portion of the economics of life.

* * *

I SHOULD like to see some lady, or ladies, take up heartily and earnestly the whole question of the employment of servants, and to place, if possible, their conditions and requirements on a much better basis than they are now. I should like to see the establishment of societies throughout the kingdom which would bring these servants into much closer contact with those who are, by precept and desire, competent to teach them more thoroughly their true position in the world in which they move.

* * *

I SHOULD like above all things to see their mistresses take them by the hand, just, as it were, to give them a lift up all round, make them more comfortable, and consider their working hours. There is work here for a true reformer, if you will; it bristles with difficulties, that I know, but everything requiring philanthropical interference always does. I may have something more to say on this subject in a future issue.

MIRANDA.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)