

WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

LADY DISTRICT VISITORS.

THE professional world is opening its arms, slowly, reluctantly as it were, but still opening them, to the women of to-day. Portals once fast barred are now besieged successfully by the "ladies;" and there are many ways whereby our sisters can earn a living, of which our mothers—and far less our grandmothers—never dreamt. Necessity has been the virtue (or vice) which has driven women from their rightful sphere, as men call it, of home to join the surging throng without—that sad throng which seeks so wildly to somehow, somewhere earn a living. The ladies' demand has created a supply, and now clerks, typewriters, secretaries, compositors, journalists, reporters, guides, directors (witness Miss Cornwall), editors, and even lawyers and clergy in America can have the letters "ess" affixed truly, if not euphoniously. But all teachers prefer pupils in the pliable or youthful stage of life, when the fingers are still supple and the mind receptive on new ideas. And then it is so much easier when all the former years of life have been spent in learning, and before lessons have been laid aside, and the art of acquiring knowledge is forgotten. Thus it is that most professions are entirely debarred to those whose years number more than a quarter of a century. Besides, apprenticeship means time, and many cannot afford even that—not to mention premiums, which often, however small, shut firmly the door to would-be applicants. Thus it is that the cry so often arises from the penniless widow and the middle-aged spinster orphan, suddenly thrown on the charity of the cold world, "What shall I do? What can I do?" Lady district visiting has been taken up by many such a one for the simple reason that it requires no especial training, though this is its principal recommendation, for the post is anything but a pleasant one. The duties are principally those of an ordinary district visitor, and "to be generally useful," as the advertisements say of lady helps. But tact and patience are both needed—nay, they are necessary for the work. The poor—it is wonderful how quickly they discover that the work is not voluntary—often prove very inconsiderate towards the "paid" lady, whom they think they can with safety insult, and whose every kindness they take as a due. Then, alas! clergymen are but human, and the deficiencies of the unpaid worker are often laid on the shoulders of the paid. Then it is hard to have all the hard work for the mothers' meeting or the class, while another gets the praise; and "slights" are frequent, for many a Christian

worker forgets the admonition, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The salaries range from £30 to £50 per annum. It is necessary that the visitor should live in the parish. A knowledge of Nursing is an advantage, and a clergyman's reference of not less than two years is essential. All further particulars can be had of Miss Jackson, 26, Grosvenor Road, S.W. The work—in which the Archdeacon of Middlesex is much interested—is kept up by the charitable public, and may well be recommended to those who would help others to help themselves.

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ANOTHER way by which ladies can earn their bread, but, alas! anything but a congenial occupation, is as School Board visitors. Many schools now employ ladies to visit the houses of the children and enquire the reason of absence, &c. Their visits are, however, much resented by the parents, who do not appreciate the paternal Government's interest in their little ones. The result being that many an impertinent answer, many a low breathed curse falls to the lot of the lady inspector, whilst oftener than not the door is shut sharply in her face. Also, these children often come from alleys and courts, to visit which arouses the opposition of the moral and bodily senses, vice and dirt being the principal characteristics thereof. Still, money can thus be earned, if hardly earned, and there is no need to pay a premium or serve an apprenticeship first.

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WELL named are the "Happy Evenings" which Miss A. Heather Biggs has set afloat, and when, instead of work, play is the order of the day, or night, rather, for the school children of our many large schools. That the little folks thoroughly enjoy themselves none can doubt, but what are the parents' opinions on the matter? Do the children owe them no duty? Away at school all day, away at play all evening, where does the time come in for the home work, the helping tired mother, the nursing baby boy, the laying of father's tea? If right were right, would not those boys and girls now wandering up and down the street indulging in idle talk and gossip with their companions be rather within doing their duty? Alas! it is not only the higher classes who spoil their children, and teachers should ever put father and mother first, and not inculcate in those whom they would benefit that most subtle of vices, even selfishness.

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MISS GORDON CUMMING is deeply interested in Mr. Murray's Mission to the Chinese blind, and

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