

Nurses and friends regretted that she was not able to continue her work in District Nursing which was so highly appreciated by the clergy, the Medical men, and poor of the East End of London.

THERE has apparently been some trouble at the Melbourne Hospital in respect to its Nurses, if I may judge from a duly authenticated report which has just been sent me. The *Southlander*, a local journal, somewhat lightly satirises the whole affair, upon which I may have something more to say next week.

I AM informed by the publishers that it is hoped that the first of the *Nursing Record* Series of Text Books will be ready for issue by the end of next week. Owing to the difficulty experienced in selecting a thoroughly suitable binding some delay has taken place. After the first is issued the other ones will appear at regular intervals of about two months.

S. G.

## WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

### THE LADY DETECTIVE.

I WISH you knew Mrs. Williamson, the well-known detective, and now the accomplished manageress of Mr. Moser's Private Agency. Bright, eager, clever beyond the ordinary, and one who has seen many phases of life, she talks well because she has ever something to tell worth hearing. She is deeply interested in women, and in women's work and women's needs. A worker herself—one of the busy bees of life's hive—and earning her own livelihood, she holds strongly the opinion that work ennobles and not degrades. She has a horror of patronage, recognising that woman's greatest safeguard is her own self-respect. Often brought into contact with sin, yet not contaminated by virtue of her high ideal of womanhood, she ever uses her influence for good on those around her, and is held in great respect by her co-workers. I have begun this short article by thus describing minutely this most successful and highly esteemed lady, because I know there is a strange dislike to the very word detective—a sort of class prejudice, which considers that a woman detective must be, by the very necessity of her employment, unsexed and a social pariah. I will now mention the qualities which Mrs. Williamson, in my interesting interview with her, stated as the most necessary for detective work, and, therefore, most likely to lead to rapid advancement. First, then, that rare quality with women—a capacity for acquiring business habits—*i.e.*, method, punctuality, accuracy; also keen perceptive powers (indicated by the bumps just

above the eyebrows, say the physiognomists), and the gift of being able to decide quickly and act promptly on that decision, for the plans of hours may have to be changed oftentimes on the spur of the moment, for not only words but looks also must be noted, and the course of action varied accordingly. A good education is necessary for the higher branches of this—profession, shall I call it?—as is also the power of persuasion, possessed, however, by most women, and also the less usual power of making others yield to a stronger will than their own—that strange power on which modern mesmerism is founded, and which is so inadequately described by the word “influence.” Lastly, and most needful of all, is that misappropriately-named sense, even common sense. With regard to salary it varies so according to the style of work undertaken and the position maintained that no fixed sum can be stated. In most offices it is by the “case”; but at Mr. Moser's the pay is weekly, whether employed or no, and at the same rate as the men, for there is no difference made in this office between the male and female detectives in hours, position, &c. I must just add that what is in the outsider's point of view the only duty of detectives—*i.e.*, “shadowing”—is the least important in many ways, and not nearly the best paid. There are many openings for those who have the gifts needed for insuring success in this most interesting way of earning “daily bread” in this almost unknown field of women's work.

I WAS a little amused as well as interested to hear that a lady (a University graduate) often helps Mrs. Williamson as “voluntaire” detective for love of the work. And it is a noble work, this manifesting of wrong, this proving of truth. Many a woman has been saved from the sweet-toned fraud seeking her gold, not herself; many a deceitful wickedness has been brought to light, and sin confounded and wrong righted, and years of sorrow saved by the opportune advice and the intelligent enquiries of the maligned detective. And it must be fascinating work too for those who delight to study the ways of men, for those who love excitement, action, and change; yet oftentimes it proves laborious toil, and it needs both strength of body and powers of endurance. And though saddening by revealing the depths of man's frailty, yet the golden ore of love and goodness is lighted on unexpectedly at times, teaching the lesson never to despair. I think it is the hatred of spying inherent in the English nation, the dread of infringing on the liberty of the subject, which causes the unreasonable dislike felt to detective work—a dislike which like many other prejudices is yielding to the power of fuller knowledge.

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