

a company. Personally, I should prefer its staying as at present, if there was the smallest possible chance of my living for ever; but I do not suppose that anyone would work as I have worked; and the last eight years' work is beginning to tell upon me. Of course, in due time, such a course will be taken as you advise; but I am perfectly happy in asking that shares to the value of four thousand pounds might be taken up, for I am told that some twenty years ago, when the house was built, it cost twenty thousand pounds; that the gentleman who sold it to me gave nine thousand. It was built for an hotel, when there was a prospect of a bridge being put over the Severn just here. By-the-bye, it was owned for a short time after the Hotel Company came to grief by Mr. Lucas, the father of the Miss Lucas who came under your displeasure a little time back; but it has been much improved, and a great deal of money spent upon it since then.—Believe me, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

"M. E. HEADDON.

"Riverdale, Newnham-on-Severn,  
"April 11th, 1890."

I CAN only say that I am very pleased to have Miss Headdon's most satisfactory explanation, but it is almost a pity that the information contained in it was not given in the circular I alluded to. Who Miss Lucas is I do not know, and I have no recollection (and I have been associated with the *Nursing Record* from its first number) of any lady of that name falling under the editorial displeasure.

I AM in a position to announce that No. 1 of the *Nursing Record* Series of Text Books and Manuals, entitled "Lectures to Nurses on Antiseptics in Surgery," by E. Stanmore Bishop, F.R.C.S. Eng., is now ready, and may be obtained from the publishers, Messrs. Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, Limited, St. Dunstan's House, Fetter Lane, E.C., price two shillings (post free). There should be a very considerable sale for this very useful work.

S. G.

## WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

### THE ACTRESS.

"GIVE a dog a bad name," &c. You all know the rest of the proverb. The theatrical profession has got a bad name, and it keeps it; and though books, education, and greater knowledge are all decreasing this prejudice, many hold up their hands in horror at the very word actress, and draw aside metaphorically their skirts. Why, little Marie Wilton wondered, did the gentlemen and ladies, who were petting and admiring her, stop suddenly and shake their heads at her on learning she was a playwright's daughter? The favourite objection of the publicity of the life had more valid grounds half-a-century ago than now, when the famous opening sentence of an after dinner speech, "Unaccustomed as I am to public

speaking," would not truthfully fall from many a lady's lips. Of course the temptations are great, and the very characteristics of the actress, the very powers which enable her to become an actress—her vivacity, her brilliant imagination, her beauty, and her artistic tastes—enhance a thousand-fold these temptations; and human nature is very weak, and men, and women too, are prone to err; yet that these temptations can be and are often successfully resisted, and that the actress in the glare of publicity is oftentimes as innocent, if not as ignorant, as the sheltered, tenderly-nurtured home daughter, has been fully proved. For examples I have only to mention the names of Mary Anderson and Mrs. Kendal, the latter not only herself an actress, but the wife of an actor, and the daughter of a playwright. It is the power of becoming imbued for a time with another spirit, even the spirit of the part being played, that is the real secret of true acting, although of late the dramatic art has been so carefully studied that the necessity for natural acting—this sounds a regular Irish paradox—is sometimes forgotten. Of course there are many steps in the theatrical ladder, from the star's lofty summit to the lowest of all, the pantomimic super; and each is liable to the actress's temptations, whilst to the lower "lines" is added oftentimes that greatest of all incentives to sin—want of money. Yet there are many who patiently toil on bravely, night after night, for the sake of parents, sisters, little fatherless ones at home, or the invalid husband, or else just that they may thus obtain honestly their daily bread. The theatrical profession is not for lazy folk; the work is hard, terribly hard, and is a severe strain mentally and bodily, for actors and actresses are no pleasure seekers, no idlers on life's road. Rehearsals in the morning, matinées frequently in the afternoon, performances at night leave but little time for rest or recreation. Unless there is decided taste and marked ability the profession is not to be recommended; neither unless health is not only good, but robust. Cold dressing-rooms, draughty "wings," bad sanitary arrangements (this is especially the case in country theatres) all tend to try the constitution, and many a bright eager life has fallen a prey thereto. The salaries in town are very varied—from one shilling a night for supers to £5 or £7 a week, but there is no certainty of employment and the expenses are great. Of course well-known actresses make enormous sums—as much in a week as the lesser planets do in a year. Engagements are usually made by the week, month or season, and theatrical managers are sometimes given to sudden collapse—as witness Her Majesty's last Christmas

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