

WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

THE LADY COURIER.

In the years that are past, when ladies were less independent than at present, and etiquette forbade their appearing much in the streets unless accompanied by friend or servant, no ladies—nor, indeed, gentlemen—as a rule travelled even through *la belle France* without a courier. But then couriers were always of the gender masculine, whereas now the genus lady courier has made her appearance on the scene, as witness the advertisements in the fashionable dailies and the notices of the L.G.A. But couriers, of whichever sex they may be, are, as a class, at a discount nowadays, when travelling is made easy and guide books abound. Yet still to those who have the good fortune to be rich, and the ill fortune to be lazy, a courier must add mightily to the joys of travel—it must be so charming to enjoy the scenery without worrying over the mundane affairs of tickets, stations, dinner. Then to the young and inexperienced a courier is almost a necessity, especially to those young ladies whom the glamour of travel has tempted from their homes, and who go forth, like young monkeys, to see the world. I must plead guilty to being old-fashioned enough not to prefer seeing my English sisters, like our American cousins, doing Europe alone. Prefer, I pointedly say, for I know that in many cases it cannot be helped, and that couriers are only for those who have well-lined pockets. But then usually parties can be made up, and it is better to sacrifice a little independence than for the inexperienced to buy experience for themselves—ofttimes dearly. Lady couriers, or travelling companions as they are sometimes called, have a position which is no sinecure, and they thoroughly earn their money. They must be of active habits, unselfish, economical, and sweet-tempered, for it is trying to the spirit to be expected to make ridiculous bargains and obtain tickets for less than other folk. Then they must be far-seeing and well prepared for possible accidents, and they must be good linguists and good travellers, and well acquainted with the lands through which they have undertaken to pilot their employers. The charges made for these many qualifications differ so much that it is impossible to fix a price. It is rather a case for arrangement between employers and employees, but if there are babies in the party, I prophesy the demands would be a trifle higher. Babies, as they usually willingly and distinctly testify, were not born to travel, whatever men and women were. But to have two or three thrown in with a travelling party has its *pros* as well as *cons*. Has not everything? In this case

the *pro* is, one is certain to get a carriage to oneself—that is if the train is not very extra crowded. A courier's life may be a very happy one, though I rather doubt it; but I cannot commend it to those seeking a living, as I fear it would prove but a precarious one for two reasons—firstly, because the situations would never be permanent, but fleeting as the train itself; and, secondly, because the expenses of such a life would be heavy. Also I fear that the applications for escort would, like angels' visits, be few and far between, except in rare cases where there is an exceptionally large and good connection.

UNDER the above title might almost be placed those advertisements in the "dailies," beginning, "Lady, desirous to travel, wishes to chaperone two or three young ladies," &c. The duties of chaperoneship are manifold and need much tact in their fulfilment, but many ladies (usually those who have been in a better position, widows of husbands who did not believe in insurance agents, &c.) are most willing to dare them, so that they may keep up at least the semblance of independence. I always think it is a pity parents do not more frequently place their daughters in the hands of such people. To move a family costs a vast sum, and it is not often practicable; yet it is important the girls should see a little of the Continent, and this mode is far wiser than that of placing them for "the finishing touches" at a foreign school, where they gain no real knowledge of the country and its inhabitants, even if they do learn a little of the language. Besides, foreign schools are never advantageous in forming the character of our English lassies.

GAS is out of fashion in our homes, and oil lamps are in again, and very handsome are the tall, heavy brass ones now all the rage, whilst everyone, be they medical men or no, admit that their more subdued light is better for the eyes. These lamps have brought a new trade among us—a trade imported from America. Lady lamp-lighters are the latest idea for women's employment. Ladies—young or old, as ye will—go from house to house to do the lamps in the morning, ladies and servants having discovered that this new fashion involves both time and trouble. Besides, lamps are ticklish things to manage, but the lady lamp-lighter attacks them boldly, and having made herself acquainted with their many tricks, and having studied the subject of oils, she continues to manipulate them skilfully, receives her duly-earned remuneration, and goes her way, rejoicing in work well done. Of course she does not receive much at each house, but as she does not remain

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