

WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

THE QUEEN OF ITALY recently held an interesting reception of the lady members of the female committee of the Rouge Croix (Red Cross Society) at the Quirinal. She received the ladies, twenty of whom attended, seated in the chair of State just under a picture of her husband, the King, and was dressed in black velvet with pearl ornaments. Her Majesty presented each lady with a copy of a work on the philanthropic objects of the Rouge Croix, translated from the German, and with a special dedication by herself. A lunch at which the Queen presided, given to the ladies, terminated this successful *rèunion* of the lady patronesses of the Rouge Croix.

* * *

EARL FORTESCUE presided at the twenty-ninth annual meeting of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, 22, Berners Street. The annual report of the committee, read by Miss King, the secretary, noted an important advance in the manner in which this question of the employment of women was now regarded by thoughtful people. Parents who were unable to give their daughters enough to live upon now generally recognised the duty of providing for them such training as would enable them to maintain themselves. It had always been the special work of this society to put girls in the way of acquiring some art or exercising some industry which would bring them adequate maintenance; and that women were capable of sustained and efficient work was proved by their increasing employment in various branches of industry. The report proceeded to mention in detail the pursuits for which it endeavours to train women, these including decorative art, chromo-lithography, wood carving, wood engraving, photography, plan tracing, type-writing, shorthand writing, bookkeeping, hair-dressing, and waiting. During the year, through the agency of the society, seventy girls had begun to learn some art, trade, or business; seventy-seven women had obtained permanent engagements; while those seeking temporary work had been employed on four hundred and sixty-five occasions. The committee added that they had under consideration a scheme for the employment of a number of the poorer hands in factories and work rooms during the months of July and August, when work was slack. It was believed that if neat-handed women were employed in packing the best fruit, and evaporating or making into jam what was not wanted in the English market, the farmers would be materially benefited, while the women would secure a much-needed change of air.

Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., in moving the adoption of the report, said the society was worthy of support, if only because it kept before the public the point that natural ability without training would

not secure success in industrial work. It was also useful as a standing protest against the vanity of parents who considered that their girls were so charming that they were sure to get married, and need not be provided for. If the society could only induce parents to take a more realistic view of the situation, that in itself would justify its existence.

The Rev. Canon Barker, in seconding the motion, expressed an opinion that the educational market was overcrowded, and suggested that women should give their attention to the manufacture of jewellery, which required taste and delicacy, to telegraphy, and to dressmaking. The society should, in his view, attempt to keep up prices, for he could not see why a well-qualified woman should receive less than a well-qualified man.

The report having been approved, a vote of thanks was accorded to the chairman, on the motion of Mr. A. Graham, seconded by the Rev. Brooke Lambert.

Earl Fortescue, in reply, commended the operations of the society as entitling it to public support. No doubt the various suggestions which had been made would be considered by the committee, but as regards fruit-packing he feared the proposal would be useless until a Railway Rates Bill had been passed by Parliament.

A number of specimens of wood-carving and decorative art, produced by the women under the society's training, were subsequently inspected by the visitors.

* * *

THE question of emigration for women is receiving a large share of public attention at present. At the request of Miss Emily Faithfull, Lord Salisbury directed inquiries to be made as to the prospect of employment for English-women in towns along the Pacific Coast of America; and received the following report from Consul Donohoe:—

"The demand for house servants is good, and housemaids and parlourmaids—though both are usually united in one person—easily obtain five pounds per month; but they will have to mix with any other servants who may be kept, and will have much harder work to do than those in a similar position in England. If English ladies choose to take servants' places as cooks, waitresses, or housemaids, when they arrive here, they can obtain them if they are competent, but it seems a pity they should be induced to come out to the Pacific Coast with the prospect of being taken into families as lady helps, a position which is not known here. . . . The best people here send their children to either the public schools or to private ones, and I don't believe there are one dozen governesses living in families in San Francisco. It is a cruel act to advise educated English ladies to come to the Pacific Coast in search of employment, for they will find that they will in the end have to take

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)