

WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

THERE is a little alteration taking place in these columns, inasmuch as I have been commissioned by the Editor to make them my own, to deal with, in as chatty a manner as is at my command, the various phases of work and doings which may from time to time be brought under my notice. I can promise my readers that any communications they may at any time forward me will be duly and gratefully acknowledged.

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I AM glad to be able to state that the very useful Institution, the Somerville Club, Oxford Circus Avenue, Oxford Street, inaugurated some little time ago, already has seven hundred members upon its rolls.

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ONE of my lady friends for some time past has been devoting herself to photography, with very happy results; and I have not the slightest doubt but that this department of work will, in the not very dim and distant future, be greatly occupied by the members of my sex, who should be able with their deft fingers to produce good work.

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THE two chief difficulties my friend has to contend with are—first, the soiling of the fingers and nails. Photography plays sad havoc with both these; and the only way to avoid this disagreeable portion of the work is to wear india rubber gloves, but these are, even at the best, very uncomfortable and unsatisfactory.

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THE second and the more important is the "posing." Women, as a rule, are not successful in this; and a well-known West End photographer told me not very long ago that, if he could only get over this difficulty, he should employ none other but female labour in his establishment.

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THE "posing" of human subjects by women, continued the "W. E. P.," "is always stiff and unnatural." Why it should be so I cannot possibly say, for who can approach the delicate touch of a woman in setting the drapery of a gown, or in arranging a bouquet? I can only answer this by drawing a comparison with costume making, for I never yet met a lady, be she whoever she may, let her be trained up under all the "systems" possible, who could cut a costume or a jacket like a man. It is one of those things one cannot, nor will be likely to, understand.

I HAVE seen some of my friend's work in the photographing line, taken by the instantaneous process, and very amusing and very excellent they were. A litter of pigs—sow and seven little ones—formed a very laughable group, whilst the various attitudes and expressions of her brother, taken unawares in his shirt-sleeves, engaged in the act of shaving, are simply screaming.

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ALL that has to be done to get a happy result is to present for a second one of the Kodak cameras, weighing a few ounces, at the unsuspecting object you wish to picture. A sharp click and the thing is done.

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I AM sure everybody will just now sympathise with Mrs. Fawcett at what is felt to be a great mistake on her part in the crusade against the children employed in theatres.

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THERE is no woman I have greater respect for than this lady, who has so earnestly, so determinedly, and so unselfishly devoted so many years of her life to the relief of the misery around us, and to the solution of the many difficult social problems that are presented to us; but with all due consideration and acknowledgment of these inestimable services, Mrs. Fawcett has, I am sure, committed an error of judgment.

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I SHALL ask that lady a very plain question, and it is this: What is going to be done during the coming winter with all those thirty thousand children who are employed in the theatres during the season, and who in no little measure, under the kindly influence of humane managers, are able to add not a little to the comfort and sustenance of the homes to which they belong?

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IF Mrs. Fawcett will satisfactorily explain this I should be glad, for it will ease my conscience very much, as I know only too well what it means, if all these thousands of little ones have their interesting and enjoyable employment taken from them, and are left to wallow in the gutters, and be denied their customary warm clothing, the education and the wage which have been so liberally and thoughtfully supplied by such practical philanthropists as Mr. Augustus Harris and others.

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I CONSIDER that until Mrs. Fawcett and her friends find some efficient substitute for these unemployed young people, a great and tremendous responsibility rests upon them—a responsibility which is increased when we consider the utter helplessness of the little ones themselves. MIRANDA.

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