

bodies of men called guardians (excellent individuals as local shoemakers, tailors, and the likes), who know absolutely less, if such a thing were possible, about the matter than the Matrons above alluded to.

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ONE can hardly realize that in an exceedingly large number of instances the Medical Officers of Poorhouse Infirmaries are never consulted or considered in any way as to the appointment of Nurses. Therefore, it is impossible, under these conditions, that the Poorhouse Infirmary Nurses, as a body—many of them, undoubtedly (the properly trained ones), able and amiable—can possibly occupy the same level or standing as the ordinary recognised Hospital Nurse. It ought not to be so, I grant; and I am proud to see that the scandal such a state of things causes is likely to prove of benefit by raising the whole question, and the more the Poorhouse Nurses themselves will advocate reformation in this respect, the quicker will be their attainment of their wishes, and that is the chief reason why I welcome so heartily my correspondent's opinion, for I hope it will give rise to still further discussion and consideration, and prove useful in forwarding the position and Nursing standing of a large number of Nurses just as willing to improve themselves as are those of any of the recognised General Hospitals of the United Kingdom. S. G.

WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

LADY COMPOSITORS.

FROM acorn to oak, from the "tadpole to the frog," from the child (or, according to the late Professor Darwin's theory, the monkey, perhaps) to the man-growth. In it lies the vitality of life, for without progress is stagnation, and stagnation is the mother of death.

"The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones."

So wrote the greatest of dramatists and of poets. In the germ of the idea of "print," and the rudely-constructed press, Caxton, the journeyman, left behind him as a legacy to humanity "a good thing," which has developed, during the centuries which have come and gone since then, into a mighty agent, an all-powerful influence; though whether it is an unmixed good, who dare say? The pen, thanks to him, is mightier far to-day than the sword. Women compositors! The thought is a little startling at first; but why not? Echoes answer, Why not? and so would also the bright band of young ladies busy at work setting type on the premises of the Women's Printing Society, Great College Street, West-

minster. All the work is done by the said young ladies—composition, galleys, paging, proofs, &c.—only the machinery being worked by men; for howsoever intellectually equal, in brute strength the male sex will be superior until an army of Amazons again arise; so it happens that the machines are too heavy for the "girls" to work. The Women's Printing Society was founded by the late Mrs. Paterson, and has been established nearly fourteen years. At first, from the fact that it had to begin by training its operators, it was financially a failure, but the last two or three years the patience of its promoters has been rewarded by a rapid and steady increase on the right side of the balance-sheet. The work-room, which will accommodate about twenty young ladies, is large and convenient. The lady compositors receive a weekly wage of from twenty shillings to thirty shillings according to ability. Eightpence per hour is paid for overtime. Work by the piece is allowed instead if preferred. Sometimes the operators make as much as thirty-five shillings per week. The apprenticeship is for three years, a premium of five pounds being asked. The young ladies receive a small wage after the first three months. A month's trial is first given. The age varies from thirteen to fifteen. The apprentice must be at least fairly well educated. The hours are from nine to 6.30, and till 1.30 on Saturday. There is a great demand for well-instructed women printers, and there is no difficulty at present in obtaining remunerative situations. The Society prints a weekly paper, and every kind of printing is undertaken.

THE Misses Emily and Georgina Hill have lately started in connection with their father's old-established printing and publishing office a "new department, in which women may be trained as compositors, proof-readers, shorthand writers, reporters, and journalists." The address is 154, Westminster Bridge Road, S.E. The room appropriated to the young lady type-setters is large and high. There is a very large stock of plant on the premises. Miss Emily Hill has herself undertaken journalism, beside other literary work. She translated for one thing, Beethoven's Clavier Sonata, für Freunde der Tonkunst erläutert von Ernst von Uterlein. A small premium is asked for apprenticeship. The girls must be under eighteen before entering. But though Miss Hill's new department embraces all from the bottom step to the top of the ladder, still she does not insist on the whole course being taken, and older ladies might turn with advantage to reporting, for the demand for lady reporters is increasing. Shorthand is essential for this branch; also the art of condensing is a

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