

WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

THE LADY GUIDE.

NOVELTY! that is the cry of the age. Like the Greeks of old, we ever desire "to hear or to learn some new thing." But, alas! in this the end of the 19th century, we labour under the difficulty that few things are new. However, Miss Davis, the founder and manageress of the "Lady Guide Association, Limited" (offices, 16, Cockspur Street, Charing Cross), has proposed—and not only proposed, but carried out—a not only novel but sensible idea under the above title. The additional sub-title, rather a long one, of "The London and International Reception Inquiry, Information and Supply Bureau," I subjoin, as it shows the wide scope of the work undertaken by the Association, which is verily a living guide book, a true "Enquire Within upon Everything." If you want to know anything, if you want to procure anything, if you want to see anything, "Apply Here." The lady guides are emphatically *ladies*, poor ladies of education and refinement, who seek work, not charity. They are paid by the week, and a fund is provided in case of sickness. They are not allowed to receive gratuities, nor to accompany any gentleman alone—only if ladies are of the party. Every day parties of six leave the office, under the care of a lady guide, for sight-seeing. Friends can also make up their own parties, but they must not number more than the magical half-dozen. Annual subscribers of £5 5s. are entitled to introduce one lady a year for employment, and those thus introduced have a prior claim. All are obliged to pass an examination as to their knowledge of London (historical and geographical), and other "common sense questions," as Miss Davis calls them—such as where to go on a windy day in preference (do many reply the river, I wonder?); also, how to make a cup of arrow-root or beef-tea, for invalids seek often a "guide to health" here in a bright, practical companion. The examination is not competitive. Every lady guide has a certificate given her, which she is bound to show on demand. They are divided into first, second, third class certificates. First class certificates.—"Guiding for educational purposes and teaching to the buildings, museums, galleries, parks, &c., or where full information is required; advice upon furnishing and decorating and superintending same. Tariff, per day, 8s. 6d.; per week, £2 5s." Second class certificates.—"Meeting at stations, seeing friend from one station to another, sight-seeing where guidance without guaranteed knowledge respecting the buildings and sights is required, shopping for employers, writing letters, invitations, leaving visiting cards, &c. Per day, 7s. 6d.; per week, £1 18s." Third

class certificate—Temporary household assistants, companions for children, taking them to and from school, repairing wardrobes, &c. Per day, 4s.; per week, £1 1s. I regret to be obliged to add, for it shows the terrible poverty amongst ladies by birth and education in England, that Miss Davis has already many more names on her books than she can possibly employ, whilst she has daily many applications. The only openings are for ladies who know some foreign language fluently, and especially Spanish. The Association is under the patronage of the Duke and Duchess of Wellington, and many other distinguished people, notably the Countess of Aberdeen, Sir F. Leighton, Mrs. Ormiston Chant, the Rev. Stopford Brooke, &c.

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"TIME is money," says the old proverb. It is the former of these commodities which the L.G.A. would and does save those who seek its aid. The premises, which are very well arranged, are open to the public at fixed tariffs, and are often used as a place of "rendezvous," or for meeting a dress-maker, &c., fitting rooms being supplied; also, ladies can dress here for the theatre, &c.—surely often a boon to the inhabitants of Greater London, who "come up for the day." There is a restaurant also attached, and sleeping accommodation for ladies too, here in the very heart of the great metropolis. The building is well worth a visit, and I should especially advise my American readers to make it one of their first "sights" on coming to London, and also there to secure an able guide, for thus they will be not only able to "do" England's great capital more thoroughly, but at least expense in the long run; and Londoners also, who have visited every sight, every gallery abroad, but who do not know the wonders and beauties of their own city, might well do worse than join one of the lady guides' "Programme" tours "round about town."

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I WOULD particularly draw attention to two departments of the L.G.A., the House and Apartments Agency, and Shopping for Employers. Whoever has experienced the weariness and difficulty of hunting for apartments will welcome the new order of things, when on arrival at the station, tired and depressed, one is instead met by a bright looking lady, who metaphorically tucks you under her arm, and transfers you to a comfortable sitting-room, on the table of which stands in readiness the refreshing cup of tea. And this fairy can be obtained by one letter of instructions to the L.G.A. All the apartments (within town, and at the seaside) have been personally inspected before being placed on the books. The Shopping Department comes as a

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