

Cresswell, and opposed by Mr. T. Ryan (Secretary St. Mary's Hospital) and Mr. W. R. Merrett. The resolution was carried. The meeting terminated after the usual vote of thanks to the Lecturer and Chairman.

S. G.

## WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

### "PRESS CUTTINGS."

HALF a hundred young ladies at least are employed by Messrs. Romeike and Curtice, at their well-known press-cutting establishment at 359, Strand. "Press-cuttings!" It is a word coined by the exigencies of the case, and has nothing to do with the fine old presses still sometimes to be seen in the old-fashioned hall or cottage, but only with that great modern power which sways the world, by means of that little invention of the old printer, Caxton. The word simply means, "cuttings from the press," *i.e.*, from newspapers. This, however, is not a very simple business after all, as would be willingly acknowledged by anyone who took a peep at the hive of busy workers, clip, clip, clipping, in Messrs. Romeike and Curtice's establishment. It is indeed an interesting business, giving an idea never before conveyed of the extent and usefulness of the Fourth Estate. Now, with apologies to those who know, I would explain to those who know not that the proprietors of a 'press-cuttings' agency undertake to send any paragraph, article, &c., in the papers containing one's name, or information on any particular subject in which one may be specially interested, to any subscriber. Politicians, foreign potentates, actors, artists, authors, vicars, curates, and Society with a big S, all patronise this useful friend—yea, and tradesmen also, for this is the strange fairy which causes circulars to arrive so often just at the opportune moment. Messrs. Romeike and Curtice have altogether over five thousand names on their books, Mr. H. M. Stanley's being among the number, whilst Colonial and Indian governors have not failed to avail themselves of this easy method of learning to see themselves as papers see them. About ten thousand newspapers are received and cut to pieces ruthlessly every week; and some five hundred magazines, while over £200 worth of half-penny postage stamps are used in a year. The working of so vast an undertaking is carried out, as may be expected, simply by division of labour. There are fourteen departments—the theatrical, the commercial (one of the largest), the art, the literary, &c.; besides which there are the reading and cutting-rooms, in the latter of which the carefully marked papers are reduced to mutilated

shreds, for even the advertisement pages are employed to profit. The papers go first to the reading-room, where each paper is read carefully and then marked; these are sent to the cutting-rooms, where the scissors are sharply applied, and the now separated slips pasted on forms. They are next classed and sent to each department, where they are classed again for names, folded up in the little yellow wrappers, and sorted for post or messengers, those for theatres and newspapers being delivered the same day in London. The young workers in the establishment are generally the daughters of tradesmen, and they begin as quite girls immediately they leave school; and starting in the cutting-room; they work up gradually until they become readers. The former earn about from seven to ten shillings weekly, the latter from thirty to forty shillings. The superintendents of the departments are paid partly by commission, and are usually men. How long the girls take to gain promotion depends entirely on their own quickness and accuracy. A knowledge of type-writing and shorthand is a great advantage, as is a knowledge of foreign languages, if spoken and, above all, read fluently. The hours of work are from nine till seven; Wednesdays and Saturdays till half-past four. And now, as a last word, I must repeat the compliment Mr. Curtice paid to women workers. "We find," he said, "that women work better than men. They are more patient, more methodical, and always to time." After all that has lately been written about woman's business capacity, it was pleasing to hear so flattering a speech from one who can speak not only from theory, but from experience.

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THERE are hundreds of foreign journals on the office lists. Once, indeed, the firm sent a notice from a Chinese paper, but it was returned with the remark, "Chinese not spoken here." The little forms are well got up, and have the name, number, and name of journal, date and address of journal to be filled in after the notices are affixed to them. Among the subscribers are many editors, especially editors of class journals. This is lift-erature (to quote the *Globe*) with a vengeance. One well-known weekly obtains many of its smartest jottings and cuttings, and many of its wittiest repartees through this agency, thus saving the editor's time and eyes, and pocket also in the long run. Messrs. Romeike and Curtice are the oldest of such agencies in England, though there are others of a more recent growth. The idea originated the other side of the silver streak, M. Cheri, a Frenchman, having started the first of the kind in Paris several years ago now.

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