

"RETIRED."

This article is addressed essentially to Matrons—old or middle-aged tired Matrons—not young Matrons, who are still filled with the laudable desire of setting the whole world and, incidentally, their own hospitals right. For the desire to set the world right—so strong with keen young enthusiasts—does not last with all of us to the bitter end. There comes a time when you no longer mistake your prejudices for principles; it may be that your powers do not fail you, but you grow tired of worrying over the complexion of minds and souls; you are weary of nerves and diseases, and the complications of that intricate unit—a hospital. Life expresses itself to you once again with the greatest sympathy in the simple, satisfying, broad outlines of your healthy youth. You long once more for straightforward action and the steady, honest growth of nature — nature who puts on no frills to please your fancies, and who chronicles your mistakes with a quite relentless impartiality.

At least, that was my case. I had not "broken down": I have never in my life had any "nerves" to speak of. I had been nineteen years Matron of the same hospital, and had lived through many and great improvements there. I had always taken an interest and part in nursing politics. But there came a day when I woke to the fact that I was tired of it all. Now when you have been really some-

thing of an enthusiast, it comes upon you with rather a shock to find that enthusiasm a part of the past. There is no work in which it is more dangerous to become a mere creature of routine and habit than nursing or the management of nursing. Nursing demands above all that you shall be heart and soul devoted to her; that whatever your outside pleasures and interests may be, she shall have the first claim on your affections. A kindly interest is not

enough; it is the whole or nothing.

Now my friend and assistant Matron, Miss Winterscale (whose portrait you see with the goat), and I had tastes in common. We kept some chickens in hospital at the end of the garden. We had often discussed the chicken farm we would have when we retired; so when the psychological moment arrived, when by a fortunate conjunction of circumstances we felt we could venture forth, we sent in our joint resignations, and started to look for a suitable abode.

Now comes the practical part. We read a good many advertisements; took the second house we looked at, and have never regretted it.

It lies four miles the other side of Ringwood, just beyond the New Forest on the borders of Dorsetshire, and the strip of moorland that stretches from the sea till it joins the Wiltshire Downs. It is a place surrounded by many spots of great beauty and much historical interest. The village in which we live, and which rejoices in the name of Three Legged Cross, is, how-



MISS MOLLETT IN "OUR DUSTMAN'S CLOTHES."

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