

## WOMEN AND THEIR WORK.

THE Metropolitan School of Shorthand has lately opened a large building in Southampton Buildings as a new ladies' school in connection with their well-known school in Chancery Lane. Everything is very nicely arranged and on a very large scale, there being three rooms for dictation alone, called respectively the slow, moderate and rapid speed rooms. There is a nice Dorothy restaurant in the building for the girls, who, therefore, need not go out of the school for meals. The students—there is accommodation for six hundred—all looked very bright and happy, as well as busy, when I went over the premises the other day. Typewriting is taught as well as shorthand, but the former is, I am assured, of little use without the latter; also book-keeping, languages, arithmetic, &c., and soon music is to be included as well, although what connection the piano can have with the necessary qualifications for a good clerk puzzles my feeble comprehension. Now that such a school has arisen where girls can be thoroughly trained, the old argument that women are so unbusinesslike should cease out of the land, only, I fear me, most of those who desire situations will make the old mistake, and will insist on taking, even at a low salary, something at once, instead of being content to wait and learn first.

I AM still old-fashioned enough to believe that a woman's first duty is to her husband, but evidently Mrs. Sheldon, the "feminine Stanley," as she has been called, does not agree with me. She has a more exalted idea of a woman's mission in life, or leastways of her own, and has therefore started for Africa to show the savages how "divine a thing a woman can be made" by wearing Dr. Jaeger's sanitary clothing, of which she has taken plenty to the Dark Continent, being a great believer in the German's theory of all wool as well as all cry. Mrs. Sheldon—who is now, by-the-bye, well on the way to the land of her fond desires—bade her friends in London a very cheery farewell, and started in the very best of spirits on her enterprise; but methinks if she survives to return it will be as a sadder and a wiser woman, for the stern realities of the explorer's life will prove much harder to bear as actual fact than when only dreamt and talked about. Meanwhile, what of Dr. Sheldon? Does he approve?

ACCORDING to the *Woman's Herald*, a niece of Count Tolstoi's has transcribed his celebrated novel, "War and Peace," into raised letters for the blind. The work has taken her two years to

write, and makes 5,000 pages of raised characters. For the blind at least a blessed day will dawn when phonographic books become the fashion. Ah, but what will the printers do then, poor things?

A LADY Cook—not one famed for culinary accomplishment, however—has arisen in the person of Miss Hickson, who personally conducts parties of ladies round the world, or to any part of it, under the euphonious title of "lady escort." She has travelled immensely herself, and is willing to place her knowledge at the disposal of others for "a consideration." She makes one stipulation, however: her parties must be about the same age—that is, she will not mix old, middle-aged, and young together, although she does not object to forming a party of any of the three separately. I expect, however, it will be the last-named who will patronise her most; for as year by year passes by, men—I suppose I ought to write women in this case—realise more and more that the world is not worth seeing, and without travelling to discover it they may be assured that it is a "vale of tears." Again it will be the young who will mostly need Miss Hickson's experience to fill up the void of their own inexperience, unless, that is, they desire as many adventures as had the famous Sinbad of old, and rather like to be "taken in."

LEGAL are generally cruel kindnesses, and legislation, when it would lighten burdens, often only presses them yet heavier on the already oppressed. To tell a starving woman she shall not work for bread is surely "the unkindest cut of all." Yet this is the foundation of Mr. Sydney Buxton's amendment of the Workshop and Factories Bill. Of course everyone knows that no woman ought to work more than twelve hours a day. Mr. Buxton is perfectly right there; but then no woman ought—so, at least, say the Doctors—to go without a good dinner every day or go supperless to bed. Yet hundreds, thousands do, in this very city of London. Alas! I fear the reformers will find this a sadly difficult world to reform, and unfortunately most of the Members of the House of Commons, even if they pity, cannot sympathise (for to sympathise truly one must be able to feel for another *from experience*) with the poor, and therefore is it their acts of kindness so often prove sadly mistaken.

IN the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* for this month Lady Dufferin has given to the world an interesting article on the "Women of India," a subject none could write on from more personal knowledge than herself, for this gracious lady made whilst in India close investigation of

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