

him, for his kindness to her was gratefully remembered; it was indeed the one bright ray which had illuminated the darkest hours of her life, and if he came— But would he come?

Venetia never knew when the question changed its form in her mind, and it was not until he stood before her, and the well-remembered tones of his voice made music in her ears, that she realised how eagerly her heart had counted on the answer.

The summer of this year came late and chill, and was succeeded by a pale autumn, in which the half-ripened grain

was reaped in sullen despair lest the early frosts should render altogether vain the labour of the sickle. Such seasons are not uncommon in the northern counties, yet this year is still remembered in the neighbourhood of Rockly as one of scarcity and sore sickness, a year when the bread-winner of the household was laid low, while the children drooped and pined, and the house-mother, sustained beyond her strength by love and courage, bore upon her shoulders the burden of the household. It is to this sad season that Venetia looks back as to the summer of her life; for when sorrowing, and

oppressed by burdens not her own, there came to her one with a hand to help, an arm to sustain, and a heart to encourage her woman's effort, and the new year saw her John Cartwright's happy wife. In the old church in which as a child she had found in imagination the interest that her life lacked in reality, Venetia was married, and through the door which had so reluctantly opened to the trembling feet of the deserted child she passed upon the arm of her husband to the home in which she was honoured, loved, and happy.

[THE END.]

A SERVANT'S WEDDING OUTFIT.

WE have had plenty of good hints in the GIRL'S OWN PAPER for the outfits of girls who need evening dresses and white satin wedding gowns; but so many of the readers are working girls, that perhaps it will not be amiss to explain to them how I managed to get such a comfortable outfit when Richard and I settled down in our cottage home.

When I came to consider what I needed, I found that I had more than £50 in the Post Office Savings Bank. That seems a great deal for a girl of twenty-six, whose wages have never been more than £16 a year, but I will tell you how I managed.

I always had an idea of saving, since a poor old lady, a cousin of our next door neighbour's, who came out of the workhouse on visiting days, used to tell me her story.

She had been a very good cook, taking her £20 or £25 a year for many years, until rheumatic fever came, and crippled her poor hands so that she could not even tie her bonnet strings, or lift her tea-cup for herself. She had no home to go to, and only £3 or £4 in hand, so that at thirty-five there was nothing before her but the workhouse infirmary for the rest of her life.

"But what did you do with so much money?" I asked her once, for £20 sounded like a fortune to my childish ears.

"I just squandered it away, my dear," she said sadly, "on pretty clothes, and treats, and excursions, for myself and my friends. My fellow-servants always praised me for being so open-handed, but not one of them ever comes to see me now. If ever you go to service, Ellen, be sure and put by a bit for a rainy day," and her eyes would fill with tears.

I have been fortunate in having no call to spend my savings. My health has always been good, so that I have had no doctor's stuff to pay for. My parents are not old, and father has good, regular work as a gardener, so that I have never needed to help them, though many a useful garment for the little ones have I made with my sewing machine of an evening out of my own clothes, which were no longer fit for use in service, to save my mother's eyes, which are weak; and she has plenty of mending to do, without making.

These quiet opportunities for needlework have been a great saving to me. In each place I have had, I have found time to make all my clothes except my very best dresses; and having been well drilled in needlework, both at school and at home, it is no trouble to me.

My places have all been in my native town, so little money has gone for travelling, although I have always gone the summer trips of our Temperance Society, which is generally to the sea-side, thirty miles away.

I do not mind confessing that another

motive for saving has been, that I always thought a good outfit was such a nice thing for a girl if she got married, especially since I helped our Miss Ethel make and pack her pretty *trousseau* when she left us for a new home in the north of England.

Since Richard and I made up our minds, two years ago, I have actually saved nearly £24, by careful repairing and contriving, in order to have plenty to spend when the important time came.

Mistress has always given each of us a black merino dress each Christmas, and I must say that the visitors have been very liberal to me, although I am sure that I have never put myself forward to get their "tips," as some ill-mannered servants do.

I was not quite thirteen when I first went to service. I had done well at school, and there were plenty of mouths to feed at home without a great hungry growing girl as I was then.

So mother fitted me out as well as she could, and I started in life as maid-of-all-work at Mr. Shaw, the greengrocer's, at the other end of the town, for the small wage of a shilling a week.

My mistress, who had several children, was very strict and particular. She had been in good service herself, and knew just how things ought to be done. She was kind, too, in her way, and took pains to teach me my work, and to keep my clothes mended up of an evening.

But it was my master whom I remember with most gratitude. He was a cheertul, jovial sort of man, and often softened even his fault-finding with a joke. It was he who put me in the way of the Post Office Savings Bank.

On my thirteenth birthday, my mother, who thought I should be feeling homesick, sent me a little parcel, with some apples and lardy cakes, a pair of woollen gloves, and a sixpenny story-book. How pleased I was, to be sure! When Mr. Shaw saw me with them he said, with one of his merry twinkles, "You have been a good girl this three months, Nellie, so I think we must give you a book too. You shall come with me and get it after tea, if the missus can spare you for five minutes."

I thanked him heartily, privately thinking that five minutes was not much to allow for a visit to the bookseller's. But when the time came, he led me into the Post Office next door, put down half-a-crown, and before I understood what was being done, an account was opened in the name of Ellen Williams, and the thin, buff-coloured book was handed to me. I was so pleased, for I knew that father wanted me to begin to save as soon as possible. The account being opened on my birthday, has made it easy for me to remember

to send my book in to be made up, as you have to do on each anniversary.

It was not much that I managed to put by in that place, although Mrs. Shaw soon raised my wages to two shillings a week, for, like most girls of my age, I grew out of my clothes and wore out my shoes terribly fast; but at the end of two years I had added seven-and-sixpence to my good master's "nest egg."

When her eldest daughter left school, Mrs. Shaw gave up keeping a servant, and she got me a place with Mrs. White, a widow lady with a large family, where I was to have £7 a year. I was the only servant there too, but no one was idle in that house. All the family were in business, or at school, but they all lent a hand to the necessary work. Even the little girls made their own bed before trotting off to school, and the young gentlemen were not a bit above blacking their own boots of an evening in the privacy of the scullery; and yet I am sure they were real gentlefolks, both in birth and manners.

When they were fairly started for the day, Mrs. White and I were very busy. She always worked with me, and taught me what I did not know; and to be sure there was plenty for us to do, cooking and cleaning, washing and ironing, mending and making—there seemed no end to it; and yet we always did get through comfortably by Saturday night.

My mistress was a clever, managing woman, and now that I have a home of my own, I am thankful that I had those five years with her, and especially to have learnt her thrifty ways, and tasty, inexpensive cooking. She gave me a rise each year up to £10, beyond which her small income did not allow her to go; but I managed in those five years to bring my banking account up to a little over £11. £3 of this I withdrew, when I was about nineteen, and with my mistress's approval bought a good lockstitch hand sewing-machine. She had taught me to use hers, and often had allowed me to do the longer seams of my own garments upon it, so I thought best to buy myself one of the same sort. I was so proud of that machine when it was new! It has proved a good friend to me, and must have done miles of stitching in the seven years I have had it.

When I was just twenty, Mrs. White decided to take all her family to Australia. She had relatives in Adelaide, who promised the young people better prospects than they had here, and they were all eager to go. So my mistress disposed of her furniture, packed her boxes, and started on the long voyage, leaving me very sorrowful at parting from so true a friend.

But she did not forget me among all her business, for before she left she procured for

me an excellent place as house and parlour-maid with a cousin of her own, Mrs. Leslie, at "The Cedars."

I had £14 a year from the first, which was liberal of my new mistress, considering that so much was new to me—the waiting at table, the plate and lamp cleaning, and the care of so much handsome furniture.

When I had been there three years, my wages were raised to £16, and then I treated myself to a nice little silver watch, a thing I had long wished for.

When we decided last Easter that we would look to being married in September, we talked over ways and means. Richard had savings enough to pay for all the main furnishings, and being a carpenter, he made many useful things.

He said if he paid ready money down he should get a good discount—"No hire should get for him, making you pay far more than the goods are worth, and having the weekly payments hanging over your head like a nightmare!"

I said I would undertake all the house linen and crockery for my share, and began, with mother's help, to make lists of all that I should need. I did not mean to spend all my savings—"rainy days" may yet come; and if it please God to grant us little ones, the money will come in handy for the extra expenses which they bring.

I had a grand time for getting on with my shopping and work, for my master's family were away the whole of July and August; and the mistress, knowing what I had in hand, kindly gave me leave to go out as much as I liked.

One of my first visits was to my friend, Lizzie Brown, a member of our Bible Class, who supports her invalid mother by dress-making.

I took up a piece of oversewing to help her while we talked. I told her that I had decided to get two good stuff dresses to begin with, and she said at once, "I tell you what, Nellie, if you can get them soon, I will make them at leisure times, and only charge you five shillings each for them. I wish I could afford to make them for nothing, but the lower price is all I can give you by way of a wedding present, for we have had so many extra expenses lately."

So we settled that I should get a nice grey cashmere for a wedding dress, which would do for Sundays next summer, and a grey bonnet to match. I have a fancy for bonnets, being tall, and broadly-built hats are not becoming to me. Lizzie made me the bonnet, and put some bows of narrow pink velvet in it, and made one for the neck of the dress. This, with grey silk gloves, and the white flowers which our young ladies brought me, made as pretty a set-out as any bride in my station in life could desire.

For the second dress, which was my Sunday one for the coming winter, I chose a blue serge, which kind Lizzie took the trouble to braid for me, and I bought an excellent cloth ulster for 18s. 6d. at a sale.

I had two very good stuff dresses by me, and four cotton ones; but these were very light, and I thought, through the winter, when drying was bad, I should not want one of them added to the necessary washing every

week; so I put them by for summer wear, and bought an every-day dress of old-fashioned brown linsey. This only cost 10s. and I made it myself, with full sleeves and wristbands. There was a loop inside these, and a little button on each shoulder, so that I could fasten them right up when at work, and yet they would come down in a moment for meals, and to answer the door.

I made the skirt short, to avoid getting dragged when I was in and out the garden feeding the fowls or hanging out the clothes. I cannot tell you what a comfort that warm substantial dress has been to me already.

I did not need a good jacket—indeed, I had a very good stock of half-worn clothes to go on with. A hat I brought last winter only needed a shilling's worth of ribbon to make it nice for every day, and I got a black fancy straw bonnet, lined it with a piece of velvet which I once had on a hat, and trimmed it with a handsome scarlet and black ribbon, for Richard likes to see something bright and cheerful.

The new things which I needed were the following:—

	£	s.	d.
Grey cashmere dress	1	3	6
Grey bonnet	0	5	6
Serge dress	0	17	0
Dressmaking	0	10	0
Linsey dress	0	10	0
Ulster	0	18	6
Winter petticoat	0	6	0
Six nightdresses	0	12	9
Six combinations	0	9	0
Two flannel petticoats	0	6	0
Three flannel vests	0	6	0
Three flannelette vests	0	3	0
Four large aprons	0	3	0
Two pairs of stays	0	6	6
Six pairs of stockings at 1s. 6d.	0	9	0
Twelve handkerchiefs	0	5	9
One pair of boots	0	10	6
One pair of shoes	0	7	6
Bonnet and hat trimming	0	4	3
Two pairs of gloves	0	3	4
Collars and necktie	0	2	3
Cottons, tapes, etc.	0	0	8
Total	£9	0	0

My clothes finished, I turned my attention to the house linen, and with the help of my good sewing-machine soon made it all more strongly and neatly than any shop-made things.

We had only two bedrooms to furnish, and I bought two gay-striped Austrian blankets to lay over the beds in winter.

	£	s.	d.
Two pairs of blankets at 15s.	1	10	0
One small pair of ditto	0	8	6
Two Austrian blankets	0	15	0
Two counterpanes	1	1	0
Four pairs of sheets	2	0	0
Two tablecloths at 10s.	1	0	0
Two ditto at 5s.	0	10	0
Twelve pillow cases	0	6	6
Twelve huckaback towels	0	9	0
Six Turkish towels	0	4	6
Three round towels	0	4	6
Four toilet covers at 1s. 3d.	0	5	0
Kitchen and pudding cloths	0	4	6

	£	s.	d.
Window blinds	0	2	6
Two pairs of white curtains	0	10	0
Two red tablecloths	0	6	6
Total	£9	17	6

These prices are by no means the cheapest at which the different articles might be had, but I had seen in my places of service how much more satisfactory is the wear of really good material, so I resolved to buy only such.

Besides these things, I made up many useful odds and ends out of scraps I had by me—iron-holders and dusters out of pieces of print, oven-cloths from the best parts of worn-out working aprons, and a couple of house-flannels from a very thin old petticoat quilted together.

When it came to choosing the crockery, I had two pleasant surprises. Master and mistress said they must give me something after six years of faithful service, and chose a dinner set. It is a real beauty, with a brown pattern on a cream-coloured ground, and such a number of plates and dishes.

Then the cook, who is a quiet, middle-aged person, insisted on spending 14s. on a lovely pink tea-set for me. I protested that it was far too much; but she only laughed, and said she should feel free to come and drink tea out of it very often, as she has no relations in our parts to go to on her Sunday out.

These presents saved me so much that I felt justified in buying what I had longed for, but had felt I ought not to afford, namely, a small mangle and wringer combined, which saves so much work on washing day.

But the tea-set was far too pretty for daily use, so I bought six *strong blue cups* and saucers, some plates and dishes, a brown earthenware teapot, six different-sized jugs, some basins and pie-dishes, kitchen tins, knives, spoons, and forks. Two sets of bedroom china cost me 15s., and I brought sets of blacking and black-lead brushes, brooms, a good scrubbing brush, some tin candlesticks, and a strong, double-burner lamp.

I had little need to spend on ornamental things, for our young ladies gave me some framed pictures, and the little boys a pair of vases; master's old aunt sent me a plated teapot, and my Bible Class teacher a nice little clock, besides smaller gifts from my relations, and from Richard's brothers and sisters.

I bought and trimmed a new brown bonnet for my mother, and gave my little twin sisters new pale pink gingham frocks, white sailor hats, and white cotton gloves; and with their long fair hair (which they generally wear in pigtails) all brushed out, they made as pretty a pair of little bridesmaids as you could wish to see, and very proud they were of their office.

After all this, I still had £20 in the Saving Bank, which gives one a very comfortable feeling in looking forward to the future; and I have the satisfaction of knowing that for years to come I shall need next to nothing from Richard's earnings for my personal needs, and that many of the household goods which I have bought will, with careful using, be comforts all my life.

MAUDE ROBINSON.

