

trapped;" then went his way to report Mrs. Boothroyd as a defaulter to his principal.

Janet handed Susan Meade's rent to Mr. Cutclose, then tried to speak, but for a moment could not utter a word. Her tearful eyes and quivering lips told a tale of trouble, though her tongue was silent.

"I'll step in for a moment if you please, miss," said the landlord. "Better than talking on the door-step."

He suited the action to the word and entered the cottage, Janet herself being thankful to avoid publicity, though in her mother's absence she would have been glad to keep him outside. To stand within sight of the neighbours and tell Mr. Cutclose that she had no money to give him, and perhaps to hear him speak sharply in return, was the greater evil, which would be avoided by his entrance.

"Don't say a word, miss. You are in trouble; I can see it for myself. The old lady is ill, and work is slack. That sewing-machine man has not been over-civil, and you've no rent for me today. I have about reckoned things up, haven't I?"

Janet made a movement of assent; then, with an effort, said, "If you will please to wait a little. We have always paid, though sometimes we have had to ask a little patience. My poor mother was not always—"

"Now don't, miss, please. You mustn't break down," said Mr. Cutclose, for Janet could no longer restrain her tears. "Anybody can see that your mamma is a real lady, and you are another. Such as you trouble a great deal more about a week's rent than most of my tenants would do if they owed me six months. You needn't be uneasy. I'll not send you any trouble—trust me for that. If anybody else does, you let me have a line; not to my office—for I don't stay the whole day there—but to my house, One Ash Villa, Carlton-cum-Penley. You see, I live out of town; and, though I say it, I have as pretty a little place as one need wish for, with nothing short but a mistress for it. This is my card."

Janet took it almost mechanically. She was heedless of Mr. Cutclose's remarks about his home and its attractions, and his attempts to look sentimental as he spoke of its one want were

equally lost on her. She was just conscious that the rent was to stand over, and that the landlord was disposed to befriend them. All the same, she shuddered at the thought of any further indebtedness to Mr. Cutclose. She did not omit to thank him, but she was glad when she found herself alone. Before he left, Mr. Cutclose enquired after Susan Meade. Janet told him all she knew, mentioned her visit of the previous day, and said that no doubt they would hear from her, as the money left for rent had all been paid.

"That will not matter. Susan Meade is all right—an old tenant and a good one. And I am all right," he added to himself, however. "The furniture is all brand-new, and worth many a month's rent. That other poor girl is nearly at the far end—nearly, but not quite. It went against the grain to leave her this morning without opening my mind, but I don't think she was quite ready to listen yet. They've no money, but they will part with odd things; and I dare say the machine will be taken. Then will be my time to step in, and I shall grudge nothing."

(To be continued.)

## HOW TO SECURE A SITUATION.

THERE are a great many persons who think that the best way to secure a situation is to wait till one comes to them. Like Mr. Micawber, they live in daily expectation of "something turning up"; they are particularly fond of the saying, "All things come round to him who will but wait," but they forget that it is equally true, "While the grass grows the steed starves." I know some such at this present time who have been waiting in this state of placid contentment for years, meanwhile spending their small capital, or borrowing of their friends. In this age of rush and hurry, when applicants for every vacant post are as busy and as numerous as bees in a hive, those who are willing to pursue this line of conduct may, as a rule, wait for ever.

The object of this paper is to give a few hints to those who are really desirous of securing work, and who do not know how to set about it. I have nothing very startling or wonderful to relate. You may probably be well aware of all I have to tell you, and, like the prophet's advice to Naaman, it may be despised for its very simplicity. The most simple means, though frequently the most effective, are often overlooked. "Nothing succeeds like success"; but, for any measure of success in any undertaking, a certain amount of energy, industry, and perseverance is indispensable. Granted that you have this, and a plentiful sprinkling of the salt of common-sense, I venture to say that, if you follow my advice, you will not long have occasion to ask, "Why sit we here all the day idle?"

In the first place, do not be too proud to let your friends know what you are in search of. If you be a competent person, and your demands be not exorbitant, it is highly probable that somewhere in the circle of your friends, or friends' friends, is just the niche that is meant for you. In my wide experience I have known more situations obtained in this way than in any other. Too often ladies hide the fact that they have to work for their living, as if it were an everlasting disgrace and could never be forgotten. This is one of the old-fashioned ideas, which, it is to be hoped, a

more enlightened age will wipe out. Only this week an elderly spinster, who has lived in highly-genteel poverty for the best part of her life, remarked to me, "My grandmother was a perfect lady—she never did anything." May future years be preserved from such nonentities!

In the next place, regularly and methodically watch the advertisements in the newspapers. Make a business of it. Do not scan the columns casually, just now and then when the fancy takes you, but repair early every morning to the nearest library where the daily papers may be seen. Failing a library close at hand, any newsagent's, for a small sum weekly, would answer the purpose. Provide yourself with a pencil and paper to take down addresses, and leave your home ready prepared to apply at once, in person, for anything that may seem likely. The early bird catches the worm.

It is sometimes well to advertise for yourself. Should you decide to do so, give plenty of time and thought to your advertisement. Consider carefully exactly what you require, and then state it in as few words as possible. Should you receive any answers, exercise the utmost discretion in ascertaining all you can about your correspondent before entering into any engagement. There are so many traps and pitfalls for inexperienced and, perhaps, too confiding girls, that dealing with strangers requires great caution.

The safest and best thing to do is to place yourself in the hands of a reliable agent. There are such, though, owing to frequent frauds and impositions, people are prone to shun the whole class. It is true that there is no section of society more preyed upon than poor, self-supporting ladies; but a really trustworthy agent is the best means you can employ for securing an engagement.

In this matter, as in every other, you must proceed in a business-like way. State fully and concisely what you wish, what you can do, salary required, etc. Then, do not walk away and forget all about it, except that you have paid the agent your fee. Keep in touch with her; act immediately on any communication she may send you, and be sure you let her

know the result each time. Should it sometimes appear to you that she puts you to unnecessary trouble, do not be annoyed with her. Remember, it is to her advantage, as well as to yours, to get you comfortably settled; her interests and yours are identical.

Some persons imagine that the one object of an agent is to secure the fee, and no further trouble is taken as to whether the applicant be suited or not. I assure you, were this the case she might soon close her establishment; the larger profits come from the commissions on situations secured.

I would also advise you not to hold too strongly to what you think right in the way of salary, holidays, and other details. Should things seem generally desirable, it is better to give way on one point than to lose a good engagement. Very probably, when you are known and appreciated, your desire will be granted. Gather from others who have filled similar positions what you should demand; the agent can advise you well as to this.

So many have such large expectations that they are never realised. Only last week I heard of a young girl leaving school with nothing more than a second-rate education. She desires to be a governess, but will take no less than £100 a year. Poor child! She might as well say £1,000 at once.

Another lady is anxiously looking for an invalid to reside with her. She offers nothing out of the common way, but expects a very uncommon sum in return. She will probably wait a long time. I fully admit that the remuneration offered in the present day for ladies' work is shamefully small; but, that being the case, "half a loaf is better than no bread"; and it is worse than folly to sit down and wait for what we shall never get.

The above advice, every word of which is the result of long experience, is only intended for competent persons, and, in the words of Captain Cuttle, I would urge them to "make a note on it." How to secure a situation for the incompetent is a problem I have not yet solved.

NORA C. USHER.