

DOMESTIC SERVICE IN AMERICA.

AWARD OF THE PRIZE.



THE Editor has great pleasure in publishing the award of the judges in the American Domestic Service Competition. The judges are two well-known American lady writers who have special knowledge of the subject of the Competition, and who examined the papers separately. The judges have reported to the Editor that the work of two competitors is of equal merit; and the Editor has therefore decided, in accordance with the regulations governing the

Prize Competitions, to divide the Prize of Twenty-five Dollars between the two competitors, whose names are

(Miss) SARAH S. GOODHUE,
Whitewater, Wisconsin;
and (Miss) GRACE WELD SOPER,
Waltham, Mass.

Honourable Mention is also awarded to three competitors:—

Mrs. H. C. Ingersoll, Washington, D.C.
Mrs. L. B. Lavelly, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Mrs. J. G. Rodger, New Haven, Conn.

Below we append the papers that have been supplied us by the two judges as the result of their study of the question; the prize papers will appear in subsequent numbers of the MAGAZINE.

I.—DOMESTIC SERVICE IN AMERICA.

IF any evidence were needed as to the difficulty of dealing with the domestic problem in America, it would be found in the variety of opinions expressed in the papers submitted in competition for the Prize offered by CASSELL'S MAGAZINE. In the number of papers sent in, there are very diverse views as to the causes of the difficulty, and this very diversity would seem to place it among those unfortunate social maladies about the causes of which any two reformers seldom agree; and, if the diagnosis is so difficult, how can the cure be hoped for?

Several of the writers express their conviction that the trouble is caused by the demand exceeding the supply. Quite as many, with more reason perhaps, but with no stronger conviction, say that the supply is sufficient, instancing the number of unemployed women-servants in every city in proof, but laying the blame on the inefficiency of the supply. Several others declare the spirit of equality, which forbids a respectable woman willingly to accept the kitchen as her place in the house, to be the reason that women offering themselves as servants are the lowest class, the intelligent and industrious preferring the mill or

the factory. Those who take this point of view contend that if the servant were invited into the sitting-room after work is over, and were allowed to join the family at meals, a very much better class would be drawn towards household occupations. Some who take this view acknowledge that there is no doubt servants are well paid, well fed, and well treated; and yet, because they are in a position of acknowledged inferiority, the self-respecting woman prefers to be ill paid and ill fed in some other employment. Yet another group of essayists, while coinciding with this view, as to the remedy being greater social equality, yet differ entirely in their opinion as to the servant's general treatment, and contend that she is usually over-worked, ill-fed, and unappreciated. Still others again contend that lack of Christian patience on the part of mistresses, lack of practical knowledge of household work, lack of sympathy with the trials an untrained servant has to meet, are reasons why household service in America is shunned.

Some exceedingly well-written and interesting essays are records of a single personal experience; these scarcely meet the conditions under which the prize was offered, which, it seems to the writer, should be an abstract view of the situation, free from prejudice, with the best suggestions for its remedy. Of the large number of papers submitted only very few meet this requirement, and, rather singularly, those papers which give this general view are almost unanimous in their opinion that the remedy can only be found in schools of technical education and industrial training.

Nearly all the remedies proposed outside of these are such as would require an entire subversion of the present conditions of civilised life, and a return, so far as the arrangement of household work is concerned, to patriarchal simplicity. However desirable this return might be—and the harassed house-mistress, or brain-weary employer, quite as much as the ambitious employée, may have brief day-dreams of its restful delights—but they well know they can be only dreams which visit us all occasionally, when common sense takes momentary flight, and the consequences are forgotten. We cannot go back to patriarchal days by halves; and since few of us—servants least of all, for none have gained more by civilisation than they—would give up the blessings of nineteenth-century culture for the doubtful advantages of tribal life, that is no solution of the difficulty which ignores the sacredness of family life, which is broken by the admission of any stranger, be they cultured or uncultured, to the family circle.

Those reformers do most towards the remedy who see the necessity not so much of attracting educated women into the kitchen, for if such a change came about the already terrible army of ill-paid factory hands would be vastly increased, but by making the best of the material we have, helping them to see that good work is always respected, and will obtain for the

faithful self-respecting worker a social consideration no amount of self-assertion without it could ever do.

To tell them, as two of the essayists do, that no class of people have a right to be contented in this country, that the atmosphere of liberty is against it, seems a mistake. It is true that here the lowest worker may rise, but only by doing better work than the average, not simply by aspiring.

— CATHERINE OWEN.

II.—THE DOMESTIC SERVICE DIFFICULTY IN REVIEW.

THE great domestic question of the day, simply put, is, "How are we to get and keep good servants?" This is the problem which has long perplexed the American housekeeper, and which is of vital interest to all who love the name of home. The answer, judging by the diversity of opinions expressed on all sides, is not so easy to find.

All agree that there is a serious difficulty, which threatens to become a national evil, and which cries out for speedy and thorough reform. How this is to be effected all are anxious to know, and many eager to tell. Suggestions have been given differing according to the location, experience, sex, and temperament of the writer. Some look on the question broadly as one of political economy, others as one of sentiment, and more as one of religion. It has been treated from a philosophical, a legal, and a business standpoint. In a word, the matter has met with much careful attention.

The value, however, of any suggestions must depend upon their practical usefulness. Proposed remedies must be widely applicable to the country, and not alone to any part or class thereof. They must be so plain, and sensible, and expedient as to require no eloquence to plead their cause when once fairly presented. We can better discuss these remedies after returning to the original question, and dividing it into three heads, which seem to include all the causes of complaint from both sides.

First, the scarcity of efficient workers in the department of domestic service.

Second, the low standard prevailing all along the line of said service.

Third, the lack of harmony between employer and employée.

Were it not for the scarcity of good servants there would probably be less heard about unreliable intelligence offices, misleading references, and a variable and unreasonable rate of wages. Let us not make the mistake of doctoring the symptoms first.

Were it not for the low standard of domestic work, would it be held in such contempt by clever, capable, and dainty girls of either American or foreign birth? Assuredly no more than nursing the sick.

Thirdly, we come to the prevailing feeling of distrust expressed by both employer and employée. It will be said here by some objector that the last-named trouble would not exist but for the other two. It might be so, indeed, if this were purely a business matter; but the relations between a banker and his

clerks, meeting only for a few hours each day, are very different from and far less delicate than those that must exist between a housewife and the serving-maid, whom she receives into the sacred privacy of home. There is no possible comparison in the case. Mistress and maid live together under the same roof night and day, for months and years perhaps, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and misfortune, in joy and sorrow. "A great opportunity for a gossiping maid!" sneers one. "Ay, and a great opportunity for a noble influence!" says another.

Some one has hinted that a mistress will find it greatly to her advantage to be kind and just. That is on the ethical principle that our own selfish comfort is best promoted by pleasant surroundings. What true woman will be content to conduct her household affairs on that basis alone? "Do not even the publicans the same?" Let no woman shirk the responsibility of the "stranger within her gates."

It will not need to be added that the most amiable and industrious girl can never please an exacting or thoughtless mistress, so the third grievance has now been stated and proved.

How shall we remedy our domestic difficulty? We reply, the majority declare for training schools; not a few expensive ones, but many scattered over the land; and either self-supporting, as far as may be, or endowed by public and private charity. Girls going from these schools, it is further added, will receive diplomas or certificates, and will command good and well-deserved pay. Such schools would prove a magnificent solution to grievances Nos. 1 and 2, by raising the standard of work and increasing the supply of competent workers.

It must be admitted, however, that the value of such services would place them beyond the reach of some in very moderate circumstances. Must those weary wives and mothers continue to take emigrants off the ship? I think not. For just such as these we have received two excellent suggestions.

We will first suppose, for the sake of argument (as the suggestor did not), that the training schools are established and the standard of work raised, will there not be many sensible, bright girls who will prefer living out to unhealthy toil in shops or factories? And just as there are refined day-seamstresses, so there will be, perhaps, poor gentlewomen who will not disdain to enter a small home as a help, provided they are treated with some extra courtesy, which they will amply repay by superior daintiness and ability.

Poor American gentlewomen as helps for their overworked sisters: that is suggestion No. 1, and No. 2 is equally good.

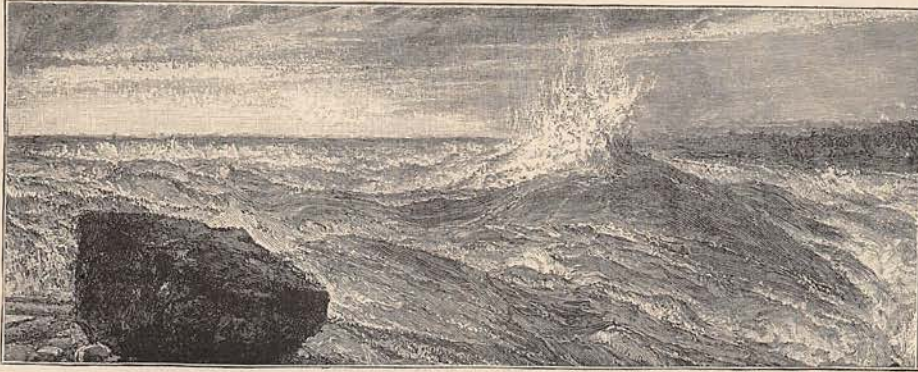
It is as follows—reduce all work to the smallest amount possible, and hire help for a few hours a day only. A good class of young girls who have homes, and only desire pin-money, will apply gladly on such terms. They will take small pay, whether trained or not, in consideration of having their afternoons and evenings to themselves. This suggestion has struck me as being peculiarly appropriate to small families desirous of a little help in the drudgery of housework.

Of course in many cases it would not answer, as, for instance, where there were many babies, or an invalid, or where the husband had night work, as on a newspaper, but it is a good special remedy.

Of those proposed for general application, there are

two which seem to me the best. One is training schools, either separate, or in connection with public schools and institutes; and the other, no less important and no less practical a remedy, can be summed up in one word—sympathy.

A. Z. S.



THE NIAGARA SACRIFICE.

[It was the custom of an Indian tribe to sacrifice a beautiful maiden annually to the spirit of the Falls of Niagara.]



'ER swift Niagara's echoing shores
The moon has spread her silver ray;
And loud the impatient torrent roars,
Expectant of its coming prey;
For on this very night
The fairest Indian maid must glide
Down that swift stream so fierce and wide,
Must yield her to the eddying tide,
And quit the realms of light.
Such sacrifice by old decree
Each year hath been, each year shall be.

And to which fairest maid is given
The meed among so many fair?
Who, journeying to the Red-man's heaven,
Shall shun this world of toil and care?
And doth she fear to die?
Fear to embark in frail canoe,
And bid her tribe, her friends, adieu,
Then pass, like fleeting ghost, from view
For all eternity?
Ah, no; though death itself be near,
An Indian maiden knows not fear.

Behold her calm and passive mien,
Her lustrous eyes, and dusky brow!
Hath ever maid more dauntless been
Than she who comes to perish now?
And yet—she scarce knows why—
There lurks within her inmost breast
A grief which may not be repress,
That he, the chief who loves her best,
Should thus behold her die;
Should see her borne on ruthless wave
Beyond all hope, all power, to save.

And now the fatal hour is nigh;
The Indian warriors line the stream;
While, all around, the cloudless sky
Is flooded with the bright moonbeam.
And lo!—at signal given—
A damsel fair, in drifting boat,
Adown the shimmering stream doth float;
They note her form, her mien they note,
And rend the echoing heaven.
Loud swells the applauding shout while she
Is gliding to eternity.

But see! propelled with greater force.
There enters on that scene of death
A second boat: they watch its course
With straining eyes and quick-drawn breath;
A warrior sits therein.
With vigorous arms his oars he plies,
His bark with heaven's own light'ning vies,
And shoots like meteor through the skies,
The maiden's boat to win.
A few strong strokes—then, side by side,
They journey down the furious tide.

'Tis he! 'tis he! They meet again,
Nor death itself can part them more.
Words speak they none, for words were vain
Beside yon cataract's deafening roar;
On—on—speeds each canoe.
The Falls are near, the stream more fleet,
The currents shelve beneath their feet,
Their eyes for one short moment meet,
Then both are lost to view.
Yet sweet, methinks, those lovers' fate,
Whom death hath failed to separate.

H. S. S.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF DOMESTIC SERVICE IN AMERICA.
HOW SHALL THE WANT BE MET?

PRIZE PAPER.*



N a recent article mention is made of the institution inaugurated by Elizabeth Fry in Chelsea, England, in 1827, for the training of young girls for domestic service. Although that was a reformatory school in connection with the education for work, the

latter phase of her idea seems to have made the effort most successful.

If through that channel good servants have been trained, then why may not schools be instituted in our country, where good, respectable, and self-respecting girls may find instruction in domestic work, and enter upon it with such qualification for service that they shall find in it an interest which only makes in any business good workers?

It is true that there are in the cities cooking schools, but they are expensive, and only the well-to-do people can take advantage of them. We need them on a broader scale, of a more miscellaneous order of instruction, and such prices of admission as only can be had in benevolent institutions, with something of an endowment to meet in large measure their expenses.

As the matter now stands, most of the domestic help is obtained from the families of foreigners having recently come to us, and whose poverty in the overcrowded old countries necessitated an order of living very unlike that even of our own poor.

They come from the manufacturing towns of England, where, with extremely low wages, they scarcely managed to keep hunger from the door. Perhaps their fuel was so scarce that what little baking was done was at some public oven. Possibly bread, beer, and meat were the only supplies of the table day after day, and week after week.

They come from Germany, where the ways of living are so unlike our own, or from peasant France, where life, though very different from the German, is no more like ours, and no more agreeable to us.

We all know what the life of the poor in Ireland is, and from Ireland so many come seeking places for domestic service here.

Among these, of every nationality, there can be only entire ignorance of American ways. There are no means of education for them except through the mistress, who is obliged to take such help in default of better. Her own superiority is, perhaps, not one of practical knowledge. She knows what is a well-cooked dish, and has some ingenuity in devising methods of making it. She has her cook-book, and knows how to read it.

But it is largely experimental with her, and were she her only scholar she would have trouble and failure enough, yet she must take another and duller one, and patience gives out. The poor foreign girl, possibly not well understanding our language, is exasperated by sharp words, and, knowing little of respectful ways, is as correspondingly impudent as her mistress is impatient.

The girl is either dismissed at once, or stays and sulks, and does not half try to do her best.

The whole household, with every other thing conducive to peace and comfort, is made miserable because of the lack of harmony between parlor and kitchen.

Or, if from a poor American family the rare event happens that a girl goes out to service, she has only the training for it that her mother has given her in cooking, where scantiness of material necessarily gives little knowledge of the use to be made of abundance. Thus it is often used so lavishly that, like "too many cooks," it "spoils the broth."

But it is rarely the case that an American girl, of average brightness and ambition, will go out to service. A more unhealthy, and perhaps less remunerative, position in a shop, or at a sewing-machine, is chosen, because of an undeniably greater social consideration.

And why is it so? Largely because there is so great a proportion of ignorant foreign help that the calling takes on the character they give it, while in the trades and sewing line American girls are in the ascendancy, and doing better average work.

And, then, largely because there is such a prevailing antagonism between mistress and servant, that it is a repellent employment for one who desires the current of her life to run in smooth channels, and it is entered upon only from necessity.

But why this prevailing lack of harmony between domestic service and its employment?

At the foundation, no doubt, because the service is so imperfectly rendered. The training often commences with first service out. There has been, perhaps, an interregnum between the last cook and the new one, who comes inexperienced, and is only taken because the lady "cannot do *everything*" herself. She well understands the delicacy of cake, the lightness of rolls, the tender juiciness of steak, but of the practical experience of securing all this with her own hands she knows nothing. All might go well with her if only she need have superintendence of her kitchen with a cook well trained for her work, but often she is obliged to take an inexperienced one, and then there is need of great patience, for the American girl, more

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than the foreign one, must be handled carefully, or she is off.

And then, again, if the girl is amiable and experienced, the mistress, it must be confessed, is often arrogant and fault-finding, treating the girl as if she were a machine, so far as any sympathy or commendation is concerned. The kitchen is bare and dreary to sit in when work is done, the chamber just comfortable. What wonder that she wants to go out of evenings, or gather company about her, and that a mutual sympathy between servants often results in a common conspiracy against the peace and good order of their respective places. In such a case both mistress and maid are at fault.

Now, what can be done to remedy this domestic evil, and make happier women and consequently happier homes?

In the institution of cooking schools, and the interest of the young girls in cooking clubs, there is much to hope for in the fact that households are less likely to be entirely dependent on incapable servant-girls, and that ignorant ones can be better trained if they must be taken in that condition. Mothers are getting more interested in cooking, and it seems less like drudgery as they work with their daughters, who are using their cooking school notes in practical work.

If there should further grow from this interest schools for training girls for domestic service, so that ignorance be no longer its badge, there will be a change in the proportion of American girls found in it, and it will be as respectable to work in a woman's kitchen as to sew in her family. Good American kitchen girls will be as readily obtained as good American sewing girls. And, then, if at a moderate expense the foreign girls coming to our shores find an entrance at once to institutions endowed through the benevolence of those of large means who are seeking wise channels of beneficence, they will be fitted for earning their own living. That, they must nearly all do, unfitted as they are for it, and households suffer in consequence.

If departments of cooking and other industrial training are needed to make of the coloured girls of the South industrious and capable helps, or to make for their race better homes, scarcely less so are they needed for the girls of foreign birth almost without exception, whom we must otherwise take into our own homes to train them there, thus detracting so much from the pleasure of the gathering about our tables, which so often is about the only hour when all the family meet during the day. A poor "cuisine," the entrance of an untidy, sour-looking waiter, is enough to spoil this social hour, or turn it to the never-ending theme of the kitchen failure.

Let us hope that in some way, or by many ways rather, there is a dawn of better days for mistress and maid, and that they may soon be ushered in; that womanhood in the one case may be better fitted by patient endeavour for better things; and, in the other, it shall be elevated and educated for better service, so that there shall be more of harmony in all departments of home life.

Why may there not be more servants like one who not long since went to her rest in good old age—her work well done in one family all her life? Her employers' interests were ever her own, their children scarcely less dear to her than to them. Well qualified for her work, she was faithful in it.

Mutual kindness and patience will do much towards establishing harmonious relations between servants and mistress; indeed, they are indispensable, but the education of both in the mysterious art of cooking is needed to supplement all the other graces.

It may be that, in the present imperfect order of things, the training of the maid must be through the mistress alone. If so, it will be through laborious painstaking on her part, a process sure to "let patience have its perfect work." If successful, however, it shall return in tenfold blessing to one who has the consciousness of having contributed to the uplifting of another.

It is true we shall find some ungrateful receivers, who will leave the place when they have been thus helped for higher wages elsewhere. Indeed, this is true of good endeavour for others always.

The girl we have thus educated is not only helped, but her next mistress, stranger to us though she be. And, after all, it is not altogether self-sacrificing work on our part, as we have had better service in its progressive movement than we would at its first low mark, or if we had exchanged for another of the same grade.

Then, too, we may look at this as true missionary work coming to our hand. Here is our home missionary field. Are we more interested in the foreign work? From every foreign country they come to us at their lowest estate, needing both our Christianisation and civilisation. Scarcely a nationality but has its representative of the lower classes knocking at our doors, and seeking "a place." It is a work we cannot evade, except to our own detriment and that of others as well.

The servant we make better, more loyal to us and to her own true womanhood, more capable, more industrious, when she goes out from our homes, goes either to make a home of her own in America better, with such influences reaching on and on for good, or goes to make some other home happier for her good service.

These were motives enough, but the blessing is no less personally our own. Better than self-indulgent ease the work of helping another to enter on a life of higher aspiration, and to a practical, self-supporting service. It is a faint modelling of our lives to His, "who took upon Himself the form of a servant."

Let us arise to this thought as American women. Let us seek the cultivation of better servants, so far as in us individually we may have the opportunity; and in this endeavour, helping towards the elevation of womanhood more lowly than our own, we will hope there may soon be larger provision for cheaper education for domestic service through institutions for that special object.

SARAH S. GOODHUE.

among fashionable dames. One point is certain: whatever the British nation may affect, the French have persistently adopted bright colours this autumn, and at all the fashionable seaside places the toilettes are as brilliant as a rainbow. The sunshine has lent the picture additional charms and a perceptible additional gaiety, so all is well.

We have engraved two costumes made in Paris—one is worn in the country, the other at the seaside.

The second represents a lady busy with her telescope, and wearing a checked foulard costume. It has a cream ground with red and black lines; all the trimmings—bows, revers, &c.—are red silk; the hat is of basket straw trimmed with red. The former costume is of striped green and écreu canvas, the petticoat being écreu embroidery mounted on green silk. The plastron matches the petticoat, and the bonnet is likewise of the two colours—écreu and green.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF DOMESTIC SERVICE IN AMERICA.

HOW SHALL THE WANT BE MET?

JOINT PRIZE PAPER.*



THE question of domestic service throughout the United States, reduced to a simple principle of political economy, is that of a scarcity of labour in comparison with the demand. According to the economic law, the excess of demand should be met by an increased supply; but sentiment and social feeling, which have a large part in complicating the problem of household service, interfere with the workings of the law. The

growing dissatisfaction and perplexity of housekeepers seem to show that the supply of competent servants is diminishing each year, and, though statistics cannot be easily collected, there is little doubt that skilled labour in this branch is much needed.

A great social change, which is still in progress, and whose end cannot be seen, has serious effects upon household service, complicating it, and rendering its immediate cure difficult, if not impossible. The influence of the labour unions, which, though seldom inciting organisation among domestic servants, increase an anti-capitalist feeling, and the change in the manner of living of rich Americans have widened the social separation between mistress and maid, and decreased the harmony of their relation. During the last two years servants have cultivated an independence of spirit which is often unreasonable. To give a specific example of this feeling:—Within the last year, a domestic employment bureau in a large city was compelled to close twice on account of the impossibility of bringing together servants and ladies in search of servants; at one time there were eighteen ladies waiting for servants, and twenty-seven girls applying for situations, yet no one could be satisfied, mainly on account of the reluctance of the servants.

Although independence produced by changed social conditions is an important factor in the difficulty, it would not be correct to consider this quality the only source of trouble in this many-sided problem of household service. In the condition of society which has occasioned a difference in the occupations of women from those of the early part of the century, domestic training is not considered the inevitable and chief feature of a girl's education. After marriage, women, especially those of large cities, continue the outside cares, social, philanthropic, and educational, which they have begun in girlhood, and no longer mistress and maid work together as in the early and simple days of the Republic. Mr. Andrew Carnegie says, in his work "Triumphant Democracy," that in 1830 the servant problem was much easier of solution than now, "for, as there were fewer foreign women available for domestic service, native Americans had to be employed. These were not called servants, but 'helps;' and it was the custom for them to sit at the family table, and in other ways to be treated as equals and members of the family. Such an arrangement was hardly an inconvenience, where so much simplicity of life prevailed." Mistress and maid have both changed during the last fifty years, and, though all true Americans believe in a well-kept home, new conditions are not met with sufficient readiness to produce good results upon society. Most noticeable is the change in servants since native Americans have gone from domestic to mill-work, from mill-work to shop, leaving their former field to foreign labour. The most troublesome effect of this change is seen in country villages and upon farms, where it is impossible to obtain servants, since even foreign women will not leave the city for the country, and housekeepers are compelled to perform all kinds of domestic work, with the chances of a neighbour's help in the times of emergency.

There is no better way of studying the practical workings of the domestic servant problem than by watching in a city domestic employment bureau the

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methods of "placing" girls. Here is an office which has obtained a reputation for trustworthiness, on account of its connection with a benevolent institution whose officers have imposed strict regulations, and maintain constant supervision over its methods.

Two thousand girls a year are provided with situations. During the hours in which the office is opened interesting scenes are constantly being enacted. A lady, who is evidently both wearied and discouraged, enters, and inquires for an efficient servant for general housework.

"I'm afraid that I haven't a well-trained girl to-day," replies the manager; "but I have a girl who has had a year's experience, and whose face I like."

The lady sighs, but, upon consenting to talk with the girl, seems to be more easily satisfied than her first demand would imply.

"Can you make bread?" "Can you wash and iron?" and other questions of similar nature are answered by demure affirmative, and, at the end of a few minutes, the bargain is made and the lady has hired her servant. The conversation has been so vague, the lady neither carefully defining her requirements, nor the girl her desires, that it seems impossible that the one should know the capabilities of the other, or that the duties should have been understood.

Soon a young housekeeper enters, and says impulsively—

"I must have a good second girl immediately. I want one to-day."

"I have no first-class girl," replies the manager.

"But I must have some one."

A girl is introduced to the new-comer, but is soon dismissed.

"Oh! I can't take that girl. She says that she has never washed collars and cuffs."

"But that is because her mistress sent collars and cuffs to the laundry," explains the manager. "She can easily learn, and might prove a most useful servant, since she understands all other branches."

"Oh! I can't take the trouble to train girls," is the emphatic reply of the young housekeeper, who continues her search among the intelligence offices.

After this incident, the manager gave an interesting review of some of the complaints which she received from different people on both sides of the problem. "It's six of the one to half a dozen of the other, and ladies and girls are both to blame. The girls complain that the ladies are not willing to teach them anything. The demand is for experienced girls, proficient in the work required, and, unless a girl has had a year's experience, she finds it most difficult to obtain a situation. The ladies complain that now there are no girls for general housework; there are cooks, second girls, parlour-girls, and nursemaids, but few who are willing or able to perform the general work of the house. The old-fashioned maid-of-all-work is becoming extinct in the increase of special department girls."

The manager discussed the reason for the exclusion of American girls from service. "Social ostracism is

the chief reason for the American distaste of housework, and there is no opportunity for a rise." The growing custom of requiring nursery-maids to wear caps and aprons keeps many excellent American girls from a light occupation which would be eminently suited to them. This form of servitude is often required, and many independent and refined girls, who will not accept the condition of wearing caps and aprons in the street, often lose fine opportunities. "It is certain," explained the manager, "that mistresses desire subserviency as a necessary quality for girls. 'I want a trained servant,' a lady asks, meaning that she would like a girl who would curtsy when the lady came into the kitchen. One nice American girl was discharged because she had the air of not wanting to be snubbed. When the lady was asked why she did not like the girl, she said, 'Oh, she always looked as if she felt that she was quite equal to any of the family.' On the other hand, the ladies complain of the girls' independence, which often borders closely upon impudence. They say that an American girl, as a rule, does not make a good servant, since 'she demands the highest wages, is afraid of work, always watchful for fear of being treated with undue consideration, and has a discontented, independent air that is perfectly intolerable.' One lady complains that she is often disappointed by girls who break their engagement because they find a more remunerative position, or some other reason. She said that the last girl she engaged failed to meet her appointment because her young man 'did not want her to live where it was so far from the city that he could not call upon her.' The manager received the complaint with a resigned air. That is not an unusual charge against girls, but it's six of the one to half a dozen of the other, and ladies disappoint as well as girls."

The evils of the present system of domestic service proclaim themselves. Even the superficial observer of the business of the average intelligence offices notices the misunderstanding which exists between employer and employée, the incompetency of the maid for serving and of the lady for superintending, the suspicion of the one and the distrust of the other. Unfortunately, the remedies are not so forward in asserting themselves. When a plan is suggested, it fails either from its apparent impracticability, or has only temporary and partial success from its want of adaptation to the age. Co-operative housekeeping, which is a remedy frequently suggested, is one of the fruitless schemes, failing of wide acceptance because its machinery is too elaborate for general adoption, and its aim seems to many to threaten the isolation of the family. A more hopeful plan is the technical education of servants by means of schools for housekeeping, or industrial classes, which might give instruction in cooking and other branches of domestic work; but the plan, under present conditions, is impossible of wide extension. One or two large benevolent institutions in cities offer board and tuition for a course of several months in domestic work, but the advantage presented in this way is necessarily limited, and the great class of servants, the majority of whom cannot

afford the time nor expense of cooking-school instruction, is not benefited. When public industrial schools are established, the alluring ideal of training for servants will become a reality, beneficial for its practical end and for its moral effect. The children of the poor will be trained to do something useful, so that when they are needed for household service they will be found ready for the best use.

But there are some remedies of a practical character which might be put into immediate operation, if public opinion were earnest in its determination to remedy the evil, and the housekeepers of the land would cooperate energetically and conscientiously in making an end to some crying abuses.

More trustworthy bureaus of domestic employment, or intelligence offices, are needed. Such is the really blameworthy condition of most offices that, to those who have understanding of their methods, their unreliability "goes without saying." The licence seems to have no avail in putting an end to fraud and imposition, or even worse results, to the girls who are in the power of the office managers. It is not a fair commentary upon the good nature of the American people that such centres of fraud, as some offices, should be permitted undisturbed to take their fees in support of a vicious system. A more rigid care in the placing of girls, certificates of character, or well-attested references, and stringent rules against fraud and imposition, would lop away many evils from the existing relations between intelligence office managers and the public. An office should be placed under managers of well-known character and reputation. Since the fee is the temptation to a relaxation of rules and to most of the evils of the system, the best-regulated employment bureau would be the one independent of fees through the support of an outside fund. It is usually the case that the most trustworthy offices now are under the charge of Christian associations or women's unions. A girl who is known to be dishonest, a family which bears a reputation for cruelty or fraudulent dealings, would not be admitted into contracts by managers who are thoroughly responsible and sensitive to their duties to the public.

More conscientious recommendation of servants by their mistresses is another need in household service reform. It is well known that many ladies give references to servants who do not deserve praise, and, on the other hand, that some servants are denied "characters" to which they are fairly entitled. The general worthlessness of references is well known. Since, even in their imperfection, they form a safeguard to worthy service, and are undoubtedly a preventive of unlicensed imposition, it can be readily seen that their value as honest references is most important. A plan of sending printed circulars for information to the former mistresses of girls seeking employment is eminently practicable, and from answers to the printed questions much testimony can be obtained, useful to the managers who place girls.

A discriminating regulation of wages would be an important factor in the domestic service difficulty. The real evil is not too high remuneration or too low

wages; it is the unfair distribution of the wage fund. Instead of receiving wages according to experience or worth, servants are paid according to the means or fancy of the employer.

"I pay four dollars a week," says the lady at the intelligence office.

"This is a green girl," suggests the manager.

"That makes no difference. I pay four dollars a week."

The green girl engaged at that price reports her pleasant experiences to her friends who are receiving low wages, though they may be more experienced girls, and immediately dissatisfaction ensues along the whole domestic line. As matters now exist, injury to all housekeepers is done by those who do not take the trouble to realise that by reducing all to a level they are discouraging the cultivation of better qualities by servants. A regular gradation of wages would be of great advantage in the solution of the problem.

A change in social sentiment would produce an equal economical change. It is the tendency of the times to degrade and not to elevate household service, and to discourage American girls from choosing the employment of "servant" on account of its implied social degradation. Ladies who read Carlyle, and who take pleasure in Herbert's often-quoted lines upon the divinity of drudgery, have a manner of considering their maids the inhabitants of a different world from their own. While their theories are sound on the dignity of labour, their practice places labourers in a lowly position. Housework will be elevated when it is regarded as a business honourable and respected. If the mistress would hire her servants as her husband in trade hires his clerks, the relations between the manager of the house and the labourers would be on the sound basis of political economy, and not on a social or sentimental footing. As in other fields of labour, thorough training would be expected, and the girl who aspires to service would learn her profession as the bookkeeper learns to keep accounts. In order to maintain a contented household, and to encourage the best efforts of her servants, the mistress would aim to be impartial, kind, and considerate, as the farmer or merchant endeavours to gain the affection and respect of his workmen. The business principles which regulate the household can be applied still higher to the public part in the domestic service question. In many European countries Governmental supervision regulates household service. Servants in some places possess conduct-books, without which they cannot find situations. The mistresses note the girls' behaviour in this book, which is countersigned by the police. Why could not the system suggest an American plan of regulation? A supervising board of domestic service, composed of the prominent matrons of city or town, would be a useful department of municipal government. Its duties would be the supervision of intelligence offices, and the careful oversight of the unprotected girls, as well as prevention of fraud against housekeepers, and its good results can be predicted as one answer to a difficult problem.

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