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 always "cruising". I know some such at this present time who have been wasting in this state of placid contentment for years, meanwhile spending their small capital, or borrowing, and working hard. 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 economy will 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 secure 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 Naomi, it may be desirable to yours 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, perseverance, and patience 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 have to ask, “Why sit here all 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 competent, your powers, and your desire to work, will do work, and your expectations will not be exorbitant; it is highly probable that somewhere in the circle of your friends, or friends’ friends, is just the niche that is made for you, and your walk expected. 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, it is, to be hoped, a more enlightened age will wipe out. Only this week an elderly spinner, 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 fortune be spared from such sentiments!

In the next place, regularly and methodically watch the advertisements in the newspapers. Make a business of it. Do not scan the columns haphazardly 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 newspaper office will 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 case an opening 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 confidence-stricken, that dealing with strangers requires great vigilance.

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 gone to the whole chaff. 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 have to employ for securing an engagement.

In this matter, as in every other, you must proceed in a suitable way. State fully and candidly 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 some time appear to you that you are unnecessary trouble, do not be ashamed of 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 to the point.

So many have such large expectations that they are never realised. Only last week I heard of a young lady leaving school with no one to help her. She desires to be a governess, but her salary is no less than £100 a year. Poor child! She might as well say £1,000 at once.

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