very hot and restless." I mount the nursery stairs, and stay till Jessie is quietly asleep, and Mollie’s temperature ascertained to be normal, and on coming back to the drawing-room I find Tom talking with an old gentleman and his daughter, our nearest neighbours, whom he is hospitably asking to stay the rest of the evening; they have come for a book, and Tom delights to display his treasures, so the hours pass quickly, and at eleven, when they leave us, I am really too tired to read any more.

"I suppose you must take the ‘Acanthus’ back tomorrow, Tom?" I say when we are alone. "I have not had time to read that paper."

"I fear I must; Sir Charles asked me for it to-day, but I am sorry you have not read it, for I asked Blakiston to come on Thursday instead of Stuart, who called to tell me he must leave town-to-morrow, you don’t mind, dear, do you?"

"What about Mr. Blakiston? Certainly not, I shall be glad to have him at dinner," I reply, but I regret more than ever the loss of the half-hour that would have made me acquainted with his charming article.

"I am afraid you do not care about reading so much as you did, my dear," says Tom, patronisingly, as he walks to the door.

"Tom, how can you?" I exclaim, vehemently. "It is that I have such incessant interruptions—listen," and I hold his coat button, while I recount the day’s experiences.

"Well," he says, unmoved, "this is exceptional. Jimmy Giles doesn’t get scalded, and the Waltons don’t come in for the evening, always."

"No, of course not, but this is only one day of my usual life, and other interruptions occur instead," I say severely. It is useless, I know. Tom goes to smoke, and at the club to-morrow he will say to Sir

Charles: "What a pity it is, so many women give up everything in the way of culture a few years after they marry!"

I ask—how am I to read newspapers, magazines, travels, novels, biographies, within a month of their publication (to say nothing of having such a book, perhaps as Oliphant’s "Scientific Religion" thrown in occasionally)—and yet to lead the life of a sociable woman with a household to look after? Will someone reply?

M. R. L.

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**WAGES OF DOMESTIC SERVANTS.**

*By Emma Brewer.*

"Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it."—Gen. xxx. 28.

"Thrift is good husbandry, teaching us how to save and how to spend."—Vanderbilt.

It is long since articles on our friends the servants appeared in The Girl’s Own Paper, but our interest in them has never flagged; indeed it has been kept alive and intensified by means of the papers sent in on the occasion of the Competition Prizes offered by the Editor to all girls who worked with their hands.

These papers brought us face to face with the writers, very many of whom were domestic servants scattered throughout the land, and who at the time were performing their daily round in the cottage, the farm, the house of the professional man, as well as in the castles and mansions of the rich.

The character of their work was admirably set forth, together with the hours they laboured, the way they were treated by their mistresses, the kind of recreation they were allowed, and in most cases the wages they earned.

Curiously enough, the Board of Trade is awakening to the fact that domestic service is the largest women’s industry in the kingdom, and that domestic servants form one-third of the female working world, therefore a very important portion of the population, and it has been trying, without much success at present, to discover the amount of wages earned by this numerous class of workers, and how long on an average servants retain their situations. But with all its desire to succeed, and with its vast machinery at its command for collecting statistics, the Board has only been able to get reliable information as to the wages of 5,338 servants out of about one and three-quarter millions. Still the move it has made will be of infinite service in letting light in upon the subject of domestic service, which every person thinks he or she knows thoroughly, and of which very few have any real knowledge. Indeed how is it possible they should know when every household that can afford a servant differs from all others both in the kind of servant employed, the conditions of the home, the wages paid and the treatment given and received?
Now that so many occupations are open to girls and women, the subject of the wages earned by domestic servants is a very important one, and the Board of Trade is to be thanked for looking into it. It is the first attempt at a serious investigation into the wages of domestic servants, and, although partial and incomplete, it contains a large amount of information which has not hitherto been available to the public, and which will no doubt prove very valuable as a foundation for comparisons in years to come.

The domestic servant is a member of the household and a very important one—indeed, in fact, on which the comfort of the home greatly depends.

The question is, can she earn sufficient wages to keep herself neat and respectable and put by something in the savings bank? Or, if she has aged or sick parents, can she help them with the wages she earns?

To answer this correctly will never be an easy task, for it does not depend solely on the wages earned but rather on the individual character and disposition of servants and the needs of those at home; and not the least important part of it is whether they may rely on the wages being paid punctually.

Can a girl do as well for herself and her belongings in domestic service as in an office, as typewriter or clerk, or in a laundry or factory?

Of course, she has her food and lodging, which can be put down as from £15 to £20 per annum, and in this respect the estimates are sound, as those who go out to daily work often fare very badly as to food, lodging and home comforts; and indeed she scores all round except in one instance, that of not having every evening free.

In domestic service there are many grades of skilled and unskilled labour as in every other occupation, and on the lowest rung of the ladder is the little slavey of the lodging-house or coffee shop, whose wages, if any, are next to nothing, whose work is never-ending, and who can do nothing for home but relieve it of her board, such as it is.

So she does the least well off of all those who work for their living, and she rarely rises in the scale. It may be interesting to learn that out of every hundred mistresses who employ servants fifty-nine keep only one servant, and although the wages paid and received are much the same, yet the conditions of the home vary so immensely as not to be capable of comparison.

As far as wages go the general servant under fifteen years of age earns as a rule £6 a year, and from sixteen to twenty years old £17. There are one or two reasons why very few general servants get into houses where four or five servants are employed, because they are not sure of their work and attached to the people whom they serve, and because as they grow older they obtain increased wages, though few ever get more than £20.

The average age of a general servant who gets £20 and more is thirty-five, and the length of her service from six to twelve years.

Another reason against a good general servant entering households of many servants and so obtaining higher wages is the want of professional training, which is a serious defect in our social organisation.

At present the good general servant, like the good mistress, is born, not made.

Out of every hundred households twenty-three employ two servants at an average wage of £15 per annum.

Strange enough, the wage is higher where the number of servants is greater, so that in households of three, four or more servants the wages, taking one with another, are £18 per annum.

Perhaps you remember having seen a picture in Punch of a mistress engaging a cook. The lady asks, "What wages do you require?" To which the cook replies, "Well, ma'am; if I am single-handed and have to do the ground-floor, area, and front-door steps, and bread, I want £20; but if you give me a kitchen-maid, and I have nothing to do but cook, I should want £40 a year." We pay for position, you see.

* So called because she lives in the house or within the walls, as opposed to an outdoor servant.

The number of households employing four servants is only nine in a hundred, and those employing a larger number are only four in a hundred, and taking the wages all round they average £18 a year.

Cook and lady's-maid also obtain the highest remuneration. Of the former you rarely find one under twenty or over forty, and their wage ranges from £25 to £30 per annum, while lady's-maids get from £20 to £35, according to the house in which they take service, beside very valuable perquisites.

Having looked into the average wage of the domestic servant, we come again to the question, Is the servant better off or less well off than the girl who goes out to her daily work? After weighing carefully all the circumstances, it seems to me that a domestic servant in a good household is much better off than either a shop-girl, a typewriter or clerk.

She has her food, including tea, fire, a small item in these days, lodging and washing without cost to herself, and when her wages are paid quarterly the four or five pounds is her own, to buy necessary clothing, put away in the savings bank or help her people at home. What girl other than a domestic servant ever has as much at her own disposal at one time? In addition to the wage a servant often receives quite a large sum in the year in tips from visitors. I wish this form of income was done away with, but the practice obtains in spite of my not liking it, and is often quite sufficient to provide them with clothes.

A good parlour-maid usually gets more than £28, while the wages of a nurse vary from £16 to £20 per annum.

The difficulty of obtaining good servants is much greater in households employing one or two only, which is perhaps the reason why frequent holidays are offered as inducements instead of high wages.

The relations between mistresses and servants are very little affected by the rate of money wages agreed upon.

The servants find no difficulty really in obtaining full value for their services, and consequently there is an absence of bargaining on either side.

The important points which make a situation desirable are the quality of the food and lodging provided, the amount of work required to be done, the way the household is organised and the efficiency and personal characteristics of both mistress and servant.

We learned from the papers sent in, to which I have referred, that a large percentage of servants retain their situations for many years, some indeed for twenty, which speaks well for both mistresses and servants.

There is as much honour in these days attached to domestic service as to any other means of getting a living. The thing is to be sure of and understand the work decided upon, and to do it to the best of one's power.

The way to decide upon our work is to select that best suited to our special capabilities and by which we can earn the most, and thus secure our own present and future well-being and enable us to help and do good to others.

Those who read this paper will be able to decide to what extent the wages of domestic servants will enable them to compete with girls who work out of the house in doing good to themselves and others.

We add a little group of figures for those who are interested in them.

We will suppose that there are 5,771,199 households in the United Kingdom. Out of every hundred of these employing servants—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Servants</th>
<th>Wages (£)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59 keep only one servant</td>
<td>£17 17s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 servants</td>
<td>£18 10s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 servants</td>
<td>£19 6s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 servants</td>
<td>£20 0s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 servants</td>
<td>£21 3s. 9d.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Averahe wage £17 17s.

Roughly speaking, servants employed under fifteen years of age are a little over 8 in every 100.

Between fifteen and twenty | 33 |
| **twenty and twenty-five** | **19** |
| **twenty-five and thirty-five** | **10** |
| **thirty-five and forty-five** | **7** |
| **Over forty-five** | **9** |