

A GIRL AND HER SPENDING MONEY

BY SARAH CANTWELL SMITH

MANY a girl, who feels that her place is in her own home and who really is needed there, to play or sing for father at night—or to help her mother in the day time, and who besides has no actual need to become one of the women wage earners of the world, is sometimes dissatisfied with her home life and spends much of her spare time envying the business girl and wishing she could make some spending money of her very own.

As one of you wrote me a few weeks ago, "there are so many little things one could do with pocket money, little birthday treats for friends and for one's little brothers and sisters. Oh, lots of things." Another writes that she is in school, yet has some spare hours and would like to earn some money for herself.

It is to this girl I want to write this month, and tell her that not only do I sympathise with her desire but I think it can be accomplished. What has been done can always be done again, and many a girl has solved this very problem for herself and has found often that at the close of the year she has more money on hand than her business sister who has had her board and room and clothing to furnish out of her too often meagre wage.

I have always considered the ideal arrangement for the girl who really takes her share of duties in the home and fills a needed place, to be the monthly allowance which she can spend for clothes—or just as her fancy dictates, but sometimes the state of the family exchequer does not permit of allowances after all the necessary items have been met; but even here the girl need not be discouraged; there are

many ways of making some money for oneself, if one only has energy and a strong enough desire. Most dreams in our life can come true if they are not too unreasonable ones, and if we only want them badly enough to overcome the obstacles that lie in our path.

There are one or two general rules that we can always apply in starting out to make money for ourselves and the first one is:—Take whatever comes to your hand, if the thing you most desire isn't offered, and do that thing with enthusiasm. We are not often asked what we want, choice of work comes only as a result of successful accomplishment. The opportunity at hand may not even be the one for which we think ourselves best fitted. Never mind if you are really in earnest and can do the thing at all—seize it that very moment and say "Thank you." Other things will open up in unexpected and unlooked for ways and your future goal will not be put the further off. In fact, one can get a great deal of inspiration to effort and endeavor along any line in thinking of the goal before their eyes. Are you desirous of a course in stenography or music or even a coveted year at some school or college? Work toward that end by putting your level best into the thing of the moment. These lesser things will drop out of your hand as it closes upon a larger duty.

Second—Don't be ashamed of the work that you can secure for the time being. Work of any kind is good and no work is belittling unless we ourselves make it so. If we do what our hands find to do with enthusiasm, energy and genuine interest, the larger field and the higher opportunities will open up before us as we go along. Too many girls make the mistake of dividing work into two classes, menial and superior work, and they permit chances to go by because they fear doing such and such things might hurt their social position. Remember that you yourself are the big thing and social position the little. If we are too anxious about the latter, we are liable to lose this very thing we are searching for. While, on the other hand, tact, ambition and womanly grace will win recognition anywhere. No one will admire you the less because you have the ambition to gain something for yourself, which requires money in its accomplishment, and you refuse to calmly sit down and let the days go by because no work that is "fitting for one of your position" turns up. Many and many a University girl helps herself through by housework, mending, or in any way she can; often waiting table in some restaurant or summer resort in her vacations or in the college dining rooms during the school year.

Social charm and recognition depend eventually upon ourselves and our personalities and not upon the work we have done to help ourselves along. That this rule is a needed one, I know, for several

girls have told me they could not take up certain lines of work because it was beneath them. One, to whom I suggested being a mother's help—because that seemed the only thing open at the time, replying, "But people would consider me a servant."

Now as to ways of earning money from one's own home. I shall suggest a very few, all of which I know have been tried and found successful by certain girls. Any one of you can probably think of several more and each one can best decide what will best help out in her own case.

Helping backward children in their school work has always been a favorite method with the girl to whom knowledge comes easy. The teacher could help you out in this, and either advise the parents concerning your plan, or you could personally see the parents. Even in a country school there must be mothers who would be glad to have their children have a little intelligent help say two or three hours a week. A bit of help for twenty minutes daily will clear up the path for many a boy who can see nothing whatever in arithmetic, and the pay need not be much—fifteen or twenty cents an hour—will help out quite a bit and not be a burden to the parents.

Taking care of young children, either in their or the girls' own home has often proved quite a success, for it gives the mother opportunity to go out, knowing that her little ones are safe and happy. One girl sent out cards, stating that on certain afternoons—Tuesdays and Fridays in her case—she would care for and amuse the children of the neighborhood for ten cents per hour. As she often had half a dozen or more in an afternoon this helped out considerably in purchasing the library she wanted for herself.

For older children, say from six to eight, a course in really good literature could be offered, either by being told or read—giving them actual cultural value as well as entertainment. I tried

Stories of the Early Greeks" once for a young boy of seven and kept him interested all through the summer.

Work with the hands—plain or fancy sewing, knitting and the like, is usually profitable and there are several firms willing to send it even into the country, and if one is really good at hand embroidery, one can often procure

work from the larger stores. If one lives in a town even though it cannot boast of being a city, clerking can often be secured for the rush seasons and not only is it a way of earning some pocket money, it is very interesting in bringing one into touch with people. One girl with college training wrote me that she had gone into a department store merely for the Christmas rush and she was liking it so well she thought she would stay for a while. Her people are very well to do, and she herself is to be married to a mechanical engineer, and all this extra money comes in useful for her many little desires.

Going out as mother's help for even a very few hours a week will prove very profitable and make one of real service. Almost any housewife is glad to know of some one she may secure for an hour or so in an emergency, and her friendship and admiration for the one willing to help out will in no way be lowered. Only remember that here, most of all, self respect doesn't mean you must feel yourself above your position of that moment, even if the position be in the kitchen. I myself secured a little maid for Christmas week (whose father was out of work and who had four younger sisters, all too little to help out) only to be told that she must eat her dinner at the same time as my guests, since she was as good as any one. I did not doubt her moral goodness, but I did very much doubt her common sense. I was not needing at the time an extra guest—what I wanted was some one to help with the serving. Such a girl as that has much to learn before she will be a success in any line at all.

Another girl of much higher social rank asked my advice about going in with a group of college girls to wait table at a summer resort for six weeks, as she needed some extra money. As she, upon graduation was intending with her fiancée to go to one of the East India Islands as missionaries, I thought the experience was just what she needed, for knowledge of books alone will not make one a success in working with humanity; but she gave it up in

(Concluded on page 34)



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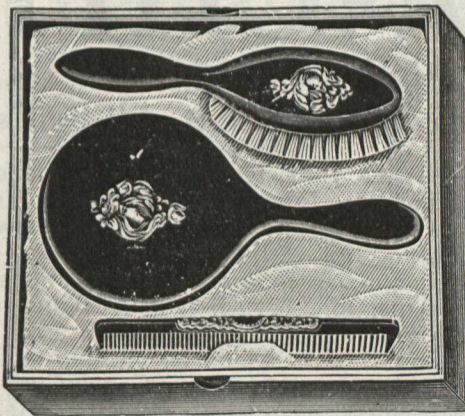
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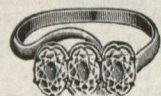
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