

Why of the "Help" Problem

By C. C. HAMILTON

IN her article last month, entitled, "Cooking My Way Through Canada," Miss Violet Bertram, a housekeeper in Vancouver, deprecated the disparagement that prevails toward household "help" and called for a leader to set the matter right.

Mrs. Hamilton anticipated that cry in her article, "The Scientific Management of Household Work and Wages," recently delivered before the Canadian Public Health Association, and published as follows in the January *Public Health Journal*:

"I purpose calling your attention to the relation of the mistress to the maid and of her duty to her, also to make some suggestions regarding some of the difficulties with which we are only too familiar in this connection. I take it that efficiency in the maid is the first requirement on the part of the mistress who desires to manage her household scientifically. How can we arrive at such efficiency? We find that many things militate against it, and that the mistress for the most part has to trust to a hit or miss system when in search of the expert. Scarcity of labour and want of organization on the part of the mistresses are, I think, two of the factors in making our household management uncertain; we all do a fair amount of grumbling about our servants, but I fail to see that we have tackled the subject in a business way.

"I would plead for co-operation on the part of the mistresses and think the time is ripe for them to confer together on this important subject, and to form associations for dealing with it. Out of so much varied experience good results must follow. Unfortunately, with the majority of young women, domestic service has fallen into disrepute, and a number of people still look upon it as derogatory. It behooves us to seek for the cause of this, to raise the standard of domestic labour and to place it where it should be, at the head of a woman's employment. It should essentially be a worthy profession, dealing as it does with our homes, the bases of our civilization.

"We can remove one disability by competing on equal terms with the stores, factories and offices, and by making housework as attractive, if not more so, than these employments. To many young women the comfort in factory or store work lies in the sociability, the regular hours, and the fact that when work is over the girl can turn her back completely upon it and get into a new atmosphere for the time being. I plead, above all things, for a limited day for the domestic servant, under existing conditions for the ten-hour day, though I hope eventually to see an eight-hour day for all. This may require some sacrifice on the part of the mistresses at the outset, especially in such cases where only one or two servants are kept. A girl in house service is often at work or on duty for sixteen hours a day. She may not necessarily be working hard all the time, but she is in the mistress's hands so to speak all the time, and at the end of a bell wire. Are we making for good management in the household when we permit this; are we doing our duty to the community or to our nation when we put such a strain on a young woman who may be a potential mother? Our duty to the race demands that we should govern the conditions of this young woman's work so that in later years she may have the chance of becoming the mother of a sound generation.

"A mistress could well arrange that during certain hours of the day her maids should be absolutely off duty, though when at work they shall be ready to give full

value for their pay. With two or three maids in a house, hours might be arranged to overlap so that the mistress has always someone at hand, or in cases where only one maid is kept I do not think that the average Canadian mistress, efficient and hard-working as she usually is, would fear the hardship of a few hours of her own housework to herself or a little more time with her children. I believe that such an arrangement would tend to greater efficiency in the servant, and a more wholesome and simple life in the household.

Romance at Rideau Hall



Miss Evelyn Pelly, Lady-in-Waiting to Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Connaught, is Reported to be Affianced to Captain T. H. Rivers Bulkeley, C.M.G., M.V.O., Equerry and Comptroller of the Household to His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught.

In this connection we would do well to enquire into the experience of those who have employed servants living outside the house, this plan works excellently in some localities and under certain conditions.

"Much of the misery resulting from domestic service is, I believe, due to loneliness and the lack of homelike surroundings when work hours are over. The fact that leisure hours are mostly after dark is often productive of evil. Where it is possible, the girl should be provided with a comfortable sitting room, where she can entertain her friends, though this is by no means a perfect

way of overcoming the difficulty, for a mistress naturally hesitates to pry and a maid does not always feel at home in the surroundings of her work.

"I would suggest the formation of a mistresses' association, which should have various departments. One of these should be a domestic agency or registry in which all personal records could be kept, wages standardized and arranged to scale, and the workers graded according to efficiency. We might thus avoid finding ourselves giving expert's pay to the raw novice, a state of things we all know too well, and which works unfairly in every direction. This might also perhaps have

the effect of settling some of the differences between mistress and maid, which are often merely temperamental, and might result in fitting the peg to the hole more frequently than hitherto.

"We should also establish training schools in connection with the association and existing institutions, having long and short courses of instruction, so that even an expert cook from the old country might have the opportunity of becoming familiar with our stoves and other conditions, thus saving much friction.

"Lastly, I would urge the establishment of domestic servants' clubs, with properly supervised recreation rooms, where the young women might entertain their friends of both sexes; I do not think it would be a very difficult matter to find out the standing of such friends and admit them according to their desirability.

"Something of this kind is especially necessary in country districts. With the wider use of the school houses, social centres might readily be formed at which a lonely girl could meet others of her own kind under proper chaperonage.

"The associations could give badges for long service and good conduct, which would act as incentives to excellence.

"This is not all mere theorizing, for something of the sort has been tried out by the German housewives of New York, and has been found to work well. Membership of such clubs carries with it a certain social distinction and esprit de corps which are found to have an excellent moral effect.

"I plead now that the Toronto mistresses shall follow the example of these ladies, not only for their own benefit but as a duty to those young women who form so important a part of the household, and I think that in providing the right conditions for the workers they would go a long way in the direction of scientific management and the production of efficient workers. I believe that it lies with the mistress as much as with the maid to raise this essentially worthy and feminine calling to the rank of one of the desirable professions."

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The Lady-in-Waiting

MISS PELLY, lately familiarized to Canada, far and wide, as lady-in-waiting to her Royal Highness the Duchess of Connaught, is announced to be affianced to Captain T. H. Rivers Bulkeley, C.M.G., M.V.O.

Miss Pelly is a niece of the Earl of Wemyss, A.D.C. to

Queen Victoria for many years and later to King Edward VII.

Captain Bulkeley has had a rather distinguished military career, having served through the South African war with his regiment, the Scots Guards, and being mentioned three times in war despatches. He was wounded at the Battle of Belmont. He was formerly comptroller to the Earl of Minto and Lord Curzon when they occupied the post of Viceroy of India, and was aide-de-camp to the Duke of Connaught when His Royal Highness was in the Mediterranean.