

# ADVERTISING *for* A MISTRESS

*AMELIA engages to be on hand Friday morning in three different places. Amelia's crowd control because they are organized.*

PEOPLE who ordinarily employ domestic help will agree that the problem never was so urgent as it is now. Keeping house never was quite such a tax on ability, patience and energy. The time to face the problem honestly is now, if we are ever to get it on the road to settlement.

Little things happening like this are typical of a lot of people's experiences:

Answering an advertisement for domestic help—general—a maid applied; liked the house, had no objection to the children, was satisfied with the wages and not anxious for more poetic license than any average maid might expect.

"I'll come Friday," she said, sweetly.

"I can depend on you, Amelia?"

"Oh, certainly, I always keep my word."

"But you understand—I have been fooled so often by girls who promise to come."

"Oh, yes, but you can trust me."

"I have refused other maids, better ones sometimes, because I had already engaged one who promised to come—and didn't."

"Oh, that's not square at all. You can depend on me. Friday morning—yes. Good-day!"

Amelia might as well have said good-night. For she never came. From casual evidence collected afterwards, it was found that Amelia had engaged to four mistresses in one day. She had taken what seemed to her the best of the lot. The other three all waited for Amelia to turn up—on Friday!

The obvious way to get even with Amelia and her tribe would be to engage every girl who comes—and take the one who turns up. But of course this would be bad ethics. It is not recommended here.

Why was Amelia thus able to deceive three mistresses in a day? Because she had the whip-hand, and she knew it. Because Amelia was really advertising for a mistress, making the lady pay the cost of the ad, and turning her down when she found someone who suited her better.

If mistresses are to overcome this problem, they must begin to organize. Amelia and her tribe are organized. They have esprit de corps and all the passwords. Mistresses go at haphazards. Where is the remedy?

Let us see. A glance at history shows us that domestic help was once supplied by slaves. Housework was probably classified as fit only for the lower orders of beings. This will continue to be the case until we raise the standard of proper training of the workers, by treating them with the consideration given any other class of workers.

The economic situation is out of joint to-day because of world-wide conditions. The high wages paid for unskilled labor in munitions and other manufactures of war needs, have turned many girls from their kitchen-ward course.

IT is useless to tell them how much more they would have at the end of the month of doing housework. They readily counter with the reply that they want to be out more, and they want to wear good clothes, and company to work with; and it is worth more than the difference in money to work with people who do not look down on one. And they always add the irrefutable statement that it is so much pleasanter to have regular hours and to know that you will not have to be called as early as 5 a.m., if you happen to work in one of those antediluvian homes where washing is still done in the house. This bone of contention has, in the majority of homes, been removed to the laundry unless the mistress does it herself, as many do. So that when the autocrat of the kitchen table inquires with lofty mien, "Of course you do not expect your help to do laundry work," the prospective mistress eagerly pleads "not guilty."

The mistress is to blame—not because she is offering to a girl who is seldom well trained the complicated system inevitable in a one-maid household, but because, viewing the situation from the

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standpoint of a broader experience, she should do all possible to make conditions such that the maid can do her work properly and in reasonable time.

SHE IS TO BLAME if she allows members of the family to impose upon her demanding extra service.

SHE IS TO BLAME if she does not give her a warm and comfortable room in which she may sew or read when her work is finished.

SHE IS TO BLAME if she does not safeguard her morally in her home as she would her own daughter, and she is to blame if she does not endeavor to extend these safeguards of self protection about her when she goes out for her necessary recreation.

Many a girl well qualified by practical experience in her own home would prefer housework to factory or store, but for the danger of getting into a home where immoral men of the family think a domestic their lawful prey. Strange to say, there are not lacking people otherwise good, who condemn instead of commend a girl for defending herself at the point of the revolver in such desperate straits. There is the problem of the immoral maid, who can do untold harm in a household, but the mistress is the one in command of the situation, and it is her first duty to make fair conditions. "Systematize your work as I do my business, and finish at a certain hour," is often the well-meant advice of the master of the house, but unfortunately the home is a continuous performance and the raising of a family a dealing with the infinite and eternal that cannot be shut down when mere time says "six o'clock." It needs a day and a night shift with plenty of spare women available, and yet one woman is often supposed to do it all and be ready "to smile at eventide."

Where the helper is of equal social standing with the family and is treated as such, as was the case when the country was newer and as is still the case in some communities, the problem is reduced to its lowest terms. However, all women are not like the mother who had seven sons, and each of them married to a one-time maid of their mother's. She evidently understood the law of proportionality, and chose only such maids as she felt were suitable or could be trained to be suitable for her sons. No doubt she had plenty of applicants! Women are to blame that they have not risen to the occasion and with their united wisdom evolved some scheme of supplying well trained domestics as well as beginners who may continue their training under a mistress.

Let women unite on getting domestic science taught in the lower grades of the public schools, so that every girl who has to leave school early may have the advantage of proper teaching of simple cookery. It seems looking a long way ahead to meet the urgent need of to-day, but if we had commenced it even ten short years ago,

we should now be reaping the result. Our present system makes this training available only for those who have the advantage of longer training. Not only would this aid the mistresses, but it is of inestimable value to the working girl when she leaves factory or store for a home of her own after years of boarding.

Few of those household treasures the Swedes, Finns, Danes and Norwegians, are to be had now. Only those of longer Canadian residence but shorter training. Women endeavor to simplify their house-keeping, but the complexity of life about us cannot be entirely counteracted by removing the doilies and the service plates.

Recently a distraught housekeeper, now to the last shred of strength and patience, advertised for a general, weeks without receiving one reply. She changed the ad. to "Companion Helper." They came in by the dozen. Maids young and green, maids old and shrivelled, maids shy and maids brazen, maids that hadn't gumption enough to button their boots, and maids that showed signs of managing everything in sight, and woe betide a baby that dared to cry; maids that looked with intent to kill, if they were not employed, and pathetic, broken down old women, who tried to spruce up and step lively in the hope of being employed.

THE wages asked are all the way from \$20 per month for ignorance, utter and unabashed, to experienced help at \$35. Some would consider the position only if there was no washing. No cooking and not too much company. Evidently only housemaids' duties are ideal. Others demanded every Sunday afternoon and evening off.

To some women, the Companion Helper offers at least a partial solution. It certainly serves as a striking illustration of the trend of the times. Many refined, well educated women, who have been un-

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## HOW MARTHA GRAY

NEVER be it believed, would Martha Gray have done her share of the world's work in and about the log house of the third homestead, if she had not been an artist. It was the spirit of what she did and the form it took—crude as the form might be—that carried her over mountains of toil. It made possible her idea of the family. It was behind all her belief in the school, the church and the neighborhood. To her the house on the gentle slope-up from the lane above the big lake was to become a centre of influence. Yet she never talked of doing good. She only did it. She had nothing to do with movements. Church-women never could organize her into action. She never sent crusty notes to the school teacher. She had no theories of heaven or hell to discuss with the minister. But no teacher and no minister ever came away from under Martha Gray's roof who did not feel that he had been inspired to work harder himself for the good of others.

How can I better illustrate this spiritual character of a woman whose hands were always thick and hard with toil, than by telling the short story of the little organ that became a sort of visible soul to the whole family? In the strange art sense of Martha Gray, her striving after pictures on the rag mats, colors in the rag carpets and gaieties in her patchwork quilts; in her passion for clothing and feeding a family of eight besides herself and Jon; in her capacity for six days work a week from five a.m. until nine or ten at night; in her zeal for the children's knowledge, industry and self-help; in her particular care for all the things to her hand, the spindle and the loom, the scissors and the needle and thread, the paring knife and the pickle jar, the cheese-bags and the soft-soap kettle; the knitting and the darning and the patching; the kettles and the pots and the pans; the fur caps and the straw hats she made; the bonnets and the shawls and the mitts—in all these there was the intense love of use and beauty that found sometimes its most perfect expression in the music of the home.

Music was as necessary there as the pork-barrel. Hymns haunted Martha when she had no voice to sing. An old song—Scotch, perhaps—or some nubby old, English thing caged up in the memory of Jon, had the power to lift her away from the sense of drudgery.

And without this much of Martha's work must have drudged her into a drab and weary thing. Her toils were not in themselves all beautiful. Disorder and dirt lay in wait to clutter up her hands and her feet. There were times when no artist would have found her a subject of charm. Times when her clothes and her flesh and the crude, sticky and cumbersome things with which she worked made her into a sort of woman of the caves.

But that log house, afterwards weather-boarded, plastered and enlarged,