

The Young Woman and Her Problem

By Pearl Richmond Hamilton

The Stenographer and Her Salary

A business man whose stenographer asked for an increase in salary has this to say:

"I was sincerely anxious to give her all she was worth, so I suggested she take a test which would reveal her ability. She agreed. We were paying her fifteen dollars a week. I gave her three tests which we have adopted for stenographers. Instead of her being worth fifteen dollars a week or more, the tests showed that she was worth only nine dollars. I showed her the results, and told her frankly why we could not afford to pay her more. She saw my side, and declared she wanted to do her best, to improve. She did so. Today she is earning and getting eighteen dollars a week.

"I was able in this case to determine just what was a fair rate of payment by comparing the employee's ability with fixed standards. We have made a study of stenographic work in our office, and have set standards of pay and performance. We find that this method protects us against overpaying. It also gives employees an incentive to become as efficient as the standard and receive salaries in accordance.

"The principles used in setting these standards can be used anywhere. Questioning some stenographers, I found they had no accurate ideas about the time it took to do the work.

"How many words in the dictation just given out?" I asked one stenographer, after a morning's dictation. She could give no answer.

"My questions gradually worked themselves out in my own head, and I made studies which resulted in a practicable plan for standardizing our stenographic department. The following factors were easily obtainable:

"1. Average number of words in a type written line, 12; 2. Average number of lines to a type written page, 26; 3. Average number of stenographic pages to a type written page, 2; 4. Average speed type-writing (words per minute), 60; 5. Average time required to type write one page (minutes), 5.

"Suppose a given dictation covered seventy stenographic pages. Then from the figures given above it is apparent that this would make thirty-five type written pages. The time for transcribing this number of pages would be one hundred and seventy-five minutes, or approximately three hours.

"This method of reckoning is now standard in our offices, and proves satisfactory to ourselves and our stenographers. It is like a railroad timetable; stenographers have so much ground to cover at fixed speeds, and they can schedule the time of their arrival. This is a convenience to ourselves, and a source of considerable satisfaction to the stenographers in maintaining a certain standard of proficiency, for they realize they are paid what they earn.

"The standardization of the stenographic department results in economical operation and satisfies our stenographers who are paid for what they do, and know it."

The experience of this business man is worth consideration. The system dignifies the position of the stenographer and creates a fine spirit of rivalry for efficiency, and there is no difference in the pay as regards sex—men and women alike are paid what they earn.

The Domestic and Her Wages

Last year a woman employed two girls for the same work. She paid one ten dollars a month and after two months dismissed her and hired another at twenty-five dollars a month. She says the girl whose wage was higher cost her less—that she managed so economically and did her work so systematically that at the end of the month the household expenses were less than when she employed the ten dollar girl.

One girl used five pounds of butter a week, the other three pounds. One girl used a box of sugar each week, the other used a box in two weeks. The first girl

burned more gas with less cooking than the second, she broke more dishes and wrecked the housekeeping tools and furniture more than the second girl. The first girl was a poor cook, a slovenly housekeeper, an expensive servant. The second girl was a good cook, a tidy housekeeper and economical help.

Thus they come and go. The first type of girl complains because she does not get the wages the second type gets. The word efficiency never enters her head. The economic value of the domestic to the home should be an important factor in determining her wages.

If a girl is not satisfied with her wages let her ask herself this question: "What am I worth to the home?"

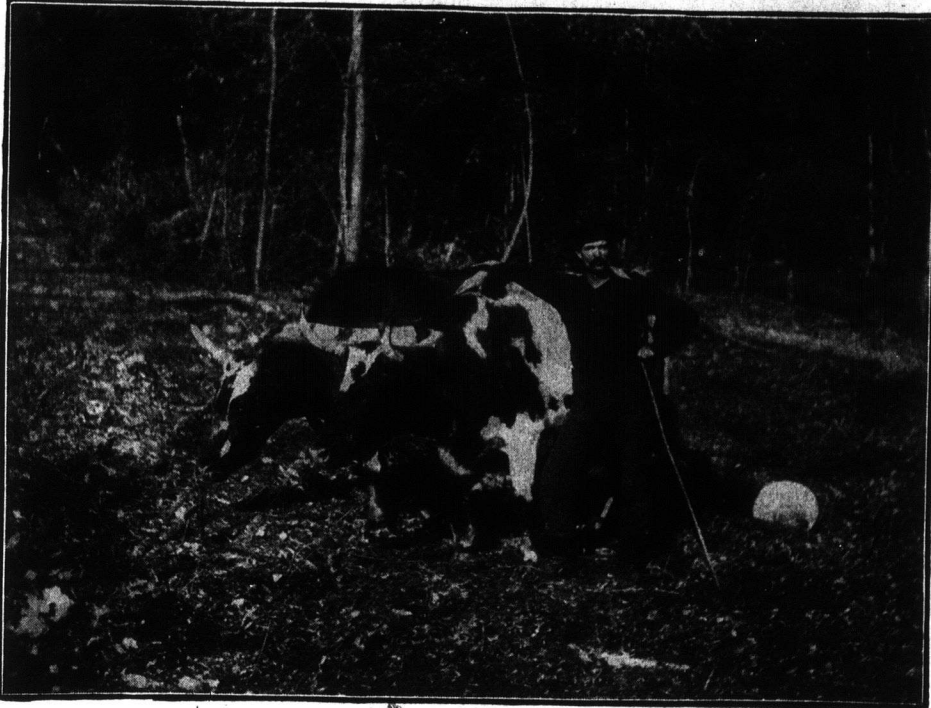
Scores of girls are dismissed from situations because they are too wasteful. Their wage is a small part of their expense to the home. Scores of other girls are dismissed because they muddle their work so that they make more work than they accomplish.

There are girls who never do anything thoroughly. If asked to do a certain piece of work they will skim over it, just the surface is touched. One can determine the type of womanly strength a girl possesses from the way she does her work. I would not care to trust a girl who has no depth of character enough

knowledge of laces that she is placed at the head of her department. I find in book departments girls selling books who know nothing about books. A clerk who has no knowledge of color effects will sell me a horrible combination for a dress. When I find a girl who knows what she is selling I go to her every time. At the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in Boston, under the guidance of Mrs. Lucinda W. Prince, a school of salesmanship for department store employees is so helpful that the big department stores of Boston send girls to it every morning and pay them full wages while they take a three months' course. There are classes in arithmetic, in textiles, in hygiene, in color and design, in demonstration sales and in business forms; a girl gets not only a new view of the art of selling goods over the counter but a new vision of a big principle in education.

There is a class in color. These girls are engaged in the practice of color every afternoon, over hats, ribbons, waists, gloves, costumes. When we begin once to study a subject which reaches practice in our lives, we cannot stop with practice. A law of the mind carries us on to the theory, the philosophy of it. This is the reason why trade training broadens not only technique but soul, trains not only to earn but to live. Our work then is "refined selling" because we understand it.

There is no reason why an ambitious salesgirl cannot work herself up to the



The hardworking homesteader with modest ox team

to go beneath the surface of her work. Work is so systematized as to concentrate responsibility and remuneration, toward the top. As we grow in efficiency we achieve responsibility. Till we do, we discharge minor duties for small pay.

We meet so many girls who make of themselves martyrs. Peace of mind and efficiency are not found in renunciation but in service. We need to learn to earn.

Housework is fast becoming a dignified profession.

The courses in home economics are demonstrating the science of home keeping. A systematic instead of helter-skelter manner of managing housework is being taught in our schools. Free evening courses in our city schools are open during the winter evenings to all girls. A girl has a wrong impression when she thinks anyone can do housework. Why there are few domestic girls who can wash dishes clean. Most mistresses in Winnipeg assert this. Housekeeping is the finest of fine arts and when girls in domestic service dignify their profession with efficiency women will gladly pay good wages.

The Sales Girl and Her Pay Envelope

The girl behind the counter is often too tired to see opportunity yet it is there. There is a relation between the science of selling and daily work. A girl in the lace department may study the lace industry until she has such a valuable

head of her department or even up to the position of buyer. Winnipeg salesgirls on the whole are to be congratulated on their splendid courtesy and attention to customers. The girl behind the counter appreciates courtesy from the customer and I fear there is more courtesy shown from behind the counter than before.

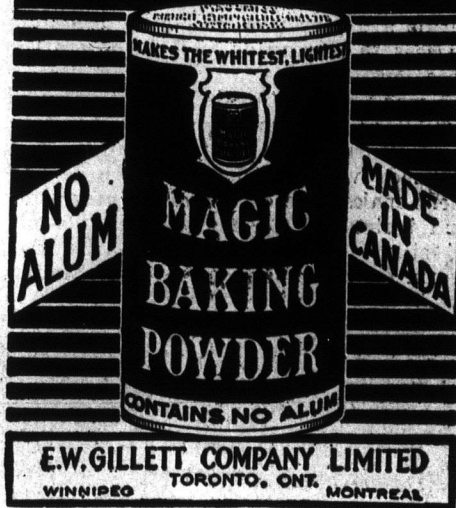
To the clerk who understands her work and who studies the wishes of her customers there need be little fear of the dreaded envelope with the discharge slip. Efficiency usually draws the regular envelope.

The Dressmaker and Her Remuneration

Two Old Country girls came to me one time to help them into dressmaking establishments. Both gave me similar credentials. One got into a department store dressmaking parlor, the other into a private dressmaking establishment. The first had really the best opportunity for advancement if she made good. A year later I hunted up both girls. I found the first working for eight dollars a week. "That's more than she earns!" exclaimed the woman in charge when I expressed my surprise. "You may take her if you want her, she'll not be missed here. There is nothing we can tell her. She knows it all!" she continued as I started for the door.

I went on to see the second girl. "Miss B—? Why, yes she is our head designer. We're paying her eighty dollars

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