

THE HOUSEHOLD.

FALLACIES CONCERNING DOMESTIC SERVICE.

BY CATHERINE OWEN.

While we are hearing of the sufferings of those working-women who, it is said, prefer ceaseless, hopeless toil, and semi-starvation in their own overcrowded garrets to the restraints and degradation of domestic service, we may well ask where they have obtained their knowledge, or rather imbibed their prejudice, were it not that consideration of the matter induces one to believe there is no preference. They sew and starve because others sew and starve, and to do so requires no effort, only endurance. To take service, if the thought has ever entered their minds, needs energy and courage to face the new and unknown conditions of life, and they are withheld by a vague dread.

No truer service can be rendered to these unfortunates than to clear away the false impressions that may exist in the minds of the women themselves, or refute by a statement of the facts, which any observer can verify, the foolish ideas afloat as to the relative position of the domestic and the sewing-woman. For this reason it should be the aim of every one who comes in contact with them, or can reach them in any way, to show them the contrast between the comfort they refuse and the misery they accept.

The foolish ideas with regard to domestic service are that the sewing-woman in her garret, bare, cold, and hungry, is free, while the servant is not; that the sewing-woman is independent and cannot be "ordered round," and that her "time is her own." The facts are that the sewing woman is a slave of the greedy taskmaster who grinds her down to the verge of starvation, while the one who chooses woman's natural work in the house that needs her is the really free woman.

If the sewing woman does not like her work she dare not quit it; to do so means starvation. If the taskmaster cheats her she dares not refuse to be cheated; her work will be taken from her and given to one of the dozens waiting to take her place. If she is brutally spoken to, she dare not resent it; and there are, we are assured, worse things than cheating and brutality that she must submit to without resentment, or be marked for persecution. So much for being her own mistress. And this ceaseless, ill-paid work is performed under every form of physical discomfort, in bad air, in overcrowded rooms, in winter cold, in torrid summer heat, with insufficient food, and sickly, ill-clad body. The time which she calls her own, where is it, when the machine runs from morning till night? After the day's task is done? When we know the pittance she earns we may be quite sure that day's task will not be done so long as human nature can bear up against fatigue. The time between the cessation of work until it begins again must surely be a stupor of exhaustion. Can the weary woman then give herself up to the pleasures of "home"? Can she take the recreation for which being "mistress of her own time" is supposed to give opportunity? Contrast this veritable slavery with the freedom of the domestic servant. If she does not like her place she leaves. Whether she performs her part of the bargain between herself and her employer or not, she is paid. There are no pretenses for reducing her wages for work imperfectly done, nor reductions made because the shirts and collars, or table-linen, she has undertaken to iron, but does badly, have to be sent to the laundry and paid for. If she has temporary illness, days when some family crisis, the arrival of kindred from abroad, or wakes, or weddings, or funerals, make her desire a day off, she has it without loss of money, the mistress often making strenuous effort, putting off or changing her own plans for this purpose; for, be it said ever so gently, there is in the majority of cases very little choice in the matter—if Delia does not get the holiday, she leaves her place at a moment's notice.

It is only the domestic servant, among working people, who is thus paid for the time she enjoys. The shop-girl or factory hand is fined for every five minutes she is late or not working. The domestic is under no such espionage.

If the domestic servant's work is not satisfactory she may be told of it, and it is possible that a long-suffering employer may lose self-control and get angry, considering

that she is only human, and express her anger; but exceptional indeed must be the lady who speaks to a dependent as women are spoken to in factories and stores. If directions are given, it is usually done with a studious and generally sympathetic regard for her susceptibilities. Her day's work would be long, if she were working from the time she builds her fire in the morning, shortly after six, till she washes dishes at seven in the evening; but this is far from being the case. If she is single-handed in the family, on washing and ironing day she may work the whole day, as she would do if she were the mother of a family, without any of the aids to work she has in service; but on other days there are hours of leisure which largely depend on her own activity and ability. In these days the housework is all comparatively light, for there is no scrubbing of floors to snowy whiteness, no carrying of hot and cold water up three or four flights of stairs, and very little carrying of coals. Moreover, her work has that excellent quality of variety, and rarely is there any rush or drive, unless her own mismanagement makes her waste time one part of the day, which she must make up the other.

Of course employers cannot always be well-to-do; many are forced to live plainly, although the characteristic of American housekeeping is profusion of food; but where poverty is, the employer shares it. Yet under the least favorable conditions the food is very different from the bread and tea of the needle-women, and the cases are rare when it is not abundant, and not far better in quality than even the well-to-do of her own class would provide for themselves.

Of course there are restraints in service, as in every other work by which money is made, and some of the most objectionable to the servant herself, such as having to be in the house at a reasonable hour, the inability to go out every night, etc., are such as a mother would impose on her daughter, or wish for her wherever she might place her. It is unfortunately true in this day and generation, as in all that have gone before, that there is no way of earning a living, or even of conscientiously doing our life part, without giving up some of our liberty and our time; but of all ways by which a working-woman can make her living there is not one by which she can do it so easily, so independently, and so healthfully as in domestic service.—*Harper's Bazar.*

PLAIN DRESS FOR CHURCH.

Can we not, by our influence, induce Christians, at least, to dress more plainly when they appear in the house of God? Do we not all know that the poor—and among them is very generally the family of the poor inebriate, who sadly need the consolation and help that the means of grace afford to the forlorn and sorrowing—are habitually kept away from the house of God because they cannot brook the scorn and contempt, or, to say the least, the neglect they encounter if they venture into our houses of worship, even though their apparel be neat and wholesome. Only the past week I met a lady who has been staying away from church, though it is just across the way from her, because, on account of her reduced circumstances, she could not replenish her wardrobe, though I had never noticed when I saw her there, but that everything was right with her apparel. I could not persuade her to attend. This thing is nearly universal in this country. I am happy to know that the evil is far less in England. A distinguished divine from that country, who has recently visited America—Rev. Newman Hall, if I mistake not—remarked to a friend, as he was passing out of a large and fashionable church in the city of New York: "Do your American ladies indeed go from church to some place of amusement? It seems to be our own sex, for the most part, that is open to censure in this regard, consequently it is fitting that our sex should undertake the reform. Besides, the W.C.T.U. has become a great power in our land, and it is fast becoming unpopular to oppose them in anything they undertake. Whatever is taken under the wing of the W.C.T.U. at once gains prestige and commands respect. Through the local unions it could, in a short space of time, be brought to the attention of a vast number of the Christian women of our country. It would seem that they might easily be made to see that if they have costly

apparel it should be reserved for some other occasion than for display in the house of God. See I. Tim. 2:9; J. Pet. 3:3.—*E. C. Andrews in Union Signal.*

PASSIONATE BABIES.

I have been speaking of crime beginnings and crime prevention, in those families only which are called respectable. A very large proportion of our embezzlers, forgers, and many of our thieves, come from such families. There is a smaller portion from this class, that commit what are known as crimes of passion. For these, too, there is greater blame to be put upon the parents than often is put there. Many a passionate child rules the household. The little baby on his mother's knee goes into a passion because his dinner is withheld from him, or some toy denied him. He shrieks, and strikes his mother; and the mother says: "Poor little boy, he has such a passionate nature; he can't be crossed," and yields to him. She ought to spank him—spank him hard, for being in a passion, and give him nothing till his passion has cooled. The child, though he be so young that he cannot speak, if he be old enough to lift his fist and strike a blow, deserves punishment,—needs to have a lesson of repression taught him. The mother who neglects this, increases the chances of her son's going to the gallows. When the child is older, there are better disciplinary punishments than spanking; but when the child reaches such an age that they are useful, it may be too late; his temper may have grown into a dominating force in his character, that can not be eradicated. Mothers sometimes say, when a child shows a vile temper, and shrieks a great deal, that it would endanger his life to punish him; perhaps so, but you still more endanger his future, if you don't punish him. Many a gallows tragedy has had its beginning on the mother's lap.—*W. F. M. Journal.*

LET THE CHILDREN HAVE LUNCH.

April's closing number of *Good Housekeeping* comes to my table fresh and vigorous in all its departments. I am pleased with Mrs. C. H. Potter's sensible article entitled "Let the Children Have Lunch." I believe that children require food oftener than grown folks, and that to limit them to three meals a day may be to torture them, and do them a great injustice. But I will let Mrs. Potter express her sentiments and my own, as she most decidedly does:

"I have seen children, the quantity and quality of whose meals and the time of serving, were most religiously looked to, who were yet so ungrateful and dissatisfied as to watch with hungry, longing eyes the generous slice of bread and butter in the hands of a playmate whose mother was not prejudiced against lunches between meals. And I have seen those same children help themselves surreptitiously from a plate of food that was left within their reach.

"Oh, how I pitied those children! and I both blamed and pitied their parents. They were high-minded and of estimable character in every respect, and if they had been aware that their children had been guilty of theft to appease their hunger they would have suffered an agony of grief and mortification, and they would have felt it their duty to inflict a punishment in proportion to their estimate of the fault or crime, which would have been anything but slight, judging by the height of the moral standpoint up to which all members of their family were desired and expected to live. However, in consideration of the fact that the children were sorely tempted, in consequence of too strict limits in regard to food necessary to their comfort and health, I decided that the matter was too delicate for me to handle, so did not meddle with it; that is, I did not inform the parents of the theft to which their children had been incited by the overpowering craving of their poorly nurtured stomachs, so they escaped punishment.

"I resolved, there and then, that no child of mine should ever suffer with hunger to an extent which would compel it to stoop to take that which did not belong to it, with which to appease its natural craving for food, though all the people in the world should proclaim to me the advisability of stinting it in the matter of its daily allowance of good, substantial food. It is safer to let each stomach, little or big, speak for itself as to the quantity of food needed to keep it in working order, and then pay due attention to quality and preparation. This,

I am inclined to believe, is the better way to pursue, at least in cases of children naturally healthy and active. Such, engaged in vigorous, out-door gymnastics from morning till night, will make away with an incredible amount of food in the course of a day, and be all the better and stronger for it.—*N. Y. Observer.*

A PLEA FOR THE BABIES.

BY MRS. ALMA H. FISK.

An eminent physician, upon being asked how early a child's training should begin, replied: "With the first moment of life." Another, whose observation of children has been very large, says: "The habits formed during the first three weeks of life exert a controlling influence over the whole period of infancy." There is both philosophy and sound sense in these statements. If their truth and wisdom could be realized by all mothers, how much of the anxious care of later years might be avoided, and how much more of success and happiness might be secured for their children. There seems to be a strange delusion, even among sensible people, about this matter of educating children. Ten-year-old Jennie must, of course, be obedient, polite and thoughtful; the same conduct is expected from six-year-old Harry; but surely obedience can not be expected from the winsome little two-year-old, the baby.

Yes, dear, doubting mother-heart, expect just that, not in the same degree, but still obedience. Sit down in the home nest, and watch this wee birdling as she flits about, gladdening every home with her dainty ways, and sweet baby talk; all is well till your will conflicts with hers, then behold a transformation; the clouded face, the pouting lips, the defiant attitude, all reveal to you the existence of a distinct individuality in this little baby form. She is your baby, but she is not you; she has her will, her tastes, her strong points and her weak ones, just as certainly as you have. You cannot make her nature, but you can direct and control it, and thus secure the highest good for her future life. "Sow an act and you reap a habit." Teach the little ones the act of obedience, and it soon becomes a habit; teach them from the first to be polite and tidy, and stubborn, dirty-faced, sticky-fingered children will seldom annoy us. An intelligent, well-bred childhood ought not to be looked for after an untrained, wilful babyhood.

Canon Farrar says: "Sacrifice is fruitful, and there is nothing fruitful else." All true motherhood, as all noble life, must sacrifice, but the reward is ample.—*Christian at Work.*

THE KITCHEN.—Every house, large or small should have a roomy kitchen, well lighted and thoroughly ventilated, as it will ensure, not only the comfort, but in a great degree, the health in the family. The kitchen, then, should be the first thing looked to in the arrangement of the household, and should be provided with a liberal supply of utensils and conveniences to simplify and expedite labor, if even to do so demands a sacrifice of luxury in the parlor and dining-room.

PUZZLES.

CHARACTER HINTS.

1. My first is a gentleman very unique Unparalleled A No. 1, so to speak.
2. Shrewd and miserly, witty and wise He brought down fame, by a string from the skies.

3. A ripe red apple gave him the clue. His dog a candle overthrew.

NAMES OF RIVERS.

1. A number, a vowel and a division of water.
2. A boy's nickname and a large insect.
3. An American writer.

CONUNDRUM.

What state is round at both ends and high in the middle?

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN LAST NUMBER
1. Summer.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE MOTTO APOSTOLIC.—

1. Rachel.
2. Elijah.
3. Samson.
4. Tyre.
5. Isaiah.
6. Nazareth.
7. Tertullus.
8. Haman.
9. Eutychus.

10. Laban.
11. Orpah.
12. Home.
13. Daniel.

REST IN THE LORD.