

Shall Sewing be Done at Home?

A question came up the other day that proved too knotty for settlement by the parties who had it under discussion, and it was unanimously resolved that one of the number should present it to the readers of The Standard.

Two or three ladies making a morning call on a friend found her in her sewing room before a table piled high with muslins, nainsooks, embroideries and laces, while she herself was rapidly cutting out garment after garment of ladies' and children's underwear.

What new crochet have you got into your pretty little head now, Mary, asked one, are you working for a children's hospital or an old ladies home, or both?

Neither, replied her friend. I am simply cutting out a year's supply of undergarments for the family, which my seamstress is going to make up.

You are not doing this from motives of economy, I should judge, said another. You can most certainly buy these things ready made at the spring sales cheaper than you make them, or at least than you can buy the material and pay for having them made.

Why, said a third, yesterday I bought really nice corset covers for 25 cents apiece, nightgowns for 99 cents, children's cotton flannel night drawers for 84 cents, and pretty morning gowns for my nurse for 97 cents. All were neatly finished; the cotton garments were trimmed with Hamburg edging or lace, and the dresses were daintily made and were a good fit.

Then followed further evidence of Mary's want of thrift, during all of which the hostess was quietly going on with her work. When they had ceased she said:

And who makes these garments, do you think?

Why, sewing women, I suppose, said one.

What do you suppose they get for the making? The materials for the articles you have mentioned cost me almost as much as you paid for them ready-made, and I have even less trimming on them than some of you have described. How much, think you, does a woman get for making a dozen wrappers which are sold at 97 cents each, and of which the eight yards of material cost 80 cents, to say nothing of lining for the waist and thread and buttons?

The ladies looked at each other. We never thought of that, said they. A dozen wrappers, did you say? Think of making a whole dozen. I should think it would be a week's work at least.

Mrs. Martin, said the lady, addressing the seamstress, come here and tell these ladies some of your experience.

A neat, pale little woman in rusty black came forward.

I have tried almost every honest way of making a living since my husband's death, and for a year previous to that, while he lay ill. I made corset covers at 35 cents a dozen. There were sixty button holes to make and sixty buttons to sew on, and I could only make a dozen in a day by sewing until twelve o'clock at night.

I had not been used to hard work or to running a machine, and I suppose I was slow, for when I took the first lot home the manufacturer said they did not care to let me have any more, I was too long in making them.

Quick looks of sympathy and cries of Oh! and Ah! from the listeners.

Then I tried ladies' wrappers at 75 cents a dozen from another place, but I was too slow, with a sigh.

Dreadful! Dreadful! said the callers. Please go on, Mrs. Martin.

I made children's drawers at 25 cents a dozen, and children's cotton flannel night drawers at 35 cents a dozen, but I could not earn enough to buy bread, much less pay rent. A woman who lived in the same apartment house used to make "hickory jumpers" for 35 cents a dozen. There is almost as much sewing on one of these as on a white shirt, but she made a dozen in a day. She used to run her machine until one and two in the morning. I have seen her get up from it and say: I feel as if my limbs were on fire. She had, perhaps, been running it with scarcely a pause for hours. She was only 23 years old, and had married a widower of more than twice her age with five children. He was out of work and they all depended on her for support. Her baby was born dead. The doctor said she had sewed too steadily.

There was a moment of horrified silence and then one and all declared that never again would they buy "bargains" in ready made clothing.

I think it will be worse for the poor women if you don't, said Mrs. Martin. They are glad to get work even at those prices. It is often all that stands between them and starvation. Sometimes there is an old mother or an aunt or sister who is something of an invalid, but who can just manage to look after children and do the housework—there isn't much to do when one gets so far down—and then the wife can give her whole time to the work. Most of them work faster than I do.

I can't reason Mrs. Martin out of her belief that we will only make matters worse by not buying this poorly paid work, said the hostess.

But surely, said one of the callers, if we each find some needy seamstress and hire the things made, that will be better.

But that will only be four, said Mrs. Martin, who seemed totally destitute of the first principles of political economy, and there are so many.

It is better to really help four than to keep eight on the verge of starvation, said one lady.

And so the matter ended.—Alice Chittenden in The Standard.

LOVELORN LIZZIE.

Oh, it's you, is it, Lizzie?" was Mrs. Priscilla Kane's ejaculation as her pretty daughter, a black eyed, curly haired, roguish faced girl of seventeen, who worked in one of the big Kensington factories, walked into the kitchen, swinging her dinner basket in her hand and humming a merry tune.

"Yes, dear mother, it is I," said the girl, and she kissed the wrinkled face of the hard worked woman.

"I'm glad you've come," said Mrs. Kane, glancing admiringly down into her daughter's pretty face. "Mr. Mercer is in the front room. He's been waiting for you about two hours, and Lizzie," sinking her voice, "he had a long talk with your father, in which he said that he loved you and wanted to make you his wife. I'm sure it almost took my breath away when your father told me about it, for he's got a good business and owns lots of property besides. He told your father that as soon as you were his wife he'd satisfy the mortgage on this house and make us comfortable for the balance of our lives. Lord knows, it will seem strange enough to rest, for I've seen nothing but work since I was a chit of a girl, and I've grown old before my time, trying to make ends meet. Now put on your gingham dress and go in to see him. He is in the front room."

Mrs. Kane paused suddenly and stepped back with a startled cry, for, happening to glance at her daughter's face, she saw such a marvelous change in its expression that she grew alarmed.

"Now, Lizzie," she continued, "don't fret me and say you won't do it, for I've got a raging headache, and a little more excitement will drive me crazy. I am sure it's not much that your pa and I ask you to do. You ought to be willing to make some sacrifice for our sakes."

"I am!" answered Lizzie, and the hard lines in her face softened: "I'm willing to work early and late for you, but when you ask me to marry a man whom I hate it is too much."

"There, there," began Mrs. Kane. "I know you'd only have one of your tantrums as soon as I told you of your good fortune, but your father would go to the saloon and leave me to face it all," and sinking into a chair she threw her apron over her head and began sobbing and crying and rocking herself back and forth in a manner suggesting hysteria.

"So father has gone to the saloon again, after promising me to remain away," said Lizzie, and her eyes snapped.

"It's because he's in trouble," apologized the mother, wiping her eyes. "If you'd only marry Mr. Mercer and lift us out of our poverty, your pa would be a different man."

"I doubt it!" muttered Lizzie; and then, speaking loud, said: "Well, I won't marry Mr. Mercer—that settle's it. Marry him? I'll go out and beg first!" and, seizing her shawl and hat quickly donned them before her mother could interfere, rushed out of the door, and had reached the end of the alley before that lady could get to the gate. "That girl will be the death of me," Mrs. Kane moaned, re-entering the kitchen, and then rolling down the sleeves of her faded calico dress she smoothed her hair and walked into the front room, where Mr. Isaac Mercer, a fat pudgy man of fifty, with a smooth and very red face and a bald head, sat vacantly staring at the big pattern in the cheap ingrain carpet.

Rather haltingly she apologized for her daughter's absence, saying that the latter would not be home until late, having to do overwork at the mill, and Isaac Mercer left, promising to call on the morrow.

Lizzie meanwhile proceeded toward the saloon which her father frequented. She was obliged to cross the railroad to reach the place, and she stopped at the little signal station, where she knew Charlie Hancock, the telegraph operator, was at work.

Charlie was the particular friend of Ned Howell, a brakeman on the railroad who had been Lizzie's lover since they were children together, and whom she had promised to marry when he should have saved enough to give her a home.

"Charlie," she said, tapping on the window to attract his attention, "will fifty-three be down to-night?"

At the sound of her voice Charlie raised his head from his work, and catching sight of the girl's pretty face, sprang to his feet.

"Great Scott, Lizzie! Is it you?" was his ejaculation, and then, without meaning to be harsh or cruel, he told her in excited, disjointed sentences about a terrible accident that had taken place on the railroad at the other end of the division.

As he proceeded she in fancy saw the terrible scene, but she uttered no sound, and continued staring into his face with dry, wide open eyes.

"Poor Ned was caught between two cars, and the doctors say one of his legs will have to come off. He's pretty badly mashed and may die. All the wounded were taken to the Presbyterian hospital and—"

He stopped suddenly, and, rushing from his little den, ran out on the platform and caught Lizzie in his arms just as she reeled fainting.

She did not remember much after this, and an age seemed to have passed when she finally opened her eyes in her own shabby little chamber at home, to find her mother, her father and the doctor bending over her.

The first question was about the accident, but they put her off, and it was not until she was able to sit up that she learned the whole truth.

Her lover had lost one of his legs, and, being no longer useful to the railroad company, had been discharged.

They did not tell her that several letters had come from him, nor did they inform her that her father, being for once in his life sober, controlled and influenced by his wife, had written a letter to the crippled brakeman, informing him that Lizzie was shortly to be married to Mr. Isaac Mercer.

The latter called upon her several times while she was convalescent, but she invariably refused to see him, and would never eat the tempting delicacies that he sent to her bedside.

One evening when her mother was busy in the lower part of the house, and her father had gone as usual to the saloon, Lizzie put on her hat and cloak and stole from the house.

Just before she reached the railroad the door of Charlie Hancock's little den opened, and a man came out on crutches.

As he approached, Lizzie rushed forward.

"Ned, Ned!" she cried, and when the cripple looked up and caught sight of her face he halted and his own grew very white.

"I beg pardon, Liz—Miss Kane," he said, bowing stiffly.

"Miss Kane?" repeated Lizzie, drawing back. "You used to call me Lizzie! What's the matter? Oh, Ned, I've been very sick, and all through the delirium I saw you lying crushed and mangled and crying for me to come to you."

"I was pretty badly crushed," said Howell, and he glanced ruefully at his crutches, "and I guess I must have called for you; but that was before I learned that you were going to marry Isaac Mercer."

"Marry Isaac Mercer!" repeated Lizzie; "why, I hate him!"

"What?" cried Ned, and his face brightened. "Why, I heard that you were going to be married to-morrow, and I couldn't resist the temptation to come up and look on your dear face once more before losing you forever."

"It's all a monstrous lie!" cried Lizzie hotly. "I wouldn't marry him if he was worth ten times as much as he is."

"I thought it must be true," said Ned, "when you didn't answer my letters."

"I never received them."

"And you don't mean to say that you still love such a poor, crippled wretch as I am?"

"I'd love you if you'd lost both your legs!" cried Lizzie, and she could hardly restrain herself from kissing him right then and there.

One of Ned's fellow sufferers by the railroad smashup was a high official of the road, and learning that the crippled brakeman was of more than average intelligence, had secured him a position in the general office of the company, where he was bound to rise.

Lizzie needed but little urging to consent to a marriage that night, and it being too late to procure a license they sought that Mecca of runaway lovers, Camden, and were made one.

When Isaac Mercer read the marriage notice the next morning he was the maddest man in Kensington and closed up his grocery store for the balance of the day.—Philadelphia Times.

Glass Type.

The French newspapers are just now testing a novel sort of type, some made of malleable glass by a new process. The new type preserve their cleanliness almost indefinitely. They are said to wear better than those made of metal, and can be cast with a sharpness of line that will print more distinctly than is possible with the old style type. La Patrie is now printed entirely on glass type.

The colored boys of Fort Worth, Texas, believe that the present conditions should pass away, and with that end in view have organized a people's party club. A start was made with 247 members.

Several fires occurred in Paris on Wednesday night. They are believed to have been started by anarchists.

Dominion Trades and Labor Congress.

The following circular calling the annual convention of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress has just been issued:

OFFICE OF SECRETARY-TREASURER,
85 Summerhill Avenue.

To the officers and members of trades councils, trades unions, and district and local assemblies of the Order of the Knights of Labor throughout the Dominion of Canada:

Fellow Workmen,—The eighth annual session of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress will be held in the City of Toronto, commencing on Thursday, September 8th, 1892, at 10 o'clock a. m., and all labor organizations in the Dominion are invited to send representatives.

The basis of representation is as follows: Trades unions and local assemblies of the Knights of Labor shall be allowed one delegate for each one hundred members or less, and one for each additional one hundred or majority fraction thereof; trades councils and district assemblies of the Knights of Labor, three delegates. Two or more trades unions or local assemblies of the Knights of Labor, whose aggregated membership does not exceed 150, may unite to send one delegate. No proxy representation will be allowed, and all delegates must be members of the bodies they represent; but nothing in this clause shall be construed to prevent unions or assemblies from combining to send one representative who is a member of one of such unions or assemblies.

All delegates will be required to produce certificates of election (blank forms of which is herewith forwarded), signed by the presiding officer and secretary of the organization they represent and bearing the seal of the same, where such exists. Where two or more organizations have united to send a delegate, his credentials must bear the signatures of the presiding officer and secretary of such organizations, and also the seals of the same, where such exists.

Notice of the election of delegates; together with their names and addresses and the number of members in the organization they represent, must be forwarded to the Secretary of the Congress on or before Thursday, Sept. 1st, 1892.

The expenses of the Congress shall be met by a per capita assessment on the membership of the organizations represented at its sessions, and such other organization as may signify their willingness to contribute to its funds, the rate per capita to be determined at each session of the Congress, but in no case to exceed ten cents per annum.

That the wisdom of bodies which, through any cause, may be unrepresented by delegates, may not be lost to the Congress, it is requested that such bodies forward, by resolution, such views as they entertain on any particular phase of labor, or the tenor of any question which, in their judgment, may be worthy of discussion or action by the Congress.

As the session of the Congress will be held during the holding of the Industrial Exhibition railway fares from all points in the Dominion to Toronto and return will not be over a fare and a third, and in many cases will be as low as single fare.

All communications should be addressed to the Secretary of the Congress, who will be happy to furnish all desired information.

URBAIN LAFONTAINE,
President.

GEO. W. DOWER,
Secretary-Treasurer.

Toronto, Ont., June 28th, 1892.

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