

The Young Woman and Her Problem.

By Pearl Richmond Hamilton.

AN ATTACK OF USELESS IDEAS.

At the beginning of every new year we are prompted to make resolutions. The old year is a picture of regrets, and we face the new year with better plans than we had in the past. For two months we live up to our new rules, but, one by one, we break them, and gradually drift into the old way. Every time we break a resolution we weaken our will power. In the beginning of this year, let us go into our room and have a serious talk with ourselves. There are so many "fuzzy-minded" girls that I see—they always appear in a state of confusion; they see a problem in its entirety, and are not able to separate it into parts. There are no clear edges to what they see, or think, or feel. A five-cent piece, if you hold it close enough, will shut out the sun. "Fuzzy-minded" people cannot tell the difference between what is big and important and what is of no more account than a five-cent piece. They live under the tyranny of little interests.

Every new piece of work means a new opportunity. The lives of young women are crowded with plans and responsibilities that will exercise tyranny over them if they will let them.

You cannot do everything at once, so get your work into finishable bundles. Then keep your eye fixed on them until you can put them on the shelf. You will be surprised at the joy you have from the sense of achievement.

The joy of success is in this daily conquest of definite problems. Every conquest is an inspiration for the next. If girls cultivate the ability to select the important, they will realize the art of living.

I travelled with a young woman once who spent most of her time trying to decipher the kind of flag that floated on the different buildings. She never saw the architecture, I am sure, or the scenery of the new country, or even the people. Her whole journey was marked by a continuous squint to see the flag on a far-off building.

She did not have the ability to select the important.

A young woman's feelings tend to be vague and irresponsible, therefore she must not yield to them, for yielding means weakness—self-indulgence.

Make your feelings push toward effective action.

I see a girl come downstairs in the morning greatly depressed. Her day will be a failure. Does yielding to that feeling increase the value of her day's work?

A girl will prove herself master of her emotion if she gets outside of it. "Fuzzy-mindedness" is an attack of useless ideas.

With intelligent direction, emotions can be made to accomplish work. Then get outside of your feelings and judge them squarely.

I have in mind the only Chinese woman who has ever studied dentistry—Dr. Faith Sai So Leong. Coming from a nation whose women have lived in deepest ignorance of anything that pertains to modern thought, this Chinese girl adopted a career which few women of other nations have dared to attempt. When one realizes that in China only two per cent. of the women can read an ordinary book, one can understand the surprise of her friends when she announced her desire for a professional life.

She was the only girl among a throng of forty sturdy students, and Sai So ranked among the highest in her class. She now has a flourishing practice. Dr. Faith Sai So Leong did not allow herself to live under the tyranny of little interests.

Julia Marlowe says: "I conserve my energy, allowing none of the trifles of the hour to sap the vitality which gives me control of my nerves. Work is the secret of success, no matter in what line of endeavor we choose to plan a future."

THE COMMERCIAL VALUE OF A WOMAN'S FACE.

There has come into the commercial field of women a new profession—"The Profession of Being Pretty." In the theatrical world, many parts that should be played by big-brained women are given to pretty girls. Indeed, the "pretty girl idea" has made the success of our present day musical comedies, and I am sorry to say that the "pretty girl idea" is fast creeping into the department stores in the large cities.

What are the requirements for this profession?

Good clothes, a stylish appearance, and a complexion and hair dress imitating the latest fads of fashion.

In some stores the prettiest girls are put in the most conspicuous places. In one New York store the girls are picked and placed according to the color of their hair, their complexion and their height.

The store model is the envy of the "less fortunate" girls in the store. As she is very artificial, her influence over the other girls is not wholesome. I wonder who are to be blamed for the store-model's idea of beauty. Are the society women?

These models, as a rule, are raised to their position because of their pretty faces and stylish appearance. It is not their ability that promotes them.

Since their looks hold the positions, the girl-model must constantly think of herself.

This is detrimental to her character, for thoughts follow the law of the universe—they create their kind, and bring back whatever goes out from the mind.

While dress and beauty are their constant thoughts, there is still another great evil resulting from the work of the store model.

These models who spend their days posing in beautiful gowns and hats before customers, soon yearn and covet these clothes when they see how well they make them look, and it is not unusual to see a ten-dollar-a-week model wearing a fifty dollar hat or a five hundred dollar cloak. Where did she get it?

This question comes to my mind. "Will the commercial value of her face be increased or decreased in ten years' time?"

Then I think of the girl with the plain face, who thinks, reads, studies, and develops beauty of character, till in ten years' time her face is radiant with natural beauty—soul beauty—womanly beauty.

The value of her face cannot be expressed in commercial terms.

A girl should think seriously before she sets a commercial value on her face. It means, as one writer states, "debasing of good ideals, demoralization of character, ruin of health, and often the loss of life itself."

THE GIRL TWENTY MILES FROM TOWN.

Many of our readers live far from town, and the problems of the business girl do not interest them.

A traveller said to me the other day: "I have been in many places, but I have never seen more charming girls than on the farms and homesteads of Western Canada." He furthermore stated that they were so beautiful in their natural manner that he wished some of the girls in cities might be brought under their influence.

One serious problem that these girls have is the absence of social life. It is difficult, I realize, and many cannot endure the loneliness, and consequently go to the city. I believe the girl on a Western Canadian farm has more opportunity than the average girl in the city.

I know a girl who lived in a secluded place during her girlhood, and she longed for social life. When she considered going to the city, something advised her

to remain in the country. She planned a course of study, sent for good magazines, and lived close to nature until she became an authority on many subjects. When she met her city cousins in a few years she could converse much more intelligently than they on art, music, literature, and the affairs of the day. She became very popular, and all because she had cultivated a fine sympathy and a wide understanding. High ideals and patience and broad-mindedness are the keys to a girl's popularity with men.

The girl in the country has the advantage of a chance to think and study without constant interruptions during the long winter evenings. Fill these hours with self-improvement, and some day, I am sure, honor will come to you, I know of no greater honor that can come to a girl than to have a man say to her in all earnestness: "Whatever good I have accomplished or may accomplish, I owe to your influence and your sympathy."

My dear girl, twenty miles from town—wherever you start a home you plant a new little world, and the atmosphere of this little world is your special element. Your home on the farm can be quite as intelligent, the aspirations and appreciations of your family quite as broad as in the city. Your life and manner of living may be different from city ways, but what right have city people to assume their ways are better? Farm work is not drudgery unless one does it in a drudging fashion. I believe that God takes especial notice of the beacon lights of the homes in our great Northwest. Remember that on a farm a woman needs to look after the mental welfare of the family.

People are not lacking in refinement at heart because their hands are rough and their clothes are not in fashion. Coarse sentiments are often under the polished enamel of the city gentleman, while real refinement is often seen in the plain farmer, whose honest and sincere heart may beat under a homely coat.

The lure to the city is a siren song which has been the undoing of many a young girl's life.

THE GIRL WITH THE LOW WAGE.

Several complaints have come to me from girls who earn four and five dollars a week. They say they cannot live on so little, and criticize severely their employers. My sympathy goes out to the worthy girls who earn more than they are paid. I am sorry for them. It is impossible to live comfortably in the city on so little, and conditions should be different; however, there is another side to the question. There are hundreds of girls who really do not earn more. They have not improved their opportunities, and therefore are not capable. I suggested this to one girl who exclaimed: "Why, how can I study or improve myself, when I am so tired after my day's work that I feel like dropping in my tracks." Now I have studied this girl for several months, and I feel sure that she could improve herself very much if she would devote one half the time she uses in upbraiding her employer in developing her natural capabilities.

This particular girl has brooded over her employer's "tyrannical injustice" until she has injured her own mental and physical power—she has become a chronic fault-finder.

As a matter of fact, her employer in this case is a hardworking man, who has spent useful, busy, and strenuous years of hard work to build up his business. Success has come to him through his own efforts, and not at the expense of those working under him.

The Canadian business girl is, generally speaking, the most fortunate of all business girls. She has greater business advantages and opportunities than the girls of any other country. She can get to the top if she will work in the right direction, but she cannot hope to climb the ladder of success by pulling those above her down.

Responsible positions are open. There is a large unfulfilled demand for efficient capable business girls in all lines of work. I heard of one firm that tried and dismissed twenty stenographers before one was found who could do accurate, neat and reliable work.

This proves that good positions are

open, and it also means that girls are not so capable as their opportunities.

Now, a girl who has never prepared herself for any more than a four dollar a week position cannot blame an employer for not giving her a ten dollar a week place.

Sometimes I think I preach "the ideal" too much, but we need ideals. Just as there is an ideal home life, so there is an ideal business life. The work may be drudgery, but girls must have ideals if they are to earn a living successfully.

I mean by having business ideals, that one needs to live up to the very highest idea of the work of which she personally is capable. If girls require of themselves conscientious, cheerful, earnest work, with a fine moral purpose back of it; if girls keep their business ideals high, they will not need to worry about a raise in salary. A raise in salary is very liable to follow a raise in ideals.

"The reward of humble work well done is the ability to do higher work better."

WHY SHE WAS NOT HIRED.

A young woman applied for a position as book-keeper recently. She was in the office about ten minutes, during which time she told so much about her previous employer's business as well as her own, that the manager interrupted her by saying: "I am sorry, Miss, but your services would not be desired here."

The applicant immediately asked "What reasons have you for not hiring me? What do you have against me?" The manager, however, dismissed her without any explanation. After her departure he said to me, "If that girl tells so much about the business of the firm she has worked for in ten minutes' time, I am sorry for the business interests of any firm whose books she keeps."

She was not hired simply because she could not keep the affairs of her work to herself.

Business girls need a high sense of business honor and responsibility, a high sense of business tact, business ethics, and a nice appreciation of the points of obligation and duty between employer and employee.

It takes energy, hope, grit, determination, mental and physical strength, good common sense to make a successful business girl.

BE COURTEOUS TO THE AGED.

The girl who is popular with old people is worthy of admiration. I have been observing lately the attitude of young men and women toward the old, and what conclusion do you think I have reached?

Young men, as a rule, are much more courteous to the old than young women. Old people appreciate attention so much, and they should have it.

The old lady next to you in church is wiser than you are, my dear girl. She was a girl once, and she may be thinking of memories too sacred to mention.

It is true that you meet old women who are gloomy and repulsive, but what made their old age ugly? The habits formed during their girlhood.

But there are so many beautiful old ladies—they are just sweetly heavenly, and we realize what their girlhood must have been.

Think, girls! How are you planning your old age?

One old lady who has recently passed away—Julia Ward Howe—when asked to set forth the aim in her life, replied: "My aim is to learn, to teach, to serve, and to enjoy."

During her girlhood she studied hard, inspired by the idea that she who would elevate others must first climb the heights herself. During the last years of her life she said: "The deeper I drink of the cup of life the sweeter it grows."

A Wise Observation.

A gentleman and his young son were walking along Palace Yard when they saw a clergyman, in his robes, passing into Westminster Hall.

"Oh, father, who is that gentleman?" said the son.

"That is the Chaplain of the House of Commons going to read prayers."

"Does he pray for the members?"

"No, my boy. He looks at the members and prays for the nation."