



THE way of happiness can only be found if it is not deliberately sought.—*Claudius Clear.*

A Farm Girl's Experience in the City

By ANNIE WOODWORTH
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ELLEN Hartwell, always had a great longing to go out into the world and earn my own living. Like all young people ignorant of life, I imagined that in carrying out this desire I would meet with no especial difficulty. That portion of the universe in which my lot had been cast was a fair and delightful region of country, but its remoteness from the larger towns and cities was a big drawback in my eyes. The old saying: "Far fields are green," is a true one in its application to many cases. I wanted to be in the midst of things.

"What other girls can do, I can do," I declared, with a proud confidence in my own ability. "Beulah Tompkins is no smarter than the rest of the girls around here; and she has a splendid position in Chicago."

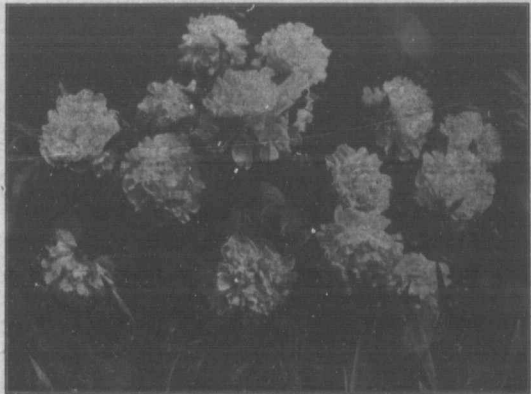
"Many times a week I recounted with animation, for my parents' benefit, all that Beulah Tompkins had told me about her "splendid position" as a saleswoman in a department store, and of her opportunities, achievements and amusements. "You never liked Beulah," mother would remind me with gentle patience. "And she is the only person you know in Chicago. I should hate to see you leave home for her representation, or to follow in her footsteps."

Beulah's all right, mother would reply. "I know have never been in— but that may have been just as much my fault as hers. Anyway, I wish I had such good times as she is having. She tells of so many ways there are in Chicago for enjoyment and improvement, that it makes me just wild to go, too. I hate to think of spending all my life in the country. It is so deadly dull and uninteresting."

My mother sighed as she looked into my flushed face. I was an only child, and the eager light in my eyes brought back to her mind her own youthful longings for experiences different from those she had known. She realized how hard it is for the young to be contented in quiet, uneventful surroundings. They crave excitement; they want something to happen. She felt how much truth there is in the old proverb: "You cannot put old heads on young shoulders," and knew in her heart how difficult it is for the young heart to appreciate present privileges, opportunities, and blessings.

"You will never see anything more beautiful than this," mother said, with a wave of her hand, indicating

our immediate surroundings, and the far-seeing view before us. We were sitting on the veranda of a plain and humble farmhouse. A hedge of lilac bushes in full bloom marked the front boundary of the yard, and the fragrance was borne to us by the breeze which came in gentle gusts. A



One of the Finest White Varieties of Paesoy in Cultivation

The illustration herewith is that of Paesoy Futura Maxima, one of the finest white varieties grown. This plant was grown by J. B. Thompson, Westworth, Co. Cal., and had 40 buds on it at once. Several of the flowers measured eight inches across.

bed of tulips gave a touch of vivid color to the scene. At our left was the vegetable garden, where green sprouting things gave promise of succulent edibles in store, as father wrought with hoe and rake. Stretching away to the horizon was a beautiful level landscape clothed in the vivid emerald of spring, and dotted with trees, houses, and patches of woodland. A miniature mountain in the distance added variety to the scene.

The Permission Given

"I know it is beautiful, mother, and I love it," I acknowledged, quick tears dimming my eyes. "But I am so tired of it all. I want something different. I want to see life."

"What about Philip?" mother suggested inquiringly.

"Philip Marston can attend to his own affairs!" I replied in a passionate outburst. "He has no right to decide my movements. Here is Beulah's letter." I offered it to mother to read. "She had the promise of a place for me in the store where she

is employed. Say I may go, mother. Oh, please say I may go!"

There was a pause, then mother replied very quietly: "Yes, you may go, Ellen. Your father has always left such matters to me; and I judge it the wisest thing for you to have the trial. You are old enough now to assume responsibility for your own life. I hope you may not have reason to regret this step, dear; or rather, I hope you will regret it in the sense that such a regret may drive you back home to us who love you so dearly, and wish only to further your best interests. If our circumstances would permit, I should prefer to have you 'see life' under a brighter aspect. But there is little prospect that we will ever be in a position to do more for you than we are doing now. It has always been hard to make 'both ends meet,' as you know."

I left home shortly after this conversation, and found a place in the basement of the great department store in Chicago where Beulah Tompkins worked. I was seeing "life"—such phases of it as were possible in my position. A year passed, and rose color had faded into drab as reality dispersed the glow imagination had conjured up for my deceiving. Where were the pleasures, the excitements, the opportunities for improvement

convince me before I left home that the \$6 per week I was now receiving was not a sufficient—nay, a splendid sum for a girl to live on in the city. Sad experience, however, was an eye-opener to me. I paid \$3 a week for my stuffy hall bedroom in a dreary lodging-house, which was not without a walking distance of ten cents. Ten cents a day for car fare amounted to sixty cents a week. At a cafeteria restaurant downtown, where the customers waited upon, I had a fairly good meal of meat, a vegetable, a glass of milk, or a cup of tea or coffee, and dessert, could be had for about twenty-five cents, including bread and butter. Ten cents for coffee and rolls for breakfast, and for the same for supper, was the cheapest I could manage, unless I bought a loaf of bread, and the like, and ate it in my room, as was often the case. This did not include my meals for Sunday. So here was \$5.30 out of my \$6 gone already.

Then, there was the laundry question. Launderies objected to having girls "messing" in their kitchens. I managed to wash out a few articles in my wash bowl, and dried them in my room. I could not iron them, because as mother said, the gas, besides, there were no conveniences. I had to have clean underclothing, which nearly emptied my purse.

Over and over I blamed myself for poor management, when the end of each week found me with an empty purse, and needing so many things, until I read in a daily newspaper the statement by one versed in such matters, that a girl could not live "honestly" in Chicago on less than \$8 a week. I had lived honestly on less, but it was not living; it was only existing. Many girls earned even less than me, and what an allurements to wicked ways for one pretty, and fond of clothes and amusement! Many of the girls lived at home, which accounted for their being able to work for as low as \$4, \$4.50 and even \$3 a week. Some of the "Want Ads." in the newspapers, openly stated their preference for those who lived at home.

Poor me! When my clothes were worn out, I would be face to face with a pretty pertinent question.

Beulah earned \$8 a week. I knew now just what \$8 a week could do. It would pay for Beulah's more expensive room and food, but it never could pay for the clothes she was wearing. Then, how did she get them? I was frightened. I could not help but think to it. Beulah's people—plain, humble but respectable people, imagined that she was doing so well.

Then I was homesick—horribly homesick. Not for the world, however, would I acknowledge it. And Beulah had not proved to be the congenial companion I had anticipated. In fact, I liked her no more than I had in the past. In fact, indeed, now that she was at close range with me, Beulah was uppish, and inclined to patronize me from her loftier station in the perfumery department on the main floor. I hesitated to mix mind about deciding that Beulah was inclined to be "fast," but I did not approve of her "gentlemen friends." "You've got to have a little more style about you," you expect to go about with me," she said to me, whose wages certainly did not permit of much "style."

(Continued next week)

It is useless to wish for the best things in life, for there are not enough to go around; rather let us try to be content with the good things.