# TRADE TRAINING OF CANADIAN GIRLS

# *NEXT STEP STORIES*

**BY MARJORY MacMURCHY**

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Transcribed & Curated by Chris Willmore

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Written by Lady Marjory Jardine Ramsay MacMurchy Willison (1869 – 1938).
Cover image: Three Toronto women, early 1900s. Collection of Chris Willmore.
Endpiece: Anonymous illustration from *Come into the Kitchen,* a pamphlet published by the Lydia Pinkham company in 1928. Collection of Chris Willmore.

Includes content from "Next Step Stories," originally published in the Regina *Leader* from May to September, 1913, "The Case of the Working Girl," published in the *Canadian Courier* from May to August, 1912, "The New House Keeping Problem of the Paid Domestic Worker," published in the *Saskatoon Phoenix* from November 1912 to January 1913, and and in *The Canadian Girl at Work* (1920).

Collected, transcribed and edited by Chris Willmore

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# The Case of the Working Girl[1] (1912)

*The writer has been asked to state some of the facts in the case of the Canadian working girl. The problem of the girl wage-earner is one of the most difficult in city life. For the girl, it is the most difficult. To men and women of good will, the problem is perplexing because economically a perfect solution seems to be impossible. A girl is worth a good deal. We have reason for saying that life is too hard for the girl who earns wages. This is true in our Canadian cities. There are several reasonable ways in which the girl can be helped, without making her dependent when she ought to be independent, and without interfering with the freedom which we all want for ourselves. These ways are not charitable, but of economic betterment. It is greatly desired to obtain the interest of the Canadian public in the case of the Canadian girl at work. First, her case must be studied. The stories of Canadian working girls which follow here are true stories. Features in one story have been interchanged with features from other stories to make identification impossible.*

A. X. is a stenographer. Her father, a farmer, died soon after A. X. came to the city. Her mother is old and lives with a married daughter. There are several brothers and sisters. As a child, A. X. had a good deal of the care of a feeble-minded sister who is now in an institution. This fact has something to do with making A. X. more nervous and timid than she ought to be. She is a competent worker, but not strong enough physically, and not up to the average in energy. She shares a room with one or another of her girl friends, wage-earners like herself. After five or six years of employment, she is now earning ten dollars a week. Her present situation demands more intelligence than is required from the ordinary stenographer. She must be nicely dressed, and she must be agreeable and tactful in dealing with the people who come into her employer's office. Her employer says that her hours are short, her work agreeable, and that her salary is all the position is worth. The girl, who is entirely on her own resources and who receives assistance from no one, has difficulty in making both ends meet and saves nothing. She might have less difficulty if she knew more of food values and if she denied herself all pleasure, including journeys two or three times a year to see her mother. Can any Canadian girl who is full of life, who wants a good time, who appreciates what is fine and delightful in life, who is sensitive and rather clever, be expected to satisfy herself with just living and no more? Girl stenographers in Chicago recently made a statement that it is impossible to live on less than twelve dollars a week. We have no statistics as to what a living wage is for a girl wage-earner in any Canadian city. One may make a fairly accurate guess. It is improbable that there is any great difference between a living wage for a girl stenographer in Toronto and Chicago, or Montreal and Chicago. The girl who is a stenographer, the girl who works in a shop, and the girl who works in a factory, do not have equal expenses. It costs a stenographer more to be ready for her work. Many girl stenographers in Canadian cities get six, seven and eight dollars a week.

[1] Originally published in four parts in the *Canadian Courier* on May 4, May 11, May 18 and August 10, 1912.

B. Y. is newly come from the country to the city. She is strong and determined to succeed. She has what comparatively few girl wage-earners have, a plan for the future. When she knows enough, she is going back to the town near her old home to establish a model restaurant. This fact alone makes B. Y. an exceptional working girl. She had saved some money, which she had earned herself, before coming to the city. Her first position was as a bookkeeper. She gave it up because she could not live on six dollars a week. This was before she found out on how little a girl can live when she must. B. Y.'s resources were exhausted before she got another position. In her present employment she gets four dollars a week. But she is learning the catering business, and her wages will be increased if she is a successful worker. She is not yet certain that she can make good in the city. B. Y.'s case brings us nearer to the lower levels of comfort and safety in the life of a girl who is earning wages. At first when she came to the city, B. Y. paid one-seventy-five a week for her room, and three dollars a week for her meals. This left her one-twenty-five per week for all other expenses, which is an impossible margin. She finds that by sharing a room with another girl, or with two or three other girls, that it is possible to rent a room for one dollar a week. If a girl pays less than a dollar the locality is undesirable. B. Y. is given her lunch where she works. The lowest sum which a girl wage-earner pays for three meals a day is two-twenty-five a week. With a room at a dollar a week and meals at two-twenty-five, both sums the lowest possible expenditure, out of six dollars, two-seventy-five a week is left for other expenses. Many working girls in Canadian cities have to live on six dollars a week. They cannot live well. It is not exactly known whether they can remain in good health if they live on six dollars a week. But it does not seem likely.

There are working girls, mainly beginners, who get less than six dollars a week. Three and a half, four, four and a half, and five dollars are wages paid in some instances. These figures, which are clearly below a living wage, bring in another question. The working girl has to learn the trade by which she supports herself. It is folly to suppose that an employer of labor can pay a girl, whose work is of no value to him, sufficient wages to support her in comfort. How the girl is to live while she learns her trade is another story. It is partly the responsibility of the Canadian public, partly the responsibility of the girl's own people, partly the girl's own responsibility, and it is partly the responsibility of the employer. He must have as efficient labor as he can get. Hiatuses such as this, when a girl is learning to support herself, make the life of the girl wage-earner too hard. She does not learn her trade at home. She does not learn it at school. This difficulty applies particularly to shop girls and girls in factories. There is the business college for the stenographer and bookkeeper.

It will be noted that the cases taken so far are of girls who do not live at home. Theirs is the hardest case. It is made hard by the fact that working girls who live at home, and perhaps do not have to pay for washing, and possibly even do not pay board, can live comfortably on a wage which means starvation to the girl who does not work at home. This is part of the problem of the girl wage-earner. There are no Canadian statistics to show what proportion of women workers live at home. The United States census report on Women at Work, compiling data taken from the 1900

census schedules, shows 65,186 women employed as saleswomen in one city. Of this number, 60,062 were single women, and of the single women, 86.1 per cent. lived at home. But 2,547 of these women lived in homes where the woman worker was the only breadwinner. These are not Canadian statistics. It seems fair to say, however, that probably about 86 per cent. of the working girls in Canada live at home. The effect of saying this is to leave the reader with an easy mind. But it is not plain from what we can find out of the case of the working girl that the easy mind is justified. It is conceded that the case of the working girl who does not live at home, is made almost impossible by the fact that she has to enter into competition with the girl living at home. The girl at home has to live, in the same way that the girl who is not at home has to live. It cannot be admitted that girls who live at home work for pocket money and showier clothes. There is probably a small percentage who work for this reason. It is so small as to be practically negligible. Ask any woman inspector of factories, ask anyone who has intimate knowledge of the girl wage-earner, and the statement will be made that a girl goes into a wage-earning life from necessity. Work is good for everyone. The girl who has no work in her life is much worse off than the working girl, unless the conditions under which the girl wage-earner lives are very hard indeed. No objection is raised to the girl being at work.

The fact remains, and this is known by actual investigation, that thousands of girls in Canadian cities like Toronto are paid less than three hundred dollars a year. What percentage of these girls earning less than three hundred dollars a year live at home? How many of them are entirely on their own resources? How do they live? These are questions to which every community which is socially alive, and particularly the non-wage-earning women of the community, must find a reply.

C. X. is a factory employee, a native of the city where she works. She lives some distance from the factory and starts from home at a quarter to seven. She reaches home again at half past six. Her father is a laborer. There are six children besides C. X., all younger than she is. She is a good worker and makes a good wage, about twelve dollars a week. She has been working ten years and she is tired. She looks it. One reason she is tired is that she does the family washing. Shea lso contributes largely to the upkeep of the family. C. X. is a good girl. No girl of her character is willing to let her mother do all the work at home if she can help her. This is why C. X. does the family washing. One would hardly like to advise her not to do it. But extra work at home is generally overtiring for the woman who earns wages.

D. W. is an only child. The mother was left a widow when D. W. was four or five. D. W. and her mother are accustomed to living on the narrowest margin. Their hardest time was when D. W. was at the public schools. Now she is earning eight dollars a week as a stenographer. It is to be supposed that D. W. and her mother feel affluent at times when they think of the old days. They still live in one room and are careful of their clothing, which costs as little as possible. Lately D. W., who is a good stenographer, has been complaining of indigestion and of being always so tired. On being asked the reason, she explains that the other stenographer in the office where she works is a new girl. The head of the firm will not have the new girl take any of his dictation because she does not know her work well. D. W. does most of two

stenographers' work and frequently stays till half past six. She has half an hour for lunch and goes out for it. But she has to hurry so much that she would rather not eat at all. How long will D. W. be able to stand this kind of thing, little D. W., whom one can remember a few years ago dancing because she and her mother were asked to a house to help on Christmas Day, and that would mean turkey for dinner?

E. V.'s case is not typical of many Canadian working girls, except in one particular. She wants a good time. E. V. can work well. She is long past the place where there is any question of making good. She has a little left her by her mother. She has household furniture. She is a competent business woman. Above all, she knows how to live in great poverty. She has been in a house where life has been kept for two people on two or three dollars a week. This is possible. People who have to do it learn how. But it cannot be done unless the person spending the two or three dollars has a store of clothes, a store of furniture and bed clothes, and the knowledge of how to buy and cook food that better-off people do not know much about. E. V. is reinforced at all these points against the exigencies of life. There are plenty of other people who want a good time as much as E. V. does. But E. V. means to have it at all costs. She has no relatives except some cousins living in the country. She was born in the city. Her mother and she were too poor to have friends like themselves. E. V. rooms in a house where three or four other girls have rooms. There are two directions in which a wage-earning girl of this type can look for more social life. One is to become an active church worker. The other is by becoming a member of a small club of girls and boys. E. V. has no inclination to become an active church worker. The trouble with many of these small social clubs is that they break up through quarrels among the members. The quieter girls do not approve of some of the other girls, nor of some of the young men. One does not expect the world to be made over at once and made better for the girl wage-earner in Canada. But E. V.'s case will be found by the thousand in every large city. She is the representative of the working girl who wants a good time. For the matter of that, everyone wants a good time. But the girl wage-earner has fewer opportunities to enjoy life without taking greater risks than other people.

One criticism can be made against all these cases. The case of the altogether successful working girl has been left out. The girl who has some money to start with, who is a good worker, who works for a while and marries happily, is all right, especially if she has had any training in housework. The girl wage-earner who lives in a good, sensible, prosperous home with her own people, where she has not too much housework to do when she gets home after her day's work, where she can meet friends and have a good time socially, this girl has every chance to be successful and happy. It would be difficult to estimate what per cent. of Canadian girls who work for wages belong to the class of whom too much is not expected. But whatever estimate is made, the underpaid, overworked, unhappy remnant is not mythical. It exists.

Taking the cases given above and writing down the difficulties of each case, the points presented are: underpayment; the inefficient worker; the untrained worker; competition by the girl who lives at home; the employer (including foremen and forewomen) who does not know how to treat the girl worker; absence of home life

and comfort; lack of necessary, wholesome amusement and social companionship; [and] unreasonable demands made on the girl worker by her own home people.

To this list of difficulties may be added a constant tax on the girl's physical strength outside her hours of employment. The girl wage-earner generally has to make some of her clothes, such as blouses, etc. She often mends her own clothes and does some of her own washing and ironing. This condition is practically universal. It is a greater tax on the vitality of the working girl than is commonly supposed. To make a good appearance is a business necessity for the girl at work. She has to keep up her appearance by extra work because she cannot afford to pay for it. Generally speaking, it costs her more in vitality than the money she saves – if she had the money.

## HOW SHE IS EQUIPPED FOR HER WORK

What is the equipment of the Canadian girl wage-earner when she begins to earn her living? To tell the truth, we know very little about it, except in a general way. Take the case of a factory girl, a shop girl, and a stenographer. These are the girls whom we meet every day in the street cars and on the street, who are at work in the same offices as we are, whose work is performed partly for us, in the same way that we do our work partly for them. It is apparently true that the industrial and commercial world as it is organized at present is on a basis which makes it impossible for a certain proportion of these girls to earn a wage on which they may live decently. Four dollars is below a living wage. Yet this sum is being paid to a number of these girl workers. A certain number of people believe the employer is wholly to blame for this condition. But it is the public, not the employer only, that is accountable. If the work a girl is able to do is not worth a living wage – to put the case in this shape for a moment – there are no market laws which will supply her with a wage on which she can live comfortably. If she has never been taught how to keep herself in good health, and if she has never learned the value of money nor how to spend money, it is not likely that she will be an efficient worker and useful citizen. The girl worker, when she begins to earn her living, is greatly under-equipped as compared with other workers.

When a girl appears at a factory for work – we are in prosperous days when practically any girl who applies will get work – what does she know to help her earn a living? The average girl can read and write after a fashion. She knows some arithmetic, and has a little other knowledge of the same kind, the possession of which places her higher in the scale of civilization than she would be without such knowledge. Suppose she is employed in the making of garments of any description. Does she know anything about cutting out her own clothes, or of design? Has she any idea of power machinery, or even of running an ordinary sewing machine, the management of which a girl ought to be able to learn at home? Has she any knowledge of making anything, or even of giving value for wages, or of receiving a fair recompense for work? From what the writer can find out, the answer to these critical questions is in the negative, with the exception, possibly, of the last question. The average Canadian girl has no special preparation of any kind to fit her to earn a living. Her mother has not taught her, probably because the mother does not know

what the girl needs to know. She has not been taught at school. It is not remarkable that there is a discrepancy in the girl's wages and that she suffers, unless she is supported, while she is learning, by her people at home. It is not remarkable that the average girl is not an efficient worker. Some girls become capable workers in a short time. Many remain inefficient. It is unlikely that there is any reason inherent in the girl why the average girl should remain an inefficient worker.

The shop girl's position, as far as my knowledge of her work is concerned, is about the same. She does use, however, her knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Those who check over her slips can tell how badly the average shop girl writes. If she is told about it, she resents what is said to her. Most people would. It is only individuals of unusual good sense who improve deficiencies when told about them. What the shop girl has to learn is to make sales. In order to do this, she must make a good appearance. No shop will employ a girl who does not look tidy and fairly smart. The time-keeper who admits the girls has authority to send them back if they are not properly dressed. He does send them back, if they do not keep the rules, and they are docked for time. If they are, it is their own fault because shop girls know that they have to pass the test of being properly dressed. Last summer, in a big department store, a girl came in the afternoon in a white skirt. The time-keeper let her stay, for once. But the other girls in her department pinned a couple of their black aprons round her. This is no hardship. It is part of the discipline of the shop.

To learn to sell is not as simple as it may seem. The girls teach each other in an off and on kind of way. But the shop girl has to depend mainly on her native gifts. If she does not succeed in one department, she is usually tried in one or two others before being let go. The idea would naturally occur to anyone that in this respect a forewoman would be of the greatest assistance. A forewoman must surely have the best opportunity to train girls under her. On inquiry, the forewoman does not seem to do this. There are exceptional heads of departments who have a gift for training girls and who are very kind, the girls say. In such a case, it is always added that the forewoman knows a great deal about the work of her department. To show how exceptional a case of this kind is, the writer has heard frequently for a number of years of one forewoman who teaches the girls in her department about the commodity which they have to sell. She is known to an outside public that has never come in contact with her because she is an expert. Her record is an indication of what a forewoman can do for the girl wage-earner. But probably the average forewoman has a great deal of other work besides teaching girls how to make sales. Some of the most progressive among the large stores have classes to train girls in making sales. The girls are let off from their departments to attend these classes. Is there any data to indicate what is the efficiency of the average shop girl? As a rule, the shop girl is paid less than the girl in the factory. Shop girls are often paid four, five, and six dollars a week. Her wages prove that the shop girl is poorly equipped to earn a living. Perhaps it is true – undeniably it is true in some instances – that the employer deliberately underpays the girl wage-earner. He would have to pay her more if she were a better worker. If he did not, she could go to another shop and get higher wages.

The girl in an office has been trained in a business college. She has special equipment – such as it is – and in consequence is in a different class from the factory girl and the shop girl. It is generally stated by employers, however, that good stenographers are extremely rare. Possibly they are not much rarer than very good positions. At least, the girl stenographer goes to work for the first time knowing something about the special work by means of which she has to earn a living. What appears most conspicuously in the case of the girl stenographer is that she does not know how to keep up her physical efficiency as a worker. This sis true of the factory girl and the shop girl, but the writer believes that it is most noticeable in the case of the girl in an office. She does not know how to use money so that her wages will give her back their value. She does not know how to keep up to the strain of her work.

If the self-supporting woman, who has reached a position of comfort and success, is asked what will make or cripple the girl wage-earner in her endeavor to become self-supporting – after the girl has learned her special work – her answer will be that the final test is the girl's capacity to take care of her health and to spend her wages with good judgment. This is the point which means success or failure. And this is where, apparently, no one helps her. Or she never finds out and she is always half-sick and half-poor. There are varying grades of not being as well as she ought to be, and of spending money for poor returns. The fact is that the girl – the woman – whether she is a wage-earner or a girl at home, is never taught the value of money. She is not taught how to spend money so that she may get back its value. In much the same way the girl is not taught what she ought to eat, how she ought to be dressed, or when she ought to rest. She finds these things out for herself, or she lives so much the less efficiently for not knowing them. It is a truism that girls are not taught how to feed babies, which is one of the chief causes of infant mortality. But the want of knowledge is wider than this. Girls are not taught what they ought to eat themselves. They are not taught as housekeepers what they should give their households to eat. These are sweeping assertions. They are made here, because this want of common necessary knowledge is part of the problem of the girl wage-earner. The statement applies to all alike, factory girls, shop girls, and girls in offices. The girl wage-earner does not know how to take care of herself. She may find out after some years. But she does not know, except in rare instances, when she begins to work. Her lack of knowledge is a great loss to her. Sometimes it is an irretrievable loss. Her knowledge of how she ought to spend money is, if possible, less than her knowledge of what she ought to eat and wear and when and for how long she ought to rest. These statements are not guesses. They are facts.

## HOW SHE MIGHT BE EQUIPPED

What duty has the public towards the girl who receives less than a living wage? The first and obvious reply is to say that the employer should be compelled to pay a living wage. Cities have adopted a minimum wage, it is said, with good results. It may be necessary to adopt a minimum wage in Canada. There are employers who pay less than they can easily afford to pay and less than their employees earn. But the average employer is as anxious as the average citizen can be to do what is right for his employees. To arrive at a fair wage, that a business can bear and on which a

worker can live reasonably with a reasonable margin, is a problem which can be dealt with only by experts. It is surely a matter in which a government should have some supervision, if in no other case, at least in the case of girls who are known to receive less than a living wage.

But one of the chief reasons why girls get less than a living wage is because they are untrained and inefficient workers. No true remedy has been proposed when it is said that a government should fix a living wage, if the worker is not actually worth the living wage. In this case, the inefficient girl worker will tend to be driven out of employment and will be in a worse case than before. At least part of the remedy is to be found in a change in the public school curriculum. A girl's public school training should include the teaching of how to keep personal and household accounts. The education of a girl ought to teach her the value of money, both for her own sake and the sake of the nation, since women save practically all that is saved in a country. A girl should be taught food values, and personal hygiene, and the care of children. To turn a girl out into the world to earn her living, when the girl is ignorant of the value of money, when she does not know how to buy or how to save, when she does not know how to take care of herself, and when she has no trade by which to earn a living, is an unsatisfactory result of public school education. It will be said that the girl's mother ought to teach her these things. But school takes up a good deal of a girl's time. Besides this the mother often has not the knowledge herself, nor does she know how to teach her daughter; if the mother knows she has no time, or she is foolish enough to think that her daughter can get on without knowing. The Canadian public school does not seem to help effectually in making the girl efficient either at work or at home. It is probable that the findings of the Commission on Technical Education will recommend that classes be opened for girls in technical schools which will offer instruction in design, home dress-making, millinery and other subjects, which will be of use to factory and shop workers. Excellent work is being done already in the departments of cooking, dressmaking, and so on in the night classes of technical schools. But is the exceptional girl who takes advantage of these classes, not the average girl. Public school education in Canada reaches the average girl and it is the efficiency of the average girl which should be increased.

Scientific investigation only can show what part the foreman and forewoman should have in the increase of the girl worker's earning power. Perhaps the most promising recent development in the situation of the worker is the advent of scientific management in business and industry. To discover what periods of work will produce the highest results in production and the best results for the worker are questions which can be answered only by scientific investigation. It appears likely that these periods of work and rest and rate of speed will prove to be different for men and women workers. Unquestionably, the person who directs the girl worker has a great deal to do with her success as a worker. How the girl ought to work is a question which has been little studied. This promising field of investigation is one which will give results greatly in the interests of humanity.

The girl worker who does not live at home gets less than a living wage because of competition by the girl who lives at home. It must have remained in the memory

of anyone who listened to the evidence before the Government Commission which investigated the wages of telephone girls in Toronto that the girl who does not pay for her washing, because she lives at home, or with relatives, helps to make a living impossible to the girl who has to pay for her washing. Get it down to a case of Annie Brown, who boards and has no home help, and of Jessie Smith, who pays for her board at home, true enough, but is helped out in many little extra ways. To live at all, the former pays from her reserve supply of health and strength and youth, and she knows that it is the girl at home who helps to make her pay. What is the remedy for this competition by the girl who lives at home and who also cannot live without her wages? The present writer does not know of any remedy. But there must be a remedy of some kind. Is the trade union a remedy? Then it will have to come for the women in industry, although so far trade organizations have taken little hold of women workers in Canada.

What is wanted first and most of all is a study of the woman wage-earner in Canada. Statistics should be collected which will show what a living wage is in various Canadian cities where girls work in large numbers. We know too little about the girl who works for wages, and accurate knowledge is the first essential. Increased efficiency on the part of the working girl will help to solve the problem of low wages, and the country, through its schools, can help to teach the girl efficiency. The employer should begin at least the introduction of scientific management, if it is no more than to recognize the principle that his foreman and forewoman, and that he himself, should know more about the best use of the girl employees who work in his factory, shop or office.

But what is needed more than anything else is the scientific study of the subject. Who should undertake this study, if not Canadian universities, and such Government agencies as the Commission for Conservation? The case of the Canadian working girl is a subject of so many phases that to deal with it properly nothing less than scientific study is adequate. And in studying it the universities and Government bodies would be doing a service the importance of which it is hard to overestimate.

## THE WORKING GIRL'S SOCIAL LIFE

The social relations of the girl wage-earner during the time when she is not at work still remain to be considered. Typical instances have been given of the girl at work, with the limitation that no statistical information is available for Canada. What does she do with herself the rest of the time? Low wages, and less than a living wage, have a good deal to do with the lack of social life which is forced on the girl at work who does not live at home. If she had better wages, she would be happier outside her working hours. It is admitted that in all probability her wages are low because she is untrained and inefficient. It is true that the girl's wages are low because of competition by the girl who lives at home. It is true again that woman as labor has not been studied in the industrial world. In one establishment known to the writer, where the girls are directed by a woman who believes in methods of scientific management, the improvement in the type of girl worker is evident. But low wages are not the only fact in the life of the Canadian girl wage-earner.

## POVERTY IN SOCIAL RELATIONS

If the girl at work does not live at home, she suffers from the lack of home life and companionship. She is dissatisfied and unhappy because she is denied the wholesome amusement and social intercourse which belong to normal existence. One has never known a girl wage-earner living away from home who did not suffer acutely from the fact that she had no way of making friends. Mature working women understand so well what it means to live away from home that they would rather cut their wages in half and live at home than earn big wages away from home. This longing for home is not pure sentiment. A home is a necessity for a contented working woman. If she has to earn big wages and can do so only away from home, she will stay away; but it is often because her wages are needed to keep up the family home where she does not live herself. This is not saying that there are not exceptional women who can make friendly circles for themselves wherever they may live. But the average working woman away from home has only social acquaintances who can give her little support and sympathy when she needs companionship. They find they have been mistaken, as far as average happiness is concerned, when they exchanged a friendly little world for a world which is larger but indifferent. Home life is a factor in the health of a working woman. The difference between living at home and boarding is sufficient to account for health and well-being in the case of one working woman and ill-health and failure in the case of another woman equally endowed physically. Sympathy expressed in words and looks, someone to talk to, someone to care what is happening to the individual worker, are as necessary to the health of the average woman as proper food, clothing and rest. The most economical way to live is within the co-partnership of a home. Food is better. There is not an equal expenditure of money in proportion to returns. Relatives spare the working woman tasks which otherwise she would have to perform for herself. These facts are stated here because the girl wage-earner often discovers them to be true only after she has tried living away from home, and for the further reason that the general public may realize what is involved for the girl at work when she does not live at home.

## STANDARDS OF CANADIAN FAMILY LIFE

Thousands of Canadian girls employed in New York have discovered that the thrill and enjoyment of a big city are not included in "the long day" of a girl away from home. Probably more Canadian girl wage-earners are employed in Toronto than in any other city. It is estimated that from forty to forty-five thousand girls are at work in the business section of Toronto. Relying on the percentage figured out by the United States Census with regard to women workers – which is certainly too high a per cent. rather than too low – about three thousand five hundred of these girls are living away from home. Work is good, and they are happier girls than if they were idle. But as for recreation and companionship, healthful play and wholesome amusement, where is the girl who lies in a cheap boarding house and earns wages of six dollars a week, and less, to find these things in Toronto? It seems to be true that the average girl wager-earner in Toronto is paid close on a living wage, or less than a living wage. She has to do her utmost to make both ends meet, with little, or nothing, [left] over for enjoyment. Is it true that she longs for quiet, comfortable

surroundings where she can eat her meals and talk to someone like herself without incurring consequences which she would like to avoid? Two churches in Toronto are providing downtown lunches for business girls. As soon as such a lunchroom is opened, it is filled to capacity. "Capacity" means serving the same tables, filled with different relays of girls, every half hour between twelve and half past one. It has been said that girls go to work because of love of excitement and pleasure. In connection with one of these church lunchrooms the girls a few weeks ago gave a free supper to one hundred poor children. They are proposing to support a deaconess from the fund formed by ten cents a week collected from each girl who belongs to the luncheon club. It is necessary to form a club for church lunchrooms. Otherwise the lunchroom would be crowded beyond its capacity by the girls who would come to lunch. They come because the atmosphere is homelike, and there is quiet and peace. The story of the church lunchroom for business girls is a fair indication of the pressure which is felt by the girl at work.

It is useless to propose that girls should not work and that they should stay at home. Generally speaking, a girl works as a wage-earner because she has to; often it is necessary for her to leave home to get work. We do not believe this will be a bad thing in the end for women of the future and society. It is better for the girl to try to be worth something than do nothing and be nothing. But society and industry as organized at present make it harder for the girl at work than for other wage-earners. A better wage would help and can be secured by making the girl a more efficient worker. The study of the girl at work – the scientific and careful study – is the first step towards improving both wages and social environment. If this study is not undertaken by government and universities, such an investigation is the opportunity of women's clubs. Statistics cannot be arrived at overnight. They can be collected usefully only by experts. Dr. Annie Marion Maclean, a Canadian woman who is Professor of Sociology in Adelphi College, Brooklyn, conducted an inquiry into the wages of working women in the United States for the Young Women's Christian Association of the United States. Undoubtedly, Dr. Maclean would be delighted to be retained either by a woman's club or a Canadian University or the Commission for Conservation to advise in such work for Canadian working women. There is a Canadian Business Woman's Club in Toronto, members of which must possess the knowledge and enthusiasm required to help in compiling statistics of a living wage. To get these statistics it is necessary to find a number of women wage-earners who are willing to keep account of what they spend. Initiative is necessary. Who will give the initiative? There must be some women's club in every Canadian city which can at least undertake an inquiry into the number of girls in that city who are paid less than $300 a year. At the same time let women's club find out whether the girl with $300 a year – or less – lives at home or boards away from home. This information will strike at the root of the difficulty, immediately and in the simplest way. If the women's clubs of Canada are in earnest – some of them undoubtedly are – they can do this work for girls, and will help to raise the standard of Canadian civilization.

It may be said that a great deal is being done already for the girl who works. The Young Women's Christian Association, activities of churches, and of such

organizations as the Girl Guides, will be cited as efforts to help working girls which have been successful. These are alleviations. They are not cures. They reach as many girls as they can. They do not help every girl. They do not increase the efficiency of the girl worker nor better her wages. They do help to some extent in social companionship, and in making it possible for a girl to live while she learns a trade. These good agencies are the result of kindness. What is needed from the public, more than kindness, is common sense and justice and business efficiency. What is needed socially is a deeper sense of the unity of the family and outside of family life a stronger social bond. What is needed, perhaps especially, is the recognition, principally by women at home, that the standards of Canadian family life do not in every respect compare favorably with family life in Great Britain and the United States, naming countries with which we will be compared in arriving at the standards of civilization.

Fortunately, it is true that everything which increases the welfare of the community improves the woman wage-earner's position. Better housing affects every worker. Town planning of the highest type will eventually tend to gather people into small communities, parts of the great community of a city. The garden suburbs of England show how such communities have a life of their own, social and recreative, with music, and sports and amusements in common. There, old people live near the families of their children, in apartments of their own if this is more convenient. There the sick and poor are cared for, the little community recognizing its obligation to the weak. And there single working women form part of the community, their recreation and social life and housing being planned for along with every other part of the community. In the same way, the playgrounds of cities are developing into recreation centers, and recreation centers are being recognized as an inevitable part of the responsibility of a city. When the girl at work can go in the evenings and on Saturday half-holidays to a recreation center controlled by the city where there are clubs for social enjoyment and for study, for sports and such amusements as dancing and theatricals, the problem of loneliness for the girl wage-earner in a city will be to a large extent solved. European cities have public baths for women as well as for men. The citizens of a German city do not need to go hungry for music unless they are rich. When similar social conditions are to be found in Canada, our civilization will be better than it is now.

It may be said that the average wage-earning girl marries in a few years, and then her difficulties as a wager-earner are over. There are numerous exceptions to this rule. In any case if a girl is an inefficient and underpaid wage-earner she is not likely to become an efficient and successful housewife. The girl wage-earner is always in our cities and always will be. It is, of course, a rural problem also since girls come to towns and cities from the country to work. What difference does it make that the problem is not for the same girl, but for another? The average girl who works for a living reaches a low standard of efficiency and a low level of wages. If she marries, her successor inevitably appears and furnishes the same problem. It is evident to anyone who thinks of our social and industrial life at all that the first step to be taken by the community for the girl at work is the acquiring of definite information. How

many girls are at work? How many live at home and away from home? What is a living wage for a Canadian working girl?

No one knows accurately. Surely women's clubs will undertake this inquiry. The sociological departments of universities could give valuable aid. The Canadian Government has a Conservation Commission which is in sympathy with projects of this character. The efficiency of the girl can be increased by a change in her public-school education. In addition, some specialized training should be provided for the girl who goes from school direct to the factory or shop. Finally, while the girl wage-earner who lives at home should be helped to understand what low wages mean to the girl wage-earner who does not live at home, a general betterment of social life should be begun for the girl who works and lives away from home. It is a good business proposition for the girl away from home to secure for herself as far as possible the same comfort and social companionship that she would have at home. She will have to think about this herself and work for it. But she needs some help in securing homelike comfort and companionship. Churches can help. But it is not work for churches only. Possibly it is not particularly the work of the church. It may be particularly the work of women who live at home. It is also civic work and civic agencies should undertake it. A city is not a real city if it is not a good place to live in for all classes of its citizens. If loneliness and isolation and the consequences of living on a low wage are to some extent removed, other social problems will be at least correspondingly reduced in scope and seriousness.

The statement has been made that standards of Canadian family life do not always compare favorably with family life in Great Britain and the United States. Perhaps an extract from an article by Mr. Peter McArthur, which appeared in the Toronto *Globe* of January 1st, 1912, will explain the statement sufficiently. The article is on "Country Girls." Mr. McArthur is telling why country girls leave the country. "Money greed can shrivel the souls of women as well as of men, but I have no hesitation in saying that few Canadian girls are fairly treated in regard to payment for their work. Neither their fathers nor mothers nor brothers can understand why they should ever have a dollar that they can call their own and for which they should not render a strict accounting. They may be given good clothes and a piano, but that is regarded as sufficient payment for all that they may do. If there are sons in the family an effort will be made to give them all a start in life, but unless the daughter marries her outlook is anything but encouraging." Farther on Mr. McArthur writes again: "The more I think of it the more I am convinced that the revolt of the girls is due to their home surroundings. Many of them live in brick houses that have the outward appearance of palaces and the inward accommodation of log-barns. They can see their brothers being provided for, while no provision is being made for them. They dread the hard, narrow lives that are lived by their mothers, and are not to be blamed if they do. The only solution that suggests itself is that of providing more considerate fathers, brothers and husbands for country girls, and I say this without any wish to appear humorous or to make a display of cheap gallantry." The Monocle Man, in the *Canadian Courier,* writing on the shortcomings of Canadian manners, urged Canadian women to begin to toil less arduously and to

bring joy into their homes. We speak of the majority of Canadian women, not of the few who are wives of the wealthy or who are wealthy themselves.

Neither Mr. McArthur nor the writer in the *Canadian Courier* are likely to have invented imaginary conditions. These are conditions which they have seen. Mr. McArthur writes of the country girl. What right has a Canadian farmer to let his daughter, or his sister, come to the city to earn a living without any money and without a trade? Yet this is done. It is a shame. Here is where the standards of Canadian family life fail. Every member of a family ought to share alike with the others, with the exception that the member who can earn least should have more care than the others. This is what family life means. Idleness is probably worse than overwork. But Canada seems to be the only country in the world where the girl is allowed to start out to earn a living with less care than the boy. It may be supposed that the case is different in the city. This is not so certain. The following may be an extreme case, but it is true. In a household in a Canadian city a man and his mother live by themselves. The man has a good position and earns a good salary. His mother is an old woman, probably seventy or seventy-five. Two daughters and one other son are married and live in the same city and they are all in comfortable circumstances. An unmarried daughter has lived away from home and supported herself as a governess for 20 years, and for 20 years she has sent home contributions to the upkeep of the family home. When she visits her home she buys a good part of her mother's clothing in addition. Naturally, she has saved practically nothing for herself. She makes only a moderate wage, greatly less than any of the rest of the family. They have their own responsibilities, of course – and there is always the unmarried son who lives at home and is fond of music and the theater. It may be said that this woman is a fool. If she is, then her brothers and sisters are knaves. They are only unconscious, self-absorbed Canadians.

There may be no other such true story in Canada. One cannot know. But it is true beyond a doubt that in Canada the woman who works is supposed by her family to be well able to look after herself without any financial assistance from them. She begins with less than the others. She ends with less. Her brother's salary is larger than hers beyond all comparison. He marries and his ideas of what his wife should have are different from his ideas of what his sister should have. The working man who marries passes easily into the same class. The Canadians who can change this standard of Canadian family life are the women who live at home. All that is needed is an adjustment of burdens and a change in point of view. The mother who brings up her son to think that the girls of the family need never be thought of by him as far as their future is concerned is neither a clear-sighted nor a far-sighted woman. It is not part of a brother's duty, generally speaking, to support his sister entirely. The Canadian girl enjoys supporting herself and likes helping others. But it is a brother's duty to make sure that his sister can support herself if necessary, to share with her the good times that she needs, and to help to secure her future. When the family home has to be kept up, it is surely sons more than daughters who ought to do this. Not because they love home more, but because they earn more. The girl wage-earner's family perhaps expects a little too much from her.

It is a long story, and it does not seem to be ending on a particularly happy note. But it must end well, or it will not be essentially Canadian. The girl wage-earner in Canada is not a pathetic figure. She is a good-natured, cheerful, and promising young person who needs only a little thoughtful, careful, scientific study by business people, sociologists and her own home people to convert her into all that is capable in work and happy and useful in her social relations. As to what has been written of the standards of Canadian family life, it may be partly true that we take for granted a girl can earn her living without any teaching, and it may be true we forget to find out whether she has enough to live on or not. We believe that this will be changed very soon. It must be changed. For there are many girl wage-earners in Canada who have not enough on which to live. But family life in Canada is frank and kind and good. Family ties in Canada are close ties. It is because we have expected girls to live at home and to need no money – which is impossible nowadays – that we have not considered whether they could live away from home or not. We do not need to doubt that the coming of the stronger social bond and the better social consciousness which are needed is sure. But they will not come unless we work for them. […]

One business girl writes on behalf of herself and five other girls who depend on their own wage earnings:

"I say 'us girls' because I am one of the many who have to board and who have to depend solely on themselves. Of course, you must not take from this that I find myself a hardly-used person. I can gratefully say that my circumstances in many ways are especially favored. But I am thinking of the many, many others who have not the privileges I have had, and of whom I am hearing every day, girl friends of mine working in many capacities. I could write you pages of experiences of my friends, but it would be nothing new to you, the same old story of the things girls have to go through and the way they have to stint and manage, in order to live within their salaries. It seemed to me and my five girls companion who have ready our articles with the greatest interest that the price of everything has gone up, but not salaries. As short a time as three years ago, $10 for a stenographer was as far as her hopes ever went, and she could live very comfortably on that. Then, you know, the pace of dressing has increased so much. I suppose you will say that it is not necessary for the girls to keep up to the extreme of fashion, as some of them do in the downtown offices, and we agree with you. But a girl has to dress well, because one's appearance and 'style' are taken into account nearly as much as one's proficiency; especially this is true in the larger business office downtown. After $5.50 is taken out of that salary, which includes board and a room and a light lunch in the city, there is not a whole lot left over for laundry, dress and sundry smaller items which, when counted, mount up. We do not take the word amusement into our finances at all, or at least very little. We often go out together for a walk, or car ride, or picnic, or matinee, which means, of course, car-fare, lunch, and 50 cents for a ticket is the limit. . . .

"Another thing we have often talked about is this: Take the average boy with just the average education, and he starts to work some place, any place. He is always able to look higher, for promotion from one place to another. Of course, it depends on himself whether he is ambitious and a good worker and whether he can be depended

on. He can work up year after year as his abilities show him able and as vacancies occur. Then take a girl. Except in a few rare cases, she gets so far and no further. Once a stenographer always a stenographer. Once an office-girl always one. Years of experience and intimate acquaintance with the detail of the business such as girls get do not seem to get them further along as would happen in a boy's case. A girl does not want to stay a stenographer if she can do something better. She just gets so far in both salary and position and there she sticks."

## How I Found My Work[2] (1913)

When the woman who thinks business is the highest work in the world next to farming was asked if she would tell other women how she happened to go into business and what helped her to succeed, she answered that she was very glad to do anything to help.

"What do you think of business?" I said to her, after we had been talking for a while. She thought for a moment, and a look came over her face which meant that she was going to speak seriously from deep conviction.

"I think," she said, "that business is the highest work in the world next to farming." This woman thinks business is work worth doing. Her whole heart is in her work. She believes that she is helping with the good work of the world; that she is a comrade in her own way with nation-builders. Without this conviction no woman or man who works can be successful in the highest degree. This is the most important lesson and the first lesson which women who work have to learn; and all real women must work in one way or another.

"I had to work," she began. "There were two of us at home. A friend came to me and said that if I really wanted to work she could get me all the work I needed. So I began to work at home, and then I began to save. When I had three or four hundred dollars saved, the two of us made up our minds that we would go into business on our own account. I had learned the principal details while I was working at home. I had learned a good deal about designing."

I asked her afterwards if she could have got on as well without this practical home experience, when everything was done in a small way. She smiled and said, "Oh, no," in the way people do when they are quite sure of what they are saying.

So this woman went into business on her own account with one other member of her family. I asked her to tell me what had helped her in business. She replied, "In the first place, it was their willingness to work hard, to wait for returns, and to unite unselfishly in everything for the good of the partnership. We were down at eight in the morning, worked till six, and went back very often at night making up orders. If any of the work people come back at night, they are paid overtime, of course. I looked after the details always; just to be there makes such a difference. They know you are there, and it helps to make things go right."

"Did you enjoy it?" I asked.

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[2] From MacMurchy, M. (1913, January 25). HOW I FOUND MY WORK. *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 13.

She said that she enjoyed bustiness and work. “But it means giving up almost everything else. The woman who is to succeed in business cannot be thinking about marriage all the time. She must give her mind to her work and plan about it. She must put work first, and she must have enthusiasm. Then you must make sure that there is as little waste as possible.”

I said to her that a woman ought to be specially fitted to look after eliminating waste both in time and material, and she agreed that this was true.

“I owe a great deal of my success,” she said, “to the people who work for me. My forewoman is a wonderful woman. Every girl in the factory will go to her and confide in her. She is one of the women whom people trust because she is so human and so kind. I remember when I first noticed her. I wanted a girl for some work, and I asked a number of them to write their names, and to write as well figures from one up to ten. I liked the way this girl wrote, and I sent for her. I liked her clear eyes and the way she looked at me, and that was the way it all began. She was only seventeen then. After she had been with us a good while, a company was formed and she held stock. She is a very successful business woman and a fine woman. She began just like any other girl who goes to work in a factory.”

In reply to a question as to how much capital a woman needs to start in business, this successful Canadian woman said that she had started with only a few hundred dollars. She added that if a business could be started on a thousand dollars, and someone said to the person starting business that he or she could have five thousand dollars, it was often a misfortune. It is better to manage on a thousand capital, if that is possible, knowing more money than is absolutely necessary makes one not so careful.

“Strangely enough,” added the successful business woman, “we were most prosperous in hard times. It was then we made most money. But almost from the beginning we had more orders than we could handle. We were always driven with our work.”

It is years since this successful business woman could have afforded to retire, if she had wanted to. She did retire for a while, but as she tells herself, “When a woman’s mind has become accustomed to occupation – when she has learned to love work – she finds that she cannot do without it.” After having tried retirement, and finding it distasteful, she is now personally looking after a large concern.

I asked if there was any difficulty in a woman becoming the employer of other women. “No,” was the answer, “but she must be HUMAN. You remember that I told you about my forewoman. A woman must be human with her employees. She must forget herself in business, she must not be self-conscious, and she must learn to take the rough with the smooth.”

“The best business principle to learn is to be honest, always to keep your word even if it means loss. Buy at good prices, pay good wages, see you get good value for what you pay, sell to good people and get good prices.”

There are splendid opportunities for the right woman in business, is the opinion of this successful Canadian woman. A woman, to make a good business woman, should have executive ability, ability to grasp details, and good business

ideas. A Canadian woman of this class, who has to earn her living, has every reason to hope for success. And business experience, instead of harming a woman, is of great advantage, not only to her character; it makes her of greater service to the world.

## Jennie Brown, the Telephone Operator (1913)

To know Jennie, one must know the Brown family. Mr. Brown is a salesman at Blanket and Co.'s. As he understands so much about the goods in his department and his advice is so dependable, many ladies who buy at Blanket and Co.'s regard Mr. Brown as one of their best friends. He is not a brilliant man, and is little known outside the clientele of the Blanket store. But he reads two papers every day, smokes a pipe, and has a bit of a garden which is much above the average of gardens in the neighborhood where the Browns live. Mrs. Brown is an excellent woman, hard working, a good manager, rather timid when it comes to meeting strangers, but an authority in the Brown household. The rest of the family consist of Jennie Brown, who is pretty and going on seventeen; Pearl Brown, who is as assertive and managing as Jennie is shy and nervous; Tommy Brown, aged 13, who once was more often in mischief than out of it, but who is now a boy scout; and Gustus Brown, aged eight, who is a spoiled child but who may be induced to take a more manly outlook on life presently.

Jennie has been at high school for two years. She is not a poor scholar, but Jennie will never do much at school. It seems that the only occupation in which Jennie is interested is that of a telephone operator. Naturally both Mr. and Mrs. Brown would like Jennie to keep on at school, if it was going to do her any good. But otherwise it is time Jennie should be bringing in something to the family exchequer. According to Jennie, a girl who is a telephone operator "don't need to have much to do" with the hustling, perplexing business world. You can earn ten dollars a week in three or four years if you are a good operator; and the company has just raised a beginner's wages from six to seven dollars a week.

Mrs. Brown accompanies Jennie to the school for training girls to be telephone operators. The school is in connection with one of the telephone exchanges and is in a quiet residential district of the city. At the school, a young lady gave Jennie a printed slip of paper with questions on it, asking how old she was, if she lived with her parents, boarded or kept house, how many years she had gone to school, and so on. These questions Jennie answered in writing and then she and her mother went home. Jennie was sure that she would not be accepted, but she was told to come back again in two days, and the young lady gave her a letter addressed to the head of the telephone school. They were going to try Jennie, and if she got on well, Jennie would attain her wish and be a telephone operator engaged on a regular salary. She was to be paid at the rate of seven dollars a week for the time she spent in the telephone school, whether she was accepted or not.

Jennie delivered her letter to the lady who was the head of the school. She wondered if the lady knew how cold her hands were and how her knees were shaking. I think perhaps the lady suspected that Jennie was shy, for she took more time than

usual in showing her exactly where she was to go and what she was to do. She showed her the locker room where the girls' outdoor things are kept. Jennie was given half a locker which she shared with another girl. Then Jennie was shown the luncheon room, and she was introduced to the matron. Jennie could go home to lunch if she liked, but since the Browns live a mile or so from the telephone building, Jennie was advised to stay and take her lunch with the other girls. The company provides tea, sugar, and milk and the luncheon room and the dishes. The matron sees that the girls have what they want, and they can buy cold meat, bread and butter, fruit, biscuits and so on. To Jennie's joy she found that she knew one of the girls who was a telephone operator in that exchange, and she asked her to have lunch with her the first day. If three or four girls buy their supplies together, they can get a good lunch for ten cents. Jennie's mother lent her some money to pay for her meals for the first two weeks, since the telephone pay envelopes are given out twice a month. When Jennie got her first envelope, she was to pay her mother back. Jennie was also shown a rest room where some of the girls who were off duty were sitting in rocking chairs, sewing, reading or talking. There was a lounge in the room, but no one happened to be lying on the lounge.

## WHAT IS A MULTIPLE?

The telephone exchange was a large airy room, and the telephone boards made a long circle round the room. Some of these boards were for the telephone exchange, but the boards at one end of the room were for the school. This was where Jennie had to be tried out. Although she did not know exactly how the head of the school and the teachers were testing her, Jennie was under close supervision all the time. Was her hearing good? If there had happened to be anything the matter with Jennie's little pin ears, she would have no chance to become a telephone operator. Had she a pleasant voice? Did she speak distinctly? If her voice was husky or if she had some obstruction in her throat or nose, she would not make a good operator. If she was too slow, they would not want her. If she did not want to work, or was lazy, indifferent or pert, Jennie would never graduate from the telephone school. But these were not Jennie's troubles. Her difficulty was that she was so shy and nervous that she seemed to lose all the intelligence she had. She was afraid of the telephone board. She was afraid of everything and everybody.

Her first lesson was to learn how the numbers were arranged on the multiple. Now, the multiple is one division of a telephone board. It has eight panels, and three girls sit in front of one multiple, which contains all the numbers used in the telephone exchange. Each panel is divided from the next panel by a stripe of metal, and each stripe of metal is marked with the hundred that belongs to the panel. Every panel is divided into banks, and each bank has one hundred jacks. Each jack represents a subscriber's number. And when a subscriber wants to be connected with some other subscriber, a telephone girl puts a plug into his jack, which connects with the other jack through which he wants to speak.

How Jennie dreamed of that multiple board the first night after she had gone home, and many nights after that. I regret to say that when she went home the first night, Jennie wept, and said it was no use her going back again. She was too stupid

ever to be a telephone operator. But Mr. Brown said never mind, the first day was always the worst; and her mother told her that she couldn't be much good if she gave up right at the beginning.

The next morning, Jennie went to school again. She was still too frightened to learn much, but there was something very likeable and sweet about Jennie. Her voice was agreeable and her manner, although shy, was rather pleasing. At the end of the day the head of the school had a talk with Jennie. She told her that her type of girl generally made the best telephone operator. She preferred girls who, like Jennie, had been two years in a high school. To be nervous at the beginning was rather a good sign in a telephone operator. In fact, she comforted Jennie and made her feel that there was nothing to be frightened of after all.

At the end of the first week, Jennie thought that the telephone school was the nicest place in which any girl could work. At the end of two weeks, Jennie became a regular operator and was kept in that exchange because the head of the school knew she would do better there than in another exchange where she did not know anyone. In a little while she learned all about calls and subscribers, good tempered people and bad tempered people. She learned how to know the difference between nervous days and days when the strain seems to be so much less. She lost much of her shyness and nervousness, but she has always remained a quiet, pretty mannered telephone operator. Mr. and Mrs. Brown are even thinking of seeing if Jennie cannot get a place as switchboard girl at Blanket and Co.'s.

## JENNIE'S FUTURE

I think, however, that Jennie will stay with the telephone company and in two or three years become a senior operator. Then her pay envelope will hold ten fifty a week. If she gets a good switchboard, her salary will be about twelve, or even fifteen a week; but most switchboard girls are paid seven up to nine or ten dollars a week. Should Jennie keep on with the company and become the fine woman that the head of the school thinks she may become, she will likely be a chief operator, when her salary will be from sixteen to twenty-three dollars a week. The ideal chief operator has to be a motherly woman, as well as a good manager, because that is the kind of woman who is most successful as the head of a telephone exchange.

But on the other hand, I am rather inclined to think that Jennie Brown may marry. The average length of a telephone girl's service is only two years. There was a boy at the high school called Arthur Robinson who is friendly with Tommy Brown, the scout, although Tommy is considerably his junior. Arthur Robinson does not mind showing that he admires Jennie greatly. Just at present, however, Jennie takes the greatest pride in being the best telephone operator in the exchange. She knows all the girls, likes a good many of them, and has fallen in love with her chief operator, who is very pretty and has two dimples, one in each cheek.

Jennie is rather strong on the thoughtlessness of the public. It seems that when half the city stay up till twelve o'clock on New Year's Eve and then call up their friends to wish them a Happy New Year, this means that telephone girls are kept on duty long after they ought to be in bed. Jennie is also very strong on loyalty to her work, first to the public, and then loyalty to the company. It is pleasant to know that

girls like Jennie are to be found in every telephone exchange in Canada; they are paid more in Winnipeg and Vancouver than they are in Toronto and Montreal, but they are the same kind of girls in every city in Canada.

## Katie Simpson and Telegraphy (1913)

"I don't know what I am going to make of you," said Katie's grandmother to Katie. There was a curious contrast between the old lady, Mrs. Simpson, and her granddaughter. Mrs. Simpson was seventy, stout, slow and ponderous. Katie was fourteen, and looks twelve; she was a little girl with blue eyes, and she had a quick sidelong way of looking at you which made one feel that Katie was not quite sure whether or not you meant to be kind to her. She made very little noise in the world; she went about quietly; but the fact was that no one knew much about what Katie was like. Mrs. Simpson was poor. Katie's father had died some years before, and Katie's mother, when she married again, had left her only little girl with the grandmother.

KATIE'S FATHER HAD BEEN A TELEGRAPHER

Mrs. Simpson was rather a complaining old person. She made constant references to the fact that she had hardly enough to put on her back or into her mouth, let alone to do the same for the child. Then, too, she made a practice of consulting with her friends and acquaintances with regard to any possible occupation for Katie. The child herself did not appear to be particularly interested. Yet when Ben Grogan, who had been a good friend of her father, said to Mrs. Simpson that Katie had better come into the office where he was chief operator and learn telegraphy, I believe that Katie was better pleased than if she had been sent to be a cash girl, or put to learn any other trade. Katie's father had been a telegrapher, and Katie had always understood that he had made a name for himself among other telegraphers.

Then, too, the girl was fond of reading stories, whenever and wherever she could find any stories to read. Most of the books in the house had belonged to her father, and a good many of them were about telegraphy and the men who had risen from being telegraph operators to being financiers and railway presidents. It did occur to Katie some time after she entered the telegraph office that it was always men telegraphers who had risen to be railway presidents. Nothing was said of what happened to women who were telegraphers. Our friend Katie was an ambitious young person, although her grandmother had no idea that this was so; if she was to be a telegraph operator, she meant to become known like her father in the telegraphing world.

So Ben Grogan made a place for the small girl in the head office where he was chief operator; and this is almost the last that Ben Grogan has to do with the story. He was always kind to Katie, but he was a great deal too busy to know much about what she was doing. Instead of Ben Grogan we shall hear of Annie Farebrother, and her friend Sadie Rogers. But first we must start Katie on her way as a telegrapher.

She was paid eighteen dollars a month. Her hours, generally speaking, were from eight in the morning until six at night. One hour in the day she went into the

school and learned telegraphy, and after she had been at the work six months and had become really interested, she used to come back two evenings a week to go to the school. Her work as check girl was to carry messages from one line to another, and to do what she was told. Annie Farebrother, for instance, was the operator on a line which was fairly busy. It was said in the office that Miss Farebrother was almost as good an operator as a man, and could hold down her line as well as anyone in the office. She had learned telegraphy from her brother, who was operator in a small town about one hundred miles from the head office. When Annie became expert at the business, she thought she would like to come into the head office, and they found a place for her. Her salary at the time when Katie began to learn was sixty dollars a month; Miss Farebrother had been in the head office five years.

## SHE STARTED AS A CHECK GIRL

She was first attracted by Katie Simpson because the little girl looked as if she were hardly able to find her way about the big noisy room, crowded with machines and people, and wracked with noise from morning till night. But, as we know, Katie was not as shy and helpless as she looked. It was a good day for Katie, however, when Miss Farebrother spoke to the girl who was carrying her messages over to the Winnipeg line and said, "Say, little girl, what did you eat for breakfast this morning? You don't look to me as if you had two bites to eat for a week." It was quite true that Mrs. Simpson did not give Katie much to eat; but at the same time she was not really hungry, nor actually starving. From that day, Miss Farebrother took an interest in Katie and made it possible for her to learn telegraphy more rapidly and more thoroughly than she could have done otherwise. She found to her surprise that the quiet little girl who seemed so backward and almost slow had the very valuable quality of never letting go until she found some way of doing what she wanted to do. She was going to learn telegraphy, no matter how hard she had to work at it.

Little Katie Simpson was the kind of girl who would not admit that she could be beaten. Still, no matter how hard anyone works, it takes three or four years for a girl to become a really good operator. Before that time, however, Katie made considerable progress. When she had been two years on the staff she was on a sporting ticker and was paid twenty-five dollars a month. Old Mrs. Simpson looked after her money for her, and felt rather well satisfied that her granddaughter at sixteen was able to add about six dollars a week to the family purse. But Katie had confided in Miss Farebrother that when she got her next raise, she intended giving her grandmother so much a week for her board and lodging and keeping the rest of her money herself to pay for clothes, car tickets, lunches, etc. It is an interesting fact that girls who are the best workers prefer to handle their money themselves, while those girls who take their wage envelopes home unopened are not, as a rule, as keen about the way in which they do their work.

## WHO SADIE ROGERS WAS

But it is time for us to hear about Miss Farebrother's friend, Sadie Rogers. Sadie had also learned telegraphy in a small town. Her sister had been an operator, and Said had taught herself with very little difficulty. Sadie was an extremely pretty girl, with nice manners; Annie Farebrother was older, not as good looking, and

worked a great deal harder than Sadie. They were great friends, and they roomed together. It was when Miss Farebrother invited Katie home with her to tea that our little telegraph operator first met Sadie Rogers. Sadie had come to the city to take a position as operator in a drug store where there was an agency for a telegraph company. Her work was agreeable; the place in which she worked was quiet and well ventilated; she had not much strain to undergo in her daily work; she was a good operator; and she drew a salary of forty dollars a month – to be raised to forty-five next Christmas.

It did not take long for Katie to make up her mind that Sadie Rogers, at forty dollars a month, had rather the best of it. She could see that Miss Fairbrother was getting worn and old in the head office, where she was such a good operator that she could hold down her line as well as a man. Down there they worked all the time in a deafening noise. There were few intermissions in the work. It was drive, drive all day long. Yet Katie loved it; because she had inherited an instinct for telegraphy. She did not mind the noise; she loved the excitement, and the feeling that one was close in touch with the business of the world. Yet she could see that the nervous strain was telling on Miss Farebrother. "She feels it more than I do," said Katie, and wondered why. Katie had a good nervous equipment, very good indeed, but Miss Farebrother had been a telegraph operator for seven or eight years. She had lost a good deal of the nervous force with which she had begun.

MISS FAREBROTHER MARRIES

"I tell you, Miss Farebrother," said Katie one day, "I think it would be so nice if you had an agency somewhere. Then you would get the commission and wouldn't have to work so hard; and you could hire me to work for you."

Miss Farebrother laughed and said that would be a splendid plan; only she had promised to get married next year. Almost every telegraph operator gets married, so they say in telegraph offices. Katie says that if she does not get married, herself, she is going to get an agency somehow. Very few women telegraphers get agencies, but Katie is the kind of girl who gets what she wants because she keeps on trying for it. At least she means, before many years, to have as good a salary as is paid to the best women operators, and that is eighty or eighty-five dollars a month.

## Telephone and Telegraph Girls (1920)

The telephone girl who enters her employment in a city gains the first knowledge of her trade in a school which is maintained by the company. She fills out an application, stating how old she is, how long she has been at school, and whether she is living at home or boarding. She should be sixteen or seventeen years old, and it is better if she has had one or two years in a high school. Her work will require accuracy, and she must be quick in thought and action. There should be no defect in her speech, and she should be at least five feet in height since she requires a good reach on the telephone board. Girls who go into this work should have strong nervous systems. The necessity for rapid and constant action, the strain on thought and nerve,

and the call for resourcefulness and coolness, all of which are connected with the work of a telephone operator, are a constant drain on nervous energy.

The girl remains at the training school two weeks or longer and during this time she is paid by the company exactly as if she were at work. Payment varies in different parts of the country, but the girl at school generally receives a beginner's wages.

In small towns and country districts, the beginner learns to be a telephone operator by substituting for the regular operator. There is less pressure in telephone work outside of cities, and there is more room for initiative than in a large city exchange.

Telephone exchanges in cities are large airy rooms, well lighted, well-kept and ventilated. These rooms are pleasant places in which to work, and the telephone company provides lunch and rest rooms for its staff. A matron takes general charge of the girls, and a dietitian looks after the food provided and advises the girl employees with regard to their health. In the rest room are comfortable chairs and a lounge. The management provides tea, sugar and milk and the dishes in the lunch room. The girls may buy cold meat, bread and butter, biscuits and other food for a small charge. The hours are eight in the daytime and seven for night operators; this length of working day is regarded as the utmost which can be required from girls in telephone work. There are two rest periods in the day, besides time for lunch.

In the school the young operator is trained to answer requests for numbers, to make and break connections, and to keep account of calls. She is taught to enunciate clearly and to speak courteously and agreeably. She learns to know the board and its numbering. The board is divided into sections and each section comprises a complete multiple. Each multiple consists of eight panels, the panels being divided into "banks." Each bank contains a hundred "Jacks," every one of which represents a customer. When a connection is made, the telephone operator connects one jack with another by means of a cord and two plugs. By the time the girl is an experienced operator, she has become accustomed to the little flashing lights constantly appearing in front of her, which mean that a connection is asked for.

The operator in a city begins with ten or eleven dollars a week. In two or three years if she is a satisfactory operator she should be earning fifteen. A supervisor receives from sixteen to eighteen or twenty. The duties of the supervisor are to walk up and down behind the girls at the board so that she may be certain they are giving satisfactory service, to check delays, and to help in difficulties. For instance, if a call comes through from a fire or accident, the operator will often give it in charge to the supervisor immediately so that there may be no delay. The chief operator who is responsible for the whole service and who has the management of the working force is paid from twenty-four to thirty dollars a week, according to the size of the exchange and the amount of work involved.

Skilled operators are often employed in private exchanges and when they are competent they earn from twelve to fifteen dollars a week or more. The most important switchboards are in hotels, apartment houses, public and governmental offices, stores and private offices. The work is often exacting and in many cases

requires executive ability and resourcefulness. The operator is expected to answer calls, make connections, answer questions and keep account of the number of calls made. Sometimes important business depends on the goodwill, executive energy, judgment and quick thought of the girl at the switchboard. A young woman of strong vitality and good mind – where she has responsibility and can use initiative – finds this work fascinating. Such a worker sometimes wins [an] important promotion because she is able to show that she can manage both people and critical situations and has business and financial judgment.

Telegraphy also offers employment for girls, but not to the same extent as thee telephone exchange. The automatic machine has made a considerable change in this occupation. The Morse operator is now employed to a much smaller extent than formerly. There are still a number of men and women who are Morse operators, but they are being replaced to a certain extent by girls who operate automatic machines. The machines are extremely ingenious and do away with the necessity for the operator to understand or use a code.

Telegraph companies in some cases maintain a school for the instruction of Morse operators, and girls who enter telegraphy receive a weekly wage while at the school, as is the case with girls in the telephone school. In some cases instruction is given during work in the operating room. Schools are at central points only. If the girl who wants to learn telegraphy lives in a small town or in the country, she must be taught by the telegraph operator. A number of girl operators are to be found in country offices. The writer remembers specially two of these girls. One was in a telegraph and cable office down by the sea. She had been a telephone operator and had learned telegraphy from the telegrapher in the same office. The other girl was in an inland railway office, and had learned from her brother, who had held the position before her. Both these girls were earning good salaries.

The hours in a telegraph office in the city are from eight to six, with a luncheon hour. The room in which the girl is at work is crowded with machines and people. There is a good deal of noise and a great pressure of business, much of which is important. The girl needs to be thoroughly interested in her work and to have steady nerves in order to do well in telegraph operating. It will take her several years to become a competent Morse operator. An automatic machine is operated by a typist. The companies apply a simple psychological test by means of which they can judge whether the applicant has the power of concentration necessary for accuracy and success in this employment.

Many girl operators have charge of agencies in different parts of towns and cities. These girls have agreeable work under no great pressure in a quiet place, although with a certain amount of responsibility.

The wages paid girls who operate automatic machines vary according to the age, ability and efficiency of the workers, and the locality where the work is done. Typists may begin at seventy-five dollars a month, with increases up to eighty-five. Girls in training as Morse operators are called check girls and may receive thirty, thirty-five or forty-five dollars a month with an increase in the second year to fifty dollars. Women who are Morse operators belong to the same union as the men and

receive the same wages. In larger places they begin at eighty-five dollars a month and receive increases up to one hundred and twenty-three dollars and twenty-five cents.

Both telephone and telegraph operators are in a senses public servants, and may win the respect and gratitude of their clients. They sometimes suffer from a lack of appreciation of their really arduous work; but as a rule the public recognizes good service. These workers show loyalty under trying and exacting circumstances. On many occasions girls have risked death from fire and flood by staying at their posts to warn others of danger. During the Great War there have been instances of telephone and telegraph operators performing services as faithful and as brave as many of the deeds on the battlefield.

## When Matilda Began to be a Stenographer (1913)

Matilda took the train into the nearest town with her heart beating hard.

"I am not going to be beat," Matilda said to herself with a fierce composure which she had inherited from Grandpa Dickens.

Outwardly she looked a calm and solid country girl. For Matilda was from the country, and she had resolved to be a stenographer. This shows that Matilda was not the most modern type of a country girl. The most modern type of girl living in the country has begun to realize that there is more chance for a girl-genius to become wealthy and famous in the country than in the city. She knows that the thing to do if you are modern is to organize a hen circle among the neighbors, send the most perfectly fresh things to the most perfectly clamorous market, and so become independent, and a leader among country girls. If the girl prefers, she may organize a country home products association among her young friends. There are many ideas for the modern country girl. But Matilda did not know this, and she proposed to be a stenographer. She wanted to earn her living and to escape from Grandpa Dickens. Afterwards she wanted to be a successful businesswoman. But that would come later.

HOW DID MATILDA GET THE MONEY?

At home where Matilda used to be, there was Grandpa Dickens, Grandma Dickens, Uncle Lot and his wife and three children. The Dickens farm was a beautiful farm, but Grandpa Dickens was a tyrannous self-willed man. He thought a girl of eighteen – this was Matilda's age – needed no money. Matilda was the daughter of his son Henry; her mother and father were both dead. Matilda, after much perseverance, had obtained from Grandpa Dickens two hundred dollars to pay for her course at the business college. Don't ask me how Matilda got the two hundred dollars! I do not know. She has a good deal of the Dickens character, and she kept at Grandpa Dickens till he gave her the money. She paid fifty-four dollars for a six months' course. She paid another five dollars to the business college for her books. Paper for typewriting was an extra. Matilda found a boarding house and settled down to work.

Candidly, her first impression of the girls at the business college was that most of them were very silly. But then, many of the girls thought Matilda looked too serious and unfriendly for words. Matilda looked with respect and wonder at the ribbon bows on the young ladies' heads. She wished someone had taught her how to dress herself,

and above all things, how to do her hair. Yet she was sure that when it came to real intelligence, she was better than any of them. Remember, Matilda is not meant to be a representative country girl. Matilda Dickens is a person all by herself. But she had to learn stenography just like any other girl. Some city girls are stupid, and some of them are silly. Some of them dress too gaily. But some of them are very poor and dress shabbily. Matilda was not shabbily dressed. Then there are many clever girls, and quite a few who dress sensibly. I am only telling you what Matilda thought.

## HER BOARDING HOUSE

Then there was Matilda's boarding house. Matilda paid four-twenty-five a week for board and lodging. Pray do not think that Matilda got anything wonderful for four-twenty-five a week. She could manage to put up with it, but not much more. After Matilda got her first situation – by this time her name was changed to Mattie – she also rented a room and cooked her own food. But by this time the two hundred dollars were all spent, and then too Matilda needed some new clothes. (As long as she was at the business college, she made the clothes which she had brought with her do.)

The business college taught Matilda typewriting, spelling, penmanship, business forms, and stenography. She did not take the commercial course. It cost more and it would have meant staying at the business college nine months. Everything else Matilda found comparatively easy; but the stenography nearly drove her wild. These terrible signs! She never, never, never could remember them. The typewriting was pretty bad, too. Matilda was not a natural typewriter, as some people seem to be. Her fingers did not find the key by instinct. But then, Matilda worked. She stayed up at night far later than she should. She began to look white, and her face was pointed at the chin. Then she did not know anyone in the town. She had no relatives in Bridgesburg; and she did not make friends with the girls at the business college. There came a time when Matilda began to think that grammologs and phraseograms were the only real things in the world, and that the people were nothing but a kind of dream. How these signs twisted and turned before Matilda's eyes. You see, what she needed was a friend and a little friendly talk over things besides stenography.

## A TURNING POINT FOR MATILDA

At a business college, new pupils keep coming in all the time. One day a new girl came, Lucy Robinson. She also was a stranger in Bridgesburg. Fortunately for Matilda, who by this time – it was three months from the day when she had left home – was a thin, hard-working looking girl, Lucy asked her to help with some of the work that she did not understand. Of course, after three months Matilda knew quite a bit about stenography. She knew far more than Lucy, and this pleased Matilda. She liked to know a lot, and she liked to be able to help people. Matilda and Lucy got to be good friends. Then, too, Lucy's clothes were not gay and fashionable any more than Matilda's. There was every reason why they should get on together.

## WHAT THE HEAD SAID

At the end of five months Matilda went to the head of the business college and told him that she thought she would leave before the six months. She thought she was able to take a position. Would he kindly look out for a position for her? The head

of the business college had formed quite a respect for Matilda. He did not think she was so very clever. But he believed that she had more character than most girls. He thought she might be slow. But he was of the opinion that Matilda would keep developing. By the time she was twenty-five or so, the head of the business college was inclined to predict that Matilda would have a good place for herself. Perhaps she would be in charge of some business office. Who could tell? He explained to Matilda that what businessmen wanted was a girl who was interested in her work, who really cared about the work of the office. A good memory and a thorough education were also important. Accuracy was more important than speed. Finally, he said that he would try to get her a place. Perhaps she would have to take six dollars a week. If he could, he would find her a place at eight dollars. He did not think she could expect more, not without any business experience.

Matilda came away from the interview feeling a good deal of confidence in her future. Sure enough, she did not need to take a position at six dollars a week. She waited two weeks, refusing one or two offers, and then came at a place at eight dollars a week. She started in quite gaily. By this time, Matilda's name was Mattie, and she had a large bow of golden brown ribbon carefully placed to the best advantage on her fashionably dressed hair. She would have liked to wear a pink bow, but she had not got as far as pink yet. Yes, Mattie had cheered up considerably, and her dear friend Lucy Robinson had a good deal to do with Mattie's cheerful spirit. Mattie and Lucy rented a room together and took turns in cooking their meals. I would like to say here that I do not think it is a good plan for girls who are working all day to cook their own meals or do their own washing. Unfortunately, many girls cannot afford to do anything else. This, however, is Matilda's story. She was a good cook. She had learned at home, from her aunt, Uncle Lot's wife.

## HOW MATTIE LOST A JOB

Mattie started out quite gaily and hopefully to her new position. But to Lucy's surprise she came home feeling much discouraged. The second day she was more discouraged. The third day she had lost her job. Poor Matilda! What was the difficulty? The trouble was that Mattie had hardly ever used a telephone, and in this office, she had to look after a little switchboard and mind two buzzers. It was hard luck. Telephoning was not taught at the business college. Mattie was out of work. Still, it did Mattie good in the end. She had been a little too sure of herself. I am glad to say that at present she is earning ten-fifty a week, and she means to climb steadily up in the office where she is. But then, you must understand that Mattie has always taken a serious interest in her work. She means to have twelve dollars a week before very long. No one can tell what Mattie may not have accomplished in the next five years. She, of course, is scarcely an average stenographer.

# Edna Jasper, Proofreader (1913)

The Jaspers are an Irish family. Mr. Jasper is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. He is, however, so fond of discussion that the time he spends in it somewhat interferes with any gainful occupation which he might otherwise have followed. Edna and her sister Josephine are of the opinion that their father is very much like the famous Mr. Alcott, father of dear Louise Alcott who wrote "Little Women" and "Good Wives". Mr. Alcott was a famous talker, and his conversational powers also interfered with the Alcott family income. Mrs. Jasper, Josephine and Edna are just as proud of Mr. Jasper as Louise Alcott and her sisters were of Mr. Alcott. When this story begins, Mr. Jasper is giving private tuition to university students, and Mrs. Jasper is keeping lodgers. The Jasper family let furnished rooms, usually to university students, and often the same young men who lodge in the house take lessons in Greek or Latin from Mr. Jasper.

## MRS. JASPER'S FAMILY BUDGET

Josephine Jasper is a stenographer, but she is not very well satisfied with her position. She wants a better salary. In order to secure this better salary, she reads over all the advertisements in the papers, and a few of them she answers. She came home one day and told Edna that she believed she knew of a place which would suit that young lady, who at that time was sixteen. Edna did not want to leave school; she loved going to school and she loved studying. But she loved her mother best of all, and both Josephine and Edna knew that Mrs. Jasper had all she could to fit the family expenses into the sum of money which she made by taking in lodgers. Edna wanted to stay at school, but she also wanted to help her mother.

## WHAT IS A COPY HOLDER?

The position that Josephine had found was that of copy holder for one of the newspapers published in the city where they lived. Many of the copy holders in newspaper offices are girls. A copy holder reads aloud copy to a proofreader, and a proofreader is a person who corrects the typographical errors in the proof sheets, which are "pulled" after an article has been set in type, and before it has been published in the paper. Josephine did not want to be a proofreader. She had already her training as a stenographer. But she had an idea that to be a proofreader was the sort of work which would suit Edna. Edna went down to the office and was at once engaged as a copy holder. She was to begin work the following Monday morning, and she was to be paid five dollars a week.

## HOW PROOFREADERS ARE TRAINED

You see, Edna had no special training beforehand as a proofreader. She was to receive her training in the office of the newspaper. And she was to hold copy for the proofreaders in the newspaper office, reading aloud from the manuscript of the articles which had been set up in type. Of course, she had to be able to read, and it was a great advantage that Edna had a pleasant voice and could read clearly and easily. Enda held copy and studied proof reading four years before she became a competent proofreader. Then one of the men who had been a proofreader in the

newspaper office went into a printing business with his nephew, and Edna Jasper was promoted to proofreader.

Gradually her work became of a better quality. She was wonderfully accurate. She was very speedy. She could be depended on always. She was quite able to hold her own with the men who were reading proof. Her wages were gradually advanced until she was getting seventeen dollars a week. This is a good salary for a woman who reads proof in the city where Edna Jasper lives. In the West of Canada, a woman proofreader can get higher wages. But the average girl who is a proofreader gets perhaps not more than from ten to twelve dollars a week. Copy holders, of course, have smaller wages. The hours are from about eight to eight thirty to five or five thirty. This is in evening newspaper offices. In job printing offices the hours are almost the same, but very often in job printing offices the work of proof reading is taken along with other work. A girl may be [a] stenographer or a bookkeeper and at the same time have some proof reading to do, or the man in charge of the business may do his own proof reading.

This is one of the employments in which it seems possible that competent women proofreaders may be taken into the men's union. If this happens their time and their wages will be standardized. The question, however, is not at present settled. It may be that this question of union wages for all proofreaders will tend to keep women out of proof reading, although there is no likelihood of their ceasing to be copy holders. On the other hand, there is a greater demand for skilled proofreaders than can be supplied, so it seems unlikely that if an employer cannot find a skilled man proofreader to do his work, that a skilled woman proof reader will be left unemployed. This is the first time in this series of articles that the question of union wages appears to affect the employment of women.

## THE INTELLIGENT JASPERS

It is quite plain that Edna Jasper owes her success as a proofreader to the fact that the Jasper household is one where a keen interest is taken in public affairs. Mrs. Jasper is a very well-read woman. Mr. Jasper, as has been already explained, is a scholar and delights in discussion. From her earliest childhood Edna has been accustomed to hearing talk of public men and public events. As a consequence, she reads her proofs with real pleasure, and with a very keen eye for what is coming next. It takes years to become an expert proofreader. But an expert proofreader can almost tell what is coming next in an article. The sequence of words and of letters becomes so familiar that there is little chance of any slip escaping that practiced eye. This is the case with Edna Jasper. She says that no one can be a good proofreader who is not keenly interested in proof reading. One must remember carefully what has been written before, so that no mistake in statement escapes one's notice. Indeed, proof reading is a means by which one may perfect one's general education.

Edna has succeeded in becoming a well-educated young woman although she left school when she was sixteen. She is a keen student not only of public affairs, but of literature, sociology, and economics. She has organized a reading club among her friends; and I can assure you that the reading club spends some rare enjoyable evenings in the Jasper household. Generally speaking, Edna plans the programme of

the winter's study. One of the members writes a paper for each evening on some subject which the club is studying, and the discussion is often wonderfully inspiring, as it could hardly help being when both Mr. and Mrs. Jasper take part.

## Peg, Who Liked Keeping Books (1913)

Peg Elderberry was one of those girls whom no one can help liking. At school she was generally the centre of a group of other girls. At home Peg was often in mischief, but everyone at home had a good time when Peg was in the house. I am telling you this to explain a little how it happened that, with a great deal against her, Peg had more to contend with than most girls. She was an only child and not the joy, nor the help, of having brothers and sisters. Then her mother died when Peg was four years old, and I am sorry to say that Peg's father was not a good father. He drank, and he was unwilling to work. Finally, he deserted Peg altogether, and she was brought up in the home of her aunt, Christiana Elderberry Blynn, who was her father's sister. Aunt Christiana, unfortunately, acted as though Peg was responsible for her father's bad conduct. She hardly ever had a kind word of a kind look for Peg. But through it all, Peg kept her gloriously sunny disposition.

It made one cheer up only to see Peg's smile, but her Aunt Christiana decided that Peg was to go to the business college when she was fifteen, and this really rather young for a girl to begin training for any special work. A girl of fifteen has not much chance to become an efficient stenographer or an efficient bookkeeper in six months. But Peg Elderberry went to the college with her mind made up that she wanted to be a bookkeeper rather than a stenographer. If anyone had asked her why she would rather keep books than write letters, Peg would likely have said that it was because she wanted to. She said once that she had always considered it required more intelligence to keep books than to take dictation from an employer. Peg had always had a great admiration for intelligence.

WHAT AUNT CHRISTIANA DID FOR HER

What were some of the handicaps which Peg had to carry from which an average an average girl who begins a business is free? In the first place, there was no one who cared very much what became of Peg. That is quite a drawback. But Peg met it with that fine common sense of hers and with her cheerful disposition. Then, too, would I have said Peg was rather younger than the average girl who begins work. Again, Aunt Christiana had not much money to dress her own children, and she had very little to spare for Peg. Most girls would have minded going to business college as shabby as Peg was when she carried her books there very day. Peg did mind a little, but not so very much. That desire of hers to be intelligent helped her not to mind the shabby clothes. She confided with a friend long afterwards that she used to say to herself how astonished people would be when they saw what a fine position shabby Peg had won for herself. She had a good deal of difficulty in persuading Aunt Christiana to let her stay at the business college the extra three months required for those who took the bookkeeping course. One thing that helped was that the head of the business college said he would not recommend Peg for a position until she was

sixteen. But it ought to be remembered, to Aunt Christiana's credit, that she kept Peg all through the months that she stayed at the college, and that she paid Peg's fees with the distinct understanding that the fees were to be paid back whenever Peg could earn enough money.

## HER FIRST EMPLOYER

Peg went to her first position the day she was sixteen. It was in a seed store, and the man who owned the seed store was not a good employer. He paid Peg four dollars a week. It was winter when she began work in that office, and it was a cold office. Anyone but Peg would have kept a grudge in her mind against the seed-man. But she forgave him long ago.

"Oh, yes, I had a hard time at old Regan's," she would say, "but I did not know much, and he kept me busy earning. If I was cold, he was cold, too. He hated to waste money, or coal. I learned quite a lot about keeping books for Mr. Regan."

## WHAT OFFICE WORK TEACHES THE BOOKKEEPER

Peg explained that while one learns the theory of bookkeeping in business college, one can never really learn how to be a good bookkeeper until one goes into an office. Every office has its own system of keeping accounts. According to Peg Elderberry, it takes three or four years for anyone to become a competent bookkeeper. Even after three or four years, she says there is a great deal to learn. In fact, in the keeping of accounts there is something to learn all the time. If one is to be first class, one must never give up studying and thinking. But to return to Peg's experience.

After being with Mr. Regan two years and finding that under no circumstances did he mean to pay his book-keeper more than six dollars a week, Peg made up her mind to look for a new position. She was almost sure that no one would want her. She was still shabby. By this time Peg was paying most of her six dollars a week to her Aunt Christiana for board, and there was very little left for dress and car fares. Then she was still in debt to her aunt for part of the money paid to the business college. Peg felt that she must get more than six dollars a week.

She found a position at last, as assistant bookkeeper in the office of Aslit Brothers, tea merchants. Her trial in this office was Miss Peterkin, the head bookkeeper. This lady was non-progressive to a degree, and nothing hurt little Peg so much as not being able to do her work in the best possible way. After that, Peg went into the office of a big departmental store. This was one of the places where she learned efficiency in bookkeeping.

Peg now began to understand the meaning of organization. It was a revelation to her. Then, too, Peg says that auditors teach bookkeepers a great deal. She knows she owes much of her success to an auditor who took the trouble to explain to her the value of simple methods in bookkeeping. By this time Peg was twenty-five. Her mind, which was always a fine, clear-thinking mind, had become trained by hard work and experience till Peg Elderberry was a young woman of uncommon business value.

"If only I could convince girls who go through business college," Peg said on more than one occasion, "that they must take an interest in their work. It is fatal for any girl just to try to get through the day's work any way and then forget about it. There is a lot of happiness in work, but no one will ever find it who does not work

hard. Indifference and listlessness are fatal. Any girl who is really interested in her work will always get on."

WHY MR. ATKINS RECOMMENDED HER

After Peg had been in the office of the departmental store for several years, it happened that a friend of the head bookkeeper was starting a new business and wanted a specially good book-keeper who would be willing to undertake almost any kind of work and assume, if necessary, a good deal of responsibility. He asked Mr. Atkins, the head bookkeeper, if he could recommend anyone, and Mr. Atkins at once spoke of Peg Elderberry. He did not want to lose her, but she was worth more than they cared to pay in their office for one of the assistants.

The new business started three years ago with Peg as bookkeeper. It has succeeded splendidly, and not a little of its success has been owing to Peg, who threw herself heart and soul into the progress of this new concern. The man who started the business was not many years older than Peg, and from the beginning he believed that there never was anyone else quite so fine or quite so clever as this clear-headed, enthusiastic, hardworking business woman. The new business is now a partnership. Peg has married the owner of the business, and she is still head of the office staff.

## The girl at work in an office (1920)

The girl who hopes to succeed in office work should be able to spell correctly and should have a good general English education. It is true that some girls have taught themselves to spell correctly after they have entered business offices; and ambitious, sensible girls, who find that letters dictated to them contain words the meaning of which they do not know, study until their vocabularies are greatly enlarged and improved. But, while they are learning, the employer is not receiving the service to which he is entitled.

The only practical way for the average girl to enter a business office is by studying stenography. But to have a really satisfactory school training, the girl who means to be a stenographer should be ready to pass the entrance examination into a college or university. Three or four years' attendance at a high or secondary school is a necessary preparation for first-class office work. The girl who is a college graduate is not too well-equipped to be a stenographer. Even if a girl is compelled by the necessity of earning her living, to begin office work early, still she can, by determination, courage, and hard work, equip herself with a good business education. But it is only the exceptional girl who can do this. The girl who wishes to engage in office work should have three years, if possible, in a good secondary school, before she enters a business college.

The business college should be chosen carefully, and the girl in training should attend the classes for nine months or a year. This is the least time required for satisfactory training. Unfortunately, too many students take only six months, or even three, at a business school. The result is that they begin work only partly equipped with training for the office. Many employers complain that stenographers are incompetent and careless. One reason for this is that they have not had sufficient

training; their stenography, typewriting, and other instruction have been only half-mastered. Office work would be a better employment for girls if these half-trained and incompetent workers were not lowering wages, irritating employers, and limiting the work and responsibility with which girls would be entrusted if the average stenographer knew her work thoroughly.

The girl who leaves a business college to enter an office should not feel that there is nothing more to learn. No one can be a thoroughly competent stenographer until she has been a year at work in an office. The school teaches her how to handle her working tools. But the real problems of office work are solved only in the office. There are endless details to be mastered. Every office has its own rules and customs, and its own methods. It is necessary to learn how to meet people and deal with them. The girl must study the people with whom she works. She must learn how her employers likes to have his work done. The best workers keep on learning year by year.

Many of the qualities which go to make the ideal homemaker belong to the ideal worker in an office. The business girl will need self-control and tact. Her manners should be quiet and agreeable. An office is a place for work; and part of the usefulness of a business girl is in helping to make it a good place in which to work. She should therefore understand order and method. She should be tranquil and well-poised. She should get her work done quickly without seeming to be in a hurry. Such a girl is a treasure in an office.

The business girl should be dressed suitably for the occupation. One of the first lessons for her to learn is that no employer is likely to believe that she can do good work if her general appearance is careless or untidy. Her dress should be quiet and pleasing, and it should not distract her attention from her work. A workmanlike dress can be very attractive. Business girls as a rule show taste and judgment in choosing their clothes and in keeping every detail of their appearance neat, suitable, and pleasing. Thrift in the matter of dressing and a suitable appearance are necessary factors in the success of a business girl's work.

The business girl must be trustworthy. She cannot be a success if her employer is in doubt as to whether she may talk about office business outside. Her memory should be good. It is a great help to have someone at hand who can remember a business conversation, where to find documents, addresses, and other memoranda. The girl will find that it is unsatisfactory to spend much time in social conversation. If she wishes to earn and keep the good opinion of her fellow-workers and her employer, she will attend to work, with only an occasional remark on anything not connected with office affairs.

The salaries earned by business girls vary greatly. There are girls at work in offices who are paid as little as five, six, or seven dollars a week. But these girls are very young, they are badly trained, unable to do good work of any kind, and they should hardly be called stenographers. They can address envelopes, do a little typewriting, answer the telephone, and so on. The well-equipped office girl should realize that she must keep up the standard of her employment, as one which needs

thorough training and competent, well-paid workers, so the work of the girl in business may remain a highly respected and desirable occupation.

The supply of first-class office workers is never sufficient to meet the demand. A common wage for younger competent stenographers who have had some experience is twelve dollars. Experienced stenographers may get fifteen, eighteen, or twenty-five dollars, according to the positions they occupy, the character of the work, and the responsibility involved. Girls with managing ability may be promoted to hold important positions. They may become assistant managers of offices or confidential clerks or secretaries. Women in these positions receive salaries of from two to three thousand dollars a year. In an exceptional case a woman who is a manager may receive four or five thousand. But such positions and such women are rare indeed. Eighteen dollars a week is regarded as a good salary for a capable stenographer of some years' experience. The average stenographer receives as a rule two weeks' holidays with wages. This is an important consideration, for it helps to secure her health and general wellbeing.

It is often said that a small office offers the best opportunity for a clever girl to win promotion. She is given work of all kinds to do and can make herself indispensable to her employer. On the other hand, the work may be easier in a large office since it is organized on well-established lines. Salaries, generally speaking, are higher in large offices, but there are fewer opportunities for promotion.

An unusually competent office girl with some capital may become a public stenographer. But, in order to succeed, she must have business ability and should understand clearly what she can afford and what she cannot afford in office equipment, rent, and so on. The work of a public stenographer is very exacting. Many stenographers are employed in the service of the Government. In general, an examination is required for a position in the civil service. The work and hours are regular and not exacting, and the pay is good. Many girls, however, find work in a business office more interesting, and opportunities for promotion are also better.

Some girls who have not the ability to become expert stenographers, may be exceptionally good typists. Such girls may find employment in typing letters from phonographs or Dictaphones. Work with multigraphs, adding machines, or comptometers is required in larger offices. Special positions may be obtained by girls who are of a mechanical turn or who have considerable manual dexterity. The girl who devotes herself to bookkeeping, if she has special ability, may occupy an important business position.

In whatever capacity she may be employed, the earnest and competent office-worker will find herself highly valued and well-paid for her share of responsibility in the world of financial and commercial development.

# Ludovica Stevenson, Librarian (1913)

The Stevenson family took to school and lessons naturally. This was probably because their grandfather had been a clergyman and their father the head of a boys' school. Ludovica as a matter of course attended high school until she had passed the examinations for second and first class certificates. She would have gladly gone on to the university. But the Stevensons had no money to spare for Ludovica's university education. Stephen Stevenson, the elder son, was to be a clergyman. He had almost finished his years of preparation.

It was a secret wish of Mrs. Stevenson, the mother of this interesting family of Stevensons, that her eldest son might be a university professor in a university where clergymen are professors. Since many of Mrs. Stevenson's secret wishes have already come true, I, for one, have no doubt that before many years she will enjoy the intense gratification of knowing that her son, Stephen, is a professor in the same university where for half a lifetime her own father was dean.

The other Stevenson children, May, Agatha, Helen and George Albert, are variously occupied. Mary is a nurse. Agatha is a stenographer in a bank. Helen is still at school, but will begin to teach next year. George Albert is a bank clerk.

## LUDOVICA'S LIKES AND DISLIKES

Ludovica began to teach when she was nineteen, and she taught five years. It took her all this time to be certain whether she really enjoyed teaching or not. Meanwhile, of course, she was earning her living, which was absolutely necessary. Ludovica was a good teacher; that is, her pupils were fond of her, she was fond of them, and they improved both in manners and learning while they were in her class. But during the five years that she taught, Ludovica was troubled with the thought that she was not happy teaching. It seemed as if it was not fair to the children. Someone who loved teaching more than she did could do more for her pupils. Besides that, Ludovica felt that she wanted to be happy in her work. She could not tell why she did not like teaching, but was a fact nevertheless that she thought of school as somewhat of a burden. Yet she was fond of books and reading. She had read a great deal and was widely informed in general knowledge and on topics of the day, as teachers ought to be.

She loved to read aloud to her pupils, and many of her pupils came to love books in the same way that Ludovica did. Indeed, children from the other rooms in the school used to ask Miss Stevenson to advise them what books they ought to read. Then the school board gave a grant to the school where Ludovica taught for a library, and Ludovica had charge of the library. She enjoyed this work so much that she soon thought to herself, "I want to be a librarian. I am twenty-four years old. I have some money saved in the bank. I shall go to a school for librarians."

## HOW TO TRAIN A LIBRARIAN

Ludovica found on inquiry that there are a number of well-known schools for librarians in the United States. In Canada there are summer schools for librarians in connection with two of the best known libraries. It is a usual thing for a Canadian girl who wants to enter library work to begin as a clerk in a Canadian library. Then

she may go to a summer school for a couple of years. But Ludovica made up her mind that she would take a ten month course at a library school in the States. She calculated that if she could get board for six or seven dollars a week, board and lodging would cost her a little less than three hundred dollars. Fees and books would amount to seventy-five dollars more. Besides these items she would need to spend some money for clothes, car fare, church collection, travelling and entertainment.

The library school which she had chosen to attend was in a large city, and Ludovica meant to go to the theatre, to grand opera and to concerts. She had hungered all her life for such an opportunity, and she did not mind at all sitting up in a gallery so long as she could see and hear. Ludovica knew that all this would not only add greatly to her happiness, but that she would find it very useful in her work. She had managed to save seven hundred dollars in the five years. She would not spend it all if she could possibly help it. But she meant to make the best possible use of every opportunity to fit herself for being a well-equipped librarian.

## COURSES OF STUDY

Ludovica found that there was an examination to pass before she could enter the library school. The subjects in which she was examined were history, current events and politics, general information, literature,, French and German. Ludovica rather enjoyed the examination, which as a general rule is found difficult by those entering library schools. These were all subjects she enjoyed greatly. The examination was in June. She was notified later that she had passed, and on the fifteenth of September she began her course in the library school.

I cannot take the time to describe to you all the knowledge that Ludovica acquired in the library school. She classified books according to the subject on which they were written. She had to write reviews of books. She had to study newspapers and current history. She learned how to catalogue books, how books should be cared for and how to repair binding, she even sewed a book under instruction, and felt quite proud of her handiwork. Then she learned how to answer questions of all possible kinds and varieties, and the best books of reference to which she could turn in a difficulty. She learned how to advise people as to what reading they should do. She prepared courses of reading for women's clubs, and she told stories to children in the children's library. This does not by any means exhaust the catalogue of Ludovica's labors at the library school, but it will serve to explain what a great deal there is for a professional librarian to learn.

Ludovica enjoyed it all greatly. She had to work hard. Everyone worked hard at the library school. But there were half days and evenings when Ludovica and her friends among the library school students went off to different places in the great city, to museums, parks, theatres, down to the sea, on ferries, everywhere that enthusiastic young women can go for study and enjoyment. At times she was very lonely, for Ludovica was simply devoted to every member of the Stevenson family, and she counted the days until she could go home again.

## HER SPECIAL TALENT

You will be glad to know that Ludovica graduated at the head of that particular class in the library school. The five years she had taught were a great advantage to

her. She had learned how to work to the best advantage, without wasting time or puzzling over a difficulty which could be solved by going straight to the right book containing the solution. Then Ludovica proved to have a special talent for telling stories to children. It was really fascinating to listen to her.

One day in May, the head of the library school sent for her and said that if she cared to accept it, there was a position as a children's librarian which she might have in one of the States of the Middle West. The salary would be eight hundred a year, which is quite a good salary for a girl who has just graduated from a library school. But Ludovica said she could not be happy anywhere but just in Canada, and she thought perhaps the head librarian in her own home town would have a place for her.

Fortunately for our friend Ludovica Stevenson, the head librarian at home did have a place for her. This place also was as children's librarian, at six hundred a year. Ludovica aspires someday to being a head librarian herself, drawing a salary of twelve hundred or two thousand. But she is very happy in her work, and I wish you could see her someday surrounded by a group of children listening to one of the beautiful stories she tells.

## The Librarian (1920)

Library work, although unusually attractive, does not employ a great many workers. The work is pleasing, it is valuable to the community, and the associates with whom the librarian works are trained and intelligent.

Almost any girl who loves books and reading may be attracted to library work. She should test herself first to see if she has other necessary qualities before she makes up her mind to train as a librarian. A girl who really dislikes detail and who fails in detail work is hardly likely to succeed in this occupation. The usefulness of a library depends on a constant routine of work faithfully performed by its staff. An assistant does not spend her time in reading new books, although the best type of library worker must always find time for reading. The librarian is working for the interests of others. Her mind should be sensitive and alert to the needs of the public. She must love books, but it is equally true that she should be a lover of humanity. If she feels only impatience and irritation when she is asked to leave some routine work to find a special volume for a boy or girl, man or woman worker, or some old person who has come into the library to read, then she should not be in library work.

The standard of education required for a librarian is constantly being raised. The entrance examination to a university is often required as the minimum in academic training. A librarian cannot be too well or too widely educated, and it is generally agreed that sound scholarship is required in a library. This point should receive careful attention from the girl who is thinking of library work. A position as an untrained assistant is not easily found. More and more, it is becoming a profession for men and women who are college graduates and who in addition have taken professional and technical training in a school for librarians.

Training in library work may be obtained in different ways. The girl may enter a library as an assistant, where she will be taught the methods of the library in which

she is working. As has been said, she should be interested in books and people. She should be neat, accurate and quick in her work, widely read and well informed. The payment which she will receive may not at first be sufficient for her support, so that she will need either to have saved some money earned in another employment, or to be able to live at home, remaining partly dependent on her own people until she has acquired skill as a librarian.

After she has worked in the library as an assistant, she should attend classes in a school for librarians. The library training school, conducted under the authority of the Department of Education for Ontario, has a course of several months, with lectures, instruction, and practice work. Library boards frequently grant leave of absence to librarians and assistants so that they may attend this school. Application for admission should be sent to the Inspector of Public Libraries, Department of Education, Parliament Buildings, Toronto.

Library schools in the United States give courses of one and two years in all the branches of librarianship. These schools require for entrance either that the applicant has a standing equal to the second year in a university, with a knowledge of French and German, or a university degree. Any young woman who is a college graduate and has a certificate from one of these library schools is likely to find good employment in a library.

The technical training which a library assistant must acquire, either in a library or at a library school, includes the classification of books according to subject, the cataloguing of books, some knowledge of binding and repairing, the arrangement of books on shelves, the use of open shelves, how to use reference books of all kinds, preparation of reading courses for clubs, how to make the library useful to boys and girls at school, and practice in the children's library.

In a small library, while the work is not greatly divided, one librarian, possibly with an assistant, must carry on all the work of the library.

In large libraries, the work is divided into a number of departments, each of which is in charge of a responsible head, who may have several assistants. Over all the work of the library is the head librarian.

The administrative side of library work calls for executive and business ability. The best experience for a young worker whose gifts are in this direction is to be obtained in a small library. She may, if she has training, become director of such a library and she will gradually win promotion to a larger library, unless she finds that the work where she is suits her capacity better.

The cataloguer labels the books as they come in and prepares cards which will represent the books in the catalogue. A book may be asked for under several different classifications, and the skill of the cataloguer is required to decide how many cards are needed and under what headings the books should be listed.

The reference librarian has work of an altogether different character. She is constantly in touch with the public. All kinds of questions are brought to her. The reference department sometimes maintains a telephone service; that is, clients may telephone inquiries to the library and the information needed will be looked up and telephoned to them within a reasonable time. The reference librarian requires a

complete knowledge of books of reference, encyclopedias, bibliographies, and dictionaries of all kinds, and she must be skillful in their use.

The circulation librarian has charge of the collection of books to be loaned to the public. She must be familiar with the collection and should understand the tastes of those who use the library. Book exhibitions and announcements are under her care, and she generally has charge of a number of assistants.

One of the most pleasant and yet one of the most exacting positions in a library is that of librarian in the children's room. The children's librarian must be fond of children and should be able to control and influence them for good. She should have the wish to instruct, and she needs a rich endowment of imagination, since this is necessary in order to understand children and to sympathize with them.

Other openings for librarians are in scientific schools, medical schools, and in some law firms and business houses where the keeping and filing of documents are of special importance. Librarians in such positions are on their own responsibility and sometimes do important reference and bibliographical work. Civic and engineering libraries, municipal libraries, libraries on music, architecture, and art, the cataloguing of prints and pictures, special work in bibliography and indexing, offer in a few cities opportunities to trained and gifted librarians.

Salaries from six to eight hundred are not uncommon for library assistants who have training or experience. In a number of positions the library may be open during limited hours, or on certain days only. But when all a librarian's time is required an effort is made to pay a salary which will ensure for the librarian a reasonable standard of comfort. The better paid positions have salaries of eight or nine hundred up to twelve, thirteen or fourteen hundred for women librarians in charge of branch libraries, heads of important departments, and chief librarians.

A woman's work in a library offers opportunities for service and self-improvement. The profession is fairly well paid. It requires careful training and constant study. Enthusiasm, ability and initiative may make the librarian one of the most useful and influential citizens in the community.

## Margaret Wentworth at the Hospital (1913)

(Margaret Wentworth's story is told in response to an appeal from a Western Canadian girl who, like Margaret Wentworth, has been left without money to get into training, and who wants to know how much it costs to become a trained nurse. Nursing was not included in the original plan for these Next Step Stories; but the query from the Western Canadian girl could not be disregarded.)

Margaret Wentworth was a pretty girl, but she was not all dimples and laughter like many pretty Canadian girls we know. Her brow was serious, as were her eyes. Her hair was dark, [and] her eyes were dark blue and clear. It will help you to see Margaret as I want you to see her if you imagine this girl dressed in black, with her pretty pink cheeks and her fair ski, and her serious eyes. So she looked as she sat, very much in earnest, talking to her Aunt Elizabeth about what she would do to earn her living.

## HOW MUCH MONEY DOES A NURSE IN TRAINING NEED?

It was only a few weeks since her father had died. Margaret was the eldest of the family, and as Aunt Elizabeth said, better able to plan for herself than the little mother who had always had someone to work and plan for her. Margaret's mother, her younger sister and her two younger brothers were going to live with Uncle Jack. Margaret wanted to earn her own living at once, and as soon as possible she wanted to send back money to her mother. Fortunately for Margaret, she knew exactly how she wanted to earn a living. Her Aunt Elizabeth was a nurse, and Margaret had always wanted to be a nurse, too. The question was, how was she going to get her training when she had literally no more than twenty-five dollars a year? These twenty-five dollars, Aunt Elizabeth had said that she was willing to give her. Margaret's allowance would amount to fifty cents a week. Aunt Elizabeth sent money home, and she was saving so that when she and Robert Nelson were able to get married, she would have a few hundred dollars to buy her share of the household goods. Margaret knew that when Aunt Elizabeth offered her twenty-five dollars a year, it meant a great deal of love and self-sacrifice.

## A GOOD STOCK OF CLOTHES

"Yes, you can do it," said Aunt Elizabeth. "You have a good stock of clothes. If you were not so well by in underclothes and dresses, you would not be able to manage. But as you are, you will scarcely need anything more in the two years. You can either come to Roxborough where I am nursing and get your training at Beauplace Hospital where I was trained, or you can stay right here in Hometown and get your training in the city hospital. There are scores of Canadian cities and Canadian hospitals where girls can train to be nurses and get just as good training as they will anywhere. This is true of almost any part of Canada. Of course, to be a graduate of a famous school helps a girl to get cases in the beginning. But if the doctors know your work in the hospital and believe that you are a good nurse, you will not have any difficulty in getting private cases right from the day you complete your training."

Margaret, however, decided that she would go to Roxborough with her Aunt Elizabeth. Her mother was leaving Hometown. Their home was being broken up. She felt that she would be happier with her aunt in a strange city than she would be in the Hometown alone. I cannot say that I wholly agree with this decision of Margaret's. There is a great deal to be said for Canadian girls who want to be trained nurses getting their training at home. Of course, they must make up their minds that the training of a nurse means strict discipline. It means living and working in the hospital. There can be no running home at all hours. The hospital is the place I which their chief interest in life must be centred.

## ONE OF THE DIFFICULTIES

But Margaret went with her Aunt Elizabeth down to Roxborough. Aunt Elizabeth knew exactly how everything ought to be done. She advised Margaret just how to have her probationer's uniforms made. She warned her to be very careful as to the kind of shoes she bought. She told her how to care of her feet. This is one of the chief difficulties that a nurse has in her training. It is no uncommon thing for a young nurse to be laid up completely on account of the soreness of her feet. Aunt Elizabeth

told Margaret exactly what she ought to do about bathing her feet, using boracic powder, changing her stockings frequently. Fortunately, Margaret was not only a healthy girl; she was a sensible girl, as well. She understood that it was better to eat wholesome food at regular intervals, that she should sleep as much as possible, even when on night duty, and that she should go out for fresh air. She found to her astonishment that many of the nurses spent practically all their time in the hospital, and even when off duty stayed in their rooms. "A ride on the street cars is cheap," Aunt Elizabeth used to say to Margaret. "Get all the fresh air you can. A really good nurse does all she can to keep herself well."

## WHEN SHE WAS A PROBATIONER

Was Margaret able to manage on her fifty cents a week? She found to her surprise that a number of nurses had not even fifty cents a week for spending money. This was one of the reasons why some of them so seldom went out. It cost nothing to stay in the hospital. But once outside the hospital grounds, it was difficult to keep from spending money. It is possible, however, for a nurse to get her training and spend very little money during the two years in the hospital. Let us see how Margaret Wentworth managed.

When she arrived at Beauplace Hospital, she had an excellent supply of clothes, both underclothes and dresses to wear when she was off duty. She had her probationer's uniforms and a good supply of aprons, cuffs and collars, also Aunt Elizabeth had helped her to choose two pairs of good sensible shoes with low rubber heels and wide toes. She had, as well, an extra supply of stockings. Her probation lasted three months. She was anxious lest she should not be successful. But she was fortunate in the head nurses for whom she worked. They were kind ad taught her a great deal. Sometimes a head nurse is very sharp and severe with a probationer. Margaret, however, was so neatly dressed and quick in her work that a head nurse would have had little reason to find fault with her. She was not saucy, and she was willing to learn. Sometimes probationers bring most of their troubles on themselves. This was not the case with Margaret Wentworth. At the end of her three months' probation, she was accepted.

## SHOES AND STOCKINGS COST MONEY

Beauplace hospital gives nurses in training ten dollars a month. With this they are supposed to buy their uniforms, caps and aprons, and the textbooks required for study in the training school. Margaret found that if she was careful, she was able to buy her shoes and stockings, as well. One of the nurse's largest expenditures is for shoes and stockings. Then for car rides, church collection, and an occasional treat she had her week's allowance of fifty cents. Occasionally Aunt Elizabeth and Margaret would save up and go to the theatre together. But neither of them could afford the pleasure often. Some of the nurses in training had money to spend. A number of them spent practically nothing, which means, of course, that they had nothing to spend. It is the usual practice for a hospital either to make nurses in training an allowance, or to provide them with textbooks, uniforms, caps and aprons.

Margaret turned out to be an excellent nurse. I think Aunt Elizabeth's experience and advice had a good deal to do with Margaret's success. At the end of

her two years' training, she was offered the position of head nurse in the operating room. This was a great feather in Margaret's cap, since the operating room in Beauplace Hospital is famous. But the last news I had of Margaret Wentworth was that she had gone to a new town in Saskatchewan to open a hospital. She is practically single-handed, having not even a trained nurse to help her, and only one probationer. I am sure, however, that Margaret's new hospital will be a credit to her.

Aunt Elizabeth by this time is married to Robert Nelson. In two- or three-years' time, the chances are that Margaret will be married herself, or else she will be the head of a hospital which has just moved into a beautiful new building, with a staff of ten nurses and six probationers. For this is the happy rate at which life moves in the West of Canada.

## The Work of a Nurse (1920)

There are many wise sayings about the trained nurse, two among which may be given here. One of these was spoken by a woman who is herself a distinguished trained nurse, and the other by a woman in a public position who has met many people and is a good judge of character. The nurse said, "Trained nursing will make a woman very good or it will harden her." The other woman said, "I have never known a nurse who was not glad to be a nurse and who was not thankful for a nurse's training." These two sayings show that the work of a trained nurse is no ordinary occupation. The girl who becomes a nurse-in-training is preparing to enter an employment which will have a great effect upon her character.

A girl must be twenty, in some hospitals twenty-five, years of age before she is accepted by a training school of good standing. If she prefers to enter a school connected with a children's hospital, she may be accepted when she is twenty. The work of a nurse calls for physical strength and endurance, and it has been found that girls under twenty or even twenty-five are not strong enough to stand the strain of hospital work. A very strong healthy girl under twenty may say, "Oh, but I am strong enough to stand the strain." She is mistaken. It is not only physical strength which is required, but physical endurance, and these extra years are needed to develop this endurance. If a girl who hopes to be a nurse leaves school when she is seventeen nor eighteen, the best work she can undertake in order to prepare for nursing is work in her own home. Another way in which she may spend part of her time profitably is in the reading of good books, so that she may store her mind with thoughts and information which will be helpful to her in dealing with her patients. No woman who is a nurse can be too well-read, or too well-informed in art, music, biography, history, and the public affairs of the day. If a girl, who feels that nursing is her real work, prefers to earn her living between the time when she leaves school and the day that she is accepted as a probationer, she may enter some other calling, and meanwhile may add to her useful knowledge both of people and of work. She should also save some money, for while the training of a nurse is not expensive, still as probationer, and, later, as nurse-in-training, she will need money for necessary expenses.

The intending nurse should make a few financial calculations before she begins her course of training. The hospital will give her exact directions as to the clothes she will need for her work while she is a probationer. She will require some spending money, and she should be provided with a good stock of clothes, especially underwear, shoes, and stockings. When she is accepted as a nurse-in-training, she may be given by the hospital a monthly allowance which is supposed to provide her with clothes and the books required for her studies. This sum varies in different hospitals. Generally speaking, it is fifteen or twenty dollars a month. In any case, the sum will be hardly sufficient to cover all her expenses, although it is wonderful on how little money nurses-in-training have been able to manage. Some hospitals do not give their nurses-in-training any money and require that the nurse should pay a sum for her instruction. It is usual for these hospitals to provide nurses-in-training with uniforms, caps, and aprons.

Most training schools require from applicants an educational standard of four years in a high school or matriculation status. Young women who are college graduates may take the training of a nurse after they leave the university. The business girl or the girl in any other occupation who means to be a nurse and who has left school before reaching the necessary standard can prepare for her training by attending evening classes or studying by herself or with a friend.

The intending nurse should choose with great care the hospital in which she means to train. The standing of the hospital will have a marked influence on her career as a nurse. Some hospitals are justly famous for the excellent training which they give. The usual length of time required is three years. A number of hospitals, however, have courses of two years.

The time of probation lasts three, four, or six months. During this time the probationer will be tested for endurance, neatness, earnestness, and ability. No probationer who is untidy or who is wanting in personal cleanliness is accepted in a training school. The professional appearance of the nurse is essential to her success. Few women are more attractive in appearance than a nurse in uniform.

Nurses-in-training live in a nurses' home which is one of the hospital buildings. In these buildings the nurse will spend by far the greater part of her time for two or three years. The hospital is a world in itself, and the nurse will have few interests outside its walls. Most nurses regard their years of training as a time of growth and wonderful experience, and the average nurse is very happy during this time, although a great deal of the work is not pleasant and almost all of it is hard. The nurse learns that work of any kind may come within her province. She will have to do anything which helps toward the recovery of her patients or contributes to their comfort. Some of her experiences will teach her resolution and bravery. Speaking of such experiences a nurse once said: "As long as you can do anything to help, you can manage. It is the being able to help that matters." The life of the nurse-in-training is regular, and the hospital regime is such that as a rule nurses-in-training are healthy.

The nurse should have good health and a good constitution. In some cases, however, a girl may be in poor health because she has no definite occupation or object in life. Training as a nurse has often helped to establish good health. The girl who

applies at a hospital training school requires a doctor's certificate, and the doctor will be able to tell her whether she is strong enough to undertake the work of a nurse. She should be a girl of strong character, steady nerves, clear mind, and good judgment. She must acquire the habit of obedience if she does not already possess it. A nurse, like a soldier, is under authority and has to carry out directions exactly as if they were commands. In her work she will need tact, discretion, and firmness, and with her firmness she must be always and unfailingly kind. Her voice and manner should be as pleasing as possible. No unkind or rough woman should ever have anything to do with the work of nursing.

Short courses in nursing are given in some cities by the Young Women's Christian Association. The St. John Ambulance also has given instruction in nursing for a number of years. Since the beginning of the War, various courses have been arranged for Red Cross nurses. The honorable work of what are known as V. A. D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment) nurses proves how valuable any good instruction in nursing is, not only for the individual, but for the community. It is not too much to say that the whole service of nursing in the world would not have been adequate if it had not been for the training and work of volunteer nurses. The War has proved beyond all question the extraordinary value of the trained nurse.

After graduating from the training school, the nurse may undertake private nursing or she may follow her profession in institutional work. Private nursing is exacting, and the nurse must be strong and capable. Her hours are longer and much more irregular than when she was in training, and often she will be on her own responsibility. She will feel, however, that she is doing work of great value, and she will win the regard of many of her patients and their families. The good standing of the training school is an assistance to the nurse when she looks for cases. If she is favorably known to doctors, she is likely to have as much work as she can manage. Hospitals often engage their graduates to return for private cases. A usual charge for a graduate nurse is from twenty-one to thirty-five dollars a week according to the nature of the case. A nurse in private work cannot work uninterruptedly throughout the year. Her name is on a nurses' registry, which is generally conducted by an association of nurses or by a private individual. Returns from these registries show that the average nurse is employed about ten months in the year. Many graduate nurses earn from eight to nine hundred dollars a year in private nursing, while some earn a thousand or twelve hundred, but this is exceptional.

Nurses who are not graduates are sent out by some registries. Their charges vary according to the case. These women are sometimes called convalescent nurses and, in cases where a graduate nurse is not required, they fill a real need in the community.

As a general rule, a trained nurse does not continue in private nursing longer than ten or twelve years. Frequently, at the end of that time, her health necessitates a change in occupation. Others continue their work successfully for many years.

Many trained nurses prefer institutional rather than private nursing. Head nurses in hospitals receive from thirty to sixty dollars a month. There are also nurses who superintend private hospitals. A few nurses of executive ability, business

knowledge, and experience in nursing, become superintendents of hospitals, but not of the largest hospitals. A number are heads of training schools. Such leading nurses receive salaries varying from one thousand to two thousand dollars a year, with living expenses in addition. The work of a woman superintendent who is a trained nurse includes the financial management, responsibility for the nurses, training of the nurses, the care of patients, and the oversight of the hospital. Few individuals are equal to such work and responsibility. Other trained nurses become matrons and housekeepers in private hospitals, sanitaria, and colleges. Some are district nurses. Public health nurses assist in supervising the health of a city and give instruction in cleanliness, sanitary science, and the care and feeding of infants. Private schools, colleges, factories and departmental stores employ the services of trained nurses.

A few children's hospitals give short courses in training for children's nurses – an employment for which many girls are specially fitted. This course must not be confused with the regular instruction of the trained nurse, as it is not on a level with the profession of trained nursing. A children's nurse with hospital training will receive twenty or twenty-five dollars a month; in some instances such a nurse is paid higher wages.

## Medicine as Practiced by Canadian Women[3] (1912)

[DR. EMILY HOWARD JENNINGS STOWE]

The first woman who practiced medicine in Canada was Dr. Emily Howard Jennings Stowe. She attended the New York College for Women since she could not study medicine in Canada and graduated in 1867. Dr. Emily Stow practiced in Toronto. She was for long a familiar figure in the life of the city. Her death occurred as recently as 1903.

It may be taken for granted that any Canadian woman who practices medicine has a strong bent for being a physician. This statement, perhaps, is true of any country. On the whole, it seems to be easier in Canada for women to follow any calling they desire to follow than it is in other countries. Yet feeling in Canada socially is conservative, and, as it was said before, any woman who practices medicine in Canada is certain to have a strong inclination for being a doctor. The average Canadian woman is far from being either listless or lacking in decision of character. The average Canadian woman physician has a marked individuality. It can be said truly of most of them that they are "born doctors". This was the character of Dr. Emily Stowe. Since her day it has become an easy matter for a Canadian woman to study medicine. For a woman physician to care for a large practice is regarded now as a matter of course.

[DR. AUGUSTA STOWE GULLEN]

The first woman to take a medical degree in Canada was Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen, daughter of Dr. Emily Stowe. She graduated from Victoria University, Coburg, in 1883. In the same year the Women's Medical College, Toronto, was

[3] From Macmurchy, M. (1912, January 11). *Raymond Leader,* p. 3.

founded, and Dr. Stowe Gullen was a member of its first staff, continuing this work during the history of the college, which lasted for twenty-three years. The medical faculty of the University of Toronto became open to women students in 1907, and in the same year the Women's Medical College ceased to exist.

There is at present only one woman instructor on the medical faculty of Toronto University. Dr. Helen Macmurchy is a clinical assistant in gynecology. When the staff at the Toronto General Hospital was reorganized, about the same time that the medical faculty of Toronto University first received women students, two women physicians were appointed as clinical assistants in gynecology. These two are Dr. Ida Lynd and Dr. Helen Macmurchy, of Toronto.

Besides Toronto, the medical courses at the Universities of Dalhousie and Manitoba are open to women. Women have graduated in medicine from Queen's University, Kingston. The medical faculty of Bishop's College, now merged in McGill University, also had a number of women graduates in medicine. The medical faculty of McGill does not admit women students, but Dr. Maude Abbott is on the staff of McGill University as curator of the pathological museum.

[DR. ELIZABETH HURDON]

These are probably the only Canadian university appointments in medicine held by women in Canada. Outside of Canada, Canadian women hold a number of teaching appointments on medical faculties in the United States and India. Dr. Elizabeth Hurdon is one of the best examples of a Canadian woman in medicine outside of Canada. She is on the staff of Johns Hopkins University, and her work is held in much regard. Dr. Hurdon is a graduate of the Toronto Medical College for Women. She is the joint author with Dr. Howard Kelly of a well-known medical textbook.

[DRS. MARGARET WALLACE AND LELLA DAVIS]

One of the most remarkable fields for the work of Canadian women in medicine has been in the east. The missionary appeal early took a strong hold on the women of Canada. Numbers of them have qualified as medical practitioners and have gone to pursue their calling in countries where women can be aided only by women physicians. In India, the North India School of Medicine for Women has a number of Canadian women doctors on its staff. Dr. Margaret Wallace is professor of medicine, [and] Dr. Lella Davis is professor of physiology and hygiene.

[DR. MARGARET PATTERSON]

Dr. Margaret Patterson, now in Canada, was also on the staff of the Northwest College of Medicine. Dr. Patterson's work in India has been unusually interesting. She was for nearly seven years in charge of the Seward Memorial Hospital at Alahabad. In the great epidemic of bubonic plague in 1901, Dr. Patterson was of effective help to the British government in organizing plague relief camps and establishing plague hospitals. The people had confidence in her, since she was well known to them. For this service she was included in the honor list at King Edward's coronation, and was given the Kaiser-i-Hind medal.

[OTHER CANADIAN PHYSICIANS]

A number of women physicians from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick hold important medical positions in the Far East. These include: Dr. Annie Young of Nova Scotia; two sisters, Drs. MacKenzie in Cawnpore, Dr. Alice Ernest in Jhansi, with two women associates, both from Eastern Canada; and Dr. Blanche Wilson Stead, who is one of the best known women physicians in Persia.

Other Canadian women physicians in India and China include: Dr. Dr. Marion Oliver, Dr. Elizabeth McMaster, Dr. Margaret McKellar, Dr. Chone Oliver, Dr. Margaret O'Hara, Dr. Jean Dow, Dr. Mitchell, Dr. Haslam, Dr. Lennox (Japan), Dr. Annie Henry, Dr. Austen, and Dr. Bar. These ladies have been sent out by Canadian missionary boards. Dr. Susan Carson Rijnhart did famous work as a physician in Tibet, and is the author of "With Thibetans [sic.] in Tent and Temple". She and her sister, Dr. Carson, who is secretary of the Young Women's Christian Guild in Toronto, are daughters of Inspector Carson, of London, Canada. Dr. Bertha Dymond, formerly head of the Institute for the Blind at Brantford, who practiced for some years in Toronto, is now physician on an Indian reserve in Western Canada. It is not overstating the case to say that Canadian women physicians are with the foremost among the world's missionaries.

There are in the neighborhood of from fifty to sixty women physicians practicing medicine in Canada. About seven or eight are practicing in Montreal and nineteen or twenty in Toronto. Among these fifty or sixty women doctors, biographical notes on a few typical instances will show the training undertaken by Canadian women in medicine and the average career which lies before a medical woman in Canada.

[DR. GRACE RITCHIE ENGLAND]

Dr. Grace Ritchie England, a native of Montreal, graduated from McGill in 1888, one of the first class of McGill women graduates. She obtained first class honors in Natural Science with her degree of B.A. She took post-graduate work in Vienna, and began general practice in Montreal. She holds the degree of M.D.C.M.[4] Her husband, Dr. Frank Richardson England, is also in general practice. Dr. Ritchie England specializes in the diseases of women. She is interested in the National Council of Women, and at the International Congress of Women held in Toronto in 1900, she was convenor of the section on hygiene. As well as conducting a general practice, Dr. Ritchie England maintains a dispensary for women. The Hon. Sydney Fisher is a cousin, and Mrs. Roswell Fisher is Dr. England's sister.

[DR. MAUDE ABBOTT]

Dr. Maude Abbott, of Montreal, was the first Canadian woman to receive an honorary degree from a Canadian university for merit in scientific work. Dr. Abbott's first medical degree was received from Bishop's College. She is a graduate in arts of McGill. Her training includes years spent in medical work at the Universities of Zurich and Vienna. She took the Edinburgh Triple Qualification in 1897 and began medical practice in Montreal in 1895. She was appointed assistant curator of the

[4] *Medicinae Doctorem et Chirurgia Magistrum*, Latin for "Doctor of Medicine and Master of Surgery".

Pathological Museum in 1899 and curator in 1902. In 1911 she was given the status of Lecturer and the degree of M.D.C.M. *honoris causa.*[5] Dr. Abbott was born in the village of St. Andrew's East, Quebec. Her grandfather, the rector of St. Andrew's, was the uncle of the late Sir J. J. Abbott. Dr. Maude Abbott contributed a monograph to Dr. Osler's well-known "System of Medicine".

Medical school inspection in Montreal is carried on by twenty-four physicians, who visit the large schools daily, and the smaller schools and colleges occasionally. During school vacation, the medical officers inspect employees in buildings where large numbers of working people are employed. They vaccinate employees who do not show marks of vaccination or who are unable to produce certificates. Two of these medical school officers are women, Dr. Helen Macdonald and Dr. Marion Hausford.

[DR. MARION HAUSFORD]

Dr. Hausford may be taken as a representative of the Canadian medical woman who is a school medicine officer, since her training and experience are fairly typical. She was born in Perth, Ontario, the daughter of a Methodist minister. Like other daughters of the parsonage, she has lived in a large number of Ontario towns for the short time of a Methodist pastorate. Her medical course was taken at Bishop's College, from which institution she graduated in 1898. Beginning general practice in Montreal, she was appointed a school medical health officer when medical school inspection was begun in 1907.

[DR. SHORTT]

Mrs. Shortt, wife of Professor Adam Shortt, Civil Service Commissioner for the Canadian government, was born on a farm near Winona, Ontario. She was educated at Hamilton Collegiate and at Queen's University, being one of the first women in Canada to take a medical degree. On her marriage to Professor Shortt, of Queen's University, she gave up general practice, but she is keenly interested in public questions, especially in questions of public health. She now resides in Ottawa, where she is an active member of the Local Council for Women. She was a joint convenor of the section on women's occupations at the International Congress of Women in 1909.

[DR. HELEN MACMURCHY]

Dr. Helen MacMurchy was born in Toronto. Her father, Archibald MacMurchy, LL.D., was for many years principal of the Toronto Grammar school, afterwards known as the Jarvis Street Collegiate Institute. Dr. Helen MacMurchy taught for a number of years in the Jarvis Street Collegiate Institute, taking her medical course while she was teaching. She is a graduate in medicine of the Women's Medical College, Toronto, and of the University of Toronto. She took post-graduate work in Philadelphia and at Johns Hopkins University, and has contributed articles to the Lancet, the British Medical Journal, etc.

Dr. MacMurchy is in general practice in Toronto, and has done as well much work with regard to public health, especially in infant mortality, medical inspection of schools, and the care of the feeble-minded. She was appointed Commissioner of the Feeble-Minded by the Ontario government in 1906. She is a member of the

[5]An honorary degree.

International Council of School Hygiene, having been appointed at its Paris meeting in 1910, and she is also a member of the American School Hygiene Association.

[DR. MARY CRAWFORD]

There are a number of women practicing medicine in Western Canada. Dr. Mary Crawford, of Winnipeg, who is at present abroad, is one of the best known of these. She is a medical inspector of schools in Winnipeg.

[DR. ANNIE BACKUS]

No account of Canadian women in medicine would be complete without a notice of a typical woman physician who is in country practice. Such a practitioner is Dr. Annie Backus, of Aylmer. She was born near Port Rowan, and is of United Empire stock. She went to school in Port Huron and later attended Bishop Strahan's School in Toronto. Dr. Backus did not begin to study medicine until after her marriage to her cousin, A. H. Backus. [She earned] her medical degree at Ann Harbor. Afterwards she studied diseases of women in Chicago. She followed general practices in the States, then studied in Great Britain, practiced in the States again, and finally returned to Canada, where she is in general practice at Aylmer.

These are some typical instances of the work which is being done by Canadian women in medicine. The present account does not aim to be anything but an indication of how naturally and effectively such medical work may be done by women in Canada. It is not at all unlikely that when Canadian women as a whole begin [to take] an active part in civic improvement, on school boards, and in work for public health, much of the impulse will come from leading women in medicine. Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen was for several years a member of the public school board of Toronto. Canada is a country in which development is taking place on essentially normal lines, and those of its women who are physicians follow their calling from much the same motives which influence Canadian men who become doctors. They like medical work, and they believe that there is work in medicine which they can do effectively.

## Dolores' Specialty was Making Hats (1913)

"But, you see, dear Miss Price," said Dolores, "I would much rather trim hats than practice five-finger exercises. In connection with the keys of a piano my fingers are so many wooden sticks. But give me a yard of ribbon – and you see!"

As she spoke, Dolores placed a large white Panama hat on her knees, swathing round it in fetching folds a yard of ribbon twelve inches deep, and throwing up at one side a towering wing of shimmering lustrous silk. One minute Dolores had nothing but a yard of silk ribbon of a heavenly blue and a white, untrimmed Panama hat. Three minutes later Miss Price gazed in astonishment at a most fashionable hat. Dolores' fingers had wrought the transformation.

Miss Price adjusted her eyeglasses and gazed from the hat to her pupil. "You don't mean to be a milliner, do you, my dear?" she inquired in her gentle voice. "Very nice for you to trim your own hats, my dear, and quite right. But your father will expect you to play a little to him in the evenings when he is reading his paper. Still, a very delightful hat, Dolores, quite a gift, my dear."

"You don't know Papa," laughed Dolores in reply. "Papa is much more likely to be taking a hand at a little game of bridge at his club. Papa is a darling, Miss Price, and he wants me to be the kind of daughter I want to be most."

## DOLORES' OPPORTUNITY

Three months later, Dolores told Miss Price that she would have to leave school immediately, and that she wanted Miss Price to go with her to Madame Amsterdam's hat shop. In the three months Dolores' papa had lost a deal of money. He had gone to South America to a position where he was likely to do well. Meanwhile, Dolores had every opportunity to show that millinery was the one occupation for which she had a talent. But "genius" was the word that Dolores' schoolgirl friends used. Dolores had a genius for millinery.

Madame Amsterdam was the most fashionable milliner in the city where Dolores had attended Miss Price's school. Dolores had happened to hear that Madame took apprentices and trained them very carefully. This is not the case in every milliner's shop. But the Amsterdam hat requires the touch of an artist. It also requires the work of a well-taught milliner. No careless sewing, no thrown together hats are tolerated in the Amsterdam establishment. All this Dolores knew. She had debated for some time between going to classes at a technical school and asking Madame Amsterdam to take her as an apprentice. Dolores had decided that it would be better for her to go direct into the Amsterdam shop. She wanted to be an artistic milliner, but she knew that at the same time she would have to learn the ordinary rules of millinery.

## A DOLORES HAT

Dolores' plan was that she would work for Madame Amsterdam, who would perhaps give her five or six dollars a week if she was a promising worker, and that in her evenings she would take orders for hats from her friends. Dolores had been trimming hats for her girl friends at Miss Price's school for two years. She knew of at least twenty girls and their mothers who would be willing to take a Dolores hat. The hat would cost less because Dolores was a beginner, and at the same time Dolores knew that her hats would have a certain style and beauty which it is not always possible to buy even at a very good millinery establishment.

Now, Miss Price happened to be a good customer of Madame Amsterdam's. When Madame heard Dolores' story and saw Dolores herself, she consented, although with some hesitation, to take Dolores into her work room. But she would not consent until she heard that Dolores had an allowance of thirty dollars a month. Dolores was quite frank about it.

## MOTHER'S ALLOWANCE

"Mother says, Madame Amsterdam, that she can allow me thirty dollars a month. But I want to take that thirty dollars just as short a time as possible. I want to make mother an allowance. I don't want to take money from mother."

As it happened, Madame Amsterdam was passionately fond of her own mother, a gentle old lady who lived with her. What Dolores said about wanting to give an allowance to her mother settled any doubt that there had been in Madame's mind. It was arranged that Dolores was to begin as one of Madame's apprentices the next

Monday morning. Meanwhile, Madame herself took Dolores to a boarding house which was only round the corner from where Madame lived.

Dolores had been right. Her talent was for millinery. In a few months she was getting from the Amsterdam establishment a salary of fifteen dollars a week. In nine months, Dolores was trusted to help Madame Amsterdam in her own work, and by that time her salary was very good indeed. [By] the end of the year she was earning twenty-five dollars.

## NOT WHAT HAPPENS TO APPRENTICES

I would not have any girl think who wants to be a milliner that Dolores' story is typical of what happens to every apprentice in a milliner's shop. Quite the contrary. In the first place, Dolores had been already trimming hats for two years. She had an intuition about the shape of hats adapted to the appearance of any particular customer which was nothing less than remarkable. Her color sense was also remarkable; and she had these very clever hands which could handle silks and satins, chiffons and ninons and all the most delicate fabrics with a sureness of touch that never needs to fuss over a bow or a fold. Then, too, Dolores was older than most apprentices. Her age would have been against her if she had known nothing about millinery; but since she had already taught herself a great deal by practice and observation, it was only natural that Dolores, at eighteen, could learn far more quickly in the Amsterdam work rooms than Louise of fifteen, who was a bright little girl but scarcely knew how to thread a needle.

Dolores now has a good deal to do with choosing apprentices for Madame Amsterdam. She says that she is always interested in girls who want to be milliners, and she wants to be kind to them, since she herself received so much kindness when she was an apprentice. Some of the girls who apply, she advises to go to a wholesale house for their training. Some she advises not to be milliners, but to learn some other trade. There are few trades for girls that need a more distinct gift than millinery. If a girl has it in her to be a milliner, it will show very quickly. She ought to sew, to handle materials, and to combine colors. She should have good eyesight, good endurance – for sometimes in the busy season the hours are very long – and above all, her hands ought to be dry and she should be able to use her fingers quickly. If as well she is neat and careful about her own appearance, it is likely that she will make a good milliner.

No girl can support herself entirely while she is learning to be a milliner. She is likely to be paid a little money while she is an apprentice. But it will be some time before she is earning as much as five, six or seven dollars a week. After a couple of years, she ought to be able to make about ten dollars a week as a maker of hats. Trimmers get from fifteen to twenty, or twenty-five dollars a week. Designers in big establishments receive higher wages. But twenty-five dollars a week is regarded as a good salary for a milliner.

## THE SHORT SEASON

The difficulty for the milliner who is dependent wholly on what she earns is the short season. She may be idle four months in the year. It is hard to save enough money, even from a good salary, to keep oneself without working four months. In a

shop like Madame Amsterdam's, she gives her girls only a month's vacation without pay, sometimes six weeks. In big departmental stores the milliners are working most of the time. In the slack season they can go into other departments of the store. But the majority of milliners are idle three or four months. If they are good managers, they can use these months to make their own clothing, to trim hats for their friends and so make money. Or they can work at other employment as saleswomen, waiters, nurse maids, etc.

The knack for millinery is a gift, Dolores says, but at the same time every milliner should learn how to sew carefully, and how to measure accurately

## The Milliner (1920)

Millinery, like dressmaking, is partly a factory trade. But it is also, like dressmaking, carried on in shops and in departmental stores. The average girl is interested in hat-making, and is able to turn out a hat which she can wear with satisfaction. But a first-class milliner is really an artist. Her hands must be skilful and quick, her touch light and sure. She must have a sense of color and form, and originality and creative ability. A girl who combines these gifts with business ability is likely to make a success of an establishment of her own.

Training for this occupation may be obtained in several ways. The girl who can afford to remain at school may take a course in millinery at a trade or technical school. She may then obtain a position in a millinery establishment as a maker of hats, and will receive a beginner's salary according to the quality of her work. She should have no difficulty in advancing rapidly in her occupation if she has the necessary gifts.

The girl who leaves school at fourteen may find a place as messenger girl in a millinery shop or a millinery department. Some milliners make a special point of training their own helpers, and any girl who enters an establishment of this kind will receive valuable instruction. There is a danger, however, that the girl in some shops will find her work confined to running messages. In this case she will not become a trained milliner, and her prospects of advancement are poor. She should, therefore, see that she is being taught her trade. It is usual for an apprentice to work for two seasons without pay, and if she is being well taught she should be satisfied. In places where living expenses are high, as in large cities, girls are often allowed a small sum per week while they are learning.

The young milliner's first work is learning how to make bands for hats and to make and sew in linings. Making frames for hats follows – the frames are of wire and buckram. The girl ahs next to learn how to cover frames with materials of different kinds – silk, velvet, lace, chiffon, etc. – and she as a result learns to know intimately and to handle skillfully delicate and costly fabrics. From being an apprentice she becomes an assistant maker and then a maker of hats. She may then be promoted to the work of a trimmer. The work of a trimmer is considered one of the most difficult stages in the creation of a hat. The girl who aspires to this work must have an eye for beauty of line, and she should know how to harmonize the griming to the shape of the hat. In smaller establishments the trimmer is also the designer. The girl who has

original ideas is always the most important in an establishment. For this reason, the designer commands the highest salary.

Assistant milliners may earn wages varying from seven and eight to fifteen and eighteen dollars a week. In an exclusive business a first assistant may get as much as twenty-five dollars a week, but she will need to be a good saleswoman and a successful manager in the workroom. The milliner in charge of a department or one who is managing an exclusive millinery shop of recognized standing, receives a high salary. As a rule, the woman who buys abroad and does so with judgment and skill is in receipt of the largest income that is given to a milliner. These cases are all exceptional. A moderate millinery establishment owned and managed by a woman is likely to produce an income of a thousand, fifteen hundred, or two thousand dollars a year.

Experience shows that ability to sell hats counts for almost as much as ability to create. Tact, skill, [and] patience must be combined with the genuine gift required to find the hat which will be most becoming to a customer, or to know how to alter a hat so that it may suit the taste of the purchaser. Once it is proved to a customer that the milliner has this gift, her custom is assured.

A point of the first importance to the girl who means to be a milliner is the fact that millinery is a seasonal trade. The spring and fall trade may give her employment for seven or eight months only in the year. In the better millinery establishments, the girls are laid off without wages six weeks or two months. In large departmental stores other positions are found for the girls, and they may be without employment for only a few weeks. But the girl must understand that if she is earning ten dollars a week for thirty weeks in the year as a young milliner her income is only three hundred dollars. For this reason, it is wise for the young milliner to have a second occupation. She may spend her summer months working in an hotel as a waitress or caring for children or picking fruit. In the winter slack season, she may find a position as a saleswoman. If she can afford to remain at home, she may spend the time in replenishing her own wardrobe and sewing for members of her family. She may also get some orders for making hats from friends and relatives. She should use the slack season to attend classes in design and salesmanship, skill in which ill increase her efficiency and her earning power.

## How Lily Marshall Learned Dressmaking (1913)

Lily's mother kept boarders. She was a widow, and while Lily was useful to Mrs. Marshall in buying provisions and helping to make out the boarders' accounts, she tried to keep the girl as much as possible out of the way of the people who boarded in the house. Mrs. Marshall wanted Lily to stay at school. She believed that her daughter had it in her to become important in some way. Perhaps she would make a teacher, or a bookkeeper, or an actress. Miss Constantine, who had been boarding with Mrs. Marshall for two years, had quite different ideas as to Lily's future. Miss Constantine was the head of the dressmaking department at Fielding and Hollis,

which was the biggest, smartest store in town. She had been quite sure ever since she had first come to Mrs. Marshall's boarding house that Lily ought to be a dressmaker.

## SIGNS OF A BORN DRESSMAKER

Lily had all the marks of a girl who ought to be a dressmaker. She had good eyesight, a fine sense of color, and she had clever hands. She was quick in her movements, and she could keep steadily at one piece of work. Then Lily was the neatest little person about her clothes, and she liked sewing. When Lily was a few months over fourteen, Miss Constantine persuaded Mrs. Marshall to let the girl go into the dressmaking department at Fielding and Hollis's.

How did Lily feel about having to learn dressmaking? Lily herself had always wanted to be a dressmaker. She could remember having spent some of her time in planning dresses either for her mother or herself, or even for ladies whom she met on the street when she was going to market to get fresh country eggs at two cents less a dozen than Mrs. Marshall could buy them at the grocer's. But Lily had a special reason for being glad when Miss Constantine persuaded her mother to let her become a dressmaker's apprentice. Lily admired Miss Constantine extremely. The head dressmaker was a tall commanding woman with a fine figure; she was very clever, too, and she had a manner which impressed not only Lily, but also the customers who came to Fielding and Hollis's. Lily began to learn dressmaking with lively feelings of being an uncommonly lucky girl.

So indeed she was; but as it happened, a great deal of Lily Marshall's luck consisted in the fact that she was an intelligent little girl, and that she had learned a good deal buying provisions for Mrs. Marshall's boarding house and helping to make out the boarders' accounts. Also, Mrs. Marshall had carefully impressed on Lily the great truth that if you ever want to become anything, it depends almost altogether on your own exertions.

## THE DRESSMAKING APPRENTICE

Although Lily was not fifteen, she very soon discovered that she was not going to learn dressmaking rapidly in the dressmaking department at Fielding and Hollis's. Rather, it would be more correct to say that she would not be taught by anyone; she would have to teach herself. Every fitter, designer, waist hand, skirt hand, improver, finisher, sleeve maker, and collar maker, was just as busy as she could be; far too busy to teach Lily anything.

Miss Constantine sat in a small room where she received customers, designed costumes, settled prices, and so on. She had an excellent idea of what everyone was doing. She was very good indeed to Lily. But Miss Constantine could not possibly do more than drop a hint now and then to the clever, thoughtful little apprentice. Lily, fortunately, was both clever and thoughtful. She very soon made up her mind that some of the dressmakers were better to learn from than others. It did not take her long to discover which of the dressmakers had the most style. If you had gone into the dressmaking department you would have noticed that Lily was generally to be found near the most interesting work. Miss Constantine noticed this, of course; and she smiled to herself. She had not been mistaken in believing that Lily was a born dressmaker.

The only question remaining to be settled was whether Lily would stay a skirt hand, a sleeve maker, or a designer; or whether she would show that unmistakable organizing ability which would promote her eventually to be the head of a department or send her into a successful dressmaking establishment of her own. Meanwhile, however, Lily had had many talks with Miss Constantine. Few indeed are the dressmaker's apprentices who have the head of the department for a friend. Yet every good head of a dressmaking department takes an interest in the girls who work for her. She knows where they live. She goes to see them if they are ill. And she insists that they should either live at home or in some good boarding house where she knows that they will be safe and well looked after.

## IT TAKES FOUR YEARS TO LEARN

From what Lily could see herself in the dressmaking rooms, and from her talks with Miss Constantine, it was quite plain that it would take her three or four years to become a skilled dressmaker. Even then she would still have a great deal to learn. She had begun on two-fifty a week; and it would be well on to two years before she was earning five dollars a week. Still, she knew, because Miss Constantine had told her, that a fitter who is the head of a department can get a salary of twenty-five, thirty, or even forty dollars a week. Miss Constantine herself had never told Lily what her own salary was. But Lily had heard other dressmakers say that Miss Constantine got seventy-five dollars a week. Some heads can expect as much as one hundred dollars a week.

Lily had made up her mind that it was worth while working hard to learn dressmaking for three or four years because she knew that she could hope some day to hold such a position as Miss Constantine held now. At the end of four years, she might be a waist finisher earning ten dollars a week, and in another year she would perhaps be getting fifteen dollars a week. If she ever did own a dressmaking establishment of her own, Lily knew that she could make an income of anything from one thousand dollars to six thousand dollars a year. There can be no doubt about it that dressmaking as a trade offers remarkably good financial prospects to a clever, artistic dressmaker, with organizing ability.

## A SCHOOL FOR DRESSMAKERS

But this is not exactly what Lily Marshall wants to do. She has talked about her plans to Miss Constantine, and while Miss Constantine herself would not want to do what Lily wants to do, she thinks it is a great plan.

"You know, Miss Constantine," says Lily, "girls who are dressmakers' apprentices don't get a fair show. I mean ordinary girls, not girls with luck like me, for I had you, and no girl could help getting on who had you for a friend. But ordinary girls, they go into a shop, and get paid two a week, and nobody cares what they do. They don't have a fair chance to be dressmakers. What I want to do is to have a school where girls can go and be taught dressmaking and taught other trades too. I want to be the head dressmaking teacher in that school. I like girls, and I know I could teach them in two years so that they could go right into a dressmaking establishment and earn a good living. We would make dresses in my school and sell them, but the first thing would be to teach the girls to be good dressmakers. You know now there are

hundreds of girls who only half learn dressmaking, and who never do good work nor make a good living."

"I believe you are right, Lily," said Miss Constantine, "you are a great girl, sure. But I always planned that you would have a place of your own."

"I know I won't make as much money," replied Lily, "but my mother would admire to have me a teacher. And I like girls. I want to see girls who are learning to be dressmakers have a fair chance."

## Sewing by the Day[6] (1913)

A correspondent has written asking for the discussion of sewing by the day as an occupation for women. She was, herself, a seamstress of whitewear, but has given up the occupation since she does not find it satisfactory. Her letter to the department […] reads as follows:

Allow me to take advantage of your business discussion to ask your advice and opinion as to the rights, etc., of a seamstress; in practice she seems to have no definite rights, and if you think any good purpose can be gained, please make what use you like of my remarks.

There is a very general complaint that there are so few seamstresses who can sew well. One of my regular employers says she has had seamstresses, not one satisfactory. Some can sew well, but cannot put their knowledge to practical use, since they do not know how to put a garment together properly. Others can fit and cut but are not neat sewers.

The employers are largely to blame, themselves, if they find seamstresses unsatisfactory. They require the work done far too quickly to be done well. Again, good sewers go in for dressmaking, as I am now doing; it pays better. I have found that sewing whitewear – which really must be made and sewn well, and in my opinion is quite as important as dressmaking – will not fetch more than $1.50 a day – generally $1.25 – often with not more than one meal in addition, and sometimes car fare. There should be a recognized standard of payment for sewing by the day, where there is not at present.

Dressmakers can earn $1.75 to $2.50 a day. I sometimes get car fare in addition, generally two meals, sometimes three. Speaking of meals, mine are generous and nicely served, although two or three employers have astonished me by the meagerness of the meals which they served; practically I was starved.

I have worked for a lady who expected six nightgowns to be made in two days, fitted, tucked, trimmed with embroidery, and finished with my very best work. She expected me to work from eight to six. She was in and out, worrying all day. I left her the second day, being unable to stand the strain. The day following, I was unable to work as a consequence. Another woman engaged me to make a dress and acquiesced

[6] From MacMurchy, M. & G.E.M. (1913, February 22). Occupations for Women: Sewing by The Day. *The Regina Leader*, p. 36.

when I told her my terms were $2.00 and car fare. As her goods were short by two yards, the work took me over three days, instead of two. I had to manoeuvre and join, still the dress was a success. I charged her five dollars and car fares instead of six dollars. She would only pay me four dollars. This lady complains that she cannot get satisfactory work done, but she admitted that mine was.

Another lady engaged me to make a dress and to work four days for her. I had to work in three different rooms, and after I had cut out the goods she decided not to have the dress made as she had first intended. She told me that she would get more goods. I was to go to her the next day. When I arrived, she put me off till the next. I telephoned her and she put me off until she would have the goods ready. She would only pay me $1.50 and so I declined to go again. Through her conduct I lost four days' work at $2.00 a day and meals. Yet I am told that I have no redress. Surely there is something wrong.

Still, speaking on the whole, I am well considered. I would like to know, however, what are the correct hours for a seamstress who sews by the day, how much she should be paid by the day, and what would be considered a fair amount of work to be done in a day. If seamstresses would give more attention to details, and if employers would allow more time for elaborate work and for good work, and would pay accordingly, good sewers would feel more encouragement to remain in the trade.

Yours sincerely,

G. E. M.

I must thank 'G.E.M.' for her letter, which deals with an occupation for women that promises to be a most interesting study. Is sewing by the day an occupation for women which is likely to disappear? From inquiries, it seems that sewing by the day is likely to remain as an occupation for women. It is true, as 'G.E.M.' states, that the woman employer often says the seamstress is inefficient. I know, however, many women in households who speak with a good deal of satisfaction regarding the seamstress. In many cases, they are genuinely attached to the seamstress. They feel that she does a great deal of good work for them, and that she enables them to use the good material […] which otherwise they would be unable to utilize.

The seamstress who works by the day is invaluable in a household with children. As a rule, however, employing a woman who sews by the day is only economically satisfactory when the woman of the house sews with the seamstress. When the woman of the house has too many other duties to be able to sew with the seamstress, then it is scarcely considered good management to employ a woman who sews by the day. In such a case, the woman of the house either has to fall back on ready-made clothes, or she has to pay more for her clothes at a dressmaking establishment. For alterations and "made-overs," the woman who sews by the day is of great value. The dressmaker who has her own establishment is unwilling to make alterations or to use material which has already been made up in a dress.

It is plain that sewing by the day is a good woman's occupation, as far as permanence is concerned. A good sewer can get two dollars, or one seventy-five a day, with three meals and car fare. This is a pretty fair wage, as wage-earning occupations

go. There are two points that the woman who sews by the day should make sure of. First, she should spare no pains to become a most efficient worker. A good seamstress is in constant, indeed, eager, demand. There are numbers of women in Canada who sew by the day who cannot take any more customers, because their whole time is occupied with the customers they already have. An efficient seamstress can pick her customers. This is the second point that she ought to make sure of. If she finds a customer unreasonable, asking for too much work, pressing her to get through with unduly haste, serving her poor meals, the remedy is in her own hands. She should drop the customer and take someone else who is a good employer. The efficient seamstress can do this without difficulty.

'G.E.M.'s questions, I think, are now to some extent answered. The ordinary hours for a woman who sews by the day are apparently from eight to six. A woman whose work is in much demand can shorten her day, if she chooses. In some cases the day begins at 8.30, or 9, and ends at 5, or 5.30. The pay is sometimes as low as 41.50 and even $1.25. But I believe that no good sewer needs to take $1.25 a day, or even $1.50 if her work is really good. The best sewers get from $1.75 to $2.00 a day. In one case, a woman who sews by the day gets as high as $2.50. As far as the amount of work which ought to constitute a day's sewing, this department would like very much to hear from other seamstresses, and especially from women who employ seamstresses.

# Dressmakers and Seamstresses (1920)

The head of a dressmaking department in a large store in a city, when asked how she prepared herself for her position, told this story:

"I never took any lessons; but I had always made my own dresses and my sisters'. I remember walking down the street of the little town where I lived, one day after my father died, and as I passed the door of the best dressmaking shop in the town, it occurred to me that the man in charge of the store had often said that he would gladly pay me good wages if I would work for him. I made up my mind while passing his shop that day that I would not work for him, but that I would open a dressmaking establishment of my own. I did so, and it succeeded from the first. After a few years I thought I should like to move to the city. I applied for the position here and was appointed."

A second instance shows how a girl may have ability which she has not at first understood how to use. In this case the girl was anxious to enter another occupation. She wished to be a painter and had studied for some years both in Canada and abroad. Needing to earn some money, she found that she could sell dress designs to a manufacturing establishment, but there was not a large demand for such work in the city where she lived. Accordingly, she and another girl, also an artist, took a studio in a city which was a center of fashions, and together they worked on dress designs for exclusive shops. They both had some money saved, and one of the girls had a small, regular income. The first girl proved to have a very rare sense of color and design. It is now her work to make color combinations and provide the ideas for original designs, while the second girl, who is a good draughtsman, executes the colored drawings. These girls are now recognized as two of the best costume designers in the city where they are working.

It is apparent, then, that the girl with good eyesight, clever hands, and a fine sense of color and form, is likely to be a success as a dressmaker. But how is she best to prepare herself for her chosen occupation? She should practice sewing, either by hand or machine. She should cultivate steady application to such work, and she should not object to spending a good part of her time indoors. She should have a certain amount of taste and some ingenuity in carrying out her own ideas or the ideas of others. Manual skill, originality, and artistic ability are required by the successful dressmaker. The girl who means to make dresses for others should, herself, dress quietly and in good taste.

If the girl is able to continue at school and has a natural gift for dressmaking, the best way to learn her trade is to spend some years at a technical school. Here she will be taught sewing in all its phases – fitting, finishing, designing, the choice and use of materials, and the business details of dressmaking. The dressmaker cannot learn her trade once [and] for all and go on repeating operations which do not require originality. Styles change, and season by season she will have to adapt and carry out alterations in fashion which will tax her ability. If she cannot give more than two years to learning her trade in school, she is still at a great advantage when she enters a dressmaking establishment. She will understand all the different processes and will

be able to work in the various sections, thus gaining far more rapidly in experience than if she had had everything to learn from the beginning. Actual trade experience will teach her a great deal. If, however, she is obliged to leave school at fourteen, she should at least have had the advantage of the instruction in sewing which is given in the public schools. It is probable that she may be obliged, when she enters a dressmaking establishment, to act as a messenger girl. She should make sure, however, that she is not used for running messages only. It would be better for her to accept less pay, with the understanding that she is to be taught the details of dressmaking, than to earn more money and have no opportunity to learn. The more she tries to understand and imitate the work of experienced dressmakers, the better will be her training. The custom of having apprentices has fallen rather into disuse, and the girl will find the learning of her trade left largely to her own initiative. As soon as she begins to have some skill in the operations of the workroom, she should attend evening classes in sewing, fitting, finishing, and designing. She should wait, however, until she is sixteen or seventeen before she attends these classes. While she is learning from other dressmakers, she will have sufficient work for a few years.

The first work she will be given to do will be finishing the underside of dresses, felling and binding, sewing on buttons, pulling out basting threads, and working buttonholes. After this, the younger workers begin to specialize in skirt-making, waist-draping and waist-finishing. The designing and cutting are the work of a head dressmaker. There are also sleeve makers and their helpers, embroiderers, and collar makers. One of the younger workers is called the shopper and is sent to wholesale and retail establishments to buy furnishings, trimmings, and materials of various kinds.

The working hours in large establishments are eight, eight and a half, and nine hours. Smaller businesses have hours from eight to six o'clock. Dressmaking is somewhat seasonal, and the dressmaker must reckon, to some extent, on slack time. Generally speaking, there are two dull months in summer and one in winter.

A messenger girl may begin at from five to eight dollars a week. A dressmaker who does not specialize in other work, may earn ten dollars a week. Other wages range, according to the worker's ability and the work she can do, from twelve to fifteen, and from sixteen to eighteen dollars. Head dressmakers who cut out and design, receive salaries of thirty dollars a week in large establishments, less in smaller establishments. In somewhat rare cases a head dressmaker is paid more than thirty dollars per week.

The experienced dressmaker, who is at the same time a good businesswoman, may conduct an establishment of her own which will bring her in anything from one thousand to six thousand a year and over. But she must be able to manage matters of capital and credit, understand buying, and succeed in winning the favor of her clients. Custom dressmaking is being increasingly limited to high-class and exclusive work. The small and highly specialized dressmaking factory is affecting the custom trade. Girls, therefore, who are thinking of dressmaking as an occupation, should examine opportunities in the exclusive factory, since this branch of the industry is becoming increasingly important.

Another department of dressmaking to which no reference has yet been made in this chapter is the work of the seamstress who sews by the day in the homes of her employers. If she is really a competent dressmaker, her employment is assured. But it is a mistake for a girl or young woman without training or experience, or without a dressmaker's gifts, to undertake dressmaking by the day. A dressmaker – to define the term – is one who understands cutting, fitting, and making dresses sufficiently well to undertake the occupation as a trade. A girl should be at least eighteen or twenty before she becomes a day seamstress. In this work she is on her own responsibility and is handling goods of some value, so that she needs judgment as well as knowledge. The rates of payment are from a dollar and seventy-five cents to two dollars and a half a day, meals included. Sometimes the home dressmaker may be paid even three dollars or more a day, but in this case she must be quick, and her work must be exceptionally well done. The ordinary seamstress should be a neat sewer and should know how to fit, but she is not expected to design or to make elaborate costumes.

## Helen Brown Learns Shampooing (1913)

There were four sisters of the Browns, and dear knows! most houses that have five women at home are somewhat crowded. But Elizabeth, Helen, Jessie and Dorcas, and their mother, Mrs. Brown., were of the kind that do not produce friction. They were all large, easy-going, good-tempered, healthy persons. Mrs. Brown was a woman of about fifty-five. Her husband had been dead seventeen years. She had always had quite enough to do keeping house for the boys. It never seemed to strike Mrs. Brown that she was keeping house for the girls, as well. Yet in a way she was correct, for Elizabeth, Helen, Jessie and Dorcas divided the work of the house amongst them. Mrs. Brown directed, but she did not herself work, which was quite right when she had worked hard when they were all young children.

It was a credit to Mrs. Brown, I consider, to recognize when the girls were old enough to do the work without any help from her except advice. One sees so many Canadian mothers who keep on working long after the girls should do the work of the house, and let the mother only direct the work. But there did come a time when it seemed as if four girls had scarcely enough to do in the Brown household. As long as Jessie and Dorcas were both at school, Elizabeth and Helen were sufficiently occupied with the housework, sewing and mending, and plenty of play. The Browns all loved play, which was one reason why they were so healthy. But Jessie and Dorcas had quite enough of school, and insisted on coming home for good. Then Elizabeth married Robert Duncan, who sang in the same church choir. Elizabeth had a pretty soprano voice.

Helen declared after Elizabeth's wedding that she must find some work. She wasn't sure that she would ever marry. She was twenty-three, and she couldn't stand having Jessie and Dorcas bossing around the house as if they were the only people

who knew anything. This was unfair to Jessie and Dorcas, both of whom were good-natured, simple young persons. But Helen had been somewhat unsettled by Elizabeth's marriage. It had occurred to her that likely her brothers, Tom and William, would both very shortly to get married, themselves. In that case it would be advisable for a further source of income to be established in the Brown family.

None of the Browns ever worried about the future. But Helen, without being exactly clever, was a young woman of good judgment and some force of character. She knew very well that the grocery business left by her father, which was so well managed by Tom and William and in which every one of them had a share, although the biggest share belonged to Mrs. Brown, would not support three households, the old home where her mother, herself and Jessie and Dorcas lived, and two other homes, which so far existed in her imagination only, that Tom and William were likely to get for themselves.

## HELEN'S GOOD HANDS

Helen thought for some time before she decided what she would like to do. Then she went to have a talk with Agnes Smith, the dressmaker, who was an old friend of the family. Now, Agnes Smith had a friend who had come from the country district where she had lived when she was a girl. This friend, Miss Williams, had an establishment for shampooing and manicuring. According to Agnes Smith, this was exactly the kind of work at which Helen Brown would make a success. "You have nice hands," she said to Helen, "and you are clean and tidy. Your hair is good, and your teeth are good and you have a restful way with you. You aren't bossy nor nervous and I would rather have you about me than most people I know. Now, if it happens that you have an inclination to be a hairdresser and a manicurist, I [will] make sure that this is just the chance for you to get into a good business."

So Agnes Smith took Helen to see Miss Williams one evening, and it turned out exactly as she had predicted. Miss Williams liked the look of Helen and said she was just the kind of girl she wanted. Twenty-three was a good age. She was never willing to take a girl under twenty, and when a woman got to be more than thirty-five her hands weren't supple enough to learn to do the rubbing. It was agreed almost at once that Helen was to go into Miss Williams' establishment to learn to be a hairdresser.

## LEARNING TO BE A HAIRDRESSER

Miss Williams said that it takes the average girl about three months to learn the trade. Some establishments only take pupils who will pay a fee of twenty-five dollars. But Miss Williams said what with living so high, and most girls being some use after the first couple of weeks, that she would not ask any fee. It is usual enough, however, to pay twenty-five dollars to learn shampooing and hairdressing, and another twenty-five to be taught manicuring, which is a distinct business by itself, although generally speaking manicuring and hairdressing are conducted in the same establishment. If Helen had not been living at home, she would need to have had about one hundred dollars to carry her through this period of three months' learning. What with board and other expenses, and perhaps paying a fee, a girl needs all of one

hundred dollars to pay her way until she becomes expert enough to earn a living by shampooing. But Helen got on very well indeed with Miss Williams.

As Agnes Smith had said, Helen was exactly the kind of girl to go in for hairdressing. She had a good physique. She was neat and tidy, and the customers who came to Miss Williams found her more than usually agreeable. Helen had always been more than usually quick to learn to do anything with her hands. At the end of six weeks Miss Williams told her that she was worth wages, and that she would give her what she gave to girls who had put in their time learning, that is, seven dollars a week.

Dear me, but Helen was pleased with herself when at the end of seven weeks she went home with her first week's wages. Mrs. Brown was greatly impressed and told her to have some sense about the way she spent her money. But by this time Helen had made up her mind what she was going to do with any money that she could save after paying for her clothes and giving something towards household expenses.

Agnes Smith and Helen had talked over the prospects before a young woman who was a shampooer, and they had decided between them that what Helen was to do was to have customers of her own and to go from house to house attending to her clients in their own houses.

## WHAT IS FAIR TO MISS WILLIAMS

Helen had talked the future over with Miss Williams as well and had explained to her that although she was happy and contented in the Williams establishment, she thought it would be better for her to be by herself, with her own customers. She thought she could do better for herself in this way. Miss Williams quite agreed with her, but she reminded Helen that at the time when she came to her to be trained, she had explained that she would expect Helen to stay with her two or three years. It would not be worth while otherwise for Miss Williams to give her the training of a hairdresser for nothing. Helen herself would not consider it fair [if] after staying with Miss Williams six months she were to go off and begin a business of her own. Helen quite agreed with this, and besides she knew that she was learning more every day that she stayed in the Williams establishment. Miss Williams did not make a specialty of fashionable hairdressing. But she did make a specialty of massage, and this Helen took to as if she had been a born masseuse. Her hands were extremely restful. Miss Williams also had taken a fancy to Miss Helen, and she took special pains to make her an expert shampooer. After Helen had been with Miss Williams a year and a half, she was earning nine dollars a week, and at the end of two years and a half Miss Williams had advanced her to eleven dollars. By this time Helen was an expert manicurist as well as an accomplished shampooer. She no longer did much of the housework at home. For as Mrs. Brown sensibly said, "Girls who work for wages shouldn't tire themselves out working after they come home," and again Helen knew that she needed to keep her hands in good condition for her work.

## HER OWN BUSINESS

By this time, however, she was getting very much interested in starting a business of her own. She knew that twelve dollars a week was all that Miss Williams ever would be likely to give her. She wanted to earn more than that, and yet she did

not want to have the care, work and anxiety of having a big establishment such as Miss Williams had herself. No, what Helen wanted was a little business of her own with a round of customers whom she would visit in their homes. Again she consulted Agnes Smith.

"You and Miss Williams are both friends of mine," [said Agnes]. "I don't consider that it would be fair of you to take away any of Miss Williams' customers, and I know you wouldn't want to do it, and she wouldn't want you to, naturally. But if I were you, I would get cards printed with your name and "expert manicurist and hairdresser," and your terms. You don't live near the part of the city where Miss Williams has her business. Now, get that Mr. Bertram, your friend who is a druggist, to have some of your cards on his counter, and I will give you a list of some of my customers that I know do not go to Miss Williams. Send your cards to them. No, I believe it would be better for you to call and see some of them. I am sure that in a few weeks you will have quite a nice little group of ladies wanting you to come regularly and give them a shampoo."

It turned out exactly as Agnes Smith had said. By this time Helen has quite a business of her own. I understand that week in and week out she makes about fifteen dollars a week, and she is her own mistress, although, of course, she is governed by the demands of her work, as we all are governed, and very good this governing is for all of us. Miss Williams says of Helen that not only was she a good pupil and a good worker, she has been also scrupulously honest and right in her dealings with the establishment where she learned her trade, which unfortunately is not always true. Sometimes girls take away customers from the woman who has done her best to teach them how to make a living. But then, Helen had the advantage of having Agnes Smith's advice.

## Matilda Harper, a Woman who has Business Instinct[7] (1914)

Few more interesting stories of achievement can be found anywhere than those of the modern business world. The story of the woman's business built up by Martha Matilda Harper is among one of the most fascinating. Years ago, when she was a spirited little girl, she played games with other children in the little Canadian town of Oakville. She must have been a leader then. Today a woman of middle age, Miss Harper is the head and owner of a business which has 134 branches in 128 cities. These cities are in Canada, the United States, England, Scotland, Germany, shortly in Rome, Italy, and requests come from China and from Australia for branch businesses to be established in these countries. It is part of Miss Harper's plan never to advertise her business, and never to establish a new branch of her business until the women of a city ask for it. When the new branch is established, a brief announcement to this effect is made in the local press. But the patrons of the business make it known to their friends, and in this way only the business of the branch grows.

[7] From MacMurchy, M. (1914, June 13). MATILDA HARPER A WOMAN WHO HAS BUSINESS INSTINCT. *The Regina Leader*, p. 18.

To know Miss Harper is to understand the reason for this really wonderful business success. She is a woman of strong character, of excellent judgment, and of great intelligence. Her intelligence appears first in her choice of business. The success of women in business undoubtedly depends largely on their choosing a business in which a woman has a natural advantage. Many another woman has been employed in a shampooing business. Miss Harper was one of the very few who determined to have a shampooing business of her own. But it was to be no ordinary shampooing establishment. The care of the hair, and its treatment, were to be put on a basis superior to anything else of the same kind. It was this choice of the best, and the best only, which has had a great deal to do with Miss Harper's success.

## A STORY OF FRIENDSHIPS

Miss Harper has always had a wonderful capacity for attaching friends. The story of her life is a story of friendships. But these friendships belong to her own private life. Yet it may be said that partly through the encouragement of a friend, the young Canadian girl began the study of anatomy, so that she might better understand the business in which she intended to engage. A formula for a tonic was added to this unusual equipment. Miss Harper gave her tonic a Spanish name, meaning "more beautiful." She began a course of treatment which she has since perfected, and which includes massage of the head and neck. It will be readily seen that this Canadian woman had a wonderful grasp of the possibilities of her business.

For private reasons she began her business first in Rochester, where the head office is still. She opened her business in one room, with her tonic, since become famous, with her methods of quiet and repose, absolute cleanliness, an atmosphere of good and good-will, and a complete ignoring of all the meretricious aids to beauty, which commonly go by what is generally known as a "beauty parlor." The fashionable, or semi-fashionable woman, who unwisely wants her hair "bleached," or to have her hair dressed in the extreme of fashion, will not find what she wants in the agencies of the Martha Matilda Harper Method. What she will find is a delightful process of hair-washing, shampooing, massage, and treatment; and generally the attendant will end by saying quietly, "You will prefer to dress your hair yourself."

## COMMON SENSE METHODS

Such are the Martha Matilda Harper methods; very quiet, common sense in character, without frills and furbelows, genuine, self-respecting; in their own way, scientific. Naturally, the women who are clients of these agencies tend more or less to belong to a certain class, educated, genuine, refined, opposed to show, fond of personal quiet, and delicacy of touch with treatment. All this explains, it will be readily seen, the wonderful way in which Miss Harper's business is actually on its way round the world. Already it extends from Edmonton and Winnipeg to Dresden, Berlin and Paris. In a few months it will have reached Rome. No one can tell into what distant city it may go yet.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact about this great business owned and managed by a woman is the fact that the woman at its head does not feel the business either a strain or an anxiety. When asked at what time she experienced the period of most stress in handling all these agencies, Miss Harper replies that there never has

been any stress. The business has grown naturally and has carried easily. It began in one room in Rochester. It now furnishes employment for some five or six hundred women workers, about two hundred of whom have been trained under Miss Harper's supervision. The business in Rochester includes a training school where Miss Harper trains attendants. From this school, her agencies are furnished with managers. Usually Miss Harper furnishes the capital to begin each agency. But desire for monopoly is entirely foreign to her character. It is a great happiness to her to have furnished so many women with a good employment, a good business into which they put their own savings, and the profit of which is theirs. They follow the Martha Matilda Harper method. They are graduates of her school. They get supplies from her laboratories, one of which is in Canada and one in the United States. But the profit of the local business is for the local agent. Truly, Miss Harper is a remarkable woman; and she adds to modern business a grace, justice, and freedom of her own.

HARDSHIPS OF HER YOUTH

Miss Harper spent the first half only of her life in Canada. She says that as a child she was headstrong and willful. This, of course, must have been only that those who dealt with her did not understand the strength of her nature. No one explained to her why such a thing should be so. She was expected to obey without explanations. But as soon as she began to understand why anything ought to be done, life became reasonable and kind to her. She became self-supporting at a very early age. All her hardships, she says, came in her youth.

By some means, likely by the hardships of youth, to some extent at least, Miss Harper has become one of the kindest and most sympathetic of beings. She wants to help, and it does not make any difference what kind of person is in need of help. There is very little narrowness or prejudice in her personality. She is at the same time, however, an unusually keen and sure judge of human nature. Like all genuine people of wealth and character who have had to work instead of spending years at school, Miss Harper has thrown herself with uncommon zest into the pursuit of education. She reads widely and with delight.

One of the rules of her training school will reveal much of the finesse of her character. She never allows any of her assistants to discuss any of the clients who come for treatment; and there are never any tales carried out of school. Miss Harper at the same time has a keen sense of humor. Her pupils have the advantage of being taught by an instructor who is wise in dealing with human nature, and who believes with passionate conviction in giving everyone a chance.

## Hairdresser and Manicurist (1920)

Hairdressing and shampooing, manicuring and chiropody, are almost exclusively the work of girls and women. There had been a decided improvement in these employments, and any girl who takes a serious interest in making herself a thoroughly trained worker in one of these lines of work, provided she has the gifts which are needed, is likely to find her occupation becoming more and more necessary and esteemed.

To be entirely successful in work of this kind a girl should have engaging personal qualities. Just as a doctor or nurse with abundant personal vitality gives health and encouragement to patients by being in the same room with them, so the girl who gives massage after a shampoo quiets and soothes the client with whom she is working and who has come in for a rest as well as to have her hair shampooed. A girl with this power to soothe is a helpful person. She will never lose a customer who can remain with her if the customer has once experienced the difference between an ordinary treatment and the superior work of the girl who is gifted by nature with a personality which both soothes and invigorates.

While a girl may begin her training as young as sixteen, it is better if she is nineteen or older. Some experienced women say that no girl should begin work of this description younger than twenty. She should apply for a position as a helper in a shampooing and manufacturing establishment or with a chiropodist. Sometimes the pupil is expected to pay a fee of twenty-five dollars or more for three months' instruction. But in many good establishments it is held that the work of a beginner is very soon worth something. It is not necessary, therefore, for the girl to pay a fee in order to become trained. She may find a place where she will be paid a fair wage for a beginner within a short time after she has been accepted. But if the beginner pays no fee for her instruction, the head of the establishment will expect rightly that the assistant will remain in her employ two or three years at least so that she may repay the time and care which have been given to her training. In a year and a half a good assistant should be earning from ten to twelve dollars a week, and in two or three years her weekly wages are likely to be fourteen or sixteen dollars. If she takes some responsibility in managing the work and workrooms, she may earn as much as seventeen or eighteen dollars a week. In some establishments tips are allowed. The girl should understand, however, that as a rule wages are lower where tips are permitted. It is better for her to be employed in the best kind of establishment where the highest wages are paid. In such an establishment tips are unusual.

The helper is likely to begin by taking care of the rooms and toilet articles, washing brushes, combs, etc., and carrying out miscellaneous orders. The attractiveness of the rooms depends on the perfection of these details.

After some years spent in a good establishment the young woman may undertake some appointment work. She should choose carefully the district in which she means to work, so as not to interfere with any other shampooing or manicuring business. She should not take away customers who belong to the business where she was trained. She will need to have some money saved in order to provide herself with the necessary articles which she has to carry with her, as well as tonics and lotions. Her expenses will also include a telephone, carfare, printed cards, and so on. She should estimate her expenditures carefully to determine how much she is making over all expenses by the week, the month, and finally by the year. The summer months are likely to be slack, and this should be taken into account. She should arrange her appointments so that she may make the best use of her time and energy, and she must keep appointments punctually. A successful business of this kind may realize a weekly return of from twelve to eighteen dollars. Such a worker, by the time

she has saved some capital to invest, may be able to start an establishment of her own, buts he should do so only after a careful calculation of the expenditure required.

## Belle Nicholson, Waitress (1913)

As she says herself, Belle had a grand time coming over on the boat. There were the Stewarts from home, and the Bains, and the McGillicuddys. The other people on the ship were as glad to talk to you as if you were their next door neighbor, or better than that. Nor had Belle the slightest anticipation of difficulty on arriving in Canada, for had not Maggie McCarthy, her mother's cousin, told her that she would look out for her?

"I am that glad to have a friend," said Belle to Maggie on the station platform. "I've had a grand time coming over, but if I had not known that you would be here to meet me, my heart would have been sad."

"Yes, and I have the work ready for you," said Maggie, "and I am glad to see you, myself." And then Maggie shed a tear thinking of the old cottage where there wasn't room for a quarter of the McCarthys, and of her mother Mrs. McCarthy, who now wore her best [fur coat] sitting on the front verandah of her son's house in Saskatchewan.

THE HELP OF A FRIEND

"I said to the lady who is the superintendent of the institution where work that I had a friend who would be here on Friday. I told her you were a small girl, and well brought up, and that your mother, who was my cousin, had always seen to it that you minded your manners. She said to bring you with me as soon as you had had a rest."

"But I don't need any rest," replied Belle. "I am as strong as a young horse."

"Well," responded the wise and experienced Maggie, "until you come to experience the feel of the [land]. You will be glad enough to have a few days to settle down. It is a new, strange country to the likes of you, although for myself I felt at home from the very first day. You have to be awful smart to live in this country, Belle."

Belle sniffed, for she knew that her cousin Maggie had the reputation of thinking well of herself. "You must spend a lot on your clothes, Maggie," she said reprovingly. Maggie admired herself. "It is necessary to look well if you are to succeed in business," she replied.

Belle Nicholson found that she would be the better of the rest from Friday till Monday. But she would not rest until Maggie had taken her to see the superintendent of the lunchrooms. This lady looked at the newcomer carefully, and kindly told her that she was in need of good girls, and that she hoped Belle would like the country and do well indeed as a waitress. It was settled that Belle was to come with Maggie Monday morning, although Miss Smith, the superintendent, explained that she would hardly be likely to keep Belle in the same lunchroom with Maggie, as it was a very busy place and she might learn better where there were fewer customers. Belle, however, [pressed] hard to be allowed to stay with the only friend she had in Canada,

and Miss Smith, rather against her judgment, consented to it. Belle began her training in a busy downtown lunchroom.

## HER FIRST WEEK

As it happened, this circumstance made Belle's career as a waitress rather more difficult and stormy than it would otherwise have been. The first week she was so frightened that as Miss Smith's assistant reported, "one would think the girl had no intelligence at all." She simply could not fathom the method and meaning of checks. She rushed and she dashed. She upset and she more than once lost her temper.

Perhaps it was because the sea voyage was still affecting Belle, but she certainly did not seem to be a promising waitress. Then suddenly one morning, after she had been pronounced almost hopeless by Miss Smith's assistant, Belle apparently acquired an understanding of what a waitress should do and be. This was a satisfaction to Miss Smith, who had been taken with her from the first. Perhaps she suspected that Maggie McCarthy had some share in making Belle Nicholson nervous and awkward.

Maggie had a positive genius for pointing out faults. Whenever Belle made a mistake, Maggie would be sure to see it, and naturally she mentioned the mistake to Belle later in the day. But by this time Belle had a firm grasp of the fact that to be successful in this new calling of hers, she needed to be neat and smart in her dress – all the waitresses were dressed alike in black waists and skirts, white collars, black ties, black shoes and stockings and white aprons – that she had to serve an average number of people as compared with the number served by the other waitresses, that her checks ought to add up to the average for cash sales of the other waitresses, that she ought to be polite to customers and her fellow employees, and that she ought to break as few dishes as possible.

## A GOOD OPINION OF HERSELF

Belle's next difficulty was that from thinking she knew nothing at all and was as stupid and awkward as possible, she came to have a very good opinion of herself. It seemed to Belle Nicholson that she had learned all there was to learn about waiting. I do not know what would have happened to Belle if, fortunately, at the same time she had not begun to admire Miss Smith, the superintendent, greatly. Miss Smith made Belle perfectly happy one day by giving her two tickets for a lecture. Belle took with her a new friend, Sadie Jones. The lecture was on "The Glory of Doing Work Well," and the lecturer was a clever woman who knew a great deal about business girls. "Oh, that was a grand lecture, Miss Smith," said Belle the next morning. "I am ready now to learn to do my work all over again."

## BELLE AT HER BEST

In this period of her career as a waitress Belle Nicholson used all the common sense, the good home training that her mother had given her, the perseverance and intelligence with which she was naturally endowed, to learn now to do every detail of waiting as well as it could possibly be done. It was in her attention to detail and her determination to persevere until she was perfect that Belle differed from the average waitress. Nothing was "good enough" in Belle's judgment; everything had to be the

"best possible." She was clean, neat and smart in her appearance. Naturally erect, with a good carriage and a graceful walk, it soon became a pleasure to see Belle move about the lunchroom. She was a kind-hearted and thoughtful girl, and she took a positive pleasure in serving her customers so that they would enjoy whatever meal they had come to order. She was watchful, silent, quick, good tempered, [and] resourceful. Belle was not born a perfect waitress, as I have tried to tell you; she learned by hard work and application to be one of the best waitresses that Miss Smith ever had.

It is difficult to average the wage of waitresses, for wages vary in different restaurants in the same city, and they vary greatly in the different cities of Canada. A fair wage that can be expected by a waitress is from four to six dollars a week, with three meals in addition. This is higher in Western Canada. Then also there is the additional sum which is made in tips. Belle found that in one of the lunchrooms where she served she might make as much as one dollar a day in [tips]. Certainly waitresses do add something tangible to their wages from tips.

HAPPY IN WORK AND FRIENDSHIP

Because Belle worked so hard and was an intelligent, conscientious girl, she has done well in the three years she has been in Canada. Lately she has been promoted to be Miss Smith's assistant, and she is learning a great deal more about the business of managing restaurants than she ever imagined she would know about anything. Miss Smith says that Belle Nicholson has organizing and managing ability; this is a valuable asset for any business girl to have. She enjoys her work and she is happy in the friendships she has formed. Maggie McCarthy has been married two years, and there is a little Maggie who is very fond of Auntie Belle. Maggie's husband, John Tochty, is sure that Belle and his friend William McGregor will by and by "make a match of it." "And if he gets a fine girl," says John, "William will make her a fine husband."

## The Waitress (1920)

The modern tea-room has changed to some extent the occupation of the waitress. The modern lunchroom in the same way makes a feature of the class of girls who attend on customers. They are expected to be especially quiet, deft and well-mannered, and they should be dressed with that entire suitability to their occupation which is a mark of the well-bred girl. These girls have often been brought up with no special occupation in view – possibly they had not expected to earn a living by paid employment. But the opportunity comes to find work in a tea or lunchroom, which is owned or managed by a woman friend, and they gladly enter on their new occupation, pleased as every normal girl should be to be busy and to earn an income.

It is possible for the girl who has duties at home to spend part of her day as a waitress in a lunch and tearoom. The same gifts and knowledge which make her a success in her work at home cause her to be prized as a waitress. She understands how a table should be set. Quickly and deftly, she lays the table after each customer has been served. Her touch and movements are noiseless and pleasing to watch. She

is interested in what each customer wants. She is thoughtful and has a good memory, is good tempered and not impatient. She has an instinct for placing and arranging food so that the man or woman at the table feels that he or she is being waited on by an intelligent, well-mannered person. In spite of the high standard of the service required, the pay is rather small. It may not even cover all the girl's expenses. She has the advantage, however, of limited hours and leisure to carry on her duties at home.

The work of the regular waitress is in an hotel, restaurant, woman's club, or in the dining rooms connected with apartment houses and private hotels. Women who work in such places should be neat and smart in appearance and should wear dresses of a uniform standard, generally black with white aprons, cuffs and collars. A good home training is of great assistance to them in their work. They should have common sense and good judgment and be polite to customers and fellow workers. Perseverance, intelligence and physical strength are required by waitresses. A girl who is naturally erect, with a good carriage and graceful walk, is at an advantage in this occupation. She needs to be kindly and thoughtful and to take pleasure in serving her customers. She has to understand and remember her customers' checks, and the amount of the checks she hands in ought to equal the average cash sales of other waitresses. Many customers make a point of coming to the same waitress every day, and she should remember where they prefer to sit and how they like to be served.

One advantage in this work is that the worker is given two, sometimes three meals, in addition to her payment in actual money. In a number of establishments, the tipping system prevails, which provides a girl with an added source of income. The average Canadian girl, however, dislikes being tipped, and there are many objections to the tipping system.

## What Does Tipping Mean To The Girl? (1913)

"I thought I knew all about tipping a while ago. My mind was quite made up about it," said a clever woman managing a business which employs a large number of girls.

"You were against it?" I asked her.

"Undoubtedly," was the reply.

"What made you change your mind?" I asked her.

"I haven't changed it," she said. "But the girls don't feel about it as I do. And this makes me hesitate, lest I should be mistaken."

The point of view of another woman employer is as follows:

"Why shouldn't these girls take tips if the customer feels like giving them a tip? If the customer feels that the girl has given her particularly good service, I do not see any reason why the girl should not have the benefit of the tip."

CUSTOMARY TO TIP WAITERS

There are some businesses where it is customary for tips, or gratuities, to be given by the person who is served to the employee. It is practically the rule that all waiters should be tipped for their service. Waiters in clubs and tea rooms sometimes

receive their tips in a lump sum at the end of the year. In a large club for women in London, England, there is a box marked for gratuities for the household staff. In such clubs it is against the rules to give tips personally. But the rule is pretty generally broken in these clubs. There are some clubs, however, where tips are given only once a year, at Christmas.

## IS THE HAIRDRESSER TO HAVE A TIP?

In Canada there are two classes of girls at work who receive tips: waitresses, and domestic helpers. More recently, I believe, it is beginning to be the custom to give tips to hairdressers and manicurists. The question I would like girls who are hairdressers and manicurists to answer for themselves is: Will tipping have a good effect on the standing of the hairdressing trade for women?

## DO TIPS MEAN LOW WAGES?

One reason why waitresses, generally speaking, receive low wages is that the tips received are taken into account by the employer. Tips are just beginning to be given to girls who are hairdressers. The level of wages is not yet affected. But it is absolutely certain that if tips become customary in shampooing establishments, then the tendency will be for wages to go down. Now, girls at work, would you rather draw good wages without tips; or do you prefer to take lower wages and receive tips? A great deal of money taken in tips, and high wages, never go together; I think I am safe in saying that this statement is absolutely correct, with the exception of perhaps a cook or butler in a big establishment, of which there are few in Canada.

If one customer gives a tip, it becomes necessary for every customer to do so, or else those who give tips will get good service; those who do not, will receive poor service.

## HOW DOES TIPPING AFFECT THE GIRL?

What effect has the tip on the girl herself? One has an impression that the girl is more likely to work for the tip than she is to do her work as well as possible for the sake of the work. As far as I can understand the system of tipping in Canada, I cannot help believing that the tendency of any employment where part of the money earned is paid in the form of tips is for the occupation to become less desirable as an employment. I believe the best type of girls at work prefer to receive good wages and no tips to earning comparatively low wages and a considerable amount of tips. For one thing, the money paid in tips is fluctuating.

## A UNION OF WAITRESSES

One believes, for instance, if a waitresses' union was formed and the union requested employers of waitresses to raise the level of wages and to abolish tips, that it would have an excellent effect on the standing and character of those engaged in the trade. In such a case a waitress herself would have to enforce the rule against tipping. The customer would either take his money back or have it turned in to the management. Probably the eating places where no tips are taken would place a small percentage on prices charged for eatables in order to recoup themselves for the higher wages paid to their waiters.

WHEN TIPPING IS COMMENDABLE

As far as domestic workers are concerned, the case seems somewhat different. Gratuities are offered by guests who have been staying in the house where the domestic worker is employed. As a rule, few houses have many guests. It is not at all general for the mistress of the house to say to her domestic helper, "You have had extra work while Mrs. So-and-So has been staying in the house, and I will pay you extra wages for the extra work." The guest feels that the domestic worker has had a great deal to do on her account, and has been pleasant, agreeable and helpful. The gratuity is offered as an acknowledgment of help and kindness. It is intended more as a remembrance and friendly gift rather than as a money equivalent for services rendered. One would be sorry not to have an opportunity sometimes to acknowledge kindness by a gift; not that the gift pays for the kindness, but that the person who has received the kindness wishes to show that it has been truly appreciated. This is one of the advantages which belong to the work of the domestic helper.

A domestic helpers can be a friend as perhaps no other paid worker can. Whenever the personal relation enters in, the harm of the tipping system – whatever that harm may amount to – vanishes. Something of the same can be said of the work of the waiter. If one is served every day by a courteous, obliging waiter, one is glad of the opportunity to show one's gratitude. Besides this, gratuities are considered in the wages of the waitress. She is paid less than she would be if there were no tips. We actually owe a waitress a gratuity for her services, because the employer in this case does not pay her what her work is worth; he calculates that she will make so much a day from tips, and he therefore pays her less than he otherwise would be compelled to pay. For the reason that if wages remain low and there should be no tips, then there would be no waitresses. They would be forced into other employments.

One cannot believe, however, that any employment for women where the gratuity system does not now exist would benefit from the introduction of tipping.

## Pensie Dennis Talks of the Saleswoman (1913)

Her proper name is Penelope Dennis, but her own people always call her Pensie. The family came from Prince Edward Island, where Penelope is a good old-fashioned name for girls. Pensie Dennis was for years in charge of the glove department of a departmental store. In that department she learned a great deal about making sales and of the business life of shop girls. She never cares to talk much about herself. But Pensie tells a story well, and she promised some months ago that she would try to tell what she thinks of the saleswoman.

IT DEPENDS ON THE GIRL

"I suppose you would like to know," began Pensie Dennis, "whether being a saleswoman is a good position for Canadian girls. Lots of people say it makes a girl forward and bold. That depends on the girl. A good businesswoman can always be relied on to attend to business. The ideal businesswoman is not forward, of course. But in some stores, she has to take her part. I never was in one of those stores, and when I was a forelady myself, I always made a point of seeing that the salesgirls in

my department were not annoyed by the people who come into stores just to talk to the girls. I don't believe in foolishness," said Pensie with emphasis. "It is bad for business and, what is more important, it is bad for the girl."

THE LITTLE APPRENTICE

"I can tell you a little story that will explain what I mean better than I can tell you any other way. The head dressmaker in the store where I was in charge of the glove department was [for] sure, one of the finest businesswomen I have ever met. She was tall and fine looking, and she carried herself with such an air. You felt it was a privilege to have her advise you about anything you had to buy. Well, she told me once that there was the prettiest, sweetest little girl you ever saw [that] had come to be an apprentice in her department. She sent for her one day. 'My dear,' she says, 'you are just the girl I would like to help me. I need someone to run my messages and to be with me all the time. Now, when you go home you tell your mother that I can give you a place to be my girl, and to go [run] messages for me about the store. I can give you money at present that you would get as an apprentice. But, of course, by and by you would earn far more money as a dressmaker than you would as a clerk in the store. Now you tell your mother all about it. Say I would love to have you with me to run messages, and I will give you more money than you are getting now. But of course, if you keep to the dressmaking, eventually you will get more money than you would earn by being a saleswoman.'

HER SENSIBLE MOTHER

"So the girl went home and told her mother. Madame F. said she was one of the prettiest girls she had ever seen. When she came back, she said her mother wanted her to keep on at the dressmaking because she thought it would be better for her, and she didn't want her running about the stores and getting pert and smart because people took notice of her prettiness. 'Your mother is a sensible woman,' said Madame F. And that was what she thought of a young girl being in a store.

"Then I can tell you another story which will show you part of the other side of being a saleswoman. Once I had been down to New York on business by the firm I was working for at that particular time. They told me to stay at the Westminster Hotel, which has been pulled down since. I had gone to bed early and was sound asleep when the sound of voices talking in the next room roused me. It was one of the most amusing conversations I ever listened to.

"Three brothers had met that afternoon to settle the family estate after the death of their father. They thought their sisters were inclined to be extravagant. But the one I took to be the oldest brother told the other two the kind of girl he would advise them to marry. He said they couldn't do better than look for a girl who had served behind the counter, because she would know the value of money.

"Dear, dear," said Pensie, "how I laughed to myself that night! But there is something to it, what he said. Business does teach a girl the value of money. That is, if the girl can learn anything. Sometimes I think some girls can't learn anything at all. The reason is their minds are not on their work. They are thinking of boys and pretty dresses and fol-de-rols.

## WHAT THE SHOP GIRL NEEDS TO KNOW

"Everything I can tell you of saleswomen and whether being a shop girl is a good occupation for a Canadian girl you will find in these two stories. It is quite true that shop girls are apt to attract a good deal of notice from customers and people who aren't customers. I do agree with Madame F. that a trade like dressmaking is a better occupation for a girl than being a saleswoman. Still, on the other hand, for the right kind of girl being a saleswoman is a good occupation. It is easy to get a place as a shop girl. I mean, a girl needs hardly any training. If she can read and write and do a bit of arithmetic, that is all she needs to know. Then she is taken into a department, and the forelady and the other girls in the same department show her the little she needs to know just to get on. Of course, you understand, a girl must be neat and she must sell a certain amount every day or she will be sent into another department to see if she will do any better there. Then if she fails in that department, they may try her in another. But if she fails there, why, they have to let her go. What else can they do?

## MANAGING TO LIVE

"Hundreds of girls become shop girls because there is not other work for which they are fitted. That is the reason, I suppose, why the wages of shop girls always tend to keep either just at a living wage, or just below a living wage. No one knows exactly what a living wage is in any Canadian city. As near as I can make out," said Pensie, "a living wage for a girl in the bigger Canadian cities must be just about eight dollars a week, somewhere between seven and eight. It takes the better class of shop girl all she can do to live on seven or eight dollars a week. I suppose in Vancouver and Calgary, [and] all cities west of Winnipeg, that a living wage must be over eight dollars. I am not sure about this. But I do know that some firms which used to begin girls on six dollars have just recently raised a beginner's wages to eight dollars. I was told that the government was going to do something about a minimum wage, and these firms acted first.

## MUST LEARN HOW TO MAKE SALES

"When I began to be a saleswoman I resolved that I would learn by business and do what I was told and work hard. I don't suppose I would have made up my mind to do this if I had not been well brought up by my mother." Here Pensie paused and opened a locket to show me her mother's picture. "If other saleswomen had been trained by anyone like my mother, why, they would be different. It is sad how little many of them know. They don't know how to mend their clothes, even, and they have no idea of what they ought to eat or how to make sales. She must learn early.

"The one thing in business that a saleswoman has simply got to learn [is] how to persuade people to buy. Some stores have classes. I think, myself, they are a good thing. I think, too, that if a forelady had more time she could teach the girls in her department a great deal. But where they ought to be taught is at home by good mothers and in school by good teachers. I don't see, myself, why there should not be classes in technical schools, or rather in trade schools, where girls who want to be saleswomen can be taught about materials and the real meaning of buying and selling for women. Because, you see," said Pensie Dennis, "it is women who buy in shops, and it is mainly women who sell. Being a saleswoman is not an extremely lucrative

employment. Girls begin sometimes at five dollars, sometimes at six, lately at eight in some stores, and I don't myself know of many heads of departments who get more than fifteen a week. I suppose in some cases the head of a department may get as high as twenty a week."

Pensie Dennis herself is no longer head of a glove department. She has gone into partnership with her brother-in-law in a little business where her genuine business gifts and business experience find employment.

## The Saleswoman (1920)

The employment department of a big store is the testing place through which many girls who mean to be saleswomen must pass before they reach the store itself. Naturally the girl should be careful to do herself justice when she goes to the employment department. The head of the department will be certain to note her appearance carefully. The girl should make sure that she is cleanly and neatly dressed; she should speak quietly and politely; and she should show that sincere willingness to be cheerful, obliging and agreeable which she will find one of the best aids in her life, both at work and at home. To enter a store no particular training is required. The girl leaving school when she is fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen, who is able to read and write correctly and who has a thorough knowledge of the common rules of arithmetic, can hope to obtain a position in a store.

Having obtained a position in a large store, the girl will find herself part of an establishment where perhaps hundreds or thousands of people are employed. It is probable that her position will be an easy one suited to her age, without much responsibility, and with small pay, but, if she shows interest and willingness to learn, she will be in line for promotion. There are many positions which carry with them great responsibility, and correspondingly large wages. A girl's chance to occupy some day such a position depends largely on herself. She should try to understand as much as possible about the store and its methods and rules, and she should make her work part of the successful work of the establishment.

In a large store the younger girls are employed as messenger girls, parcel girls, markers, or, after some time in a store, a younger girl may help in the care of the stock. The payment received in these positions is small. Indeed, the problem of the youngest girls in the store is not an easy one. The girl herself should try to realize that this big store in which she is employed must be to her what the high school or college is to other girls who stayed at school when she went to work. Here, in the store, she should continue her education, which is to take the practical form of a business training.

Unfortunately, some of the girls thus employed are indifferent to their work. These are the inattentive, listless girls who look about them idly, instead of attending to the needs of possible customers, or who spend more than half the time talking to their friends visiting the store or to their fellow-workers. One large establishment reports that only one third of their staff become skilled in salesmanship. Another famous firm of employers says that twenty-five per cent. of their girls do not improve,

another twenty-five per cent. are only fairly satisfactory, while fifty per cent. are satisfactory. The girl who enters the employment of a store should determine to become a skilled saleswoman.

Fortunately, the work of the saleswoman is steadily rising in its standing as a good occupation. It is becoming skilled employment. Already there are a number of schools which teach salesmanship, and many of the larger departmental stores have courses of instruction for their salespeople. The managers of these stores say that this training pays both the store and its staff of employees. After training the employees make better wages and the store earns a higher percentage. Any girl who wants to be a saleswoman should, if possible, take a course in salesmanship either at a business college, a trade school, or at a Young Women's Christian Association, or she should try to find a position in a store where there is a school for employees.

Our young saleswoman will study in her store, she will take lessons in salesmanship, she will be interested in her work and eager to learn. Such a girl will find that the place of her employment is a world in miniature, where she can study life and human nature and where she may become a useful and well-equipped member of society. No girl who is a good saleswoman can fail to learn how to deal with many different kinds of people and to have many opportunities of making friends among her fellow-workers.

It is not difficult for the average girl to become an efficient saleswoman. To recapitulate – she should be neat and pleasing in appearance, quick to learn, willing to obey, with good manners and bright intelligence, and she should be interested in her work. She should have a "head for figures," a knowledge of correct English, and ability to work quickly and courteously at the same time. She should, of course, have a thorough knowledge of the commodity she is selling. The more accurate her knowledge of materials, the better saleswoman she will make. She should also take a personal interest in the wants of her customers. Her object is to sell articles which will give satisfaction.

The average earnings of saleswomen at times seem disappointingly small. It should be remembered, however, that the indifferent or careless girl lowers the average. The successful saleswoman, after some years of work, may earn from fifteen to twenty dollars a week. A great many girls earn less. The beginner may get five or six dollars a week or, if she is in an establishment which pays no employee less than a certain amount, she may get seven or eight dollars. The girl who earns less than eight dollars a week after a year or two years is not a successful saleswoman and is not likely to be kept on in any well-managed store. The saleswoman who is dissatisfied with her wage may ask at any time to have reference made to her actual sales, of which an account is kept. Wages are based on sales. Sometimes a commission is paid on sales over a certain amount. In any case, the girl feels that there is a direct connection between her successful salesmanship and her wages. Character, skill, tact, and energy are all required for successful salesmanship. The saleswoman who really gives herself to the work of serving and satisfying her customers finds her employment an exacting one.

A saleswoman may be promoted to have charge of stock; she may become assistant buyer or head of a department; and in somewhat rare cases she may become a buyer. These are all responsible positions requiring unusual business ability and character. The salaries are high. If a saleswoman has excellent business ability, she may, after years of experience, become an important influence in the management of the store. Some departments offer greater opportunities than others. The more expensive the article to be sold, the more is required from the saleswoman. A very young girl will not be found selling coats and cloaks or expensive suits and dresses. "The customer who is spending a large amount of money wants to have confidence in the judgment of the saleswoman," is the saying of an expert in store management.

The large department store, while it affords training and opportunity to the girl who intends to become a competent saleswoman, employs many girls and women in occupations other than salesmanship. In the store there is a large clerical staff, including stenographers, who may receive promotion to the position of private secretaries and bookkeepers. Telephone and telegraph operators are among the employees. The store shoppers act in connection with mail orders and orders received by telephone. The advertising department employs writers, artists, proofreaders, and card and sign writers. Milliners are employed in the millinery department and fitters and dressmakers in the alteration departments. Manicurists and hairdressers carry on their special occupations, and waitresses are employed in the store lunchroom or restaurant. Trained nurses have positions in the store hospital and visit employees in their homes. Machine and handworkers carry out special orders in making curtains, cushions, lampshades, etc. A store school employs teachers of salesmanship and store system.

Many girls are employed as saleswomen in smaller stores which need only a few employees. The system of the great store is not so necessary in a small establishment, yet the individual saleswoman in the small store holds a responsible position. Sometimes a girl with business ability becomes in time assistant manager, or even part owner, of such a store. Ideas and initiative will tell wherever they are found, and the girl who is really interested in salesmanship will succeed in a large store or in a small one.

The hours are fairly long, sometimes longer than the average in women's occupations, but they are no longer than the hours required in many professional and other employments in which women are engaged.

The well-advised saleswoman will have interests outside her work. She should study some interesting branch of knowledge and cultivate a hobby. She will find both pleasure and benefit in belonging to a club or other association. One of the most interesting developments in the large business establishment where numbers of men and women are employed is the organization for comradeship and improvement. Thrift is encouraged; opportunities are provided for exercise; sometimes those on the staff of such an establishment are offered housing of an attractive kind at moderate prices. The girls of the establishment may be provided with a club house.

Altogether, the character of this employment is complex and interesting. It is an attractive occupation, in which the girl is brought into relationship with people

with whom she can help to develop a sociable, cooperative life, tending to improve her own character and usefulness and that of others.

## The Paid Domestic Worker[8] (1912)

The stories of the girl and of the woman who employs the girl are the first item in the discussion of the problem. How is it that the girls fail to be satisfactorily domestic workers, and what can be said for them? How far is the woman of the house responsible for the difficulties of the domestic situation, and is there any good excuse which may be offered for her?

Let us first consider the case of the woman who employs domestic help. The woman is an employer. On her success as an employer, no matter how young or inexperienced she may be, depends largely her success as a woman. She is responsible, not wholly, but largely, for the well-being of the girl who is her paid domestic helper. What follows here is a statement of the average experience of the average woman who employs one domestic helper, and also the reply in part of the domestic worker to the story of the woman who employs her.

The woman employer finds herself without help. The girl who worked for her has married, gone into other than domestic work, or has taken a position as maid at higher wages, where there is less work and a smaller family. The woman advertises, or goes to an agency. She has few applicants; this is invariably true. The majority of applicants she would not consider for a moment, unless she happens to be physically unable to get on without help. However, one of the applicants is promising, and is engaged. The average wages of a general servant in the east of Canada are from eighteen to twenty dollars a month. In the west wages are as high as thirty dollars a month. In eight cases out of ten, the domestic worker who has been engaged at, say, eighteen dollars a month, is found by the woman employer to know practically nothing of housework. In some cases, not remarkably rare, a girl paid eighteen dollars a month does not know how to make toast, coffee, how to cook meat or vegetables. But because she is strong, active and reliable, the woman employer is willing to teach her. She does teach her thoroughly, or she sends her to a cooking school. At the end of two months, it is no uncommon occurrence for the girl to be offered twenty-five dollars a month to work for some other woman employer. In about seven cases out of ten, the girl stays with her first employer at slightly increased wages. As far as can be ascertained, girls do not invariably take the place which offers the most money. If a girl is happy and fairly treated, she prefers to remain in a good situation – not good merely from a money point of view.

### SHORTAGE OF TRAINED WORKERS

There are a number of well-trained domestic helpers in Canada. But they are in the minority. These well-trained workers suffer an injustice. Girls having no training are paid wages practically as high. This is unfair to the trained worker. It is a matter of grave injustice to the woman employer and the household. A typical case

[8] Published in several parts in the *Saskatoon Phoenix,* starting in November, 1912.

on record tells of a girl paid sixteen dollars a month for domestic work, who attempted to wash windows with a dishcloth and a teacup. The wages would have been the same to a trained girl.

What is the reply of the paid domestic worker to this statement that the average girl is not trained, made by Canadian women who are in charge of households? Her reply is that her want of training is not her fault. Everyone must admit that the average girl who is willing to be a domestic worker has no opportunity whatever of learning how work ought to be done in a well-conducted household, except by taking a position in such a household. She ought to receive low wages? So she ought. But with applicants so few, and so many positions offering, a girl who would propose to work for eight dollars a month because she knows nothing of housework would be morally in the same class with Madeleine Vercheres and Abigail Becker, good Canadian heroines of extraordinary fortitude. No, lack of training, and wages not adjusted to the skill of the worker, are not the fault of the girl who is employed in domestic work in Canada. The situation is extremely hard on the women of our households. But they, and the public, are the only ones who can remedy it. How they can remedy it will be considered later.

The woman who is known to be a good employer, fair, just, kind, and who pays good wages, can reasonably expect to keep her maid, under ordinary circumstances, for two or three years. She cannot hope to keep her longer. The average woman, who is only an average employer, cannot hope for as much. Why is the length of service in domestic work so short? For two causes. The work is not well regarded from a social point of view. Social disability is a powerful influence which sends girls from domestic work into other employments, shortening the term of domestic service. The length or service of the average young woman in any occupation is short, because the average young woman marries. All employments for women must be regulated so as to take this circumstance into account. One has never heard of a woman employer so lacking in goodwill as to be sorry when a good maid makes a good marriage. Nevertheless, it is hard on the woman employer to be constantly changing domestics. If the girls are trained, it would not be so hard. To devise some system of training for domestic helpers [is] in the interest of women employers.

## DISCONTENT AMONG EMPLOYERS

These two facts of domestic employment – lack of training and constant change – are the chief sources of discontent among women who employ domestic help. Otherwise, there is the rebellion of the girl against the character of her employment. She does not want to wear a uniform. She resents the fact of having a mistress, and the character of her own position in the household. These statements do not apply to the highly-trained domestic workers. They do apply to the girl who lacks training. This last statement may seem curious, but it is true. The matter of uniform – caps and aprons – the present writer regards as unessential, except as an indication of the direction in which a solution may be found for the domestic problem. The uniform apparently causes feeling. But in reality it is not the uniform which causes feeling, it is another element which must be dealt with in its turn. This feeling of resentment will have to be overcome by the efforts of the woman employer. As between the two,

employer and employee, the employer holds the position which has the influence to bring about a remedy.

Then we have what is called "ingratitude" on the part of the domestic worker. It is often stated by women who have charge of households that kindness to domestic workers is thrown away. One woman's story, recently told, related how a girl, foreign-born, had been taken into a household and taught housework. The girl fell ill and was looked after in the hospital by her woman employer. Her place was kept for her. She came back, but as soon as she was strong she went to another situation at higher wages. It is frequently said by women who employ domestic help that the more considerate one is of the girl's comfort, and the more careful to make her work easy, the more likely she is to shirk work altogether. These statements cannot be dealt with fully in this article, but will be taken up later. One girl's answer to the charge of ingratitude may be given now, however. It was this: She did not want kindness. If anyone thinks this reply unreasonable and ungrateful on the part of the girl, let it be remembered that what we ourselves want first in our business relations is not kindness but just business, a fair square bargain on the one side and the other. Finally, women who employ domestic help often experience anxiety as to their associations during hours off duty. The girl's answer to this is that she is lonely, and must have some social relaxation.

## SITUATION OF EMPLOYERS

Briefly, the situation of the woman employer is as follows: She needs trained help. Generally speaking, her help is untrained. Wages are extremely high: in many cases altogether too high. There is no adjustment to the value of the workers. Domestic help is constantly changing. The woman employer is always teaching a new maid.

## [A STORY TOLD ON A TRAIN]

The story which follows explains itself. It was told this summer on a train going south from Algonquin park to Toronto. The chief speaker was a man. The woman listened and contributed occasionally a word or two of comment. The man explained that he had been left some years ago executor of an estate belonging to a widow who had a family of young children. The estate consisted of a farm, which the executor sold. The interest on the amount of money obtained for the farm was barely sufficient to keep the widow. The family of young people he had put to earn their own living, and at the same time obtain an education to fit them for better work. He had explained to them that whatever there was in the estate must go to keep the mother. They would have to provide an education for themselves by their own exertions. All this struck the woman as being very sensible, right, and belonging to good Canadian citizenship. The story of the eldest child, who is the only girl in the family, impressed the woman considerably. The man said: "She attends school in the winter, and I mean to make a teacher of her. In the summer months I see that she gets a good place as a domestic servant. She doesn't like it. But I tell her that she has got to put up with it. I don't know any other way as satisfactory for her as taking a servant's place in the summer months."

## OSTRACIZED BECAUSE SERVANT

He went on to say that he heard from the girl regularly. She had a good place this summer with people who treated her well. It was true things happened that she did not like. As, for instance, the people who hired her were spending the summer at a big hotel in a lake town where Americans come for the summer months. The people had thought well of the girl, and had taken her to an entertainment in the hotel. At the entertainment she had met some people who were agreeable to her. The next time she had met them on the street, they had looked at her with apparent dislike, and did not acknowledge the acquaintance. She supposed that when they heard she was a servant, they resented the fact that she had been introduced to them.

The man and woman agreed that the people who had treated the girl in this way were ill-bred, and that she had nothing to regret in the loss of their acquaintance. But what about the girl? She was young, clever, attractive. She was to be a teacher. She was the daughter of an Ontario farmer. What is there about housework that should place her in such a position? It is better to be honest with the situation. If one of us had the guardianship of a young girl in Canada, who had her own future to provide for – such a girl as has been described here – would we be willing for her to take a job as a domestic servant?

The woman who listened to the man's story felt that he could not know what being a servant would mean to this girl, or he would not have insisted on her being a domestic. The woman herself would not have been willing to send a young girl for whom she was responsible to be a servant. The reason which would influence her is the fact that it would be difficult for the girl to make friends with whom she could be happy and feel at home. How many Canadian women would be willing to send their daughters into service? Under present conditions very few would be willing. Why? Not because the work is too hard. Not because the work is too hard. Not because it is badly paid. But simply because the girl would have a poorer chance as a servant to make a good marriage and to form the agreeable relations with other people of her own kind which control so much of our happiness and usefulness in life.

## PURELY SOCIAL REASONS

The man's story proved to the woman – and she was not willing to be convinced – that in her own mind she regarded domestic service as an unsatisfactory occupation for the girl who deserves a bright future. This is wrong. It is time we revolutionized domestic service and the household arrangements which control domestic service. The position of the paid domestic worker is regarded as the most unsatisfactory occupation, socially, for girls in Canada.

The purpose of these articles is to show that the profession of housework is the best of all professions for women. When its conditions are made satisfactory, no other occupation for women will be able to stand in the same rank at all with it. Teaching, nursing, office work, factory work, work in a shop, bookkeeping, newspaper work, stenography and every other occupation in which women are engaged for gain, will have to yield place to the profession of housework. But this time of reorganized housework is a long way off yet. The nearer it is, the better for women and for society.

The first necessity is to obtain an accurate statement of the present situation. Let us get at the truth about the servant question. We have been looking at the domestic helper from an antiquated, even a medieval point of view. To get at the truth, the situation has to be studied first as it looks to the girl who is in domestic service. The second point of view is the point of view of the mistress. The third point of view is that of the household. This point of view is not always represented by the viewpoint of the woman of the house. Decidedly not. There is also the viewpoint of the man of the house; and the viewpoint of the children. And last, there is the point of view of society in general.

## LONELINESS A CAUSE

The present situation from the point of view of the girl who might be a domestic worker is this: Either she will not go into the trade of housework; or if she becomes a paid worker she objects to: the long hours of work, without any fixed hour when she goes off duty; the impossibility of seeing her friends with reasonable frequency; the difficulty of making friends at all if she is a stranger, as usually she is; the loneliness of her life; ill-arranged housework and work not standardized; the fact that the girls and the young men who ought to be her friends say to her: "Why don't you go into a shop, or a factory, or a telephone office, and be as good as other people?"

The rest of the world try to tell the girl that this advice from her friends is mistaken advice. But saying so does not alter the fact that this is the way life looks to the friends of the girl in domestic work. And so this is the way life must look to her. Yet there are thousands of girls, hundreds of thousands of girls, who are better suited physically and in every other way, to the work of a house than to [other occupations]. These girls are strong, uneducated, without training and therefore should be in housework. I do not mean that the average girl has greater talents for making a house a good place to live in than she has for working in a factory, selling in a shop, bookkeeping in an office, or attending to a telephone switchboard in a departmental store. Make the conditions of paid domestic work human, business-like, and of attractive social standing; and the greater part of the problem will be solved. It is easy to say this. But how is it to be done?

## MISTRESS' VIEWPOINT

From the point of view of the mistress of the house, the difficulties of the present domestic situation are as follows: High wages out of all proportion to the poor quality of the work performed; constant change and shifting; discontent on the part of the domestic worker; a generally unsatisfactory adjustment of the household work.

There are many households, many paid domestic workers, and many women who have charge of a house who are managing the domestic problem admirably. When this is so, it is because of the superior gifts of the domestic worker, and of the woman in charge of the house. The situation is against them. They conquer the situation by overcoming it. The domestic problem at present has proved too much for the average woman to handle successfully by herself.

Can it be solved? Yes. In the scientific laboratory of observation and study, where all human problems must be solved, this problem of the paid domestic worker can be solved, too. Th women of Canada should not wait for some man – probably a

university professor – to come along and find the solution. The discussion of the problem may excite some feeling. But it must do good. In the present discussion, both the woman in charge of the house and the paid domestic worker will have her say. One thing is certainly true. If it had not been for the long line of failures, and successes, friends and enemies, helps and hindrances, comedies and tragedies, geniuses and stupidities, benefactors and teachers, dear girls and girls one tries not to think about often, Mary, Martha, Etta, Jane, Polly, Annie, Caroline, Appolonia, Susan, Katie, Sarah and the Widow, one would never have determined to find out the satisfactory place for the paid domestic worker in the "New Housekeeping."

[A CANADIAN PROBLEM]

How the home helper is to do her work, how she is to be paid for it, and the adjustment of her position in the household, as far as we are concerned, is a Canadian problem. The home helper lives in Canada and has entered into the inheritance of Canadian social opportunities. No woman living in Great Britain has exactly the same problem with which to deal as the woman managing a household in Canada has in dealing with her paid help. A little story will help to make this plain.

A member of one of our local legislatures was standing one day on the main street of his native town, which he represents with marked ability. He was talking with the wife of one of his constituents who had driven in that morning to market. In the middle of this conversation her received a hearty slap on his shoulder, hearty enough, as he expressed it, almost to knock him down.

A playful voice exclaimed, "Ah ha! I've caught you; I'll tell your wife on you." Turning, the legislator beheld the smiling countenance of his wife's domestic helper, who was taking the legislator's baby for an airing. He knew perfectly that Lizzie-Polly-Annie meant no harm. She liked the family. She liked her employers. She knew all about them. She had known all about them since she was a baby herself. Both the legislator and his wife having a sense of humor, Lizzie continued undisturbed in her employment. But the time came when madame felt that Lizzie's usefulness was diminishing. She kept callers too long, conversing with them on the steps and in the hall. Lizzie went into a factory, then married a young farmer and went west. The chances are fairly good that Lizzie herself may be some day the wife of a legislator. Let us hope that she will be as sensible with her domestic workers as her employer was in her case.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH DOMESTIC WORK?

From the girl's point of view, what is satisfactory with domestic work as an occupation? Women employers very often want to know why girls will not go in for domestic work. By some women employers it is regarded as a misdemeanor on the part of young women that they do not go in for domestic work and prefer, for instance, to work in factories and shops.

Now, why do girls not go into domestic work? The girl's answer is that she prefers work with fixed hours. It is true that there are many disadvantages in factory and shop work as compared with domestic work, but to the girl, the fixed hours outweighs them. If hours were fixed, would girls go into domestic service? The writer believes they would, much more largely than they do now.

On two occasions a university professor, as he related recently as he related recently at a conference on menial work, wrote out an advertisement for domestic help. He had heard that it was most impossible to get a maid in Canada. He believed that he knew why. He felt sure it was not a question of wages. His advertisement offered good wages, no work in the evenings, Saturday afternoons off at three o'clock, Sunday off at the same hour. This advertisement brought eight applicants the same evening that it appeared in the press, and more the next morning when the situation had been filled. In this household, the maid had her own part of the house, which is hers. When her hour of going off duty comes, she may remain or go out, but she is not called on for any service. She may receive her friends. This household is never without a satisfactory maid.

## THE FACTORY OR THE HOMESIDE

Canadian women who employ domestic help, is there anything unreasonable about this solution? Consider it well. A girl who works in a factory has her evening after half past five or six o'clock, as a matter of course; Saturday afternoons; and all day Sunday. If we ourselves had the choice between factory work, with the hours specified for going off work, and doing domestic work, which begins, say, at half past ten, ends at eight or later, or a little earlier; one afternoon off a week, beginning at two or three, which occupation would you prefer? It is not difficult to understand the choice of the girls, even if there are other advantages in domestic work.

The woman employer replies that her maid has from two to three hours off every afternoon, that she practically has nothing to do after washing the lunch dishes until she begins to get dinner ready. What exactly does this mean? The girl goes upstairs to dress, comes down again in an hour or so and sits at the kitchen, or in rare cases in a sitting room of her own. She attends to the door and to the telephone. She is on call. The girl considers this the same as being [unable] to do what she wants to do, to come or go as she likes. If the girl went out every afternoon for two or three hours, and her employer stayed in and answered the door and the telephone, would the woman ever consider that she had nothing to do?

The responsibility of a house counts for something. To be alert for a call is being on duty. As a rule, the woman employer says, "My maid has a great deal of time off. She goes out every evening, one afternoon a week off, and every Sunday. What do girls want?" She asks this sin a tone of indignation, almost invariably. Why the indignation? After all, why shouldn't the girl go out every evening? What less time could the worker who is paid wages have than [a] lone afternoon a week, and part of every Sunday?

If this study in sociology – the sociology of the domestic worker and her woman employer – is to be any use, it must be keen. Why is the woman employer indignant about the situation? This situation is unsatisfactory. Yes. But not because the domestic worker has too many privileges. Wages are too high. The worker is often untrained. Frankly and honestly, is it any wonder that the girl wants fixed hours to go on duty? Has the woman employer any cause to be indignant because the girl goes out every evening? If she stays in, she should be off duty. Certainly she should. After

all, a girl, or a woman employer, does go out in the daytime; should she not go out for the sake of her health and the fresh air in the evening?

The girl who leaves domestic service, and the girl who will not go into it, seldom give as a reason the social disability of the occupation. But social disability as a con against domestic work is seldom out of her mind. The opinion of her friends is heavily with her, as it ought. How swiftly does this opinion act?

A woman specialist in manicuring, chiropody and so on one day told a sad tale to a customer. Her maid was leaving her, her good maid, but why? What had she not done for [the] girl, and what could she do? She paid her wages, twenty dollars a month. She wanted a companion in the house, and the girl was her companion. She talked to her just as she would to a companion. They had their meals together. Their rooms were just the same in furnishing, and so on. But the girl's young man would not have her stay as a servant, and so she was leaving. "There you are," said the woman employer, and like as not the young man would not marry her after all.

This last opinion was naturally induced by natural disappointment on the specialist's part. But if the social disability of domestic service is felt in such a case, where the mistress and the girl have their meals in company, it must be felt in every case – to some extent. The trained domestic worker of high standing holds her own position and knows that she is practically under very little, if any, social disability. But this is the way that the majority of Canadians look at things. There can be no doubt about that. Other objections that girls have to domestic work are the loneliness and the lack of opportunity to meet or make friends. These can be remedied, without much difficulty, by the woman employer who is in earnest in solving the domestic problem.

Objections which have a sharper touch are that the work in Canadian households is often ill-arranged, that the woman employer does not know how long a given piece of work should be done, and as a consequence is unreasonable. Passing over these for the moment, we come to the strongest statement of the case of the domestic worker, except her case for fixed hours. The girls says she would prefer more of a business arrangement and less of a feudal arrangement. "Feudal," is a word put into the girl's mouth by the writer.

What the girl sometimes says is: "I am as good as she is!" meaning her employer. What the woman employer sometimes says is: "What are girls coming to? They want to be as good as their mistress." If a girl goes into a shop downtown as a saleswoman, questions of this kind do not arise. They have no proper relation to business, or to work of any kind. They must be got rid of domestic work. The girl may be better than her mistress. The mistress may be better than her maid. It has nothing to do with their relation as worker and employer, which depends on the honest carrying out of a business arrangement.

## THE BUSINESS RELATION

Objection has been taken to the statement made last week that girls in domestic service prefer to have the agreement between themselves and their women employers more of a business arrangement than it is at present. The objection is, briefly, that the present arrangement, partly business, and partly one of guarding

authority on the part of the woman employer, is of greater advantage to the domestic worker. Does the domestic sometimes suffer a business injustice because the man of the house and the woman of the house have no clear idea of what the home-help business really is? The following story answers this question. It was told, not by the girl who suffered the injustice, but by the woman employer when she was old enough to recognize how unjust and unbusinesslike she had been.

The woman said that when she first married the household consisted of her husband, herself and one maid. Her husband was away all day. The woman spent the best part of her time at her mother's. As a consequence, the maid did the work, ordered the provisions, planned the meals, and stayed in the house every day but one in the week. One day, when the woman came home, the girl said that she must go out for a little while, and please to come with her. She had been so much indoors and so much alone that she did not know what she would do if she stayed indoors any longer. The woman went out with the girl, but she did not understand that some change should be made in the household arrangements.

Things went on as before. In the evenings, the husband and wife frequently went out together, leaving the house in charge of the girl. One night, when they came home late, they found the girl asleep with her head on the dining-room table. She was tired out. It was summer, and the doors and windows were open. The husband was so angry when he found his property not under what he considered proper surveillance that he woke the girl up and discharged her on the spot.

The woman who told the story said that the girl was the best maid she had ever had. She never knew what became of the girl. But when she learned more of how households ought to be managed, she was ashamed, and has always wished that she could tell the girl how sorry she was for having treated her so unfairly. This kind of story would not be true if there was a proper business arrangement between the girl and her woman employer. We may as well acknowledge the fact that there are Canadian households in which such harmful misconceptions as this prevail concerning the work a girl ought to do, and the kind of life she ought to lead.

## THE SUPPLY OF GIRLS

Let us consider the supply of girls on which Canadian households are typically able to draw for their home help. Typical Canadian households report that in the last twenty years, the supply of native born Canadian girls has very largely diminished. Canadian girls do sometimes enter household work, but now only in rare instances. The daughters of Canadian farmers no longer are available in any appreciable number for house work. Our Canadian women managing households could count on strong, willing, good-hearted, capable Canadian girls who knew little, except to be splendidly clean in their work, but who could be taught. They were independent, sometimes saucy without meaning to be, headstrong, and not well trained. But they wanted to learn, and to see what city homes were like. Where are they now, these Canadian girls? They have gone into factories and shops. They are stenographers and bookkeepers. They have gone west, but not to become home helps.

The supply which is available is largely drawn from England, Scotland and Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. It is on the whole a supply of good quality. A

large percentage of these girls are well trained. They come to Canada, stay in house work a little while, then a large number of them enter other occupations. The woman employer finds that some former maid of her own who is now a telephone operator, perhaps, calling in a friendly manner – for many Canadian women do keep the friendship of their former maids – advises the present domestic paid worker to leave housework. It is an occupation beneath a girl in Canada. This is a wrong view of life, of course, but it is a very influential view, as stated by the Canadian girl, who was once in house work herself. The girl from the old country has to adjust herself to life in Canada. Is it any wonder that in this land of promise she begins to think that housework as an occupation is socially undesirable? The problem of Canadian women with households is to reorganize household work in such a way that it will come into its own as the best wage-earning occupation of women.

## THE SOCIAL STATUS

The question of the social status of the paid domestic worker is more serious than at present realized. Perhaps the following incident will help Canadian women to see what threatens the household if we acquiesce in the estimating of domestic work as the most undesirable occupation from a social point of view for women in Canada.

A woman in one of our Canadian cities asked a settlement worker in that city if she knew of any girl who would like a good position as a maid. The reply of the settlement worker was that she could take no interest in any girl who had so little ambition to better herself as to be willing to enter domestic service.

Understand what that means. Nothing is too good for our homes. The best must be kept for home life. Shall we allow the girls who live in our households to be described as undesirable socially? If we are so foolish and so wrong, we will pay the severest penalty. It is not possible for any member of a household to be placed at a disadvantage without the whole household losing something. One does not mean to say that this penalty has begun to be paid in Canada. But this is the direction in which the Canadian household will have to pay.

The settlement worker referred to above was quite within her rights when she chose to limit her social activities to girls who were ambitious to get on in the world. Where we have made the mistake has been to allow anyone – settlement worker or anyone else – to rate the domestic worker as a girl not anxious to get on and not capable of becoming the best type of a Canadian woman citizen. This end we must work for, or our homes will be sorry.

But the settlement worker never saw Caroline Dill, who came from one of the St. Lawrence counties, did housework as a paid domestic worker for ten years, then married an Ontario farmer, and now visits her former employer clad in black silk, with a long gold watch chain and white kid gloves. Caroline is one of the most successful farmer's wives of Ontario. The settlement worker does not know Mary Train, who came from Monmouthshire, was in housework for four years, and married a man who works in a foundry. They have a little city home and two of the finest, fattest babies belonging to any home in the city where they live. This is the kind of future to which any paid domestic worker can aspire. Is there anything the matter

with this, which would justify the social disability of the domestic worker? Quite the contrary. The writer would like to know if already in this present discussion the problem of the paid domestic worker has not begun to alter its aspect.

## DEBATABLE POINTS

Three points have been raised with regard to the present inquiry by people interested in the problem of the paid domestic worker. These are:

1. How many people does the inquiry affect? Is not its scope limited?

2. Conditions in the west of Canada are so different from those in the east that an inquiry in one part of the country cannot benefit the other.

3. What can be done immediately by the woman employer who cannot engage domestic help and yet who must have help if her household is to be properly conducted?

The answer to the first query is that women who employ domestic help have to do with this problem. Every girl in domestic service is affected by the conditions of her employment, and that is the subject of the present inquiry. The ultimate aim of the inquiry is to show that when training has placed the domestic worker on at least an equality with [other occupations], the trained home helper will be one of the best occupations, if not the best, for wage earning women. The scope of the inquiry includes women employers of domestic help, girls who are at present domestic workers, and women generally who are, or may become, self-supporting. It is not necessary to add that the question affects the life of the community directly. It has to do with the success of women as home makers, employers of domestic help, and as wage earners.

## CONDITIONS IN [THE] WEST

The second statement is to some extent answered in the reply to the first query. Two conditions of domestic help in the west of Canada do not obtain to any extent in the east. The first is the lady help, or home helper. The Chinese house worker has taught a valuable lesson to the woman employer of domestic help; all she needs to do is benefit by it. The mother's help, lady help, or home helper is one phase of the problem of the domestic worker, and the present inquiry proposes to deal with this part of the problem. Otherwise, there are girls in domestic service in the west of Canada. The number of these girls must increase. It is quite possible, even probable, that the solution of the problem of domestic help will begin in the west.

As to the lesson taught by the Chinaman in domestic service. The wife of a Dominion cabinet minister who had a Chinese cook was giving a dinner at Ottawa. A few hours before the dinner, the entirely capable cook went on strike. The wife of the cabinet minister asked for an interview. What was the matter? Was there anything about the dinner that he did not like? Did he not approve of dinners? He had understood that they were to give dinners when he was engaged as a cook. After much probing, the lady discovered that the cook had gone on strike because the eldest son of the house had come home to live. He had engaged to cook for two people. He was now to cook for three people, and nothing had been said to him. The lady said, "Was she not to be allowed to have her own son at home? What was that to John?" His wages were raised and he stayed. John was right. A bargain had been made and it

had been broken. This principle is understood in western Canada – as far s Chinamen are concerned. It is the same story everywhere. Part of the domestic difficulty will vanish when the woman employer learns that she makes a business bargain with her helper, and that she ought to keep it.

## FATAL CHARACTERISTICS

What can be done immediately by the woman employer who cannot engage domestic help and yet who must have help if her household is to be properly conducted? Frankly, in the older settled parts of Canada there is something wrong with the conditions of domestic employment in a household when that household cannot secure a domestic worker. Either the wages are too low, or an unreasonable amount of work is required, or the girl has to lead too lonely a life, or the particular woman employer – quite unintentionally, it is granted – is not an agreeable person for whom to work. The woman employer may habitually assume an attitude which means that she considers the girl an inferior. This is an impossible attitude in the twentieth century. It is wrong and indefensible. The woman employer may assume it if she chooses, but she will do without domestic help. It is right that she should. On the other hand, the woman employer may say – she generally does say so – that she treats the girl in the kindest possible way, that she nurses her when sick and is constantly giving her holidays and treats. This same mistress may keep after the girl and tell her how to do her work all day long. She may be what the girl calls "bossy." All these characteristics interfere fatally with the supply of domestic help.

## UNREASONABLE WORK

What is meant by unreasonable work? This is unreasonable: To expect a girl, when she is the only girl employed, to bring the letters from the postman to her employer on a salver. To ring a bell for the only maid and send her up to a bedroom for a handkerchief. To keep a supply of kitchen towels on hand, and whenever the girl sits down in the afternoon, to give her the towel to hem. These are instances of unreasonable work asked for in Canadian households. The girls left their positions, of course. When conditions of work are manifestly unreasonable, it is better for the girl to leave.

What is the other side of the story? There are girls employed as domestics in Canada who exercise a tyranny over their women employers. Instances might be multiplied almost unbelievably. One will do. The woman of a household had gone out to do some shopping with a friend. As soon as she had closed the door behind her, she found that she had forgotten her purse. She was afraid to ring the bell because the girl would be angry at being brought to the door. She mustered sufficient courage, with the moral support of her friend, and the girl was angry. The domestic tyrant should be told to find another place. There are girls, good girls, to be employed where wages are good and work is reasonable. A large part of the happiness of a home depends on a good domestic worker. Part of the trouble is that the girl is never told this, or very rarely.

Good wages, fixed hours, business fairness, arrangements made so that the girl may find friends and see them, will provide the average city household with an

average domestic helper. Conditions being as they are in Canada at present, the woman employer cannot be promised a trained helper.

## CLUBS FOR WORKERS

If women employers of domestic help should form an association to establish a training school and employment agency – and the writer believes that this is the most reasonable solution which can eb offered for the problem of the paid domestic worker – the girls themselves should organize clubs. What is it that girls in domestic work suffer from most? On the whole, the girls' own testimony is to the effect that loneliness is the hardest thing they have to bear. They are not underpaid, except in rare instances. The conditions under which they work are not perfect. But generally they are fairly reasonable. Loneliness, however, is sadly prevalent.

In connection with this one would like to point out to women employing domestic help that a large number of the girls employed do not have good health. It seems a strange thing that the health of domestic workers is not good. One would say offhand that a domestic worker leads one of the healthiest lives among wage earners. Yet ask any physician whose practice includes a number of domestics, and he or she will tell you that the girl in domestic employment is frequently in ill health. The reason for this will have to be dealt with later. It can be said at once, however, that loneliness is one of the chief causes of ill health among paid domestic workers.

One remedy for loneliness can be found by the girls themselves and it can be found at once. Clubs for girls and women who are wage earners offer great possibilities. The girls themselves are the best organizers, for the simple reason that what we do for ourselves is ten times more benefit than what is done for us by others. One paid domestic worker in ten or twenty is sure to have the instincts of a leader, with the strong impulse to make others happy and to plan good times for a little community of people. If it is asked what can these girls do to make a social club of their own successful, the reply can be furnished instantly. They need first a meeting place. The writer would answer for at least one woman employer out of every five that if the girl who is paid to help with domestic work says to her employer that a number of girls, friends of hers and their friends, wanted to form a club and have no place where they can meet, will she give them their advice and help, at least one out of every five women employers will be delighted to help the girl's club. It is possible that a number of the women employers would lend a room for the club meeting. Any church would provide a room for such a club. Why should not our schools be open in the evenings for this purpose and other purposes of a similar kind? The girls themselves could rent a room. Paid domestic workers have a little money to spare. They could spend some of their savings in no better way than to rent a room which will be the home of a girls' club.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLUB

Say that we have a club of twenty paid domestic workers, and that they have a room where they can meet once a week. One of the first things that I would advise them to do is to learn how to dance, and dance with each other. Two or three of the girls in the club will know how to dance. They can teach the others. Let them form a reading circle. Here the help of the woman employer will be valuable. What good

woman citizen would not be proud to spend some time planning a little reading course for a girls' club? And prouder still to go and read with them. But if the girls would rather not, and if no woman employer is available, let the club apply for help to the library of the neighborhood. This is what libraries are for. The librarian or one of his [sic.] assistants will plan a course of reading and the library will lend the books, or advise as to good books which can be bought for ten, fifteen and twenty-five cents. The very best reading can be obtained for these sums of money.

Besides dancing and reading, the girls should consult some teacher and ask for advice and help as to classes – classes in cutting out, sewing, fitting in hat-trimming, in particular branches of cooking, nature study and so on. The field opens up splendidly and it is all perfectly practicable. There is no reason in the world why girls in domestic work should not have a happy, jolly time together. Let them help themselves out of their loneliness. Of course, it will need time, and thought and planning and good will, and the individual will have to give up her own way for the benefit of everybody. But, believe me girls in domestic work who are reading these articles, and I prize the words of interest which have come from you, you can do a lot for yourselves and for others who are lonely. Believe that it can be done, and it is half done already.

One is convinced that the average woman employer of domestic help in Canada would take a warm interest in the girls' club. The girls should organize it themselves and they should manage it themselves. This is how the real benefit comes. They can have advisers, helpers, friends, but the girls themselves should be responsible. The best kind of women employers can advise and help and be friendly, but as far as the present writer can see, this is all they can do. A friendly word can be dropped now and then in good season. "Wouldn't you like to begin a club with the girls you know?" "Aren't you fond of dancing?" "Wouldn't your friends like to learn to dance?" "You could get books from the library if you wanted them, and help with study too." It might be that the thought, suggested to the girls' mind, would bring about a girls' club. The definite resolve to banish loneliness out of the domestic wage earner's life will banish it.

## THEIR MEN FRIENDS?

Two points about the domestic worker girls' club press for consideration. Are they to have no men friends, and when are they to meet them? Is the girls' club to be a kind of trade union? The first question the girls should decide themselves. If the club decide in favor of having men guests now and then, and, generally speaking, it is to be hoped the club will so decide, the girls can be trusted to see that each guest is worthy of the acquaintance of the club. The smarter and more careful a girl is, the more careful she will be. A committee to issue or approve of invitations is a very useful thing.

Is the domestic worker girls' club to be a trade union? The club's strongest characteristic should be the social element. The better and more successful the club, the more warmly the members will be attached to one another. Under these circumstances, it will be impossible for the girls to be indifferent to the welfare of each other. The questions of wages, working conditions, housing, hours, duties, rest,

and so on, will be talked over between girl and girl. This is right. It will do good. The higher the class of the employee the more rigorous is the code of honor not to discuss the private affairs of the employer. The pride of the best kind of girl in the house where she lives and works and her loyalty to her employer and her employer's family increases in a constant ratio to her standing as an employee. This is the kind of domestic worker which the girls' club is designed to encourage.

## THE HOUSEHOLD OF ONE MAID

"Everything you say makes it harder for the young married woman with children," is the statement of a correspondent who writes of what has been said of fixed hours and the domestic worker going off duty in the evening, even when she stays in the house. I do not think that what has been said of fixed ours, and the trained household worker, will eventually make life harder for the young married woman with children. On the contrary, the certified household worker – when she comes – will be the best thing that can happen to help the hard-working young married woman with children. Still, this impression of increased difficulty in housekeeping has been received from the present discussion by one who has read it diligently. Today, let us consider how the household will be affected where one maid is kept and the household consists of a man, his wife, and four children.

The discussion might as well begin with a rather startling statement. The statement may seem rude, somewhat crude, and selfish to the average mistress of a house. A capable girl left a situation which was considered a good situation. There were three really delightful children in the household. When asked why she was leaving, the girl would not say until she had been pressed a good while for a reason. She finally admitted that it was the children. The work was too hard when she had to give so much time to looking after the children. Wasn't she fond of the children? the woman asked. Yes, she was fond of the children. But it was too hard work; that was her only reason. After some further discussion, and when the woman had said that it was not right that a house where there were children had to do without a maid, the girl said, "But it is you who are married, and they are your children, not mine." What she meant was that since extra work had to be done on account of the children, the man and the woman of the house had to see to the extra work, not the girl who was the household worker.

This may seem a shocking attitude, and a crude reply. But it does not do to disregard any of these remarks made by girls in domestic employment. These remarks, sometimes made in temper, sometimes in grief and sometimes in mere unreasonable exasperation, are the clues to the betterment of household work. What did the girl mean?

## NORMAL WITHOUT CHILDREN

Now, the normal household is the household with children. This is the household for which the world is planning. How are the children being looked after in the solution of the problem of the domestic worker? It is just possible that women have not been considering the case of the children sufficiently when the status of the household worker has been neglected, as it has been for so many years.

The woman who is doing the hardest work on the average of all women engaged in work of any kind is the woman who does her own housework, takes care of four or five children, makes some of their clothes, and does all the repairing for the household. On the other hand, the woman who on the average is doing the least work in the world is the married woman, with or without children, and with servants, who leaves her children, when she has children, to the care of a domestic, has no responsibility for her household and no interests except entertainment outside of it. There are an infinite number of varieties of women between these two extremes.

How is the work of a household with children – the normal household – to be divided between the woman of the house and the domestic worker? Both of them, if they are going to be hones with each other, will have a trained housekeeper – few women agree when they are young – to miscalculate [sic.] the amount of work that ought to be done by her domestic worker. There are four children to take care of, two of them babies. Suppose the mother, who has a maid, looks after the children, and leaves all the work of the household to the girl. In the afternoon, the woman feels that it is absolutely necessary to get out into the fresh air, without the children, to shop, to visit, for a little entertainment. Well, it is necessary. It is only reasonable that she should get out. If she is to be a pleasant companion to her husband in the evening she cannot be entirely worn out. But what about the girl? She does housework in the morning, and in the afternoon looks after the children. When the woman comes home, the girl makes dinner. A domestic worker is supposed to have some time in the afternoon. This particular situation is a hard situation all around.

## EXTRA WORK NOT FOR MAIDS

Who is responsible for the work of the normal household where children are – the woman of the house, or the girl who is the domestic worker? The reply is inevitable. The extra work ought to be cared for by the woman. The girl is earning her own living. The burden of the extra work of the household ought not to come to her. But thousands of domestic workers are contributing extra work to these normal households, because these thousands of girls love the children in the households where they work, and the children love them.

So much for the case of the girl. A tribute of admiration and respect is to be paid to women who do their own work, take care of a good-sized family of children, do everything capable, and are good companions to their husbands. Such a woman after all is almost the average Canadian woman of a household. She manages her housework by doing what is essential and letting work that is not essential go. This is the only solution for the woman of a household with one maid. If there is too much work for herself and the girl, then some work will have to be cut out. The woman without a maid manages to do her work and takes care of the children. The woman of a house with a maid, if she is compelled to, can reduce the work of her household so that it can be taken care of by herself and one maid.

## AN EXTRA WOMAN

But, perhaps after all the household budget ought to make a little better provision for household work. If there is absolutely no money to spare, there settles the question. But suppose a little is taken off dress, entertainment, or whatever it is

that the family spends most on which is not a necessity. Raise the girl's wages? Not at all. But why not have a woman come in the evenings to take care of the children, or for an hour or two in the afternoons? There are women who need a little extra work. A training school for domestic workers and an employment agency should have a list of women capable of doing household work and of taking care of children for part of the day. A woman of a household who needs extra help with the children, or with the house, can find such help. How can she find it? Let her ask her own church deaconess, or the Salvation Army, or the Social Service department at the hospital.

Remember, as soon as the social position of the domestic worker's made attractive, unduly high wages will go down. Remember that girls will be willing to take lower wages if you advertise for a girl, offering fixed hours, [and] Saturday and Sunday afternoons off. The difference between the high wages and the lower wages you now pay can go to the woman who takes care of the children in the evenings, or afternoons.

## SHALL DOMESTICS HAVE UNIONS?

Several of those who approve of the girl's club idea, as promising to do away at least in part with the domestic worker's loneliness, say that while they approve of the plan they think it would be difficult to arrange for girls to attend these clubs. "It is hard enough now to arrange for domestics to get out at certain times; in the case of a club, meeting regularly, it would be very difficult."

If it is seriously contended that a girl cannot depend on having regular nights off during the week, then women employers will have to make up their minds to a continued scarcity of domestic help, to abnormally high wages, incompetent help, and other disabilities [that] exist in occupations considered unsatisfactory by workers. Domestic work is different in character from other work, but not to such an extent as the average woman seems to think it is.

Let us consider how the work of a hospital is arranged. In hospitals, as a rule, the nurse is on duty from seven to seven, with time for meals and two hours off. These two hours are sometimes broken in on. But at mealtime, the nurse is entirely off duty. Night work is taken by a night nurse. Nurses in private practice may go on and off duty, have time for meals and time to go out for a walk. If they take night work, then another nurse or one of the family is on duty in the day. It is true that there are households where a nurse is expected to be on duty both night and day. This is the principal reason why nurses dislike private practice. For the same reason, nurses in private practice frequently become physical wrecks.

## MAY BE DIFFICULT

To rearrange the work of a household so that the domestic worker can have fixed hours will certainly be difficult. But if women employers mean to let conditions stay as they are in household work because to better these conditions is difficult, then they have no right to complain about the scarcity of domestic help, nor can they justly find fault because many of the girls are incompetent.

If the girls' club – to provide friendship and wholesome entertainment of the domestic worker – is unsatisfactory, let us see what is being done in the line of improving the status of the domestic worker in other countries.

The Domestic Workers' Union of Great Britain was organized by seven domestics over two years ago. It has a membership of several hundreds and branches in London, Oxford and Glasgow. The Domestic Workers' Union maintains an Employment Agency in London. It is through this Employment Agency that the Union makes an effort to improve conditions of domestic work.

What does the Employment bureau promise domestics who secure a situation through its efforts?

"The above office is anxious to assure on the one hand better conditions for the workers, and on the other reliable and efficient workers for the employers."

## THE MINIMUM WAGE?

"We make the following, among other, stipulations in the interests of the Domestic: A minimum wage; sufficient food and decent sleeping accommodation to be provided; minimum hours of leisure out of the house; [a] fortnight's holiday per year on full pay; a true and fair written character to be given on leaving a place; no cleaning outside of up-stairs windows, etc.

"We earnestly appeal to all domestics to whom these concessions and others may be made, to show their appreciation of them by rendering willing and efficient service in return."

The Employment Bureau makes the following stipulations affecting employers:

"A minimum wage of five shillings a week, sufficient food and decent sleeping accommodations; minimum hours of leisure out of house, one half-day per week, and every alternate Sunday from 3 till 10.30 p.m.; not less than fourteen days holiday in the year on full pay, a true written character when the domestic leaves her employment; use of bathroom to be allowed; domestic to be allowed to inspect sleeping accommodation before concluding engagement; no female domestic to be required to clean outside upstairs windows."

After reading this, every Canadian woman will say how well off the domestic worker is in Canada! What we ought to say is: When will domestic workers organize in Canada, and if they do organize, what will they ask for?

## KINDNESS

A woman once in domestic service, now married and caring for a large family, writes from the country to say she does not agree that girls do not want kindness, but would prefer more of a business arrangement with their women employers. She says also that she has never forgotten how a woman who had once employed her came to see her at the back door of another place in which she worked as a domestic. That call was probably of the true spirit of kindness. She wanted to be sure that the girl was happy and in a good home.

One would not for anything in the world give the impression intentionally that kindness should not exist between the woman employer and her domestic helper. Getting down to the foundation on which the relation between employer and helper is based, justice and kindness are the two essential qualities. The girl can be as kind to her employer as the employer is to the girl. Women have experienced much kindness from the girl who will not do her work properly, who is inconsiderate, and

whose temper disturbs the tranquility of the house. Many women employers are models of kindness to their domestics. But there is the woman who expects the girl to pay her back for her kindness. She gives her a discarded dress and asks the girl back [on] her evenings out. She sends the girl occasionally to a theatre, or pays her fare for a car ride. In return the girl is to relinquish her Sunday evening. This is not kindness. It is a particularly mean form of barter. The woman gets back as much as she gives, and has the gratification of calling herself kind into the bargain. How often we hear women say, "I have been kind to that girl, and now she is leaving me." If the kindness is given to secure a permanent helper, it is not kindness, but an investment. The investment may turn out badly, of course. But it is a question if the girl should be called ungrateful.

Kindness which asks no return will fortunately always remain. On the whole, experience in Canada teaches us that there are as many really kind women employers as there are kind and thoughtful domestic helpers. It is only just to make this statement.

## WHY NOT FIXED HOURS?

Among the letters received last week on the problem of the Paid Domestic Worker is one which is unsigned, and which is marked "Not for publication." The writer of the present series regrets not being able to publish this anonymous letter. It proves with remarkable distinctness the existence of the woman employer who believes that the domestic helper should remain in her present condition or should be placed in one of greater subordination. The author of the anonymous letter is in the same class as the slave-owner. She believes that her judgment is to be supreme; the domestic worker in her household is not expected to exercise her own judgment; she is not supposed to have any. It may be that there are few Canadian employers of this type. One is convinced that there are few such women employers in Canada. Her reply to the statement that fixed hours will secure a very large increase in the number of girls entering domestic service and that fixed hours must eventually come in household work is that the writer of the present series knows nothing about household conditions or domestic workers.

If fixed hours are possible in a hospital, why are they not possible in a household? Girls' clubs managed by the girls themselves – according to the writer of the anonymous letter – would lead to anarchy, gossip and discontent, and conditions of domestic employment would be worse instead of better. The present writer wishes to make the statement here as emphatically as possible that while the woman employer of domestic help is entitled to the same respect, and to the same carrying out of the contract entered into between herself and her domestic helper, as any other employer, she is not entitled to supreme control of the life of the domestic worker nor to obedience from the domestic worker outside the terms of the contract.

## MUST SHOW TRUST

The present writer believes that girls' clubs will fail to be as beneficial as they ought to be if they are wholly under the control of any woman employer. By all means, let the woman employer befriend the club, advise the girls and help the club work. But the girls themselves should be responsible for the management of the club. Treat

women, or men, as if they were not fit to be trusted with responsibility and nine times out of ten they either will not be fit to be trusted, or they will struggle to get responsibility and will make many more mistakes than if they had been given spontaneously the responsibility which is their right. The finest class of girls of the strongest character and the best intelligence, will not be attracted, except in rare instances, into domestic work so long as the woman employer fails to recognize the girl as a responsible person, with sacred private rights of her own under her control. The better class of girl, the better a domestic worker she will be; but such a type of domestic worker will not be developed under a survival of the feudal system in household work.

Two questions have been asked recently with regard to household workers. The first is: Do you expect that the standing of the domestic worker and the conditions of housework will be altered and improved? The answer to this question is, Yes. A spirit of reform in domestic work and for domestic workers is already alive in Canada; this series of articles is only one expression of the wish for reform. It may be a long time before the complete establishment of the certificated domestic worker and the standardizing of household work, but these reforms are already on the way. Much will be accomplished in the next few years. The second question is: Do you think, after all, there is any great need of reform for household workers?

## TEMPTED OFTEN BECAUSE LONELY

How many Canadian women have employed domestic workers for fifteen or twenty years and have not been compelled to know that these girls are subjected to great temptation? They give way to temptation sometimes, because they are lonely; and it is acknowledged with pain that those who choose them for their victims do so because the girls are not as well regarded socially as they ought to be. This is a wrong which society in general has offered to the domestic worker. Miss Jane Adams makes the statement for the United States that a higher percentage is found among fallen women from the domestic worker class than from any other class of wage-earning women. We have reason to believe that there is no great, no radical difference in Canadian conditions. The health of domestic workers is extremely unsatisfactory as compared with that of other working women.

Sad instances could be given, but we do not believe that such a recital is necessary. The statements made are confirmed in individual experience. Girls in domestic work themselves say that they are shown less respect in public places than is shown other classes of women workers. A girl who has worked in a shop and households states that the is shown more respect when engaged as a shop girl than when engaged as a domestic. Surely this ought to awaken the indignation of Canadian women employers of domestic help. I have heard more than once agents for selling photographs, and in one instance an agent for selling an illustrated Bible, at the backdoor of a house attempt to extort money from a domestic in a hectoring way which ought to have secured the agent a rebuke from the police magistrate.

## REFORM ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY

These statements indicate why a reform in domestic employment is necessary for the sake of the domestic. Would not the woman employer gain greatly if she could

employ a trained domestic worker instead of an untrained girl? The certificated domestic worker would put an end to the employment of girls who know nothing of housework but are paid eighteen and twenty dollars a month for incompetent service.

A remarkably good suggestion has been made by a domestic worker. She says, "The remedy for the situation is in the girl's own hands. If she is a competent worker, she can say to her mistress that she is able to do the work of the house in so many hours. They ought to be able to make an arrangement by which the girl is to do so many hours' work and is to be paid so much in wages. If the Mistress wants the girl and needs her, a fair working arrangement ought to be possible."

This is an admirable proof of how well the girl has considered the problem of the domestic worker. Such an arrangement would only be possible between a thoroughly trained, competent worker on the one hand and a modern, just, trained woman employer on the other.

## MAKE WORKERS GOOD CANADIANS

A story of a domestic worker was told the other day which seems so improbable that most of the people who are following this discussion will be inclined not to believe it. It should be told here nevertheless because it touches on one side of this problem which has not yet been dwelt on fully.

The domestic worker of this story is foreign born and can speak only broken English. Now, every Canadian has a great work to do. He has to help to make good Canadians out of our emigrants. Every Canadian woman who employs an emigrant domestic worker ought to help to make that domestic worker a good Canadian.

This girl, who speaks broken English, is employed as a domestic in a household in one of the best residential districts of a Canadian city. She is the only maid kept in the household, and does the ordinary work of a general servant. She is allowed to go to church on Sunday evenings. She is allowed out one or two evenings a week. She is paid five dollars a month.

The reply made to the domestic worker who told this story was that there must be some explanation. The girl was paying back her passage money to the woman who employed her; or the employer had paid a bonus to some agency which had brought the girl out to Canada. The answer was no; the girl's father, who lives in Germany, had bound the girl to stay with this mistress for a year. The father, of course, did not know conditions in Canada.

One reason this improbable story – which may be true in every particular, nevertheless – is told here is to point out the effect incidents of this kind have on girls in domestic work who hear such stories. This girl told her story to a group of domestic workers who questioned her keenly and eagerly. What do you suppose these domestic workers think of the girl's mistress? They will not think she is a typical Canadian mistress, but they will say that a domestic worker is sometimes treated in this way in Canada. Canadian women employers of domestic help cannot afford to let their good names as employers suffer because of the unfairness of a few. What can they do about it? They can organize to train and to establish an employment agency. The good woman employer is the one who should dominate the situation. She should not allow

the unfair woman employer to make it even more impossible than it is now to find good domestic workers.

Neither should the thoroughly trained, good domestic workers allow themselves to be classed any longer with the untrained, incompetent, unfair girls in domestic work who keep households in disorder and discomfort and are paid the same wages as the competent girl.

Here is a companion incident to that of a general domestic worker receiving five dollars a month. What would you think of a domestic worker who, if the man of the house is late, clears away the food from the table and lets the man do without his dinner? Impossible, you say. Well, it ought to be impossible.

## DISCUSSION NOW COMPLETE

With the conclusion of this article the discussion of the problem of the paid domestic worker is complete for the time being as far as the present writer is concerned. One is grateful for the considerable interest which has been manifested, and for the help which has been received in the discussion, generally speaking, from women in private conversation and in private correspondence. It is pleasant to say thank you, and thank you is said here sincerely and gratefully. It should be mentioned that an offer has been received to begin a girls' club for domestic workers.

Out of the present discussion, and a previous series of articles on the Case of the Working Girl, has grown a conviction that a new department in newspaper work is needed in the interests of women who work, both at home, and in factories, shops, schools, offices, banks and so on. We need to understand about condition of work, wages, education, and citizenship. To this new department any woman can write who wishes to discuss these subjects. The department is specially planned as one to which girls can write for information and advice about what work they can do to earn a living. These letters will be answered as carefully as possible.

What improvements would the woman employer of domestic help like to see accomplished? She wants competent, trained help. She would like to see a better class of girls entering domestic work, and the supply of domestic help larger than it is at present. It is plain that the woman employer can secure these improvements by organizing her household work in such a way that the domestic helper goes on and off duty at fixed hours, overtime to be paid for. The woman employer can begin to agitate for a training school of domestic help. The woman employer should see that the domestic helper is placed in the way of forming agreeable and helpful friendships. The average sleeping and eating accommodation of domestic help should be improved. The woman employer should arrange the household work so that the domestic helper has an opportunity to have sufficient fresh air. She should take a sympathetic and intelligent interest in the girl's health, as the modern employer of help in factories or stores must if his business is to be wholly successful. The woman employer should recognize the domestic helper as a responsible person with private rights of her own, under her own control. When these necessary reforms are attended to, with the help of training in domestic work, the social position of the domestic helper will be greatly improved. When the social disability is removed, there will be a plentiful supply of domestic helpers. With a sufficient supply, wages will become, or will remain, normal.

### THE REFORMS NEEDED

The reforms wanted by the domestic helper have been outlined in the above paragraph. It is not easy to see how a fair woman employer can consider them unreasonable. Otherwise, the domestic workers themselves should study the situation in which they find themselves, should remedy their loneliness by forming girls' clubs, should insist on recognition of the trained domestic worker; and the trained, competent domestic worker should arrange her hours and her work with her employer.

These reforms cannot be effected all at once, of course. A spirit of kindness, tolerance and willingness to compromise will do a great deal. At the same time there are important reasons why these reforms should be kept steadily in view both by girls in domestic work and their employers. Perhaps the most important of these reasons is the care of children. For the sake of the children, the position of the domestic worker must be improved and her work recognized.

Employments for women must be regulated largely by the fact that the average woman marries. The domestic worker, especially the trained, competent worker, is fitted by her employment to become, when she marries, a competent homemaker. This is one of the reasons why domestic employment can be made the best wage-earning occupation for women. When the conditions of domestic employment are humanized, and its present social disability is removed, a girl of any class may look forward to domestic work as a suitable employment, just as any girl now may look forward to being a trained nurse. The gain in delightful human relations in the household will be great.

It is evident that Canada needs a Florence Nightingale who will revolutionize household employment.

## Daisy's Way with Children (1913)

"I am sure," said Grandmother McEntee, half-tearfully, "all I want is for Daisy to make the best of herself."

The McEntees were in the midst of their annual family gathering. David was home. David was first engineer on a lake freighter. He was forty-three and unmarried, but since he had traveled all over the world from St. Petersburg to South Africa in the engine-room of ocean ships, David was a person of consequence in the family councils. Jane was also home. Jane had been secretary to the South American Citrus Fruit Company which had lately dissolved on account of the depredations of a dishonest bank manager, but as Jane had been able to save a good deal from her salary, she meant to take several months' vacation. The rest of the family lived in or near McEnteeburg, which had been named for the McEntee family.

### DAISY WAS EIGHTEEN

Daisy, whose career the family had under consideration, was the oldest daughter of Simon McEntee, brother to David and Jane. Simon was at present in South Australia, having tired of McEnteeburg. Daisy's mother had died some years before, and since then she had had a good home with Mr. and Mrs. McEntee, her

grandfather and grandmother. Daisy was eighteen, and Jane had proposed that she should attend business college and become a stenographer, following in the footsteps of her aunt Jane. David had not agreed with Jane.

"I don't know, Jane, that you should ever have been a stenographer yourself," he said. "You are none too healthy. Look at the headaches you have, and pneumonia two winters ago. An outdoor home life would have been the life for you."

MAKING THE BEST OF HERSELF

Jane agreed with David, as she generally did. But since there were two other unmarried sisters living at home, Jane knew that the money she sent home was welcome in the McEntee homestead. Grandfather McEntee had been the village carpenter, but none of the sons felt like continuing his business, and now he was too old to work except round the house. Grandmother McEntee was more active. It was she who felt that now Daisy was eighteen and a fine, well-grown healthy girl she ought to go to work and make the best of herself.

DAISY WAS A HEALTHY GIRL

Daisy was eighteen, and like most Canadian girls she was attractive in appearance. She has a fine clear complexion, a good figure, she carried herself well, and her teeth and hair were in excellent condition. Daisy not only looked strong and well, actually was well. It is possible that the McEntee family did not realize how valuable this good health and good appearance were to Daisy.

Any girl with good health who looks healthy and strong is in a far better position for her lifework than a girl who neither looks well nor is well. Generally speaking, the average girl can keep herself fin good health. It largely depends on proper food, proper bathing, proper rest, [and] taking sufficient exercise. Housework is one of the best forms of exercise if the work is done in a sensible, hygienic way and being out much in the open air. All these health conditions are possible to the average Canadian girl. Daisy had them all. She had in addition a good constitution. And as a consequence, it really was a pleasure to look at Daisy.

She had been two years at high school, and she agreed with her grandmother that it was time that she had begun to earn her own living. But Daisy could not tell what she wanted to do. She did not want to teach, although she was fond of children. She did not want to be a stenographer like her aunt Jane, although she would not say so, since that might hurt her aunt Jane's feelings. In fact, she did not know what she wanted to do. She knew a good deal about cooking; her grandmother had taught her. She was handy with her needle, like her aunt Jessie [who] helped the village dressmaker. She did not want to be a trained nurse, like Maud Price, who was a friend of aunt Jane's. What was she to do?

In the end, the happy suggestion came from uncle David. Little Benjy Price, nephew of Maude Price, came walking up the street of McEnteeburg, and as soon as he saw Daisy sitting on the steps of the verandah, he ran into the McEntee garden and threw himself into Daisy's arms.

"I tell you what," said uncle David. "Daisy is just cut out to be a nursery maid."

## WHAT IS A TRAINED NURSERY MAID?

At first Grandmother McEntee would not hear of it. But when David explained to her that as a man of the world he knew more than she did about what a well brought up girl could do, she began to soften a little towards the idea. There could be no doubt that Daisy had a gift with children. She loved taking care of children more than any other work in the world.

When she heard from Uncle David that at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto there is a short course of training for nursery maids, and that at the end of four months a girl can graduate from the hospital with a certificate as a trained nurse maid, nothing would satisfy Daisy but writing to find out how soon she could go. It was Uncle David who stood by her and overcame the family opposition, although he stated plainly that he considered the McEntees very backward people.

"Why," he said, "isn't it plain that a girl can't learn anything better than how to take care of children? When she marries, she will know how to bring up her own children, and meanwhile she will be making good boys and girls. I don't know why anyone should think that Daisy needs any better work. You all can see how happy she will be with children, and how children love her."

## WHERE SHE WAS TRAINED

So it happened that Daisy McEntee entered the Children's Hospital at Toronto. It is the only place in Canada, as far as I know, where this training is given for a nursery maid. But here are several such places in the States; for instance, there are two training courses for nursery maids given by the city of Boston.

When Daisy went to the hospital, she had to pass inspection by the superintendent of the nurses, for great care is taken that only girls of a high class enter this course. After being accepted she was paid six dollars a month. She was taught how to take care of the rooms where children are, how to make beds, to sweep and dust, how to take care of babies, wash, dress and feed them, weigh them, take their temperatures, and other such general work. She was taught also how to care for simple nursery emergencies and to give medicine only under the order of a physician or the mother of a child. She was taught how to prepare children's food and how children ought to be fed. She was advised to take particular interest in the best children's stories, and to take pains to tell stories well. Then, too, her dressmaking knowledge was very useful, since the best nursery maids are expected to look after the children's clothes, and sometimes even to buy them.

## WHAT DAISY DID FOR JULIA

You can imagine what a splendid children's nursery maid Daisy McEntee was at the end of her four months' course. As soon as her training was over there was a place waiting for her, since there is a greater demand for trained nursery maids than can be supplied. Her first place was very exacting; she had to take charge of an invalid child. But the little girl got so fond of Daisy, and she was so dependent on her nurse that Daisy was almost heartbroken when the Dents went to Europe and took Julia for special treatment. They did not take Daisy, since the doctor said that they must have a trained nurse for Julia.

Daisy is now with the Pattersons, and she has to take care of three children, two boys and a girl, five, three and one and a half years old. With the Dents she was paid a salary of twenty-five dollars a month, and all her living expenses, of course. The Pattersons gave her thirty dollars a month. As, Mrs. Patterson says, one has only to look at Daisy and the three children to see how worthwhile it is to pay a trained nursery maid thirty dollars a month, and to know that one's precious children are with a kind, high-principled, well educated, careful, trained nursery maid when they are not with their mother.

## Euphemia, Food Expert (1913)

Although the Bains had three boys, Euphemia was the only girl. Mr. Bain was a railway conductor and so was a great deal away from home. His wife was delicate, and perhaps because the father was so much from home, the boys were inclined to be wild. Neither Tom nor Norman would stay at school. As soon as they could they got employment on the railway and their father and mother seldom heard from them. Ferguson Bain, the youngest son, was extremely near-sighted and delicate like his mother. He became [a] bookkeeper. Euphemia was intended by her father to stay at home. But by the time she was eighteen, while she was perfectly willing to stay at home, she felt that she would like to be able to earn some money. She had left school when she was sixteen and had no desire to go to school again.

Her father , when she consulted him, said that as far as he could see Euphemia was very well the way she was. She was company to her mother, kept house, and was a fine cook. What more did she want? He was perfectly willing to increase her allowance if she felt that she had not all the money she needed. Euphemia told him that she wanted something to do. Well, then, she could sew or do fancy work. Wasn't that what women liked?

After that Euphemia did not say anything more, but she did a good deal of thinking. What did she want to do? She knew that she wanted employment of some kind; she wanted an outside interest in her life; she wanted whatever she did to be worthwhile.

### THE BATCH OF CURRANT SCONES

When Euphemia told me how she learned to be a food expert, she said one of the first things she remembered as a little girl was her father saying to her that he would give her a new dress if she would make him a batch of currant scones, the kind that women used to bake on top of the stove in Scotland. Euphemia was greatly excited by this offer of a new dress and she never rested until she learned how to make currant scones successfully. It did not take her long until she brought her father a plateful of delicious scones and she got the new dress, which was a white delaine with tiny blue sprigs on it.

After that Euphemia always took an interest in cooking, and by the time she was eighteen she could bake perfect bread, could preserve fruit as well as the best cook, could make cakes and pies to the king's taste, had a way of roasting, broiling and stewing which made meat taste in a most appetizing manner, and in short was

not only an economical, thrifty, forehanded housekeeper, but she had as well the secret of imparting a delicious flavor to her viands. This is what Mr. Bain meant when he said that Euphemia was a fine cook.

## TAKING ORDERS FOR CAKES

When she was eighteen, it did not take Euphemia long to make up her mind that she would sell her cakes, pastry and bread. Fine cooking was an employment ready to her hand. She was successful from the beginning, and soon had as many orders as she could fill. She did not overwork, however, and she engaged a boy who lived in the neighborhood to deliver her cakes and bread. Euphemia was making quite a nice little sum of money when Mr. Bain was killed in a railroad accident, and Mrs. Bain died in a few months from the effect of the shock. It was necessary now for Euphemia to support herself altogether. She could no longer go on baking at home, because she no longer had the house and she had very little capital, not enough to set her up in business. She applied for a position as housekeeper in a girls' school, and she was fortunate in securing the appointment.

Now Euphemia discovered that while she could cook beautifully, could plan meals well, and was an excellent buyer, there was still something lacking. She had not a scientific knowledge of food values. Oh, there was a great deal about food that even Euphemia did not know! She had learned something about invalid cookery, but there was still a great deal about diet which was a mystery to Euphemia. By this time she was twenty-three years old, and she was as eager to begin as any student who ever went to college.

## DOMESTIC SCIENCE TRAINING

Euphemia made up her mind that she would take the money she had saved and go to a college to study domestic science. She wanted to become a skilled and trained dietitian. Between the few hundred dollars her father had left her and what she had saved, Euphemia had just eight hundred dollars. She had found out that a course at a famous college of domestic science, including books, food, clothes, board and lodging, would cost her between three and four hundred dollars a year. Indeed, Euphemia Bain would need to be very careful indeed if she was to manage to live on three or four hundred dollars a year. However, in the holidays she took a position as cook at a small club, and this helped her through the long, expensive training. Euphemia found the course of study pretty difficult; she had to work hard. To her surprise, she found that being a good cook and knowing a great deal about cooking was not such a help to her as she had expected it would be. The course was scientific; the instructors were more interested in the scientific side of cooking than they were in what might be called the artistic side of cooking. Euphemia has told me quite frankly that she still thinks this absorption in the scientific aspect of cooking rather a mistake.

## ARTISTIC COOKING

"It depends, of course, on what you mean to do," said Euphemia. "If you want to teach domestic science in a college or girls' school, or to the nurses in a hospital, then you must devote yourself to the science of cooking. To be the trained dietitian in a big hospital requires not only scientific knowledge, but what a person might call

scientific enthusiasm. But if you are going to be housekeeper in a big hotel, or in a club, or if you are going to look after the food of patients in a sanitarium or a private hospital, then I think the domestic science graduate ought to remember that it is quite indispensable to make her food look attractive and taste attractive, too. Frankly," said Euphemia, "that is what I care for most. I am proud to be able to buy economically. I always work out the proper amount of nourishment, and most carefully, especially with sick patients. But I would be ashamed if people didn't make a fuss over my cooking and say they never had tasted anything quite as good in their lives."

SALARY OF FOOD EXPERT

I asked Euphemia if she considered that a young woman could make a good living as a food expert.

"Oh, yes," she replied. "I am getting a hundred dollars a month. I think the average salary paid [to] domestic science graduates varies from fifty to sixty dollars a month; this, of course, includes board, lodging and washing. I think domestic science graduates, as a rule, do not begin with less than forty dollars a month. Of course, if a woman has uncommon ability, is a good manager and can not only buy but direct the work of a number of employees, there is no reason why she should not earn a very large salary indeed in a large hotel. But the majority of domestic science graduates go to hospitals and to schools. As you know, I am managing a club; but the reason for that, as I told you, is that I still take a greater pride in good cooking than I do in scientific cooking. I think my father made that sure when he offered me a new dress for my first good baking of currant scones."

## The House Worker – Domestic Science (1920)

A young woman who is now the author of two successful novels earned the money she needed to attend a teachers' training school by working as a domestic servant. It was the quickest and most convenient way for her to earn a certain sum of money. Her decision and independence of character kept her from hesitating for a moment to make use of this employment. One young woman who is a capable real estate agent takes a position as an experienced general servant when her usual business is slack. A woman at the head of a large business, which she originated and developed herself, earned her living as a domestic until she was twenty-five years old. There is no reason why any of us should be kept from doing good domestic work if it is the most suitable and convenient employment for us.

The disadvantages of domestic work, as it is generally arranged at present, are that the house worker is required to live away from home; her own special sleeping and living accommodation is sometimes not of the best; she has comparatively little time that is absolutely her own; she feels that she is placed at a social disadvantage as compared with other girls who are her friends and who are earning a living in other paid work, and she may be lonely, as a consequence of being often the only paid worker in the household. These are facts to be considered. But it is possible that a rearrangement of household work, undertaken by modern employers and clever

modern girls, who have a gift for household management, as well as character and initiative, may provide a solution for these disadvantages.

The advantages of domestic work include good wages, and more comfortable living conditions than the average paid worker can secure for herself. The house worker has also variety in work, freedom to move about at her work, and freedom from the rigid rules necessary in big business establishments. She is afforded an opportunity to become a highly skilled worker, and she can find a permanent position if she is competent and wishes to remain in one place. Above all, the house worker is getting the best training for homemaking.

The wages of the house worker include board, lodging, and washing, and often some part at least of her working clothes. She has two weeks' holidays with wages. She may save in a year a quarter or a third as much money as the entire earnings of her girl friends. At twelve dollars a week, working forty-two weeks in the year, the girl in a factory can earn five hundred and four dollars, out of which she has of course to pay all her expenses. The house worker who is earning twenty-five, thirty or thirty-five dollars a month can easily save two hundred dollars in a year, and a number of them do so. Girls in other paid employments, who pay board and lodging, washing and carfare out of ten or twelve dollars a week, are practically unable to save anything.

A competent house worker is beyond the fear of unemployment, while the possibility of unemployment or of being laid off for a number of weeks is an anxiety to many other paid women workers. When she marries and has a home of her own to take care of, the house worker is at a great advantage. She can take up the work of a home easily, and her management is a success from the beginning.

The accomplishment most frequently required from the domestic worker is [the] ability to cook. The girl who has a natural gift in this direction should take pains to develop it. She may have to begin to earn her living when she is quite young. In this case she should apply for a position as a second maid in a household where a cook is kept, and she should be careful to learn from the cook all that she needs to know in order to become a professional expert in cooking. Or she should look for a position as house worker with an employer who is herself a good housekeeper and who is willing to train her.

The improvement of housework conditions is largely in the hands of household employees. If a young woman is an excellent cook and a competent household manager, she can make practically her own conditions with women employers. If she prefers to live at home or in a room of her own outside the house where she is employed, she can explain to her employer the hours that she is willing to be on duty and how the work of the house can be arranged so that she can accomplish the greater part of it during these hours. She will be certain to find some intelligent woman employer who will agree to her conditions. Only the first-class worker, who can plan and carry out her plans successfully, will be able to do this; and every woman employer may not see the benefit of such an arrangement. There are a number of households where the woman in charge will be glad to accept service during half the day, but here also the house worker must be first class. The trained domestic worker

of high qualifications, able to do her work to perfection, and to consider intelligently how the work of the household can be organized, will add greatly to the standing of his employment.

The house worker should have a fairly good general education. The better her general education, the more successful she is likely to be. She should be intelligent, obliging, and adaptable. She should have a strong sense of honor, for she is largely on her own responsibility, and the welfare of the home is often trusted in her hands. The ideal household employee should have some of the qualities of the artist. The work of a fine cook is artistic, and the perfect care of a house requires both the eye and hand of an artist. No woman can be a success as a paid house worker who is not kind. She often has some part of the care of children, and it is wrong to have an ill-tempered or unkind person in charge of, or in company with, children. Besides this, the care of a house, the cooking of food, cleanliness and the work of adapting oneself to the wants of others cannot be carried out well and cheerfully unless the worker responsible for this work is kind.

Wages are usually good in domestic work as compared with other employments for women. Some girls, however, are underpaid. A girl may receive, for instance, twelve dollars a month. No girl with initiative or knowledge of housework needs to remain in such a position. Wages vary from twenty, twenty-two, to twenty-five, thirty, and thirty-five dollars, according to the locality, the nature of the work, and the skill of the worker. A first-class cook commands high wages. So also does a first-class managing housekeeper. A general servant of ability and character, who undertakes most of the work of a household, with the exception of the washing, will receive twenty, twenty-five or thirty dollars. In some parts of the country her wages may be higher. If trained workers, who have special gifts for household management and who feel that they can do better in this employment than any other, would undertake the reorganizing of housework, this occupation should take its rightful place as one of the best occupations for the average woman.

From a consideration of domestic service we naturally pass on to those occupations of girls which grow out of a knowledge of "domestic science." The study of a knowledge of "domestic science." The study of domestic science is making itself felt in the homes of the country and is opening up many avenues of employment for girls. The management of clubs, hotels, restaurants, tearooms, cafeterias, and lunchrooms in connection with colleges, departmental stores, and banks, affords employment for those who have the gifts and training necessary. Special cooking for invalids, the supplying of specialties, such as marmalade, pickles, preserved fruit, canned fruit and vegetables, salted nuts, cakes of various kinds and other dainties is work which is being carried on successfully by numbers of women and girls. The girl, in considering employment, should remember that she will be at an advantage in any specialized women's employment and that the world is offering her opportunities for good work which a few years ago had not been dreamed of. The occupation of housework, household management, cooking, all the arts of the home, will well repay the enthusiasm and energy of every girl who has a gift in this direction. What the girl with ability for this work needs to bring to her problem is, not only enthusiasm and

energy, but originality and initiative. “I have a real gift,” she should say to herself; “how can I make the best use of it?”

Universities have established departments of domestic science, and there are also domestic science training schools. Numbers of graduates find positions as instructors. Many other positions are open to the domestic science graduate. Practical experience is required in most of these openings. After graduating it is advisable to find a position as an assistant. In this way the young woman in this occupation will become fitted to hold the most responsible and remunerative posts. There are possibilities in household work and domestic science which have not yet been realized.

## Summing up the Stories of the Trades (1913)

Fourteen trades have been written about in this series of Next Step Stories: Telephone operator, stenographer, milliner, telegraph operator, dressmaker, trained nurse, [hairdresser,] children’s nurse, dietitian, librarian, waitress, proofreader, bookkeeper and salesgirl. There are many trades open to Canadian girls, but from a study of these trades mentioned, one can arrive at some conclusions with regard to the kind of trade a girl should go into, and whether in Canada girls are having a fair opportunity to earn a good living in occupations in which they are ensured healthy conditions, reasonable work and reasonable wages.

KEEN DEMAND FOR TRAINED WORKERS

In order to write these stories the writer has talked with girls at work in all the trades written about, and in every case has discussed the trade training with the employer or manager or forewoman under whose authority the girl is at work in. In almost every case the manager or forewoman has said, “I would be glad if I could get girls who are trained.” The manager of a restaurant said of the waitresses employed, “I would gladly pay a bonus for every expert trained waitress supplied by a school where waitresses are trained.” The head of a shoe department said of her girls, “I would like to teach them myself, if I had time. I do not see why a trade school should not be able to teach girls what they ought to know about selling, and about the goods they sell.” Another head of a department where numbers of girls are employed deplored the fact that the girls know nothing about what they ought to eat, or how they ought to rest in order to keep themselves in good health. Many of the girls do not know how to make their own clothes, or how to mend them when they need mending. “One of my girls told me,” this woman said, “that there wasn’t a needle in the house where she lived.”

TRAINING ENSURES EMPLOYMENT

Some of the trades written about have long and comparatively expensive training. The librarian is splendidly trained when she goes to a library school, or even when she learns her work from being in a library. The class of girls who go in for library work is of a high standard. The trained nurse has a long training; in this case she gives her services for her training. It is remarkable for how little expenditure of money a girl can become a trained nurse. But she has to give her time to the hospital

for either two or three years. The telephone girl has a short training, but it is apparently sufficiently long to teach her the trade. The work of a telephone operator is nervous work, demanding a particular class of girl. This trade keeps the average girl a very short time, only about two years. It is, generally speaking, the domestic girl who becomes a telephone operator, and she usually marries before she has been at work for a long time. The dietitian has good training. Stenographers and bookkeepers have fairly good training. But in each of these cases, all that the girl learns at a business college fits her only for getting a position. If she is to become a valuable worker, she has to teach herself in her office work how to become an expert businesswoman, either as stenographer or book-keeper. The trades in which the girl gets the best training are the trades where the average girl gets the best salary and at which she is always sure of finding a situation. It is not difficult for a librarian, a trained nurse, or a dietitian to obtain well-paid positions. A well-trained telephone girl is sure of employment.

## BUSINESSWOMEN AND DOCTORS FAVOR IT

The general opinion of leading Canadian women in business is that Canadian girls need more careful and extensive trade training. They are also of the opinion that the average Canadian girl is not taught properly how to eat or dress. Much of the information most necessary to the well-being of girls in Canada is left to the chance of haphazard. One of the most urgent needs for Canadian girlhood is the trade school. The businesswoman and the physician unite in saying that the girl should be taught how to take care of her health. Every kind of school, trade school, public school and private school, should have classes in which is taught the great subject of how to live healthy lives.

Next Step Stories were written to prove to Canadians that no Canadian family has a right to expect a girl to earn her living until she has been provided with trade training. A girl of fourteen or sixteen leaving a public school or high school is not able to earn her living until she has learned a trade. Fathers or mothers, older brothers or sisters, who send out a girl of fourteen or sixteen to earn a living in a shop, factory, office, or other place of employment, without providing her with money to help out her wages, are guilty of a cruelty. Girls in Canada not living at home cannot support themselves on six dollars a week.

## INJUSTICE TO DOMESTIC WORKER

What are the best trades for Canadian girls? The girl herself in many cases has a special inclination for the occupation where she will be happiest and most successful. She is a born milliner, a born dressmaker, a born bookkeeper or office manager, or trained nurse. After as careful and prolonged a study of the choice of trades for girls as could be secured, the present writer wishes to state that the trades which seem best for the average girl are either housework or the care of children. A children's nurse, who has been trained in such a school as the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, is worth her weight in gold to the community and the household where she works. Other Canadian hospitals might follow the example of the Hospital for Sick Children. When Canadian households are reorganized so that the trained domestic worker has a training similar to the standing of a trained nurse in a

hospital, then domestic work will be plainly the very first among occupations for Canadian girls. It is a very sad, very curious, very shocking circumstance that we have allowed the best occupations for girls to become almost undesirable.

Anyone who helps to give Canadian girls an excellent trade training will be a public benefactor.

# The author's obituary[9] (1938)

Lady Willison, widow of Sir John Willison who at one time was chief editor of the former Toronto *Globe,* died today of a heart attack at her residence. She had been ill three weeks.

Lady (Marjory) Willison was considered an outstanding personality in social, political and literary fields. Noted for her brilliant mind, she was an author of repute. Her books and magazine articles were widely read and she displayed versatility in her subjects.

Lady Willison was keenly interested in social welfare and at one time served as secretary to the Ontario Unemployment Commission and as head of the women's department of the Canadian Reconstruction Association. She was a special syndicate writer at the coronation of George V in 1911. In 1920, Lady Willison was a delegate to the Imperial Press Conference at Ottawa.

Born in Toronto, daughter of the late Archibald MacMurchy and Marjory Jardine Ramsay MacMurchy, Lady Willison was educated at Jarvis Collegiate and [the] University of Toronto. Her book reviews were considered brilliant and notable examples of her work. In 1926 she married Sir John, himself an author and journalist of distinction.

Lady Willison was president of the Canadian Women's Press Club from 1909 to 1913 and honorary president from 1913 to 1920. She was a Conservative and an Anglican.

[9] From LADY WILLISON DIES OF A HEART ATTACK. (1938, December 16). *Montreal Gazette,* p. 16.