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Herrick

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Title: The Expert Maid-Servant

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Release date: June 26, 2013 [EBook #43042]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE EXPERT MAID-SERVANT ***

THE EXPERT MAID-SERVANT

BY
CHRISTINE TERHUNE HERRICK

AUTHOR OF "HOUSEKEEPING MADE EASY"

"WHAT TO EAT AND HOW TO SERVE IT"

"CRADLE AND NURSERY" ETC.



NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS
PUBLISHERS :: 1904

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Published October, 1904.

TO
A FRIEND IN NEED

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. ENGAGING THE MAID	1
II. WHEN THE MAID ARRIVES	19

III. MISTRESS AND MAID	36
IV. THE DUTIES OF THE MAID-OF-ALL-WORK	52
V. DUTIES OF TWO OR MORE SERVANTS	70
VI. CERTAIN PROBLEMS OF SERVICE	88
VII. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS	104
VIII. A RECAPITULATION OF DAILY DUTIES	125

THE EXPERT MAID-SERVANT

I

ENGAGING THE MAID

The most common method of engaging a servant is through an intelligence office. There are nearly as many different kinds of these as there are types of domestics who patronize them. An office with a high standing should be selected. This is not only because a lower grade of employées is to be found at the other variety, but also on account of the methods followed in some of the cheaper offices. Such establishments occasionally have unscrupulous managers, who make a business of encouraging the maids they place to change often, in order that the renewed fee of the employer may come to the office. This practice has become common enough in some States to justify legislative intervention.

In nearly every city or town there are reputable agencies, sometimes conducted as business enterprises simply, sometimes run in connection with church or benevolent societies, where a register is kept of the references of servants for whom places are secured. These references are usually held as confidential between the agent and the would-be employer, and the latter is thus enabled to learn with some certainty the qualifications of the maid she thinks of engaging.

Once in a while a mistress is so fortunate as to secure a maid by the recommendation of some other housekeeper or through a servant in her own or a friend's employ. Maids engaged in this fashion are often more satisfactory than those found at an office, from the fact that they enter their new positions somewhat prejudiced in favor of the employer, instead of holding the attitude of armed neutrality often found in servants who seek places through an office.

Wherever the maid is met and in whatever capacity she is engaged, there should be a clear understanding from the beginning as to what her work shall be. The mistress should begin the interview with the maid she seeks to employ by stating what are the duties of the place she offers and inquiring as to the capabilities of the maid for the position. Often a few questions and answers will prove the unsatisfactoriness of the situation or of the applicant. In this case, the affair should be dropped at once. Never, no matter what the exigency, should the housekeeper endeavor to persuade a domestic into taking a place for which she is disinclined. It is a mistake almost sure to result badly.

The housekeeper should come to an interview with a prospective maid with an open mind, and not allow herself to be prejudiced by appearances. An aspect of sullenness is frequently the result of shyness and does not indicate unwillingness to work or a bad temper. The would-be employer should speak gently and not ask questions with a manner of having the maid in the witness-box. Such treatment will sometimes frighten a timid maid into inability to answer intelligently, and the employer will produce an impression of her own hardness and severity which she will find it difficult to overcome later. The pert and self-sufficient maid is likely to declare her nature within a very few minutes. Kindness will not intensify these qualities in her, while it will enable a bashful girl to appear to better advantage.

Before interviewing a maid, the mistress should have clearly framed in her own mind the outlines of the work required, and should know definitely what queries she means to put. Each mistress probably has her own way of learning the maid's capabilities and of explaining the work she wishes done. The housekeeper who has had little practice in engaging servants will do well to make up a formula of inquiries in advance. To begin with, it should be ascertained what experience the maid has had, what was her last place, how long she stayed in it, what were her reasons for leaving it. Having thus learned if the servant seems to be in the main satisfactory, so far as disposition and willingness are concerned, the mistress should proceed to explain what is the work of the house, putting such questions as will enable the girl to tell of her competency.

For instance, in engaging a maid for general housework, she should be asked if she understands plain cooking of meats and vegetables; if she can make bread, biscuit and muffins,

soups and plain puddings; if she can follow a recipe, etc. More elaborate culinary accomplishments can rarely be looked for in a maid-of-all-work. She should also be able to do washing and ironing, have some knowledge of chamber-work and of waiting, and be willing to learn. There are so many qualifications for the general-housework girl, who must be a sort of Pooh Bah in petticoats, that it is no wonder the supply is usually inadequate to the demand. 6

There should be no attempt on the part of the mistress to make things in the place she offers seem better than they are. A servant who is brought into a house under false pretences is never likely to do well. If the prospective mistress entertains a good deal, if she is likely to have guests staying in the house often, she should give full notice of her intention from the start, explaining at the same time that she is willing to do all she can to lighten the burden of extra work. So far as possible, the amount of labor should be put clearly before the employée, so that if the place does not suit her she may know its drawbacks from the beginning. Naturally, it should also be the part of the mistress to point out what are the especial advantages of the situation, and to let the maid see that the employer is ready to do anything in her power to prevent unusual toil from being too heavily felt. No chance should be left for misunderstanding upon any point, and from the first it should be comprehended that a spirit of accommodation and kindness will be accorded by the mistress and expected from the maid. 7

After the mistress and maid have reached some kind of an adjustment that makes them feel the relation of employer and employed would be desirable to both, it is time for the housekeeper to make special inquiry about the maid's references. If the office is a reputable one it may be taken for granted that the servants' characters are in the main what they should be, but the mistress will wish to go into details and either see the former employer or write to her. 8

This matter of references is most important. The mistress owes it to the maid as well as to herself to see that these are all they should be. No matter how excellent is the written reference shown by the servant, it should be verified by the prospective employer. In many cases the mistress of a departing maid will write for her an uncandid reference for the sake of saving herself an unpleasant scene or from a mistaken kindness. She does not wish to endanger the maid's chances of securing further employment, and she prefers to stretch the truth to being honest in the recommendation she bestows. A lamentable want of honor prevails between housekeepers in this regard, and the woman who has not found a maid in the least satisfactory while in her own employ will send her forth with a reference which makes it tolerably sure she can obtain a situation elsewhere without difficulty. On the other hand, the new mistress is no less heedless and will take a servant into her employ simply on the strength of a written reference without giving herself the pains to inquire as to its accuracy. 9

Too much stress can hardly be laid upon this necessity for honesty in the references given. It is the protection of the maid as well as of the mistress. So long as any servant can secure a good place by a forged reference or by one granted to incompetency by easy good-nature, she will not feel that her employment depends upon her merits. The conscientious trained worker stands on precisely the same plane as the careless, unqualified shirk. A good part of the reformation of the much criticised domestic service lies with the mistress who deplores its faults. When a maid understands that laziness, impertinence, dishonesty, ill-temper, incompetency, will be mentioned in her reference just as frankly as the contrary good qualities, she will take more pains concerning the recommendation that will win or lose her a place. 10

As a matter of course, there is always the chance that an unscrupulous or bad-tempered mistress may take advantage of the power of the reference. But this risk is small, especially in the present condition of our domestic service. We have not yet reached the point attained by the English, with whom a false reference—that is, one not written by a genuine employer of the servant holding the reference—is punished by fine or imprisonment. From present appearances, it does not seem likely that we shall ever get to that. But the mistresses might at least have the sense of mutual responsibility that marks "living-out girls." If a place is once known as hard, or a mistress as unreasonable, unkind, or a "driver," it is difficult to find servants to fill it. There is an unorganized trades-union among servants which helps to protect them, in a measure. The mistresses have too little *esprit de corps* when references are in question. 11

It is difficult to describe to a prospective maid exactly what her work will be, but she can have a general outline of it given to her. Concerning her privileges it is possible to be more explicit, although the privileges vary with the position the maid occupies in the household. Where one servant is kept, it is customary to allow her every other Sunday afternoon and evening out, and an afternoon and evening besides on a week-day, once a fortnight—or else an evening every week. When two servants are employed the same privilege is allowed to each, and it is the general rule that one shall take the work of the other on the days and evenings out of the latter. Thus, the second maid prepares dinner as well as serves it, when the cook is out, while the cook does the waiting and serving and answers the bell, in addition to doing her own work, when the second maid has her holiday. In some households it is the custom to have supper instead of dinner on the night when the cook goes out, thus lightening the task of the waitress. The Sunday evening supper is practically universal, as it gives the maids their heaviest work in the early part of the day and lessens the labor of the afternoon and evening. In the household where three women servants are employed, it is the custom to have but one out at a time, except on Sundays. More or less planning is required to divide the work satisfactorily under these circumstances, and the method in which the division is accomplished must be decided by the features of each case. Whatever the peculiarities of the position, they must be made plain to the maid when she is engaged, and not left at random to be decided upon later. 12
13

The arrangements once made, it must be understood that the rules formed are not to be lightly broken, either by mistress or maid. The employée is to know that she can count positively on a certain day a week, and the mistress must submit to great personal inconvenience sooner than vary from this rule. If, for instance, it is more agreeable for her to entertain guests on Thursday than on Wednesday, and the former is the maid's evening out, the mistress should waive her own preferences and convenience sooner than break in upon the maid's outing. The same principle should be followed by the maid. Her day out is agreed upon to be this or that. She should not feel that she can change it to suit herself, merely by requesting the indulgence of her mistress.

In other matters about the household there should be a fixed routine, and this should be understood from the outset. Meals will be served at certain hours, the maid will be expected to have them on time and the family to be prompt at the table. Such system as this does much towards simplifying the work of a household and gives a maid a feeling of stability that helps her to do her work to better advantage. She knows what she has to do in the line of work and what to depend upon in the way of time, and as a consequence the wheels of the home move more smoothly.

Such a hard-and-fast rule as this cannot prevail, perhaps, in every household. Take the case of a physician, for instance, of a newspaper man, of some business-men. It is almost out of the question for them to conform to an immutable regulation. If a doctor has been up all night with a patient, it is rank absurdity to say that he must be on hand in the morning for an eight-o'clock breakfast, or that if a commuter loses his train he must stop in town and get his dinner sooner than derange the times and seasons of the domestic economy. In such cases it is well to remember that the house is made for the family and not the family for the house. But instances like these are exceptions, and do not affect the general application of the rule.

On the other hand, it may be urged that there are happy and, in the main, well-conducted homes where a different principle is followed. In these the establishment is considered more as the home and less as a piece of machinery. Concessions are rendered to the preferences of the servants when they wish to vary their days out, and they in turn are ready to accommodate themselves to the wishes of their employers when a change of holidays seems desirable. Such liberties as these it is not safe to advise. They are the exceptions, and, in the long run, the stricter plan will probably prove more satisfactory to all concerned.

At the time of engaging the maid, the mistress should make stipulations as to the minutiae of caps, aprons, broad collars and cuffs, and the like. In some parts of the country there are maids who object to anything that seems to suggest a livery or uniform, and, if there are protests to be made and met, the process should be disposed of at the start.

Many mistresses and maids fail to grasp the fact that the engagement between them is in the nature of a legal contract. Mistress and maid are equals in the eyes of the law, and an agreement is as binding upon one as upon the other. It should be perfectly understood at the beginning for what term the maid is engaged and at what rates. In some places it is the custom to pay by the week, and the servant is then engaged by that term. In other localities she is engaged and paid by the month, although she is frequently taken at first on a week's trial, with the understanding that, if she gives satisfaction and is suited with the place, she is to continue her services by the month. When the latter period is the term of engagement, it is understood that the employer is expected to give not less than a week's notice of discharge to a maid, and that the latter should announce a week before her month is up her intention of leaving. Should the mistress prefer, she can give a week's wages in lieu of a week's notice, but the former method is in more general use.

When a servant is engaged by the week, two or three days' notice is demanded on either side. The "month's notice" with which English books have made us familiar is not common here, unless the servant has been for a long time in the place. Immorality, drunkenness, dishonesty, and absolute refusal to obey orders are sufficient causes for dismissing a servant without warning or wages; but this is an extreme measure, and should be resorted to only in circumstances of great provocation. Even then, complications are often avoided by paying a servant something, if not all of what is due. The servant who leaves without warning in the middle of her term is not legally entitled to her wages, but in this case, also, trouble is usually saved by paying her up to date.

Among the stipulations incident to the engagement of a maid, it is well to make mention of breakages. This may not be needful when hiring a cook, but it is a safeguard when engaging a waitress or even a general housework servant. Inquiries should be put as to the maid's carefulness with china, and there should be an agreement that the maid is responsible for breakages except in cases of unavoidable accident. Such a proviso as this may deter some maids from taking a place, but the careful girl is not likely to object to the rule, and the mistress would probably be unfortunate should she engage a maid who resented such a regulation.

II

WHEN THE MAID ARRIVES

The first days of a servant in a new place are not easy either for mistress or for maid. This should be recognized by the mistress, and she should lay in an extra supply of patience for the

emergency. She will need it, in order to endure with equanimity the sins, negligences, and ignorances of the new-comer—especially the ignorances. Yet, looked at impartially, the blunders made by the maid are probably not so much the result of ignorance as of unaccustomedness. The situation is much harder for her than for the mistress. The latter is at least on familiar ground. To the former the place is an unknown quantity. She does not know where anything is kept. She is ignorant of the preferences of her new employer. She is encompassed by novel surroundings and faces; and—a fact that is not always recognized by employers—the very phraseology of the new mistress is strange to her. The maid lacks the mental training that would enable her to adapt herself quickly to the changed conditions, the unusual expressions. Under the circumstances, the wonder is not that she does things so badly, but that she accommodates herself as readily as she does to the fresh environment.

20

I have spoken of the diffidence that sometimes produces the impression of sullenness. This same diffidence often takes other forms that are even more trying than gloom. I have known of one maid who, during the first fortnight of her stay in a new place, received every order with a loud giggle—the fashion in which her embarrassment manifested itself. Another was so much at a loss what to do with her hands when they were not occupied with her work, that she slapped them together constantly as she moved about the house or stood waiting for orders. Yet both of these maids, after their first shyness had worn off and they had found themselves and their relation to their work, became admirable servants and overcame the defects that had at first tried the patience of the mistress almost beyond endurance.

21

In the average American household, where there is only a small domestic force, the mistress should always show the servant what are her duties or direct how these are to be performed. In large households, where there is a housekeeper, the training of the new servants may be delegated to her, but these establishments are too few to be weighed in making up the main account. As soon as the maid comes the mistress should direct her or show her to her room, and tell her to change her street garb for her working-dress and then to report herself to the mistress. She, on her own part, should be ready for the new-comer, not only with a clearly framed idea of the work she will put her to first, but also with the house in good order for the work that is to be done.

22

Nothing is more discouraging to a servant than to come into a place that is dirty from the carelessness of the former occupant, or untidy and topsy-turvy. The maid is as susceptible to first impressions as the rest of us, and the moral effect of bringing her into a dirty and disorderly kitchen is distinctly bad. The mistress should have had the kitchen and pantries cleaned by the outgoing maid—and it should have been done under her own supervision or else thoroughly inspected after the work is finished. Should the maid who is leaving not have done her task thoroughly, it is better for the mistress to give her own time and labor to cleaning closets and shelves, or engage a charwoman to do it, than to permit the maid to come in before the work is properly performed. The servant who finds dust in the corners, the stove unpolished, the cellar and refrigerator uncleaned, is likely to draw the conclusion that the places can remain as she found them, or may be suffered to drift into the same condition again whenever she is too lazy or too careless to give them proper attention.

23

A word about the maid's bedroom. In some circumstances it is impossible to make it very alluring. When all of a family are tucked away in dark, inside rooms, as is the case in many city apartments, it cannot be expected that the maid will fare better than her employers. But, fortunately, all humanity are not cliff-dwellers. There are plenty of homes where it is possible for the maid to have a light, airy bedroom, which could be made attractive at a small expenditure of time and money. Yet it is seldom that a servant's room has anything pleasing about it. The mistresses defend themselves by saying that the servants are heedless with good things, that they do not take care of what is given them, and any mistress can cite facts to prove this position.

24

Without disputing the truth of these statements, it may yet be urged that it is hard for a servant to come into a room that bears plainly the traces of its former occupant's untidiness. Possibly the new-comer has in her the potentialities of neatness and cleanliness, and it is unfair to check these at the start. The room cannot be refurnished for every new maid; but the furniture it contains can be of a sort that is readily freshened. The white iron cots are neat as well as comfortable, and there should be a good mattress always. A hard-working maid has a right to a comfortable bed. If there are two servants, they should have separate beds. This should be an invariable rule. The mattress should be protected by one of the covers that come for this purpose. This can be washed as often as it needs it. The blankets, too, should be washed between the departure of one maid and the arrival of another. A neat iron wash-stand, a plain bureau that can have a fresh bureau-cover or a clean towel laid over it, a comfortable chair, a rug by the bed, are not expensive and add much to the comfort of a room. It is wiser to have the floor bare and painted, or spread with a matting, than covered with a shabby and worn-out carpet which gathers dust and dirt. The walls are better painted than papered. The mistress can consult her own preferences as to whether or not she shall put pictures on the walls, but she should not make of the maid's room a lumber place for the old engravings and chromos that will be tolerated in no other part of the house, and do it under the impression that she is making the place attractive to the maid-servant within her gates. The bed should, if possible, be made up before the maid arrives, with a fresh spread, and the room should have the absolute cleanliness that is always a charm.

25

One more point should be looked after in preparing for the maid's arrival. The mistress should make sure that the supply of china and cutlery that the maid will use for her own meals is in

26

decent order. It cannot be pleasant for any one to have bent and tarnished forks and spoons, cracked and stained cups, saucers, and plates for her food. The cost of replacing these by new is very slight and pays for itself in the agreeable impression given the maid by the fresh, bright articles.

A list of the dining-room silver, linen, and china should be made by the mistress and gone over by her with the maid the day of the latter's arrival. By thus verifying the list the maid has a clear idea of the property that is given into her charge and knows for what she is responsible. If the china is nicked or cracked, mention should be made on the list of each piece thus disfigured, and there should be a note of linen that is worn or broken. By means of such a list the mistress is able to keep track of her possessions and there is no possibility of the maid's excusing a chipped plate or a cracked dish with the plea that it was injured before she came. Such a list is also a safeguard to the maid, who is by it enabled to prove that she is not to be blamed for disasters that occurred during the stay of a predecessor.

27

When the servant presents herself ready dressed for her work, the mistress should tell her as simply as possible what this will be. The instruction would better be given in broken doses. The workings of the untrained mind are peculiar, and in mental equipment the average servant is often on a level with a child of ten or twelve. Bestow too many facts at once and you produce only confusion. So it is not well to make an attempt to give the maid a bird's-eye view of what will be her whole duty, but rather to acquaint her by degrees with her occupations. The first step is for the mistress to show her where her work is to be and the instruments with which she is to perform it. Should she be a cook, she must be introduced to the kitchen, the management of the range explained to her, the whereabouts of the principal utensils made clear. If it is the waitress who is to be inducted into office, she should be taken to the china-closet, the contents of this and of the silver and linen drawers displayed, and the particular pieces pointed out that are in daily service. When the waitress is also the chambermaid, there are explanations required as to the upstairs work. But, as I have said, it is better to supply these little by little.

28

For example, if the cook comes into the house in the morning, give her time to get used to her kitchen and her tools before too much information is offered as to the preferences of the family in cookery. Since the first meal she will have to prepare will be luncheon, tell her about this, and do not burden her with the details of dinner until after lunch is over. Still less try to give her at one fell swoop all she will need to know about breakfast the next morning or what she will be expected to do on washing and ironing day.

29

These instructions may sound unnecessary to the trained and experienced housekeeper; but the world is not entirely made up of these. The majority of women are more or less lacking in sense of proportion and in perspective, and this lack leads to a jumbling of their ideas which makes life complex for those to whom the ideas are to be imparted. Of course, once in a while one finds an intelligent servant who understands herself well enough to slip at once into her place and do the work of it smoothly, but she is the rare exception to the rule. The housekeeper must plan for the average, not for the exception.

30

This way of giving orders naturally confines the housekeeper more or less during the first days of her new maid's arrival—but a domestic convulsion of any sort is attended with drawbacks. The mistress must appreciate the fact that she will have to sacrifice herself a little in order to train her new maid properly, and that the result will be worth the trouble.

This does not mean that the mistress should stand over a servant and dictate the way in which every duty is to be performed. The employer should bear in mind that there is more than one right way of doing nearly everything, and if the new maid has a special way of her own of accomplishing this or that, she should be allowed to follow her custom until she has proved that it is not so good as that of her mistress. This may sound reckless, but it has common-sense to commend it. When the maid is given a chance to prove or disprove the excellence of her method and it turns out to be as good as that of the mistress, there is the saving of just so much friction and effort in teaching and learning a new way.

31

In advocating this I am taking it for granted that the maid has some idea of the manner in which her work is to be done. If she is absolutely "green," she will have to be taught from the beginning, and then the mistress has no option. Such servants are discouraging and tiresome at the outset, but they often turn out the best in the long-run. In their cases the mistress has no bad impressions to efface and she can implant her own modes in virgin soil.

When, however, the maid has some knowledge of her duties, the mistress should show her where she is to work, give her directions for the services that come next, and then leave her to herself. She will learn her way about her domain much more quickly if she is unembarrassed by the presence of an observer.

32

The mistress must be prepared for blunders even after she has given explicit directions. As I have said, it is quite possible the maid may not understand the mistress at first, or, in the confusion of new impressions, she may forget or confound directions. Should she serve a dish in a different fashion from that in which it has been ordered, reproof should be reserved until the mistress has made sure of the reason for the variation. If the wrong china or silver or linen is used, corrections should be made judiciously. The fault may have been forgetfulness, it may have been misunderstanding, and, in any case, fresh confusion will be the result if too many blunders are commented upon at once. The maid should be directed to repair one or two omissions, and the rest should be ignored for the time being, to be put right later on.

33

Occasionally a maid will be found who seems chronically unable to set a table right. I have known of several who persisted in putting on crooked the square of damask that was used at breakfast and luncheon instead of the large cloth that covered the entire table at dinner. The square would be laid in a slanting, to-one-side fashion that gave the whole table a drunken look. The mistress finally hit upon a successful plan. She put four chairs on the four sides of the table, each exactly in the middle of a side, and then laid on the cloth with each of its four corners precisely in front of a chair. The object-lesson worked to a charm and crooked cloths became a thing of the past.

Forgetfulness of some piece of table-furniture is a more common fault and one more difficult to rectify. If it seems impossible to overcome it in any other way, the mistress may make a ground plan of the table as it should look when properly laid, or write a list of all the objects that should go on it for different meals. It is not necessary to resort to this, however, until several days' experience has proved the new maid's inability to grasp what is required.

A chambermaid will make corresponding blunders for a time. She will have to be told more than once how the beds are to be made, will have to receive repeated instruction never to put the blankets on with the doubled end at the top, and to be careful about stretching tight the lower sheet and tucking in the coverings properly at the bottom. At the beginning the mistress should establish her standard about this sort of thing as she does about sweeping, dusting, and other cleaning, and she must never relax her requirements if she expects to have her house properly kept.

All this need not be told the maid the first day she comes, but even then she may be made to understand that work is not to be slighted or neglected. This principle, at least, she must have clearly in her mind at the end of the first day's service, even although her thoughts may be a trifle chaotic as regards details. Those it will be the work of the mistress to make clear as time goes on and the maid becomes accustomed to her work.

III

MISTRESS AND MAID

There is a type of mistress who seems to regard servants as beings of an inferior order. Her directions are given curtly—sometimes harshly. She takes the ground that the servant is paid for her work and that for anything beyond the business relation there is no need for consideration. She may be called one extreme type.

The other extreme is more common. In her desire to propitiate her employée she is herself almost servile. She is in frank fear lest the servant may leave her, and in order to retain her services makes almost any concession. Such mistresses as these furnish materials for most of the jokes on the servant question—jokes that are hardly exaggerated.

Between these two extremes there is room for a mistress who unites considerateness with self-respect. She speaks pleasantly to her servants, but she does not spoil them by an ingratiatory manner or show herself ready to make any sacrifice sooner than run the risk of parting with them. She gives orders as orders, instead of asking services as favors; but she issues her commands in a kindly way and with none of the tone or manner of a dictator, still less of a shrew. When her servants are to be reprimanded, she does it quietly, lowering rather than raising her voice. If a servant cannot be managed in this manner, she feels it is better to part with her. In the words of a veteran housekeeper of this variety, "I will not have a servant in my house whom I have to scold."

Every one recollects the saying that in herding sheep it is necessary not only to teach the dogs to drive the sheep, but to accustom the sheep to obey the dogs. So it is as desirable for the mistress to learn the proper method of dealing with the maids as it is for the maids to understand the mistress. There are many kinds of manners in both. But few are the servants who do not respond more quickly to a kindly, gracious manner than to one tinged with severity.

Mention has been made of the difficulty a maid sometimes has in accustoming herself to the phraseology of a new mistress. To the girl's hesitancy about asking for a repetition of an order, or an explanation, are due some of the blunders she makes. The mistress should be sure she is entirely understood before she sends the girl about her work. Also, she should be clear as to the cause of a mistake or of apparent disobedience before she finds fault. Always the mistress should be ready to make explanations about the work. When the maid comes for instruction she should be met patiently, and if there seems to be a difficulty of understanding, a practical illustration will often do more than half an hour of verbal directions. When the mistress can show the maid how the table is to be set, how the beds are to be made, can give her an object-lesson in sweeping or dusting or dish-washing, she will have accomplished more than a dozen lectures would have wrought. Nothing better in instruction has been devised than the Squeers method. "First they spells it and they goes and does it." But it is the mistress who does the spelling as well as the doing if she wishes the new maid to grasp a novel mode of performing a household duty.

The mistress should not shrink from reproof when it has to be administered. There are very few

employées in any walk of life who are possessed of so large a supply of conscientiousness that they discharge their duties as well without oversight as with it. To every gang of workmen there is an overseer. In housekeeping the mistress is overseer as well as planner. She must "follow up" her maids—not so obviously that they feel she does not trust them, but closely enough to produce the impression upon them that she takes an interest in their work and means to see that it is thoroughly done. When it is not accomplished to her liking she should call them to account, not unkindly, but decidedly. If a ring of dust around the bric-à-brac shows where the duster has been flourished about the furniture instead of being used to wipe each surface carefully, the mistress should call the maid to bring her cloth and point out to her the defects in that portion of her work. Should there be dirt left in the corners of the room, finger-marks on the paint, streaks on the windows, the same course should be pursued. When this has been done a few times, unless the employée is exceptionally slow-witted, she learns that it is less trouble to perform the work properly in the first place than to have to go over it twice, and the second time under the supervision of the mistress.

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All this the employer can do without joining the ranks of the fussers or belonging to that class known as the "nasty particular" housekeepers. The latter, who put the cleanliness of the house so far above the comfort of its inmates that these feel they would rather have dirt with peace than tidiness without it, are common enough to make a word of warning in place. But it is possible to accomplish neatness without sacrificing family concord, and in the desire to secure the latter the housekeeper should not permit herself or her servants to drift into carelessness.

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From the first the mistress should have it clearly understood that there is no place in the house into which she may not penetrate. Her daily inspection of the refrigerator and the pantries should be a matter of course. Her presence in the kitchen should never excite surprise or provoke criticism. Naturally, she should exercise tact in this as in every other relation of life. For instance, she should not choose the time for her morning visit to the kitchen when the maids are at their breakfast. In fact, she should be punctilious not to call her servants from their meals except in cases of absolute necessity. They have a right to take their food undisturbed, and this right the mistress should respect. Nor should the housekeeper choose the cook's busiest day for doing cooking on her own account, if this is going to add to the sum of the servant's labors. It is lack of consideration on these points that gives a house the reputation of being a "hard place." When such details as these are observed, servants are more likely to be contented, even if the work is heavy, than they are in a lighter place where they feel that their rights and privileges are disregarded.

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If a servant is to be reprimanded, it should never be done in the presence of a third person. The maid is no less human because she is in a subordinate position, and it is hard for any of us to take reproof kindly when it is bestowed in the hearing of some one else. If the mistress is inclined to be hasty, it is well for her to wait a few minutes after the discovery of the fault before she utters her rebuke. That will give her time to get the fault a little in perspective and to see its true proportions. Then she should summon the maid to her and deliver her words of warning or reprimand. Never should she go to the kitchen to scold the cook. There the knowledge of the latter that she is, so to speak, on her own ground has sometimes the unfortunate effect of provoking an impertinent rejoinder, which would not be forthcoming if the interview had taken place in the mistress's own room or in the drawing-room.

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There is a peculiar sting in a reproof given for a fault that is due to accident, to misunderstanding, or to some other pardonable cause. Very often the request for an explanation will bring out facts that the mistress had not known and which put a different face upon the occurrence. When rebuke is essential it should not only be delivered quietly, but there should be no mark of anger in the manner of the mistress. Such demeanor as this is more impressive than the harsh tones, the sharp words, for which the culprit might have been prepared.

There are, of course, limits to which faults may be permitted to go. If it is impossible to conquer them by reproof, it is better to discharge a servant than to have to persist in fault-finding. Life is too short for perpetual rebukes.

Never should the mistress forget that there is as much demand for courtesy in her terms with her servants as in any other relation in which she is placed. This is a fact that is often overlooked. A woman does not make herself less but more of a lady by prefixing "please" to her requests to her servants, or by rewarding a service with a word of thanks. This sounds so obvious that the injunction may seem absurd, but a little observation of mistresses and maids will convince any one that there is need for the advice. In many households not only the mistress but the master of the home gives orders harshly and discourteously, and the children are quick to take their cue from their elders. A degree of rudeness is permitted by parents in their children that should not be tolerated for an instant. The small boys and girls in presumably well-bred families bully and "saucy" the servants in a fashion that would do credit to a gang of hoodlums in a tough district. Sometimes the parents do not know it, at other times they know of it and do not take the pains to correct it. The children should be taught to show courtesy to servants as well as to any one else with whom they are brought into contact. The very fact that the employées are not at liberty to retaliate in kind should be used as an argument to teach them the cowardice of insolence and unkindness.

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When courtesy is given by the employers it seldom fails to be accorded by the employed. A courteous order meets a respectful response, and, as a rule, willing service is more likely to be granted. As a matter of course, the service is in a way an obligation that is bought and paid for,

but the introduction of a little kindness into the transaction does much to diminish friction. Apart from that, however, the courtesy is a duty the employer owes herself, quite irrespective of its effect upon her servants.

While reproof should be given where it is needed, the mistress should never suffer herself to neglect the virtue of praise. It is a hard life when one's shortcomings only are recognized and one's good deeds are taken as a matter of course. If humanity were at its highest level the thought that the work was well done would perhaps be enough to bring satisfaction, but as it is, a word of commendation is grateful to all of us. It is a little thing to praise the latest baking as remarkably good, to commend the maid who has waited exceptionally well at a company lunch or dinner, to say a kindly word when a fault of heedlessness or neglect has been corrected; but such words as these are the oil that greases the domestic machinery. Without them it runs hard and demands more power to keep it in motion.

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There is always the possibility of such commendation being given so often that it comes to mean nothing. This danger the mistress must guard against. There is also the chance that the maid may be of the variety with whom praise must be cumulative in order to produce any effect. I have known one of that sort. If her biscuit were praised once as being good, they had to be called excellent the second time, surpassing the third, and so on, until the adjectives applicable to biscuit had been exhausted and the mistress saw dark gloom on the servant's face, and was asked coldly if the biscuit were not as good as usual. But such cases as these are not common, and in any circumstances the housekeeper must gauge the appetite for praise and administer it with judgment.

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Sometimes one meets a presuming maid who takes advantage of the kindness of the mistress to force an undue familiarity. This, too, must be watched for, but the possibility of this result does not do away with the desirability of consideration on the part of the mistress to the maid. Fully as often as one finds this trouble does one see a foolish mistress who, taking a fancy to a maid, lets the latter drift into a position of pseudo-intimacy which is hard to break off. It is not probable that the latter would have put herself forward without a certain amount of encouragement. Once in a blue moon one meets a pearl of a serving-woman who is worthy of all the confidence and affection that can be bestowed upon her, and who grants to her employers an unselfish devotion that one rarely gets from one's next of kin. Such cases are few and far between, and blessed among women is she who has such a treasure in her household. The average housekeeper should not be too ready to think she has drawn one of these prizes in the domestic-service lottery. If she goes ahead too quickly on this hypothesis, she may have an unpleasant awakening. When advances are made by the mistress, and the maid presumes upon them, it is only the mistress who is to blame if the maid "forgets her place."

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The mistress should avoid taking sides in any controversy between servants. Often there is a good deal of jealousy between the employées in a household, and if one maid is favored more than another there is likely to be hard feeling. This pitfall must be kept in mind by the mistress. Even without expressed preferences for one over the other, she is sometimes in danger of being drawn into quarrels the servants have between themselves. Almost always she is wise to decline to espouse the part of either one. Occasionally, if she has good servants who seem to misunderstand one another it may be worth while, for her own sake as well as for theirs, to attempt to adjust differences between them. As a rule, it is well for her to keep out of it after one trial has shown her that her intervention has worked no good. Never should the mistress be led into discussing one servant with another, or listening to the complaints that a domestic makes of her fellow-workers. Class-feeling is stronger than the relation of employer and employed, and the mistress who takes up the cause of one maid against another is by way of finding she has put her fingers between the bark and the tree. The two employées are likely to make up the quarrel and combine in common cause against the mistress. This does not bespeak any especial depravity on their part. They are simply human beings, and the tie that binds them together holds where that which attaches them to the mistress fails. They go with their own as she would with her own.

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In order to avert complications it is safe for the mistress to give her orders direct to her servants instead of sending them by one maid to another. The latter course makes room for misunderstanding and recriminations. When a maid has been in the same employ for a good while, this rule may be waived, but when she is new to the place there should be no go-between in the matter of giving directions. The mistress should announce her own orders.

IV

52

THE DUTIES OF THE MAID-OF-ALL-WORK

The general housework servant has already been referred to as a Pooh Bah in petticoats. She takes practically all labor for her province. It is an illustration of the value of specialization that as a rule she commands lower wages for her services than does a maid who fills any one alone of the functions the general housework servant performs.

Since the duties of the maid-of-all-work are what they are, the mistress should make a stipulation at the time of the engagement that the employée should be ready to "turn her hand to anything." For it is fatal if she once begins to say that this or that is not "her work." That phrase

is reserved for the use of the specialist. The general servant should understand that one of the conditions of her position is the necessity for making herself useful in every department of the household.

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This does not mean that she is to be a domestic drudge of the London "slavey" type. She needs no warning against this. Domestic service of a good sort is too hard to secure in this country for there to be any danger of the maid becoming down-trodden and imposed upon. The country bound-girl may have to submit to imposition, but it would not be tolerated for a moment by the ordinary independent serving-maid. If there is domination on either side it is more likely to be found on the part of the maid, who feels the advantage at which she holds her alleged mistress.

Putting aside extreme cases and turning to the average maid and mistress, it may be repeated that it is difficult to define with clearness the exact duties of the maid-of-all-work. She understands that she is to do cooking, waiting, and chamber-work, and probably washing and ironing. Should the family be small she will perform nearly all these duties herself—that is, if the family live in a simple fashion. Should the household be large, the maid may expect a helper with the laundry-work, and the lighter house-work will devolve upon the mistress of the house or her daughters. One pair of hands, even when backed by a quick head and a willing heart, cannot accomplish everything in the work of the house without neglecting or slighting something. The mistress of one maid must recognize this and be prepared to take her share of the labor when this is heavy. What her part is to be she must define as clearly as possible at the first, in order that the maid may know just what she has to do and be able to arrange her occupations to the best advantage. When the mistress does something outside of the duties she has assumed, she should have it thoroughly understood that her act is an exception, performed for some specific reason. It is very easy to let the exception glide into a rule, and what the maid received at first as a favor which would spare her extra toil she regards later as a right to which she is entitled.

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At the beginning, the mistress does well to lay out the routine of the work of the day for the benefit of the new maid. After the latter has learned the ways of the house, and finds that she can make slight alterations which will render her work easier, she should be permitted to do so if the mistress finds that the tasks are discharged as well as under the earlier plan. Many a mistress gains good points from a servant, and the intelligent housekeeper, knowing this, is on the lookout for suggestions she may find of service.

Certain regular duties are practically the same each day, no matter what the other work may be. Early rising should be insisted upon. Six o'clock is none too early for a maid to be up in a house where breakfast is at seven-thirty or eight o'clock. By half after six the maid should be dressed and down-stairs. If the care of the furnace falls upon her, her first duty in winter is to open the draughts of the furnace and put on a little coal. While this is kindling she can go back to her work up-stairs. The kitchen fire must be lighted, the kettle filled freshly and set to boil, the cereal put over the fire, before the maid goes into the living-rooms to open the windows. While these rooms are airing she may brush out the front hall and sweep off the steps, unless there is a man engaged to take care of the outside work of the house and to look after the furnace. When there is a gas-stove, the maid's work is much simpler, and in that case she may open the windows and do the brushing-up before she puts the kettle to boil. When the furnace fire has come up, she may go down, put on more coal, and close the draughts.

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In most families where but one maid is employed the mistress of the house dusts her drawing-room. When this is the rule, the maid has only to air the rooms, straighten the furniture that is out of place, and brush up any scraps or dust that need to be removed. If the floors or parts of them are bare, she should go over them with a damp cloth. Should the family be very small, consisting of but two or three persons, it is possible for the maid to do all the dusting. If this does not devolve upon her, there are other small duties she can perform at this time, such as filling and cleaning lamps. When there is a sitting-room, this, too, should be set in order.

Whatever else may be postponed until after breakfast, the dining-room must not be overlooked. It must be brushed up and thoroughly dusted. Few things are more de-appetizing than to sit down to the first meal of the day in a room which is still, so to speak, in curl-papers. If the servant is brisk about her work she can look after the drawing-room, halls, and dining-room, and set the table before she has to go back to the kitchen. In households where a heavy breakfast is served, or where the rooms are elaborately furnished, she may have to get up earlier or leave part of the dusting to be done later. But the dusting of the dining-room must never be omitted. The morning tasks may be lightened a little by setting the breakfast-table overnight, and when this is done a thin cover—a sheet of cheese-cloth is excellent—should be thrown over the table after it is set to protect the dishes and other table-furniture from dust.

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The preparation of the breakfast is the maid's next duty. The extent of the work this involves varies, of course, in different households. In some homes the old-fashioned American breakfast of hot meat or fish, warm bread, and potatoes cooked in some form is still preserved. Other families have adopted a modification of the Continental breakfast, and find all they need for the morning meal in fruit, a cereal, rolls or toast, eggs or bacon, and coffee. The latter breakfast simplifies the work of the household, but it is not popular everywhere. Whatever the breakfast, it should be in readiness at the hour appointed, if the members of the family are on hand or not. It need not be served until it is ordered, but it should be entirely ready. When all the persons in a household can reconcile themselves to breakfasting together, it makes work easier and saves time. Should they find it impossible to partake of it in harmony as well as in unison, and each one eats alone, it renders the meal a more prolonged function. Under such circumstances, the food may be kept

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hot for the tardy ones and they may be granted the privilege of getting it for themselves from the kitchen when they arrive, instead of impeding progress by making the duties of the day yield to their convenience.

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The fruit-course may be on the table when the family is summoned. At breakfast they usually do for themselves such waiting as passing plates, cups and saucers, and the like. A plate and finger-bowl may be in front of each person, and the porridge-bowl and saucer may be close by also, if it is desirable to simplify the service. Or these dishes may be on the serving-table or sideboard, and the maid may put them on the table with the cereal when she comes in to take out the fruit-plates. After the cereal-dishes have been removed and the rest of the breakfast served, the maid may be excused to go about her other work. The time of her own breakfast may be settled by the mistress and herself. The sensible course is for the maid to eat something and take a cup of tea or coffee in the intervals of her early work, but there are few servants who can be persuaded to do this. If the maid prefers she can take her breakfast while the family is eating, but most maids and mistresses seem to find it more convenient to dispose of the bedroom work as early as possible.

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When this is the case the maid should go to the chambers as soon as the substantial part of the breakfast is on the table. The occupants of the beds should have stripped these on rising and opened the windows on leaving the rooms. If this has been done the bedclothing has had a chance to air. In order that such airing may be adequately done, the covers should be taken from the bed and spread across a couple of chairs placed back to back. The covers must not drag on the floor. The mattresses should be beaten and turned back over the foot of the bed that the air may reach them from both sides. To freshen them thoroughly, they should be left thus, the windows open, for from fifteen minutes to half an hour. While this is going on the rooms may be brushed or gone over with a carpet-sweeper—not thoroughly swept: this comes at another time. The beds may now be made and the dusting done.

62

In a small family it is taken for granted that the maid should do this work, but in a household of more than two or three it is customary for the women of the family to look after the beds. In that case the maid need only brush up the rooms, strip the beds, and empty soiled water, leaving the rest of the up-stairs work undone while she goes back to the kitchen. She may now take her own breakfast if she has not had it earlier, and clear the table. After every meal the dishes should be removed from the table as soon as possible. They should be carried into the kitchen or the butler's pantry, the cloth brushed—never shaken—and folded, and the dining-room put in order, the crumbs brushed from about the table, the chairs put in their places, the room darkened, if it is warm weather. If the mistress of the house dusts the chambers, the maid may now wash the dishes; if not, she may scrape them and leave them to soak in warm water while she goes back to her dusting and cleans and arranges the bath-room.

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To clean the bath-room properly, there should always be a bottle of household ammonia at hand, one of forty per cent. solution of formaldehyde or other good disinfectant, a couple of cloths, a long-handled brush, and a scrubbing-brush. It is also well to have a can of concentrated lye or one of the preparations like it which will cut accumulations in waste-pipes. The hand-basin, tub, and closet should be scoured out each morning, the drain-pipes flushed twice a week with water to which has been added formaldehyde or the lye. The former is admirable for removing stains and deposits, but if these are very obstinate the formaldehyde must be left in the basin overnight. The long-handled brush enables the maid to clean the closet basin satisfactorily. Ammonia on the cloth used in washing the tub and basin will remove greasy deposits. The nickel fittings and woodwork must be wiped off, the soap-dishes and tooth-brush racks washed. The vessels used in the bedrooms must be cleansed in the same manner, the water-pitchers rinsed out and filled fresh every day, and the slop-jars and commodes scalded daily.

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The linen-closet should be in the charge of the mistress of the house, and the maid should have nothing to do with giving out fresh linen for the beds or towels for the bath-room.

When the bath-room work is finished, the maid may return to the kitchen, wash and put away the dishes, and get the kitchen and pantries in order. The maid who takes proper care of her china, glass, and silver will rinse her dishes thoroughly in one water and then wash them in hot suds, the glass first, then the silver, and then the china, drying each piece as it comes from the suds. The breakfast-dishes washed, the dish-towels should be rubbed out. Once a day they should be boiled.

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This is the time when the mistress inspects the contents of the refrigerator and decides what shall be the meals for the day. Either before or after such inspection the maid must wipe off the shelves of the ice-box, and three times a week it must be scoured out with hot water and washing-soda.

The general work of the house—of which more later—is undertaken now, and after it comes the preparation of the mid-day luncheon. At this meal little waiting is required. The table is set as for breakfast. If the work is properly managed there should be no heavy tasks for the maid to accomplish in the afternoon, except on washing and ironing days. She may perhaps attend to some light work like the polishing of silver, but, if her duties are arranged as they should be and she is brisk in their performance, she ought to be able to have a little time to herself in the afternoon. The preparation of dinner is seldom undertaken until after four o'clock in houses where dinner is served at seven.

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The maid is expected to discharge the work of a regular waitress at dinner, so far as serving

the dishes, passing plates, and the like are concerned. She is not required to remain in the room, but to come when rung for. Her work of clearing away and washing dishes is practically the same after luncheon and dinner as after breakfast.

The usual costume of the maid-of-all-work in the early part of the day is a neat wash-frock and white apron. While waiting at table she should wear a cap. She should have a colored apron on when working in the kitchen, but there should always be a fresh white apron at hand for her to slip on when she answers the bell. When she dresses to wait at dinner she should put on a black frock, white collar and apron and cap. Since she must wear the frock in the kitchen, it is better to have it of wash goods. The mistress should be in readiness to answer the bell when the maid is dressing for dinner, or when she is at the wash-tub or doing any other work it is difficult for her to leave. A great deal of consideration is demanded of both mistress and maid when there is but one servant and the family desires to live daintily and in accordance with good form.

A general outline of the daily work has thus been given, but each day must have its share of the week's duties. By general consent Monday and Tuesday are given over to washing and ironing, and on these days, unless a laundress is hired to help, the mistress of the house must take charge of the chamber-work and of all the dusting, and, if the wash is large, will perhaps feel it well to wash the dishes after breakfast, and to lend a hand in the preparation of luncheon. The plan practised in some houses of having all the sweeping done on Friday is open to criticism. Even if there is baking to be done on Wednesday, a portion of the sweeping or other cleaning may also be accomplished then. The dining-room or drawing-room, as being near the kitchen, may be cleaned on the days when the maid must watch her cooking closely.

This method of apportioning the work has much to commend it. Washing windows is tiresome, and the maid will feel it less if she does a few every day than if she gives a whole morning or afternoon to them. The scouring of large pieces of brass or silver and the cleaning of paint it is well to discharge all at one time, and this may be done on Thursday, while the sweeping of the bedrooms and cleaning of the upper part of the house may be reserved for Friday. The woodwork about the doorknobs should be wiped off, the stairs brushed down, and the halls gone over with the carpet-sweeper daily, and the house, from top to bottom, swept well at least once a week.

V

DUTIES OF TWO OR MORE SERVANTS

With specialization in the household come complications. The manual labor of the mistress may be lessened when she adds to her domestic force, but with every new maid she assumes more responsibilities. She has to reconstruct the system to which she had become accustomed when she employed but one servant, and very often the whole tone of the establishment is changed from what it was in the days to which she sometimes looks back as comparatively care free.

Yet with the increase in a family or with an alteration in the mode of living additional service becomes necessary, and, unless the housekeeper is of the type who takes life hard, there is no reason why she should not soon adapt herself to the new conditions. As in all other circumstances where she must make plans for her domestics, she should have her scheme of action clear in her own mind before she gives it to her servants. Vacillation and uncertainty on the part of the mistress shake the maid's confidence in the judgment of the ruling brain, and dispose her to question decisions and to neglect the duties which she thinks do not strike even the mistress as absolutely essential.

It is hard to change the method of work when the former general household servant is put into the place of cook or waitress and a second maid engaged. The former factotum is likely to criticise the way in which her late duties are performed, and perhaps to feel that the lion's share still falls to her. So, unless it is an exceptionally competent maid who has been doing all the work, it is usually well to begin a new deal of this sort by getting two maids and dividing the work between them from the outset.

The duties assigned to the different domestics in a house where two or more servants are employed are not easy to define explicitly. They must be determined largely by the individual wants and conditions. The size of the family, the arrangement of the house, the style of living, the fact of there being small children in the home, all suggest modifications of any general outline. Therefore, the schedule of ordinary household duties following must be subordinate to the conditions mentioned, and also to the capabilities of the individual servant. In a household where more than one servant is employed it is desirable that there should be from the beginning as clear as possible an understanding of the duties to be discharged, since with the specialization comes a disinclination to undertake any work outside of the particular line for which the servant was employed. In the household of more than one servant there is a strong probability that the statement, "I was not engaged to do this kind of work," will be heard, sooner or later.

"It seems absurd that I should employ a man-servant besides the coachman and the gardener," said a housekeeper to me the other day. "I have plenty of maids, and, as nearly as I can make out, I took on this extra man for the sake of having him sweep off the stone platform in front of the porch steps. It was nobody's work. The waitress said she did not hire to do outside work, and the

coachman said it had nothing to do with his work. It was not the gardener's business, and they were all so strenuous about it that I told my husband I seemed to be the only one to whose lot it really fell by rights to keep that platform clean. There was so much discussion over it that I finally hired a houseman for the especial purpose of having that platform swept. Of course, he looks after the furnace and brushes off the porch and washes windows and does other things of that sort, but they are merely incidents. The real reason I keep him is so that my husband or I won't have to sweep that platform!"

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Bearing in mind the possibility of such complications, the mistress should tell her second maid when she engages her that she may have to perform other tasks than those which lie exactly within an over-rigid conception of her duties. If this is understood from the start it averts later annoyance.

In a family of adults where two maids are kept, these are usually the cook and the waitress and chambermaid. Unless some special provision has been made to that effect, the cook does nothing outside of the kitchen in the early morning. She may perhaps take care of the furnace (this would be her first duty when she came down-stairs), and it is also possible that she may brush off the front steps and sidewalk, but with that her extra kitchen-work ceases for the moment. She gets the breakfast and should be up early enough to do this, brush up her kitchen, and perhaps make preparations for cooking that is to be done later in the day. After breakfast she may assist the waitress to wash the dishes. This depends upon the work the latter has to do.

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Upon the waitress comes the work of opening and airing the living-rooms, brushing out the halls, sweeping down the stairs, and dusting the rooms. All this should be done before breakfast, and in order to achieve this, the waitress must rise as early as the cook. As with the general housework maid, the hour of rising should be not later than six when breakfast is at half-after seven or eight.

In most homes it is customary to excuse the waitress as soon as the principal part of the breakfast has been served, that she may go about her chamber-work and be ready to come down to her breakfast by the time the family has finished. Before she goes to her own meal she clears the dining-room table and takes the dishes into the kitchen or butler's pantry.

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Even if the chambermaid is competent, it is well for the mistress to make it possible to enter the bedrooms occasionally while work is going on there to make sure that it is all being accomplished properly. It is easy for the best employées to drift into careless habits, and the details of bed-making are too often neglected. Under no circumstances should the mistress delegate the care of her linen-closet to a servant. She herself should lay out the linen that is to be used, taking it out in a certain routine so that it may all be worn alike. On the days when the beds are to be changed, she should select the sheets, pillow-slips, spreads, etc., before she goes down to breakfast, that the chambermaid may not be hindered in her work. Clean towels should also be given out by the mistress. In a very large establishment, or in the case of an exceptionally trustworthy maid, this work may perhaps be safe in the hands of some one besides the mistress, but, simple as is the task, it requires a discretion and familiarity with the household supplies that only the mistress is likely to possess.

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After the waitress has had her breakfast she returns and finishes any work she has left undone in the bedrooms. It is possible she may not have had time to dust properly, or that the dust had not had a chance to settle after she gave the room its morning brushing. The bath-room, too, is attended to at this time. After this the waitress washes the breakfast-dishes. Before she left the kitchen after her own breakfast she should have scraped the dishes and put them in soak. This will lessen the work of washing-up when she comes down. If there is a special arrangement by which the cook washes the dishes, the waitress is free for other work. Sometimes the dish-washing is divided, the cook taking charge of the dishes in which the food has been served, while the waitress looks after the glass, silver, and the finer china. It is not easy to apportion the work in this fashion if the dish-washing is all done in the kitchen, but where there is a butler's pantry it is comparatively simple. In this case the fine tableware should never go into the kitchen at all. This plan lightens the work of the waitress and makes her responsible for the more delicate dining-room ware.

78

A word here about the dish-washing. If the maid is open to suggestion the time she takes to do her dishes may be shortened. The general habit of servants is to leave all the dishes until the entire meal is concluded and then attack the mountain that has accumulated. Much time can be saved if they will wash the dishes as they come from the table. As a matter of course, this cannot be done in a family where the waitress is required to remain in the room during the entire meal. But this is seldom the practice in the average home, when only the family is present. There is a preference for what some one has called "unexpurgated meals," and the freedom of conversation that is not possible when servants are present. If this is the case, it is an easy matter for the waitress to wash the soup-plates while the heaviest course of the meal is being eaten, and to get some of the dishes of the second course out of the way while the family is discussing the salad. In a large family all the china may not be washed then, but the silver at least and some of the smaller pieces may be clean and out of the way by the time the meal is at an end. The science that is known as "making the head save the heels" is not understood and appreciated by the average maid, and if she could receive and apply a little instruction along these lines she would find her hours of work shortened and her toil lightened. If the butler's pantry adjoins the dining-room too closely, it is not always feasible to wash dishes while the family is eating, unless it can be done so carefully that unpleasant clatter is spared. But a little thought and skill given to the

79

80

matter will usually lessen the labor of washing-up after a long meal.

To return to the routine of work. Except when there is a great deal of cooking done it is well to arrange to have the cook take a share in the sweeping. What part this shall be circumstances must decide. She may sweep the first floor, including dining-room, drawing-room, sitting-room, and halls, once a week. Or there may be a day on which she goes up-stairs and gives the bedrooms a thorough sweeping. Again, it may be stipulated when she is engaged that she is to wash the windows. If one set of these tasks devolves upon her it leaves the waitress more free for her special duties. These vary, according to the size of the family. When this consists of but two or three members, the second maid should have time in a small house to keep everything in her domain in perfect order and even to do a little of the mending. If the family is larger she will have leisure for nothing outside of her regular duties, and the case will be the same if there is a good deal of entertaining done.

81

One part of the daily work of the waitress is to take care of the lamps, cleaning and filling these. When dusk draws on she should light these and the gas, pull down the shades, and make the living-rooms ready for the evening. It is also the work of the second maid to put the bedrooms in order for the night, closing the blinds, turning down the beds, removing spreads and day-pillows, and bringing iced water to each room the last thing before she goes to bed herself.

82

In point of fact, the work of the waitress is nearly as general in its nature as that of the maid-of-all-work. She attends the door, as a matter of course, answers the bells from the chambers or drawing-room, brings hot water to the bedrooms in the morning, prepares and carries in the afternoon tea-tray, and must be on the alert to see that the house is in spick-and-span order. She has the charge of the silver, keeping it clean and polishing the brasses. For each of these especial duties she should have a regular time, and the mistress should see that the system she put into practice when she had but one servant is followed out after she has added to her household force. All the dusting falls to the care of the waitress, unless the mistress prefers to reserve for herself the handling of curios and choice bric-à-brac. The cook may sweep, but it is the waitress who follows her with a dust-cloth and who scrubs the paint and wipes off stray finger-marks from mouldings and window-panes.

83

When there is a child in the house, and the second maid unites the offices of nurse and waitress, her work must be divided differently. She may do the chamber-work, but she cannot be expected to wash the dishes unless the mother or some other member of the family assumes the care of the infant while the nurse is otherwise employed. Nor can she be held responsible for all the details that would fall to her were she waitress, pure and simple. When a nurse is employed as well as a waitress, her work is usually absolutely separate from that of the other maid. She may do sewing and the baby's washing, help make the beds, and lend a hand on the afternoons and evenings out of the other maids, but she has little or nothing to do with the general work of the house.

If the cook has thus far received slighter attention than the waitress, it is because her work is so much more closely confined to one department that it requires less minute consideration. She prepares the meals, takes charge of the kitchen, cellar, and pantries, inspects the latter and the refrigerator every morning in company with the mistress of the house, and reigns supreme in the lower realms. In small families where two servants are employed the cook usually is laundress as well. In that case the waitress generally takes part of the cook's work on washing and ironing days, preparing the luncheon on those days, washing all the dishes, and keeping the kitchen in order. The waitress often assists with the fine ironing on Tuesday. Cook and waitress relieve each other on their days out. The cook waits on table when the waitress goes out and attends the door, unless the mistress chooses to do this herself. When the cook takes her holiday the waitress assumes her duties.

84

When the housekeeper has a force of more than two servants the complications thicken, since with the introduction of each new maid comes more specialization. Unless the new servant is engaged because the family is so large that the work is too heavy for two maids, or because of the need of a special servant, as a nurse, the addition is usually due to increased elaboration in the way of living, and this, of course, subdivides specialization still more as well as raises the scale of wages. The "professed cook," who does nothing but cook and demands a helper or scullery-maid, gets higher pay than the general cook who does the washing and ironing or the one who may refuse to do laundry-work but yet undertakes all the labor of the kitchen. The waitress who understands the service of wines and is an adept at handling large dinners and luncheons, demands—and gets—large wages and feels her dignity to an extent that makes her cling tenaciously to the rights and privileges of her position.

85

The average American household which employs servants—and there is a surprisingly large proportion of the sum total who keep no servant at all—is contented with one, two, or, at the most, three servants. The third may be a nurse, as I have said, or a laundress, who, besides her washing and ironing, does the chamber-work and thus leaves the waitress free for her especial tasks in the dining-room and for the duties of a parlor-maid. The laundress may also wash windows or help in other cleaning. Or the third servant may be seamstress and chambermaid and have nothing to do with the dining-room or with the kitchen unless she fills one of these places on the "day off" of the regular incumbent.

86

In a book that deals with the work of the maid-servant it is not worth while to go into the duties of the man-servant or to touch upon the possibilities of change latent in the introduction of Japanese and Chinese service. That all has its part in the domestic labor problem, but this is not

87

VI

CERTAIN PROBLEMS OF SERVICE

88

The tendency to introduce the wearing of livery into domestic service has grown within the past few years. There are still many protests against it, and writers are found who declare the cap and apron of the housemaid a badge of servitude. But the growth of the livery has been universal, and implies no more degradation in one relation of life than in another. The public servant, whether he be policeman or street-cleaner or motorman or car conductor or what you will, takes his uniform as a matter of course. The shop-girl, who often prides herself on belonging to a higher social class than the "living-out girl," does not feel disgraced if in the big department store where she works she is expected to conform to the rules of the establishment and don a black gown and a white collar. The trained nurse does not feel it an indignity to wear a cap. In truth, there is a great deal of nonsense talked about the livery of the servant-girl. I have known sensible young women—at least they were sensible in everything else—who would flatly refuse to wear a pretty and becoming cap, and would give up the chance of a good place sooner than put one on.

89

The girl who surveys matters with an unprejudiced view will recognize a pretty little cap as an uncommonly becoming adjunct to her dress. She will also appreciate the fact that she looks much neater with her flying locks tucked back under a cap than she would with the stray tresses wandering over a forehead that is heated by brisk work. Rightly considered, the cap is no mark of servitude, and has a reason for its existence in the added neatness and freshness it imparts to the working-girl's garb.

90

This, indeed, is the whole object of the livery. When the maid is at work she should be dressed in a manner that is suitable for her employment. In the morning when she is to be busy with her housework, in and out of the kitchen, handling a broom and dust-cloth, her dress should be a neat print. In houses where the mistress provides the working-frocks of the maids, as is sometimes done, she can have these frocks made all in one piece, but in the majority of homes, where but one or two maids are kept, they dress themselves. Under these circumstances they cannot be expected to conform to any especial color or style, and will probably wear shirtwaists and skirts. It is a pity if the skirts are dark woollen goods, because these gather dust and retain the odors of cookery, but a large apron will protect the skirt, and washing is saved to the maid if her whole gown is not of a light material. She is wise if she wears a large sweeping-cap in the morning when she is busy at work that is likely to make dust, but this can be exchanged for a smaller cap when the rougher parts of her labor are out of the way.

91

For the afternoon, when it is feasible, the maid, whether she be the maid-of-all-work who discharges the functions of both cook and waitress, or the servant who is waitress and parlor-maid, should, if correctly dressed, wear a black frock with white collar and cuffs, and a white bib apron. The latter may be a little more elaborately trimmed than that she has on in the morning. In fact, with a morning apron she may dispense with the bib altogether and wear only a plain, large apron. Some mistresses demand the broad collar, although the cuffs may be omitted. I say "when it is feasible" the maid should make this change, because it is not always the most convenient thing in the world for the maid who has to do the cooking of the dinner before she serves it to be in her black frock all the afternoon. She may look neat in her gingham waist and skirt, and then, when she gets everything in order for the dinner, she may slip away to her room for a minute and get into the black waist. The waitress who has no kitchen work is usually expected to have on her black waist soon after luncheon in order to be ready to answer the bell properly dressed. The absolutely correct custom demands that she should be in this garb before luncheon is served, but this rule is not followed in the average household.

92

There are many obstacles in the way of strict enforcement of various regulations which are insisted upon as essential by those who endeavor to make the social by-laws. To such rules the majority of housekeepers would be glad to conform if they could. Like Lady Teazle, they would be only too happy if roses grew under their feet and they could gather strawberries all the year round. But domestic exigencies forbid many indulgences, and the wise woman is she who adapts herself to things as they are and does not make herself wretched over non-essentials. When a woman keeps but one maid to do the work of a household of half a dozen members, she cannot hope to have her establishment conducted as it would be with a force of three or four maids. She may very properly insist upon certain niceties of serving and waiting, but if she does this she must make up for it in other ways. For instance, the woman who demands candles for her dinner-table instead of gas must not expect the maid who does all the work of the house to have time to keep the candlesticks in order. The care of the flowers that brighten the table must also come upon the mistress. She must take this sort of thing for granted as much as she does the necessity for relying upon her own efforts in the preparation of her more delicate desserts and salads. Such efforts are the price she pays for wishing to live in a certain fashion, and, since she has made her choice, she has no right to be dissatisfied with it. Plainer modes of life and ultimate salvation are not incompatible, but if she prefers the added daintiness to the lighter labor it devolves upon her to do the additional work necessarily implied by the touches of elegance.

93

94

I have spoken of the habit of some mistresses of providing the maids' working-dress. This is done in large establishments where a certain livery is required, and in other homes, where the mistress feels it worth while, she supplies the black frock to be worn in the afternoon. Whether this is done or not it is customary for the mistress to provide the caps and white aprons worn by her maids, and the collars and cuffs, if she insists upon the latter. These belong to the mistress, and are not taken away by the maid when she leaves.

95

The laundering of these articles is generally paid for by the mistress. That is, if the washing is put out or some one comes in to do it, the aprons are included in the family washing instead of being done by the maid herself with her own washing. In the average family, where two or three servants are employed, each does her own washing and has a fixed time for it, unless some other arrangement is made between the mistress and the servant. In some cases the mistress provides also colored aprons for the maid to wear at her heavy work, but this is not obligatory. There is not the same reason for this that there is for the mistress's purchasing the livery. It is taken for granted that the maid has enough clothing of her own to enable her to look decent about the house. If, however, the mistress has her decided preferences in favor of the maid dressing herself in a special fashion, it is her business to provide the raiment in which the maid is required to appear. Often it will be found that the maid has adapted herself to her work and has purchased for herself neat black waists or frocks to wear in the afternoon. In this case the mistress is saved just so much expense and may esteem herself fortunate, but she has no right to demand that the maid shall supply herself with such a garb at her own expense.

96

The social relations of servants is a matter with which some mistresses exercise themselves over-much, while others, perhaps, give too little attention to it. According to the ideas of some persons, the affairs of a maid outside of working hours concern no one but herself. So long as she conforms to certain rules of the household, her coming and going, her associates and habits, are no one's business but her own, unless they interfere with the proper performance of her work. In a way this is entirely true, and a mistress has no more right to pry into the affairs of her maid than the maid has to be overcurious about the business of the mistress. But there is something to be said on the other side. Look at it in as matter-of-fact fashion as one will, relations of domestic service are different from any other business association. The mistress and maid do not only meet in the morning and part again at night, after having been together simply in the way of their work during the day; they eat and sleep under the same roof. Often they work side by side for an hour at a time. They see each other in bodily and mental dishabille. They are by way of asking or granting little kindly services that were never nominated in the bond. Without bringing too much sentiment into the relation, it may yet be asserted that it is next to impossible for them to meet on purely business terms.

97

When this is admitted it opens the way for something more. Not familiarity or interference, but a kindly and friendly interest. This interest grows to be something very like a sense of responsibility if the maid is a young girl far removed—as she often is—from the family and associations amid which she was reared. The ties that used to hold her have been loosened, and it would be no wonder if in the feeling of irresponsibility that comes with novel freedom she should occasionally make a mistake which she afterwards has to repent more or less bitterly. In one sense it is none of the mistress's business. She is not her maid-servant's keeper. Yet she could hardly help reproaching herself if she thought that a kindly word, a query that showed her interest, might have spared the girl a blunder, even if this did not amount to wrong-doing.

98

So, if the mistress can do it, she should try to establish some sort of an *entente* with her maid. It can hardly be an *entente cordiale*, perhaps, until they have been together long enough to have broken down the little class antagonism that generally exists at first between mistress and maid and to convince the latter of the good-will of the former. It does not take much trouble to bring about this state of affairs. An interest in the girl's family, a question or two as to whether she has any of her own people on this side of the water, an inquiry as to her friends—not in a manner that seems to imply a mere curiosity or patronage, but in a fashion that shows a genuine friendliness is prompting the queries. The assurance of the maid that she may feel free to have her friends come to see her, a pleasant word of greeting to these if they come and the mistress happens to meet them, all do their part towards making the maid sure that her employer is in a measure her friend.

99

When it comes to the question of "followers"—that vexed question in so many households—the mistress is wise if she pursues the straightest course. In the first place, she should recognize the fact that the maid-of-all-work should be permitted to have her men friends come to call on her. She did not enter a nunnery when she went into domestic service. She is a human being, and she has the right to friends among the opposite sex—just as good a right as the daughter of madam herself. Bearing this in mind, the employer should allow "followers" subject to the same rules which she would enforce with her own daughters. The young men should come at a suitable hour and go at a suitable hour. They should no more be granted permission to linger around the kitchen when the objects of their attention are busy with the daily toil than should the callers of mademoiselle be welcomed when she is at her music lesson or occupied with her language teacher. To do the followers justice, they do not often attempt it, nor do the maids encourage it. Of course, there are the stock jokes about the policeman on the beat and the milkman and the butcher's boy, but none of these—except the policeman—has sufficient leisure to spend much time in the kitchen or the front area during working hours. Even if there is violation of this rule once in a while—well, we have all had little occurrences of the same kind in our lives. Our chance meetings and partings out of canonical hours did not take place in the front area, perhaps, but

100

101

that was because our employments did not lead either of us there.

The responsibility of the mistress does not go so far as to make it necessary for her to inquire into the antecedents of the young men who visit in her kitchen as she would into those of the men callers in the drawing-room. That is outside of her province. Yet she may let the maid know that she feels an interest in her admirers and friends, and such an interest is likely to be appreciated.

Again I feel I must defend myself against a charge of sentimentality. But I have seen these experiments tried with success. I do not mean by this that the maids were models of unending devotion and fidelity. We seldom find this sort of thing without flaw among our chosen associates. But I have known instances where the casual friendliness of the mistress was repaid tenfold in times of sickness or trouble by offices which could not be compensated for in money. And it was done freely and gladly, with no thought of anything out of the ordinary, with no hint that sacrifices were being made.

"Yes," says some one, "and those very maids will talk you over behind your back."

Quite true, dear madam. As the majority of us discuss not only our maids but our own familiar friends behind their backs—as they do us when our backs are turned. We are all of us as ready to resent criticism as we are to offer it. When we find the habits of high life below-stairs, it behooves us to ask ourselves what sort of an example along those lines we had set the maid-servants within our gates.

Without hope of any reward, except that of the comfortable sensation we have when we have attempted to do the decent thing, let us try to make our maids feel at home in our houses. If it is possible, they should have a place in which to meet their friends. Where there is space, it is becoming more and more the custom to provide a sitting-room for the servants in which their visitors can be received. To many housekeepers such an arrangement as this would be impossible. In such cases there should at least be an effort to render the kitchen as pleasant as the circumstances will permit. It may be clean and neat, there may be a couple of chairs that are tolerably comfortable, and any little attempt the maid may wish to make to add to the attractiveness of the apartment should be encouraged.

VII

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

The mistress of a house must not look for bricks without straw. In other words, she must not demand good work from her maids if they lack the tools with which to achieve it.

When women, in the course of discussions on domestic topics at clubs and elsewhere, declare that housekeeping can be practised on the same principles as those on which men conduct their business, when they affirm that housekeeping may be run like machinery, they sometimes forget what is meant by the management of machinery. The metaphor pleases them so much that they fail to examine it too closely. But any machinist will tell one that an engine does not go of itself. I do not mean only that the fires must be kept up and the water which is to generate steam must be provided. There is more to it than that. The machinery must be watched and oiled and kept in perfect repair. If any bit of it is injured it must at once be replaced. There must be a regular inspection made to see that there is not so much friction on one part as to make too much wear and tear, and that other portions which are temporarily out of use do not become rusty so that they are unmanageable when they come in demand.

But what housekeeper takes such care of her home machinery as this? Here and there one may be found, but the majority, having started the works going, seem to have the impression that the wheels will continue to revolve with no further attention. It is taken for granted that the maid will pursue the even tenor of her way as if she were another piece of clockwork that has been wound up—or, perhaps, as if she were a part of the same big machine which comprises the household and all its appointments.

The difference, of course, between the machinery and the home is that in the conduct of the latter the human equation has to be reckoned with constantly. It is not enough for the mistress to see that all parts of the engine are supplied, if this or that section is to be injured through carelessness as soon as her back is turned. The head machinist would probably drop a man on short notice who had proved himself to be persistently careless of the portion of labor committed to his charge. The fact that he could do other parts of his work well, that he was kindly and good-natured and never spoke an impertinent word, would weigh for little if he did not pay attention to his especial duty and take proper care of that which was committed to his charge. With the domestic servant matters are on a different footing. In counting up her good and bad qualities the mistress must keep a debit-and-credit account and feel that one positive virtue offsets many negative defects.

Yet, even while she does this and puts up with shortcomings because of some one conspicuous merit, the mistress should not relax her effort to approximate, so far as she may, the performance of household duties to the workings of the machinery to which it is so often likened. And to do this she must see that everything necessary is at hand, to make the wheels turn smoothly.

It is a proof of the carelessness with which many homes are managed, and of the slackness which maids take for granted, that the household equipment is so often conspicuously poor. I have been in houses that were well furnished above-stairs where I have seen the maids attempting to do careful cookery with utensils that were utterly inadequate. There were broken vegetable-graters, cream-churns, egg-beaters, flour-sifters, coffee-pots with parts of their mechanism missing, bowls and dishes with large sections gone from them, an insufficient supply of such small items as measuring-cups, mixing-spoons, vegetable-knives, and the like. I have also had a glimpse of the articles provided for keeping a house clean—stubby brooms, worn-out brushes, half-bristled scrubbing-brushes, a stingy provision of the detergents and cleansing fluids manufactured for household use. In the midst of this dearth the maids worked as best they could, accomplishing wonders when one thought of the means they had in hand.

108

"But," some one will say, "these things were doubtless provided at first, and if they are lacking now it is because of the carelessness of the maids that had them in charge."

Precisely so. But the maids ought not to have been permitted to be careless. If that consummation devoutly to be desired of making the house run like a machine is ever to be brought about, the methods of the shop must be introduced into domestic work. The maid should have given to her the utensils that she will need in order to do her work properly and then she should be held responsible for them—not responsible merely by word either. It will be necessary for the mistress to keep her eyes on these details just as the head machinist makes his inspection. She will have to see for herself that the broom is hung up or stood on the handle instead of on the bristle end, that the brushes and dust-pans not only have their nails or hooks, but are kept on them when not in use instead of being thrown into a corner of the kitchen and kicked about by any one who finds them in the way. She will have to inquire if the dish-towels are washed out after service, boiled once a day, and well dried and aired—not thrown carelessly over a clothes-horse or a line to dry with the grease and stains from carelessly washed dishes still clinging to them. Once in so often the mistress must make an examination of the contents of the pot-closet to ascertain for herself if the double boiler has been left on the fire until the water has cooked away and the bottom has cracked from dryness. She must see that her pans are scoured when they need it, that no utensil is ever put away with part of the contents sticking to the inside.

109

110

Do some or all of these admonitions appear uncalled for? I hope they are, but I am afraid that at least five out of every ten housekeepers would find one of these defects in her pantries should she go there seeking perfection.

When the mistress neglects matters in this way the maid-servant is not wholly to blame for her heedlessness. It must always be borne in mind that our domestic service is not recruited from training-schools. The maid comes to us from her own home or from a succession of other persons' homes, where she has been taught to do one thing in half a dozen different ways. From all these she has evolved her own method, which may be good and may be poor. Such as it is, she is likely to follow it, unless she is persuaded of a more excellent way or compelled into it by her new mistress. In the latter case she will probably "go back to the blanket" as soon as she is at liberty.

111

I have already said that it is a mistake for the mistress to demand that the maid shall change her mode of doing a piece of work, provided the results are good. The mistress should allow time to discover the advantages or disadvantages of the servant's system. But if she feels that her own way is surely better than that the maid follows, she should insist upon a change. She should recognize the possibility of the employée's being a reasonable creature, and show her what she considers the merits of the new plan at the same time that she makes it clearly understood that, whether the maid sees these or not, the work is to be done in the manner prescribed by the mistress. She pays for the work and she has a right to say in what way it shall be performed.

112

Sometimes one finds a maid who rebels against this sort of management. In that case a mistress is wise to discharge her at the end of the month—that is, unless she can be induced to do the work in the right fashion. Of course, it is always upon the cards that the maid may have so many other good qualities that they make up for this defect; but, as a rule, it will be found that the maid who persists in refusing to adopt a method of work ordered by her employer will be hard to manage in other ways. Before giving up such a servant, however, it is well for the mistress to think carefully of the question at issue and be very sure that the way she desires possesses enough advantages to make it worth while to raise an issue upon it.

113

Sometimes a maid will come around to a new method of her own accord. I knew of a cook whose mistress had purchased one of the admirable bread-making machines. The housekeeper had investigated it thoroughly and become persuaded that it not only saved time and labor, but that the bread made from it was more wholesome than that mixed and kneaded in the ordinary manner. So she installed the machine in her kitchen, explained its workings and its virtues to the cook, and supposed that there would be no trouble about it. But the cook was an obstinate conservative. She had made good bread by the old way, and to the old way she would adhere. She did not absolutely refuse to use the machine, but she calmly went on making bread by hand. Excellent bread it was, too. The mistress could find no fault with it—but that was beside the point.

Being a sensible woman, she hesitated to raise an issue and possibly lose a good cook and a trustworthy servant. She herself went into the kitchen and made bread two or three times with the machine. Her daughter did the same. In spite of herself the cook became interested in the new-fangled notion. She saw that it saved time and toil. At last she tried the machine herself. The results were so good and at so small a cost of work that she became an ardent convert.

114

"Sure, it was wicked I used to be about it," she confessed to the mistress later. "When you and Miss Jane were making bread with it I used to be just prayin' that it would turn out bad."

There are plenty of maids of this kind, although once in a while one finds a specimen of the other sort. Usually the latter kind is found among the older women who have become "set in their ways" and object to experiments of any nature. If the employer wishes to be mistress in her own house she can hardly retain one of this variety in her service. But if there are reasons that make her willing to waive her own authority for the sake of comfort in other directions, she is perhaps prudent to do it. This is a matter each housekeeper must settle for herself. 115

To return to the first point for a moment. The mistress must give her maids what they need to do their work well before she expects to receive good work from them, and having done this shall demand that they keep their tools in order. At the same time that she makes adequate provision she should not encourage extravagance by overabundance. We all have a tendency to be lavish when we see before us what seems like more than enough. The maid should have what will suffice for the present need, but no more. There is no sense in having half a dozen double boilers, for instance, when the utmost need of the household does not call for more than four. Keep two in reserve until accident or use has disabled one of the others. The maid should not have so large a supply of kitchen and china towels that she feels it makes little difference if she takes proper care of them. Instead, she should have enough to wipe her dishes without having to stint herself, and if extra towels are needed for extra service they should be given for that time and then put away until the next occasion arises for their use. She should not have three or four dust-cloths in commission all the while, but should wash those she has every day or two and use them until they are worn out. Her cleaning-cloths—for lamps, bedroom crockery, and the like—should not be so numerous that she feels it is easier to throw them away than to take the trouble to rinse them after service. 116

Not only the housekeeper is to be considered in the enforcement of these rules. The maid is being trained in habits of thrift or of wastefulness, and the housekeeper is preparing for her own kitchen or for the kitchen of some other woman a servant who will be valuable or the reverse. I have touched upon the responsibility of the housekeeper for her servants in other respects, and this is another way in which she should appreciate her duty to her neighbor. 117

In some households the mistresses have slipped into the careless way of permitting the maid to give orders to the butcher and the grocer. This should only be done in unusual circumstances. The maid may be entirely honest and conscientious. At the same time, the mistress is not only putting her in the way of a temptation to extravagance, but is also neglecting one of her own duties. The maid should have a pad and pencil hanging in the kitchen. With these she should keep a list of what is wanted in the line of household supplies. When she takes the last of any kind of provision from its receptacle she should make a note of it on the pad. By this method there is never a discovery at the last moment that a supply of some desired grocery is exhausted. This memorandum the mistress must go over every morning when she makes her daily inspection of the kitchen and pantries. The slip she tears from the pad will serve as her list of purchases when she goes to market. This, too, should not be the work of the maid. Once in a while she can be sent out on an emergency errand, but, as a rule, it is the mistress who should do the buying. By following this plan she knows what is ordered, what delivered, and is able at the end of the week to check intelligently the record in her weekly book from the grocer or the market-man. 118

In all that has been said there has been no attempt to consider the large establishment where there is a housekeeper who assumes the duties of the mistress of the home in the way of ordering meals, directing servants, and looking after all the details of the household. Such establishments are not plentiful enough to be considered in a book of this scope. It is in the homes where but one servant or at the most two or three are kept that problems of the sort we have touched upon present themselves for solution. In such homes these problems are often matters of daily or weekly consideration. The mistress desires to do all she can to enable the maid to make the best of her place; the maid's intentions are usually as good as those of the mistress, even if they are not quite so clearly formulated. 119

Something may be said concerning payment for extra work. When a maid is engaged it is with the understanding that she is to do for a fixed wage all the work in her particular line. If hers is the place of a general-housework servant, the duties are, as already said, hard to define, but there may be an approximate idea formed of what they comprise. In other positions in the household it is a simpler matter to lay down with some precision what the avocations of each servant shall be. Except by special arrangement she should not be required to step outside her round. But there are times in nearly every family when some accident or set of unavoidable occurrences renders it necessary to ask one maid to do the work of another. Sudden illness, the departure of one maid before it is possible to engage another, the descent of unexpected guests—any one of these things may make it needful for the housekeeper to request a servant to do something besides her regular work. 120

When this is the case it should be shown by the mistress that she appreciates the consideration of the servant, and there should be an effort made to compensate for such consideration—not necessarily by a payment of money, but by a gift, the granting of an unusual privilege, or by relieving the maid of a part of her own regular work. It is not a good principle for the mistress to fall into the habit of bestowing tips for any extra service. If matters were conducted on a purely business basis this might be desirable, but, as I have said before, in the relation of mistress and maid there are too many opportunities for mutual accommodation for either to stand upon a point 121

of a kindness granted by the other side.

When it comes to tips from guests it is another matter. If a visitor feels more comfortable to offer a gift to a servant on leaving, there is no reason why it should not be done. I know of employers who say that they pay their servants adequate wages and do not thank their guests for feeling it obligatory upon them to supplement these by presents. This is not quite the point at issue. The guest does not mean to question the justice or generosity of his host, but he feels that he has caused extra labor and has received services for which he would like to make some return to the domestic. The gift is not taken by the servant as a supplement to her wages, but as an acknowledgment of services given, on her own part, and as a token of appreciation of these by the guest. The matter of tips in this country has never assumed the importance it possesses on the other side of the water, although it is by way of becoming a more serious matter with every year. 122

At least once a week the maid should go over the list of silver, which the mistress should have put into her hands when she came first to the house, and see that no pieces are missing. In the same way it is well for her to keep track of the china. Whenever a piece is nicked, cracked, or broken she should report it at once. Few mistresses are severe when this is done, although they are rarely so amiable as not to be irritated to discover such damages by accident. There will be mishaps in the best-regulated household, but concealment of these or neglect to mention them is a mistake. It shakes the confidence of the employer and saves the employée no trouble, since the injury is bound to be discovered sooner or later, and the reproof is much sharper in those circumstances than it would be if the maid had made a virtue of necessity and told of the breakage when it occurred. 123

When there has been an accident of this sort there should be judgment exercised on the part of the mistress as to enforcing the rule concerning payment for breakages. If the maid is usually careful and the accident was the result of circumstances she could not avoid, it is better not to deduct the value of the broken article from her wages. If she is habitually careless, she will learn a lesson by having to pay for her fault. If there is a clear understanding on this matter at the time the maid is engaged, there is no room for any feeling of being imposed upon when the rule is put into practice. Justice should be tempered with mercy, however, and allowances made for the first offence. The maid should be asked just how the accident happened, warned against holding wet china in slippery, moist fingers, crowding too many pieces into the dish-pan at once, attempting to carry too large a number at one time, and other methods of provoking casualties of this sort. Should she persist in such habits after the warning has been given, the payment for the broken articles should be insisted upon. 124

VIII

A RECAPITULATION OF DAILY DUTIES

THE GENERAL-HOUSEWORK MAID

Rise at six o'clock and have clothing in readiness, so as to be dressed and down-stairs by six-thirty. Strip the bed and open the window before leaving the room.

If the care of the furnace is in your hands, open the draughts and put on a little coal.

Light the kitchen fire, fill the kettle, put on the breakfast cereal and potatoes, or anything that requires some time to cook.

Open the windows of rooms on first floor, brush up the floor and the halls, and sweep off the front steps. Go over bare floor in dining-room with a cloth and dust the dining-room. Put more coal in furnace, close draughts, and give a look at kitchen fire. 126

Set table for breakfast. If a large cloth is used, put it on over the canton-flannel "silence cloth." If a square of damask or doilies are employed at breakfast, lay them on *evenly*. Crooked spreading of a table is an abomination.

At each place put a plate, knife, fork, and two spoons, the knife and spoons to the right, with the napkin beside them; the tumbler also on the right. The fork must be on the left, and near it the bread-and-butter plate. If fruit is the first course, there should be at each place a fruit-plate with a doily, finger-bowl, and fruit-knife on it. For oranges an orange-spoon should also be laid on the plate. When a cereal is the first course, the porridge bowls or saucers should be at each plate.

Arrange the cups and saucers, sugar-bowl, cream-jug, and other necessaries at the end of the table where the mistress of the house sits. At the other end place the carvers and lay the heavy mat for the hot dish the master of the house is to serve. See that there are tablespoons, salt-cellars, and pepper-cruets, and the call-bell on the table, a salt and pepper to every two persons, the tablespoons at the corners of the table, the call-bell near the mistress's hand. 127

Return to kitchen and prepare breakfast. Cut bread, fill glasses, and bring in butter the last thing. Do not announce the meal until everything is ready to serve. Put on a clean apron to wait

on table.

While the family is eating the last course of breakfast go to the bedrooms, strip the beds, turn the mattresses, hang the bedclothing over chairs, and leave it to air while going over the floors with a carpet-sweeper. Empty soiled water in bedrooms.

Go down-stairs and have your own breakfast. Clear the table, scrape dishes and put them in water. Return to second floor, make beds, dust and clean bath-room. 128

Wash and put away dishes. Rinse out dish-towels and put them over to boil. See what is in the pantry and refrigerator. Wipe off the shelves of pantries and refrigerator every day. Scald out ice-box three times a week. Clean and fill lamps.

Go now to any special work, such as sweeping, washing windows, or general cleaning. Stop this in time to prepare luncheon. Set the table for this meal as you did for breakfast. Be sure that the dining-room has been well aired and that there is no odor of stale food left from breakfast. Observe the same rules as at breakfast about serving butter, bread, and water.

After luncheon clear table, darken dining-room, and finish any small duties that have been left over from the morning. Plan your work so as to have only light tasks in the afternoon.

Change your dress, brush your hair, put on a fresh cap and a clean apron, and be ready to wait on the door. If afternoon tea is to be served at five o'clock, make the tray ready and carry it in at the proper hour. Start to get dinner in time so that there will not be a rush at the last moment. If possible, arrange the preparations so that the cooking can safely be left half an hour before dinner-time in order to set the table. 129

Spread on the thick "silence cloth" smoothly and lay the table-cloth over it evenly and without a wrinkle. Place the centre-piece in the middle of the table with the vase of flowers or jardinière on it, lay a carving-cloth in front of the master of the house, with the carvers. If a mat is used under the meat dish, put it in place. At the other end of the table lay the soup-ladle. At each place there should be a service plate with the knife and soup-spoon to the right of this, with the tumbler and napkin; the fork or forks, if more than one will be needed, at the left. If butter is served at dinner, the bread-and-butter plate may be at the left. If not, a piece of bread, cut thick, may be laid on the napkin. In most households it is customary to give a clean napkin at dinner. This should be folded plainly. The tablespoons, salts, peppers, and call-bell should be in place as at other meals. If such articles as olives, salted nuts, and the like are used, they should be on the table before dinner is served. When soup is the first course the soup-plates may be put on the service plates and the tureen be placed in front of the mistress before dinner is announced. In houses where gongs or bells are not used, the maid comes to the door of the room where the mistress is seated and announces, "Dinner is served." 130

If you have not dressed earlier, change your waist just before announcing dinner.

After the soup is served, dish the rest of the dinner and be ready to bring it in when the soup has been eaten. Take out the tureen first, then the soup-plates, carrying out two at a time, one in each hand. Carry in all the hot dinner-plates at once, put them on the serving-table, and as you take up a service plate from the table put a hot dinner-plate in its place. Bring in the meat dish first and put it in front of the carver, and then bring in the vegetable dishes and place them on the serving-table or dinner-wagon. Pass meat and vegetables and see that every one has bread and that the glasses are filled. Return to the kitchen and wash the silver and china of the first course. 131

When clearing the table after this course, take out the meat and vegetables first and then the soiled plates. If salad is to be served next, put down a salad-plate in place of the dinner-plate removed. Set the oil and vinegar cruets and the bowl for mixing the salad-dressing in front of the hostess, and pass the salad first and afterwards the dressing. The dishes of the preceding course may be washed during the salad course.

If a sweet comes next or in place of a salad course, clear the table, removing salts and peppers, unused silver, and everything except glasses. Brush off the crumbs into a plate with a folded napkin, take off and fold the carving-cloth. Put the plates and finger-bowls on the table. Bring in the sweet. When this has been finished, take out the dish that has held it, remove the soiled plates, and bring in the coffee. 132

Return to the kitchen, have your own dinner, and finish washing the dishes. By this time the family will have left the table. Clear this, remove the cloth, folding it in the creases, put away the china, and darken the room. Finish putting the kitchen in order for the night.

On Monday morning rise early enough to get a good start at the washing. Any work of this sort that can be done before breakfast is just so much clear gain. Proceed with other work as on other days, except that the dusting of the rooms and the care of the chambers will probably be assumed by the mistress. Wash the sheets and other heavy pieces early in the day in order that they may have a chance to dry. Do the flannels early and follow them with the fine clothes. The second water from the flannels may be used for the first rinsing of the cotton clothes. If the worst-soiled pieces can be put in soak overnight it will lessen the labor on Monday morning. 133

On Tuesday morning it is also well to get an early start in order to make a good beginning on the ironing. The same rule of early rising will be found helpful when there is any piece of extra work to be accomplished. A prompt beginning gives time for rest in the latter part of the day.

Rise at six o'clock and be down-stairs by six-thirty. Open draughts of furnace and put on a little coal. Fill the kettle and put the cereal over the fire. Make ready the materials for the breakfast. When the furnace fire has come up put on more coal and close draughts. Open the windows of the cellar, air the pantry, and see that the kitchen is in good order, the stove blacked, etc. After the family and the kitchen breakfast inspect the contents of the pantries and refrigerator and plan with the mistress for the best use that can be made of left-overs. If soup is to be made it should be put over now, and desserts that are to be served cold should be prepared. The ice-box must be scoured out with hot water and soda three times a week, the shelves of the pantry and the refrigerator wiped off every day. 134

Each morning see what is wanted in the way of groceries and other provisions, and make a list of what is lacking, to be handed to the mistress before she goes to market. After the luncheon and dinner are planned there will probably be time to do a little work outside of the kitchen before the hour for making ready for luncheon. Never be behindhand in such preparations so that the waitress is delayed in serving. Keep the luncheon hot after it comes from the table, and have the kitchen table set ready for the maids. 135

In the afternoon there is usually time for resting and changing the dress. The beginnings of the dinner should be made in season and the utensils used should, as far as possible, be washed as fast as they are done with in order to prevent a clutter of work when the meal is over. Wash the pots and pans in which the dinner is cooked as soon as the food is out of them. Scalding water should be put into a vessel as soon as you have finished using it. Scald out towels and fish and jelly cloths as soon as you have done with them. Keep the sink clean, and wash it out thoroughly after each meal.

THE WAITRESS AND CHAMBERMAID 136

Rise at six o'clock and be down-stairs at six-thirty. Open and air the rooms on the first floor, brush off the steps, sweep out the halls, and brush down the stairs. Brush up the drawing-room or go over the floor with a carpet-sweeper, wipe up the hard-wood floors, and dust the rooms. If the woodwork is painted, spots must be wiped from it. Take hot water up to bedrooms half to three-quarters of an hour before breakfast, according to directions previously given by mistress. Wait on table during the early part of the meal. Pass the fruit, offering it from the left side. Take off fruit-plates from the right side, putting porridge service in the place of the plate removed. Offer porridge, as sugar and cream, from the left side, remove soiled porridge service from right side, putting hot plate in its place. Offer other dishes from left side, or if the plate is served by the carver, put it in front of the guest from right side. Place cup and saucer on the right, offer sugar and cream from the left. 137

When dismissed after the service of breakfast, go up-stairs to the bedrooms and proceed with them as directed previously in duties of "General-Housework Maid." Have breakfast when summoned by cook, clear table, and prepare dishes for washing. Return to the bedrooms, finish the work there and in the bath-room, and then wash dishes, put them away, and despatch other work of the dining-room. See if silver needs cleaning and that table-linen is in order. Polish brasses, rub off furniture, wash windows, or attend to other work of this sort. Make butter-balls for the next meal. Clean and fill lamps.

Set table for lunch according to previous directions. Wait as at breakfast. Be careful that no glass is allowed to become empty, and keep a watch on the plate of each guest, offering to replenish it as it is emptied.

After luncheon clear the table before going to luncheon in the kitchen. Wash dishes and dress for the afternoon, requesting the cook to answer the bell while you are in your room. Be in readiness to attend the door during the afternoon. Make the tray ready for tea at five o'clock, and carry it in at the appointed hour without waiting for the order. If the salad is in your care, prepare it in time and see that the mayonnaise, if this is needed, is made in season. Set the table according to directions already given. At dusk draw down the shades and light gas and lamps in hall and drawing-room. 138

In passing the soup do not use a tray, but put the soup-plate down in front of each guest, from the right. Remove the soup-plate from the right, leaving the service plate untouched. When the hot dinner-plates are brought in, take up the service plate, substituting the dinner-plate. Bring the meat to the table first, then place the vegetables on the serving-table. Stand back of the carver, a little to the left. Take each plate as he serves it and put it down in front of the guest, from the right. Pass vegetables, etc., from the left. Follow the same plan as has been outlined earlier in serving salad, sweets, and coffee. 139

Should you be expected to remain in the dining-room throughout the meal, the soiled dishes must remain untouched until after dinner. If you are permitted to wait in the pantry, many of the soiled dishes can be washed during the meal.

When coffee has been served, go up to the chambers, remove spreads, shams, etc., turn down beds, and close the blinds. Come down to your own dinner, and then clear the table, wash the dishes, and put the dining-room in order for the night. Be ready to answer the bell during the evening. About ten o'clock take iced water to the chambers. If up later than the members of the family, turn out lights and lock up.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE EXPERT MAID-SERVANT ***

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