

SERVANTS AND SERVICE

BY

RUTH LAMB

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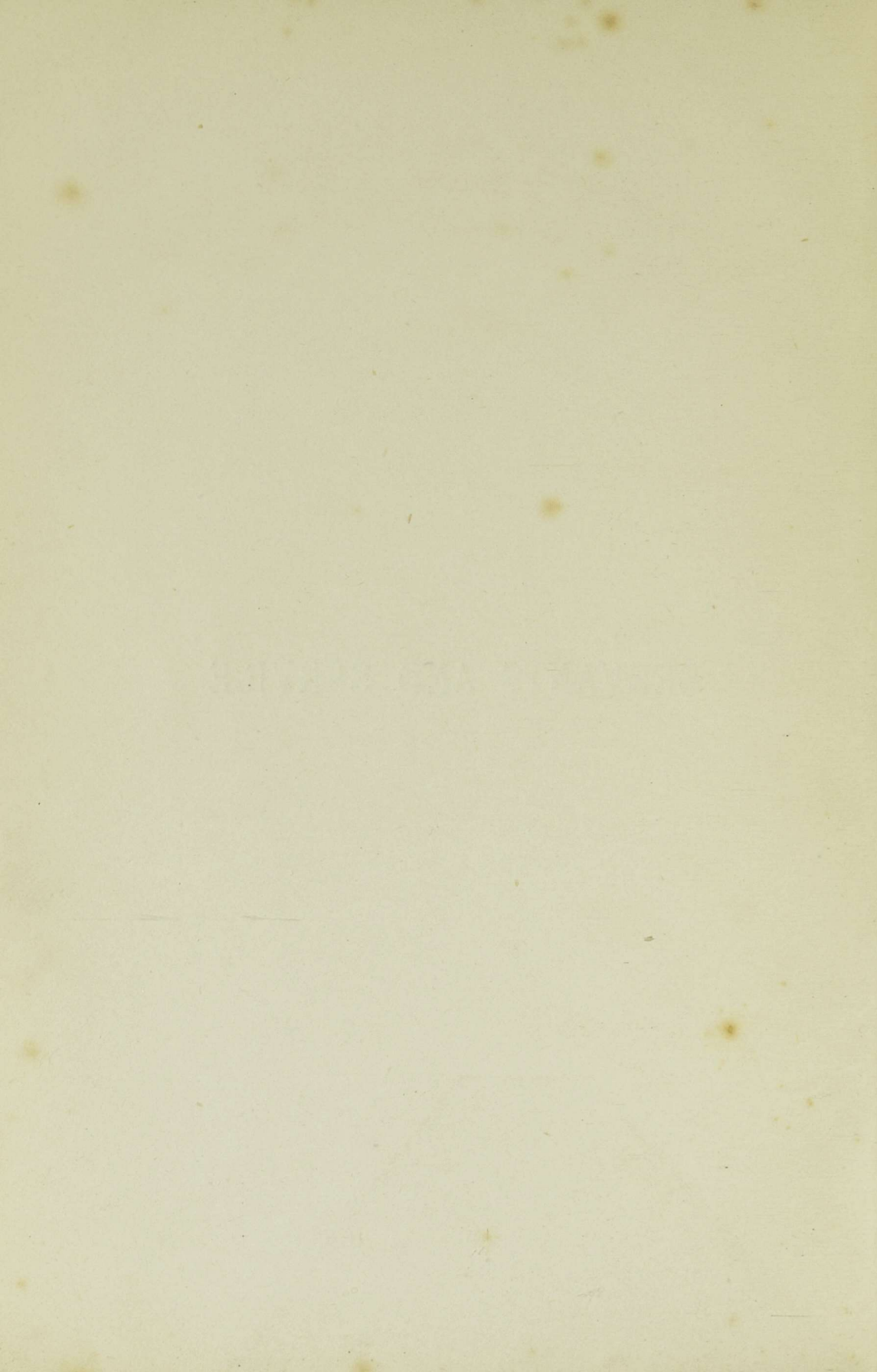
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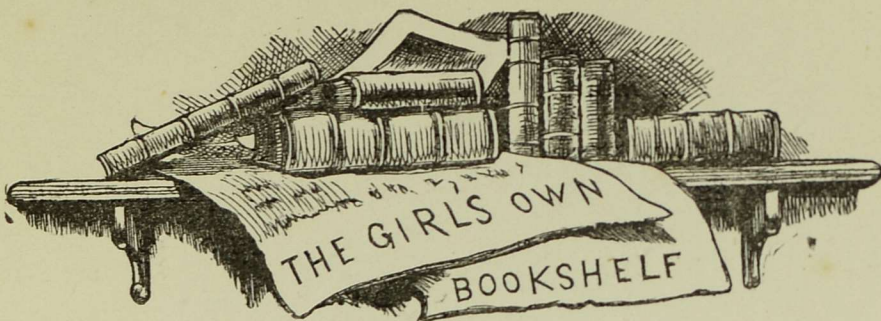
The Legal Rights of Employers and Employed.

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BY

RUTH LAMB,

Author of 'Only a Girl Wife,' 'Girls' Work and Workshops,' 'One Little Vein of Dross,' 'Her Own Choice,' etc., etc.

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PREFACE.

SOME years have elapsed since these chapters on 'Servants and Service' were first issued as a series in the *Girl's Own Paper*. I have reason to know, from many subsequent communications, that they have not been written in vain, but have proved useful to, and been highly commended alike by, mistresses and maids. Members of both classes have borne testimony especially to the fairness with which a somewhat difficult social question has been treated therein.

Whilst rejoicing over the good results which have already followed the serial publication of these papers, I hope and pray that their re-issue as a volume may greatly increase their usefulness.

I must not omit to mention that I am not the author of the appended chapter, No. XI., on 'The legal rights of employers and employed.' It contains most valuable information, but is contributed by a writer much better informed on legal subjects than I can claim to be.

RUTH LAMB.

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SERVANTS AND SERVICE.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

A LITTLE while ago I was wandering from factory to factory, watching girls at work amongst whirling spindles, clattering machinery, and clinking hammers ; wondering often that the young creatures were not bewildered or permanently deafened by the ceaseless noise which accompanied their hours of toil ; wondering still more at the varied articles produced by girl-hands, and at the way in which the comfort of persons in every rank of life seems to depend upon, and be ministered to, by what they do as outdoor workers.

The comfort of the world at large, of the great human family, is very greatly influenced by the girl-toilers in these hives of industry. But how much

more is the happiness of all the separate families which go to make up the vast total, influenced by the lives and conduct of those who actually serve in the home itself, who fill the *honourable* and *responsible* position of domestic servants.

You who thus serve will, perhaps, think that I use strong terms respecting your work and the place you occupy. I mean to justify these expressions, and to show you how truly important is that work, how high is your position, when measured by the vast trust which employers are compelled to repose in the girls whom they receive into their homes as servants.

I have been the mistress of a house for a great many years, and yet, considering that I have usually had four female servants at once, I have not had a large number in the whole time. The reason is that very few have left our home except to start in houses of their own, or from some equally satisfactory cause, and usually after a long term of service. Also, that when circumstances have rendered it necessary for a servant to leave us, it has been the rule for the family and herself to part with feelings of mutual regret and goodwill. It is always a pleasure for us to welcome under our roof those who have served us faithfully, and to hear of their well-being.

I have had only one thoroughly bad servant—

but she was a systematically bad woman, who would have wrought mischief in whatever position of life she might have occupied. Ignorance of household routine, and inexperience in the performance of certain duties, may easily be corrected wherever a servant is able and willing to learn, and a mistress to bestow time and pains in teaching her.

It makes me glad as I write to think that I both have had, and still have, servants whom I regard as dear friends ; who have proved themselves sympathetic and self-devoting in various seasons of sickness, and when extra labour and watching were needed ; who have been true helpers and comforters to all around them.

Some, too, have been associated with me in Christian work, and have deemed themselves more than repaid for any additional labour which has thus devolved upon them, by the happiness that accompanies the very act of good-doing for Christ's sake.

I think of such servants as these not only with pleasure, but with the deepest thankfulness. With all my heart I desire to thank God for such service, and for the sense of family comfort and safety which has been one of its happy consequences in my own home.

I am sure every girl who occupies the position of

lifted sufficiently to give us even a peep at the girls within, whether young mistresses or waiting damsels, when employed in household duties.

Ruth has a whole book given to her and her family. But we only see her for the first time in her widowhood, and when she has been ten years a wife. Esther has a still longer book, but in her story is involved the fate of a nation of captives.

But there is a little picture given in another place, and I never read it without thinking how delightful it must be to every young servant, to look upon this word-sketch of the little captive maid who waited upon Naaman's wife.

It tells so much in so few words. It shows us the girl, far away from her home and her kindred, a stranger in a strange land—yet full of sympathy with her mistress, realizing that she is one of the family, and anxious to do good to its afflicted and suffering head.

Putting away the memory of her own wrongs, she would fain direct her master to him at whose word, she believed, the loathsome disease would vanish and Naaman be made whole.

This little servant maid must have remembered her own home and friends, because she could speak of the miracle-working prophet in her own land. A revengeful girl would have rejoiced in her master's

affliction. A selfish one would have made terms, and only told of the healer on condition of being restored to her own friends.

This young servant girl did neither. She uttered a wish which was also a prayer on behalf of him who held her captive: 'Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.'

Though she was in such a humble position, she had gained a character for truth. Her mistress durst speak after her! A king durst write a letter, send an embassy, and despatch an offering of enormous value, in sole reliance on the word of the little foreign servant.

Her master, a great and powerful general, the mighty man of valour, and conqueror in many a battle, set out on a journey with a heart full of hope, because he could believe the wish she had uttered was sincere, and that she was convinced of the prophet's power and will to heal him.

Only a story contained in three verses of the Bible, but how much it tells! What a beautiful character it reveals! A young servant girl, truthful and trusted; forgiving and doing good to her captors; realizing that she was one of that family in which she served; forgetting self in her sympathy with suffering; repaying the kindness and confidence of her

mistress, not merely by faithful service, but by heartiest goodwill.

Ah! you who serve in the homes of others, well may you rejoice to think that one in a like position is the heroine of this delightful Bible story. May you in reading it take home all its sweet lessons, and in your own narrower circle, and perhaps a far humbler household, imitate the example, and reproduce the disposition shown by the little Israelitish maiden when a captive in a strange land.

Probably many a young, ay, and old woman too, looks back upon her girlish days in service, and recalls the period she spent under one particular roof as a turning-point in her life for good or evil. If the former, she will lift up her heart in thanksgiving as memories of wise, loving counsel and patient teaching come before her mind's eye.

Some, perhaps, are still in situations, and regularly and habitually doing their daily work as if the eye of the mistress was always present. Each thinks of one who, in bygone days, was the means of making her the valuable servant she is, by dint of much careful training and painstaking when she went, a mere girl and very ignorant, to her first place. She knows that the seeds sown by that hand have brought forth in herself the fruits of regularity, order,

neatness, cleanliness, and punctuality ; and that truth and honesty, if not planted, were fostered and encouraged by that true friend and experienced mistress.

Perhaps she remembers, too, that in those early days the patient teacher did not always find a patient scholar ; that the lessons which were given for her good were often little valued—sometimes even resented as the acts of a fidgety, worriting, too-particular mistress whom nothing could satisfy.

She knows better now, and rejoices that she fell into hands equally firm and kind. But the memory of her own little tempers and impatience under training makes her, let us hope, more patient and forbearing with other young girls who are in turn placed under her, to be similarly instructed.

I fancy I hear a chorus of young voices cry out, 'It is all very well for you to say we should be particular about the places we take, but we cannot always choose from a number. Often our very bread depends on our getting a situation. If we are unable to get what we want, we must take what we can get.'

Quite true. Yet it is not often that a girl who is worth having has to leave a situation at less than a month's notice, so that she has always some time to look about her and make inquiries.

Shall I tell you my recipe for getting a good

servant? It will be just as useful to you in securing a good place. *It is prayer*, as well as the use of ordinary means. Whenever a servant has been about to leave us, it has been the custom for my husband and myself to kneel together and ask God to guide us in the choice of a successor. We felt that the peace of our home, the well-being of our family, and perhaps even more than all, that an important influence on the minds and manners of our little ones would depend upon the new-comer. Was it not, then, worth while to ask God's guidance and blessing? If good for master and mistress, surely it must be equally so for the girl who seeks work and a home amongst strangers.

Do not take a place where you cannot have Sunday privileges. A widowed mother, herself in service, applied for a situation for her young daughter. She returned disappointed in one sense, but not in another.

'Jane could have had the place, and good wages; but when I named the going to church on Sundays, the lady said Sunday was always her day for company, and she could spare none of her servants to go out. She would give her another day instead. I told her this would not suit my girl,' said the poor mother, who had much cause for anxiety about employment for her child. 'I had all my life tried

to train her in the faith and fear of God, and specially taught her to value and remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. I dare not go against my own teaching and conscience, come what may. I must trust; the Lord will provide.'

And He did provide. The mother's prayers were not in vain; her faith was not disappointed. Pray, then, for guidance, dear girls. You will not ask in vain; but I believe you will be answered by having good homes and good mistresses, as my husband and I have been, in having good servants sent to us from time to time.

CHAPTER II.

HONOURABLE SERVICE.

IN my former chapter I called the position of a domestic servant an *honourable* and *responsible* one, and I will now give my reasons for using these two words. I wonder whether many young girls who serve in the household have considered how very much they are trusted. Perhaps they never crossed the threshold of the home in which they have obtained a situation until the very day on which they enter upon its duties ; and yet from the very moment that the young stranger girl enters the house, she is of necessity taken more into the family confidence than any outsider can possibly be.

She knows all about the going out and coming in of every member of the family. In many cases she sees and hears what even the children, especially the younger ones, are not permitted to know.

In the performance of her various duties, when waiting at table and elsewhere, she overhears con-

versations which speakers would not like to have repeated. She cannot help, in like manner, being acquainted with numbers of little family secrets that are never intended to pass beyond the walls of the home—things that would not be told even to friends, except in the strictest confidence.

Yet the master, mistress, and children receive the stranger girl, often knowing very little about her family and of herself, only so much as can be gleaned during half an hour's talk, or, it may be, a short letter from a former employer—just a sheet of paper with a few formally written answers to a few set questions, such as relate to the work of that particular situation she wishes to undertake. The future mistress has probably asked how the girl has done her work in her last place; whether she is cleanly, honest, truthful, obliging, and so on.

In many cases the information is given by one of whom we know little more than we do of the girl respecting whose character we inquire. And there are always far more important questions than those alluded to, which are never asked, and if they were, would seldom be explicitly answered. Yet, on the strength of that brief written recommendation, or after half an hour's conversation, we take a girl into our home, and place in her hands a very large share of its comfort and safety. She is allowed to

see and to know all the little household details which are hidden even from our nearest friends.

We exact from our girl domestics no pledge of confidence, no promise not to betray our trust by gossiping about what they hear or see ; what, indeed, they *must* witness, unless we are to live in a state of unnatural restraint, and make the entrance of our servants a signal for silence ! Such a state of things would be equally trying to them, to our guests, and to ourselves.

If I were a girl in a situation, I hope I should feel 'upon honour' with regard to these things. I should like to be able to say, 'I am glad and thankful to be trusted, and, by God's help, I will try to merit the confidence which my master and mistress place in me. I may not be bound by any promise to them, but I am bound far more firmly by my sense of what is right, by the witness of my own conscience, and by the thought of what I should like if I were in their places. No one shall ever be able to blame me for tale-telling, or gossiping about their concerns. I may be a young servant, but if I am a Christian girl, the same spirit should animate me that inspires the greatest lady in the land. I, if I understand the teaching of God's Word aright, am bound by the same laws in my position as my mistress is in hers.'

To be above the meanness which would screen itself from blame as a tattler, because no promise of silence has been given, is as becoming to the servant as it is to the mistress. To be true, not merely in word, but in heart and in act, is as incumbent upon the servant who professes to be a Christian as it is upon the heads of the household, and why?

Because in God's Word you are bidden to perform your duties 'in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with goodwill doing service as to the Lord, and not to men. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.'

Employers are also reminded that their 'Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him.'

The same law, you see, both for employers and employed. All have to give an account to the same Master, before whom neither rank, riches, nor position will avail anything. The question which concerns all of us alike is this, 'What sort of an account can I give of the way in which I have done my duty in the place which, in the good providence of God, I have been called on to fill?'

If it becomes the mistress to be above tattling

and meanness, to be true in word and deed, to be self-denying and considerate of the feelings of others, to be pure in speech and in life, to be careful as to the persons with whom she associates, surely all these things are equally essential to the young servant! To the latter it often happens that her good character is her fortune, that on it she depends for the very bread she eats and the roof which shelters her. Even if she did not, 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.'

People say there is a skeleton in every house; it is the same thing as saying that there is no home without some secret sorrow that the owner would shrink from letting the world see. Well, if any of you dear girls know where the skeleton is, say to yourselves, 'My hand shall never draw the curtain that hides it, or open the door of the cupboard in which it is concealed.'

This is the right way in which to look at one of the responsibilities of your position. You may make it doubly honourable by your own conduct, and by the manner in which you show that you not only *must* be trusted, but that you deserve to be.

Unfortunately we do not find that all girls act up to such a high standard as this. We have all known some who have been faithful enough so long

as a thoroughly good understanding existed between them and their employers. But perhaps something has gone wrong, and a disagreement has arisen between the girl and her mistress.

A sharp reproof has called forth an angry retort, and the 'I'm-as-good-as-you' sort of spirit has got into the young mind. Either mistress or maid gives a month's notice, and with the prospect of parting comes an entire change in the relations of the parties concerned.

Sometimes the girl acts defiantly and disrespectfully. She forgets the many marks of kindness and confidence she has received, the peace and comfort she has enjoyed under that roof, and acts with a meanness and littleness that are unworthy of any girl, especially one who calls herself a Christian. In the spirit of revenge, and with a desire to 'serve out' her employers, she will call to mind all the little domestic matters which she knows they would least like to have gossiped about, and will prove equally false to them, and to the pleadings of her own heart and conscience.

When the fit of temper is over, probably the girl sees the ugliness and treachery of her conduct, and would fain stop the ball she has set rolling. But this is not easy. It continues to roll, and increases with every turn. She has done an amount of

mischievous which she can scarcely calculate, has broken faith, destroyed the effect produced by years of faithful service, and is branded as deceitful and ungrateful by the mistress who may have reproofed with sharpness, yet who heartily wishes well to her young helpers in the household.

I will not dwell upon this picture. I do not like it, and I hope that every girl who reads this paper will think it as ugly as I do, and resolve that it shall never be reflected in her own conduct.

I have a few more words to say both about entering on situations and engaging servants. Indeed, these chapters relate equally to employers and employed ; for while I commenced by addressing myself especially to those who serve, I cannot write of them without including those who rule, and more especially the young mistresses. These have frequently nearly everything to learn when they assume the reins of domestic government at the commencement of their married life.

To the mistress I would say, 'Try to ascertain something not only about the girl you think of engaging, but about her parents, her home, and general surroundings.'

I one day heard a gentleman speak of the manner in which he engaged a very young girl to fill a vacancy caused by the marriage of an old and much-

valued servant. He lived at a distance from town, and had a very delicate wife, who was unequal to the task of seeing and choosing from amongst the many candidates for the vacant post.

The place was known to be a good one. The home was delightful in itself, the habits of the family were regular, wages satisfactory, the servants enjoyed many Christian privileges, and master and mistress took a warm interest in their welfare. There was rarely a vacancy, and on this particular occasion there were many very experienced servants amongst the applicants. Yet the gentleman who saw them at his office in the city, and made all the inquiries, finally decided on engaging a girl of eighteen to fill the place of one who had been more than half that number of years in the situation.

Much surprise was expressed at his decision, but he was quite able to justify it.

‘I was struck,’ said he, ‘with the beautiful neatness of the girl’s dress. I was sure that she was not got up for the occasion ; but all about her was suggestive of habitual purity and tidiness, and her clothing, though good and clean, bore traces of careful wear. It had evidently been used for some time, but well used. I was further struck with her modesty of manners and propriety of speech. She told me frankly that she had no one but her mother to refer

me to for her character, as regarded the work itself. She was the eldest of a family, and had never been in service ; but the second girl would now be able to take her place, and there were too many of them for all to be maintained at home by the father's earnings. She knew things would be very different in such a house as mine ; but mother had always made her do her work well, and she was willing to learn. Would I try her and give her wages according to what she was worth ? Father and mother were much more particular about the family she went into than about the money. Would I see "mother" before I fixed on any one, and her own Sunday-school teacher too ?

'I could not help thinking, whilst the girl spoke—pleaded indeed, in her honest, innocent way, for a trial—that she had in her the making of a first-class servant. I agreed to see "mother," but fixed no time for my call, and I made it during the morning.

'The sight of that orderly home and its busy occupants was better than any number of written characters. There was no running away to make herself presentable, but the girl came forward with a smiling face, and looking just as neat in her working dress as she had done in her outdoor garments.

'I had made some inquiries about the family, and found that the parents were God-fearing people, and

extremely particular about the training and associates of their children. So I engaged Eliza, aged eighteen, to fill the place of the departed Anne, aged thirty; and I and mine had cause to be thankful for the decision which brought into our house an excellent servant, a warm-hearted, pure-minded girl. She was thorough in her work, and what she did not know at first she was quick to learn, because her heart was in it, and she honestly desired not only to do enough to satisfy, but her very best.

‘The mother made one remark which amused me a little at the time. “I am so glad you are willing to engage Eliza,” she said. “I am quite content for her to come to you, for I made most particular inquiries about your place before I sent the girl to see about it.”

‘The good woman meant it as a compliment, and I understood and appreciated it. I like “my place” to have a good name; but some lady friends tossed their heads, and said, “What an impertinent speech! to intimate that she had inquired into your character!”’

And very proper too. Every girl that values her own character should be anxious to serve under the roof of a master and mistress who fear God, and who, caring for their own immortal souls, are likely to care for the bodies and souls of all around them also.

I had two sisters from one family, and when, after seven years' united service, the second left by her father's wish to learn a business, I wrote and asked for the only remaining daughter, a girl who had never left home to take a situation, and whom I had never seen. I frankly told the parents that, after my experience of their mode of training daughters, I would rather take one who had thus been brought up in the faith and fear of God, though comparatively ignorant, than the most accomplished servant without such home-training.

I received a grateful reply, accepting the offer and returning hearty thanks for the comforts and Christian privileges enjoyed by the elder sisters whilst under our roof.

Number three duly arrived, and—well, perhaps if I say that she came more than fourteen years ago, and is here yet, nothing more need be added. To the act that we have considered Christian training as of greater importance than mere skill in household duties, my husband and I attribute much of the comfort and happiness we have enjoyed in regard to those domestic arrangements that depend upon our servants' work and character.

To you, dear girls, I would say, 'Be more anxious to serve those who themselves serve the Lord Christ,' and will allow you the religious privileges of which

they know the value, than to obtain a situation where a mistress is indulgent because indifferent, or for the sake of easy work or high wages.

In seeking employers, determine to put your Heavenly Master's service first of all. If you serve Him well, no fear that you will fail in your duty to them. Remember that He said, 'I am among you as He that serveth;' that He found His joy in doing the will of the Father, and that He 'who, being in the form of God,' yet, for our sakes, 'took upon Him the form of a servant, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death.'

CHAPTER III.

‘HAIR-SPLITTERS.’

I HAVE alluded to the fact that the word ‘family’ includes the servants of a household ; but I am inclined to think that they are more slow to realize their position as such than even their employers are.

When inquiring about the work pertaining to a situation, they are often so very particular to have the duties of the place defined with the utmost exactness. ‘Shall I be expected to do this?’ or, ‘In my last place, I was never asked to do that;’ ‘I like to know what my work is to be, and then I’ve no doubt I shall do it to the satisfaction of all parties,’ are expressions common enough when mistress and maid are arranging terms.

It is no doubt advisable so to plan the work of

a house that each servant, where there are two or more, may know what is her share, and do it. The wheels of the domestic chariot would soon stick fast, and confusion reign instead of order, if things were left to arrange themselves.

There is, however, a vast difference between taking and doing the work allotted to us in a narrow, selfish spirit, or with the large-hearted kindness which should distinguish the servants of Christ. In the one case there is a continual hair-splitting going on, and when the smallest service which was not actually bargained for is required, we hear that hateful expression, ‘*It’s not my place.*’ ‘I came here to be housemaid—not to do cook’s work.’ Or, ‘If you had mentioned that, when Sarah has her day out, you would expect me to look after the children, I should have known what to do,’ is said to the mistress in an injured tone, or, worse still, *at her*, as the damsel goes grumbling about the house.

These ‘hair-splitting servants,’ as I cannot help calling them, who are always stickling for ‘rights’ and going more than half-way to meet wrongs and grievances, know nothing of the true family feeling, and are equally unpleasant people for mistresses and fellow-servants to deal with. The former are wearied with perpetual complaints—the latter are often

rendered so uncomfortable by the nagging, exacting, and self-asserting spirit of the individual who is always on the bristle in defence of her *place* and her *right*, that they will leave a good home rather than endure her companionship.

I will try to make my meaning plainer still.

The 'hair-splitter' has perhaps been called into the sitting-room to speak to her mistress. She leaves it again whilst the parlour-maid is clearing the table. She *could* save the latter a journey by carrying out one or two of the heavier articles, and would cause herself no extra trouble by so doing. But, 'No thank you,' our 'hair-splitter' knows her place. Let the waitress mind her own business—she will not be asked to do any part of hers. And so she marches out of the room empty-handed, and is satisfied that in so doing she is keeping her place.

Perhaps some one in the house is an invalid, and requires to be waited on in her own apartment. All who know anything of sick-nursing can tell how many journeys up and down stairs are necessarily made, how many weary steps must be taken by those who minister to a sufferer's comfort.

Usually, I believe, the servants are found willing

to take a full share of the extra work entailed by illness, and manifest their sympathy in the most practical way, by doing it ungrudgingly and uncomplainingly. Often they will voluntarily give up all the little privileges so precious to those whose work lies wholly indoors, and 'stay in when it is their turn to go out,' rather than cause inconvenience—all but the 'hair-splitter.' She has bargained for certain things, and she will have them. She never came to be a sick-nurse, but to do regular work in her own place. She will go up and down stairs with empty hands, though it would be no effort for her to carry up the box of coal which she knows to be wanted, or to bring down little articles which the attendant in the sick-room has put outside on the landing, until she can leave the invalid for a few minutes to carry them down herself.

Our 'hair-splitter' disdains to lend a hand outside her own circle, and, let who may give up the day out, she will exact hers and every other privilege that she can claim, no matter who may suffer inconvenience.

'I keep to my bargain; let other people keep to theirs. I do my work that I engaged for; that is enough for me. I keep my place; let the rest keep

theirs,' says the 'hair-splitter;' and she holds up her head, and defies anybody to say a word to the contrary.

Perhaps she speaks the literal truth, and she may be a thorough servant in her own department; but she is only a hireling, and has no part or lot in or with the family in that higher sense to which I have alluded. And, oh! how little does such a one realize the yet deeper, holier union and sympathy which must subsist between those who are members of the family of God, who, like the Divine Head, Christ Jesus, find it their joy to help the helpless, comfort the sorrowing, to strive, in ever so humble a way, to bear one another's burdens, and so to fulfil the law of Christ.

If a member of the family, she will 'rejoice with those who do rejoice, and weep with those who weep.'

There will be no 'hair-splitting,' no talk about rights; but the true-hearted servant, who in all her dealings with earthly employers acknowledges her Divine Master, will above all things strive to follow His example. It will not be a question, 'How little can I do?' but, 'How can I best contribute to the happiness of each and all under the roof? How can I lighten the load of, or make the work easier for, my fellow-servant?'

In numberless ways the willing mind and kindly heart will find that this can be done without any additional effort or weariness to the thoughtful helper. But even if it do cost an extra effort or a few more steps to save still more of both to a tired fellow-servant, never mind. They will be well bestowed. And if done for the Heavenly Master's sake, the reward will come in the present happiness which a consciousness of doing right always brings with it. Those who practise self-devoting kindness in their intercourse with others experience a joy unknown to the 'hair-splitter,' who triumphs in having successfully claimed her 'rights' and in keeping her place.

Now for a few words on the subject of good manners.

I have said that a servant may be as truly a gentlewoman in manners as the mistress she serves; but in order to merit the name, she must never forget the respect and obedience she owes to those who employ her. The 'I'm-as-good-as-you' sort of spirit is always a mark of—I was going to say—a vulgar mind. I will take higher ground. It is unworthy of the disciple of Him who said, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

The injunctions in God's Word with regard to the

manners and conduct of servants towards their employers are particularly plain and unmistakable. Fidelity, honesty, hearty service, and obedience are enjoined again and again. Equally so good manners, though not in these exact words.

It is no doubt very trying for a grown-up girl or woman to be reproved in sharp, unmeasured terms, and more especially in the presence of others. But if (by God's grace) she is enabled to conquer the inclination to reply rudely and to give, instead, the soft answer which turns away wrath, even when she feels that she has been unreasonably dwelt with, she gains a double conquest. She vanquishes the rising of sinful passion, preserves her own self-respect, and probably wins the goodwill of her mistress also, besides knowing that she has remembered the Divine rule: 'Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.'

You see, then, dear girls, that you are not to forget, even under difficult and trying circumstances, the respect due from those who serve to those who rule in the house. The tossing of the head, the heavy or bouncing step, the loud or pert answer, the slamming of doors, the throwing things violently

down, and the going grumbling about the house, saying things *at* the mistress which you would be afraid or ashamed to say *to* her, are all marks of vulgarity and little-mindedness, which every girl who has any self-respect will avoid. And, whilst rather calculated to inspire contempt for the childishness of those who act in this unreasoning, foolish fashion, than to produce any effect on those whom they are intended to annoy, they are also utterly unworthy of every girl or woman who professes to be a servant of Christ.

The commands, 'Be kind, be pitiful, be courteous,' were not meant for mistresses only, or for the rich and those who fill high places in this world, but for people of all ages and of every position. It is not the possession of riches, which perhaps those who own them have done nothing to win; or the bearing of an old name, ennobled by the grand lives of those who bore it in bygone ages; not the high position occupied in this world, or even all three combined, which can entitle any human being to the name of gentleman or gentlewoman.

Thank God! those who occupy the humblest positions can *merit* the names, though they may not claim them. If, in fulfilling our various duties, we yield ourselves to the guidance and teaching of God's

Holy Spirit, and strive by our lives to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, living soberly, righteously, and godly, showing ourselves kind, forbearing, tender-hearted, forgiving, observing the golden rule, spreading as much happiness and saving as much pain as we can, we shall reap a glorious harvest of peace within and goodwill from all around us.

Believe me, dear girls, none so well deserve the names of gentleman and gentlewoman as do those whose lives best reflect that of their great pattern, Christ Jesus. And better by far than all the other books in the world is the Bible itself for teaching good manners.

Before concluding this chapter, I will briefly suggest a few of the *advantages of domestic service*. Some girls think that the privileges are all on the side of the outdoor workers, that the mill-hand, machinist, the dressmaker, and the young shopwoman have an amount of freedom from personal restraint which those in service cannot enjoy. Let us look more closely into this, as also into the matter of wages.

Really the outdoor worker has in many cases less time at her disposal than the domestic servant, and her average gains are less also. A servant with good health and character need never be unem-

ployed, as the demand for such is generally in excess of the supply. She has no slack times, like nearly all other workers, employment and wages being regular the year round in her case.

Her situation is not affected by a sudden change of fashion, which will often throw nearly all the workers in a particular branch out of situations, and compel them to learn some new business by which they may earn their bread.

The domestic servant has in many cases the advantage of living in a far more comfortable home, and of being better fed and cared for. She has less anxiety about ways and means than the outdoor worker. For the latter a slack time indicates the loss of wages, perhaps for weeks together; and unless girls have been very prudent and careful, it means also a season of privation to themselves, if they cannot turn their hands to something else in the meanwhile.

The wages may seem less. Are they really so?

Supposing an outdoor worker has sixteen shillings a week, and this is a very high average, and that she does not lose a day's pay in twelve months, she is certainly no better off than the domestic servant with six shillings. Out of the sixteen the outdoor worker has to pay for lodgings, food, and fire. Could

she for ten shillings a week live in the same comfort as does a domestic servant in a well-ordered home ?

Then the latter has no coming through the streets unprotected, and in all weathers ; and, in the quiet round of household duties, she is exposed to far fewer temptations than the outdoor worker. (The exceptions are in the cases of girls who live under their parents' roof, and are cared for by a watchful, loving, and judicious mother.)

Moreover, the employment of the domestic servant is not nearly so monotonous as that of the factory hand, or so wearying as that of the young shop-woman who stands behind the counter for many hours at a time. She has less anxiety than even those under whose roof she lives, knowing nothing of consultations about making ends meet, or of fears when quarter-day comes round.

Lastly, the domestic servant is not the 'hand' of whom often the employer knows less than he does of the machine she tends, but one who is in constant communication with father, mother, and children under the roof—in short, as I have already asserted, she is one of the family, and necessarily trusted as such.

I may add that the law affords the latter very

special protection in the matter of wages, domestic servants being paid in full when other creditors often have to accept only a portion of what is due to them, or what is called a composition.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE NURSERY.

IT is a somewhat remarkable fact that the younger the servant employed, the greater and more precious is the first charge usually placed in her hands. I mean, of course, the baby, with occasionally two or three other small children in addition.

To nurse the one and keep the other out of mischief is generally deemed the fitting occupation for the little maid, herself a mere child when she first goes out to service. The young hands that are too unsteady to be trusted with such fragile articles as glass and crockery, lest these should suffer damage, too unskilled in household matters to be esteemed of much value in the cleaning and scrubbing department, are deemed quite competent to hold the baby and act as caretaker to the whole juvenile brood.

Often the busy, notable mother of a family will say, when speaking of a child-servant, 'I cannot let

her help in the house-work. She would only make more labour than she would save ; would dirty more than she would clean ; break more things by clumsiness and carelessness than her wages would pay for. I can get through much more quickly by myself, and nothing will need doing over again. But she *can* nurse the baby and look after the children, which will set my hands free to do the house-work.'

So the house-mother bustles from place to place and does the work herself. In the meanwhile, the inexperienced hands which must on no account be trusted with the crockery, the chairs, and the tables, have the sole charge of what should be to every mother the most precious of helpless treasures—her infant.

In the comparatively poor districts of large towns, chiefly inhabited by working people and small shopkeepers, it is no uncommon thing for a little maid, barely in her teens, to go out nursing by the day—and generally a very long day. She comes home to sleep, the small place where a business is carried on being often filled to overflowing by the shopkeeper's actual belongings. It is probably fortunate for the small servant that she does go home to sleep, or her day's work might come to an end even later still, or last all night, should the baby sleep with her.

Numbers of little maidens make their start as

domestic servants in this way, and rise by gradual steps to what is considered a position of greater trust and responsibility. I have been in a tiny shop when a dot of a girl, pinafores and with a cotton hood or woollen kerchief on her head, has entered. Dropping a little bob of a courtesy, she has announced that she is seeking her first place by the question, 'Please, ma'am, do you want a girl to help to nurse the baby?'

It is often the case that these little maids, the eldest of large families, have served a seven years' apprenticeship at home nursing before they are twice that number of years old. They are frequently far more handy with babies than much older people, and the very small folks always like a girl-nurse, who is not too old to romp and play, and who enjoys the games as heartily as do her little charges. These mites love to see a merry face, to hear a good ringing laugh, and to listen to the nonsense rhymes and nursery jingles which come pattering from the still childish lips of their young guardian.

I do not know a greater affliction in a nursery than a nurse, no matter how good and conscientious she may be, who goes through her duties in a grave, stolid, unsympathetic way; washing and dressing the children, tidying and stitching in a mechanical, plodding fashion, and doing her duty faithfully, according

to her light, but forgetting, in her dealings with children, that she was once as young as they are.

The nurse who worrits over a soiled pinafore or rumpled hair, who is for ever straightening up, and putting the toys and litter which children delight in and ought to have around them on high shelves and in out-of-the-way places, may have a tidy nursery, but she will certainly have a brood of unhappy youngsters around her.

There are nurses who are old in years, but young in heart, bright, cheerful, and abounding in love for children, and who come second only to the good mother in the affection of the small people. And there are others who are by no means old counting by years, but who left their youthful spirits behind them, if they ever had any, when they began to run alone.

I once heard a lady speaking of two girls, of only eighteen and twenty, who had the care of her three children. 'They are both good girls,' she said; 'truthful, conscientious, well-behaved. I have no fear that the children will ever learn anything wrong from them. But they are so stolid and dull that they seem to take all the brightness out of the lives of the little ones. One sits like a lump at her stitching; the other, like a second lump of human material, keeps the children out of mischief, and takes care that the

nursery is in a painful state of order, and that smeared faces and soiled pinafores are things unknown.

‘Let a child leave a toy for a moment, it is seized and put carefully away. These nurses never can be made to understand that, what would appear untidy and disorderly in a drawing-room, is the proper and necessary state of things in an apartment dedicated to the use of little ones. If children are to be happy they must be occupied, and to find them employment a variety in books, toys, and pictures must be within their reach.

‘A childish mind does not fix itself upon any one thing for a length of time. But though Jack may have become weary of the pursuit of architecture, and may demolish with one stroke the castle he has spent half an hour in building, he does not want the materials packed away, in case he should determine on erecting a church somewhat later in the day. He likes to have his bricks within reach, even while he is looking at pictures, and to be able to turn from his book to his wheelbarrow without asking nurse’s leave. Then the children want some one to laugh with them, to sing, to lead their games and teach them new ones; and when they go out they do not want to be led solemnly along as if they were attending a funeral.

‘I am sorry to part with two thoroughly good girls,’ added the speaker, ‘but I cannot bear to see the children growing up such little sober-sides, so unnaturally grave and old before their time.’

‘What shall you do then?’ asked the friend to whom the lady was speaking.

‘Oh, I have engaged a cheery, middle-aged widow to do the sewing and superintend generally. She is to have a little girl of fourteen under her as her messenger and the children’s playfellow. I fell in love with the little maid when out district-visiting, through seeing the delightful way in which she managed to keep her own small brothers and sisters amused and happy, with next to nothing in the way of materials. I am quite reckoning on litter and laughter in my nursery, in place of unvarying tidiness and dulness.’

Do not imagine that this lady would have tolerated any lack of real cleanliness in the persons or surroundings of her children. She estimated at their full value the neatness and particularity of her maids; but she felt that, while the young bodies were admirably cared for, the nursery atmosphere was cheerless and depressing. It was deficient in human sunshine and sympathy.

Instead of being merry and childlike, her young-

sters were becoming staid, prim little men and women ; their very games were made a serious business ; the care of their toys was a matter of grave responsibility. The children could hardly have had more upright and careful attendants ; but the mother saw that spotless pinafores, constant supervision, and a tidy nursery were not in themselves sufficient for happiness.

I have given this little sketch from life because I want to impress upon my girl readers who think of offering themselves to fill the situation of nurse, that something more is required to make a good one than a mere knowledge of nursery work.

If I were engaging a nurse for young children, I should not only inquire about the experience she had gained in caring for their bodies, her cleanliness, truthfulness, honesty, and general trustworthiness. I might be satisfied on these points, and the applicant might also be one of the best seamstresses that ever took needle in hand, and yet I should want something of more importance than all these.

I should need to be convinced that she was not taking a place as nurse merely as a means of bread-winning, but because she honestly loved the helpless little ones, and was sufficiently young-hearted to feel for and with them in matters that are trifles to grown-up people, but great things to children.

I should want to study her face a little, to find that it was bright and happy-looking, and that her voice had a cheery ring in it. To be convinced that, when the laughing, crowing baby looked up in its glee, it would see a responsive smile on its nurse's countenance, and that her presence would be likely to make the nursery not merely a cleanly but a happy place for the children.

So I say to my readers, never take a place as nurse unless you can carry with you a heart large enough to hold all your little charges, and warm enough to pay back with interest the love they are so ready to give to those who sympathise with and are kind to them. You will need patience to bear with them, and firmness to check what is wrong ; you will need constant watchfulness and prayerful self-examination in order that, by God's grace, you may be enabled to subdue in yourselves whatever might set a bad example or produce a bad impression on the children intrusted to your care.

Next to the mother, probably no human being has so great an influence over the little ones for good or evil as the nurse. Take care that yours shall be for good. There is no lesson more quickly learned by a child than that of trying to hide a fault by telling an untruth. Perhaps curiosity has led to meddling, meddling to an accident and a breakage. To cover

this and escape punishment, the child deliberately plans concealment, and tells its first lie.

The same teacher—fear of consequences—often finds an apt pupil in the nurse as well as in her young charges, and she tells, or it may be only acts, a falsehood in their presence. Who can estimate the mischief done, or the fruit produced from the seed of that evil example? Young eyes are quick to see,—young minds to receive impressions. Not so quick to lose the effect, or get rid of the consequences, of a single lesson in deceit.

Dear young nurses, let me plead with you for the sake of the immortal souls of these precious little ones; be true in word and deed. Strive to lead them gently and lovingly; set them a good example. Ask strength from God to overcome the temptations to anger and falsehood. Be careful, too, that no profane or impure expression ever passes from your lips, to defile the ears and corrupt the minds of the children committed to your care. Let not those young eyes witness any action that you would be afraid or ashamed for a grown-up person to see.

Nay, let your thoughts soar still higher, and remember the Eye that never slumbers nor sleeps, the Ear which hears equally the prayer and the wrong or idle words of which we often think so lightly.

Should any accident happen to an infant either

through inadvertence or want of care on your part, be brave and true. Go at once to the mother, and, even at the risk of losing your situation, or of a severe reprimand, tell about the fall or the blow which the child has received, and ask that means may be used to prevent any permanent harm resulting from it. I have known two cases of life-long deformity and lameness, both of which might have been prevented had the nurses told of comparatively trifling accidents when they occurred, but which were rendered serious for want of immediate attention.

The little creatures had wailed and cried,—their only mode of telling that they were in pain. The tears were put down to teething, crossness—anything but the real cause. Had the truth been told and a doctor sent for, the experienced professional touch and eye would have discovered the injuries, the joints would have been replaced, and two fine girls saved from lasting disfigurement.

Better, far better endure displeasure or even the loss of a place, than carry the life-long memory that, through your want of courage and candour, a young creature's existence has been blighted, or its activity and usefulness impaired. Ay, and what is of still more importance, better be the humblest drudge at the roughest of household work, than undertake the charge of children without a deep sense of the

solemn responsibilities belonging to the nurse's office.

If you cannot carry into the nursery loving hearts, patience, self-control, cheerfulness, courage, truth, pure speech, propriety of manners, and tender sympathy, work elsewhere in the household. Remember that it is not only the bodies of the little ones for which you have to care, but that you will have to answer for the influence you may exert on their minds and souls. Are they not the lambs whom Jesus loved and blessed? Do they not belong to that flock for which the Good Shepherd laid down His life on Calvary?

CHAPTER V.

INFLUENCE OVER CHILDREN—BEAR AND FORBEAR.

THERE are some servants, and particularly those who are beyond girlhood, who regard the children of the household with anything but a kindly feeling, who bitterly resent the planting of a young foot on the kitchen floor, and deem the appearance of a curly head in its doorway as an unwarrantable intrusion.

‘Now you go out of my kitchen this minute,’ cries the ruling genius. ‘You know you’ve no business here. Be off! Quick! or I’ll tell your ma.’

The curly head vanishes. The youngster, perhaps, only came to make a private inquiry as to the forthcoming pudding, or something equally innocent. But after his disappearance, cook will probably

further remark, 'I hate to have children poking and prying about. They always tell tales and make mischief.'

I can understand the existence of such a feeling if any mistress is so injudicious, any mother so unwise towards her children, as to permit them to act the part of spies over her servants and tattlers towards herself. It is as lowering to her own dignity as it is insulting to those who serve, and injurious to her children to encourage such practices.

On the other hand, the upright, conscientious servant has no need to care who looks on whilst she is engaged about her daily duties. If she reverently carries in her mind this one thought, 'Thou God seest me,' and acts as in that presence, she has no occasion to trouble herself about other observers.

As a mother, I feel even more strongly than as the mistress of a home. However accomplished a servant might be in the duties of her department, I would not keep her if I thought that the morals and manners of my children would suffer by contact with her.

Speaking to servants in every department of service, I say, 'Be kind to the children, dear girls. You can, if you are Christians, give many a hint for their good. You may whisper a word in season which

may make the angry boy ashamed of his senseless passion. You may show the little one who is inclined to deceive the beauty and bravery of truth.

Children are often inclined to gossip. They perhaps overhear something which was never intended to reach them, and, big with the thought of a discovered secret, are eager to share the newly-acquired knowledge with somebody else. A young servant is the nearest individual to the little personage who is inclined to be confidential, and to her the tale is told, if she will listen.

This gives a right-minded girl an opportunity of showing her own uprightness and honourable disposition by refusing to listen, and of pointing out to the child the impropriety of repeating what has been said by parents or guests who had either not noticed or forgotten the presence of the 'little pitcher.'

Imagine how sweet it was to a mother's ears when one of my children, after speaking of happy talks she had enjoyed on Sunday evenings with a young servant, said, 'I always feel better after a conversation with her, more anxious to love and serve God, and to be good and do what is right to everybody.'

After such an instance as this, dear girls, you

cannot imagine that a servant's influence is to be lightly thought of or carelessly used. I have known an instance in another home where the religious training of the parents was rendered useless, their boy's faith undermined, and the man's future career hopelessly changed, by the contrary influence of an old and much-trusted domestic.

Again, if servants wish to find a common bond of sympathy between their mistresses and themselves, the little ones will furnish it. When riding in a tram-car, I one day sat opposite to a young mother, who was accompanied by a girl-nurse with a baby on her lap. It was evidently the first, and all its clothing bore traces of tasteful, industrious fingers, rather than of great expenditure. The child was a lovely creature, and its young mother and younger nurse seemed unconscious of everything else. The three made a charming picture; for the little maid, her face lighted up with love, told how her charge had been admired by different ladies, who had even stopped her in the street to look at and praise the bonny baby. The mother listened with eager ears and happy face, and I left that tram-car with unwilling feet, because I thought that in the popular carriage I had seen two human beings united by perfect sympathy, the bond between them being a few weeks' old infant.

I had a cook once who was very difficult to manage. She was extremely clever in her own department, but determined to have her way and to rule instead of obeying a mistress who was then comparatively inexperienced in household management, and many years younger than herself. I thought I must part with her; but cook had a vulnerable point. She almost worshipped babies, and being shown into the room where I sat with a month old infant on my knee, when she first came about the place, she implored me to let her hold it whilst we talked.

‘Being in the kitchen, I hardly ever get a baby into my arms,’ she said. ‘I’m fond of cooking, but if I had to start again, I’d be a nurse.’

I am sure the baby was an unconscious source of strength to our warm-hearted, self-willed cook; and for the little creature’s sake she would often battle against a temper which was most trying to every one else in the house. Her stay was prolonged far beyond any person’s expectation, and her darling was two years old before Sarah left us. She had rendered the kitchen too hot to hold any one but herself, and it was a question of parting with her or the other three servants.

But I was almost unnerved at the sight of old Sarah weeping over the child whom she had

nursed since she was in long clothes, and who was clasping her neck with one arm, while with the other hand she wiped away the tears from her friend's face, making her pinafore corner do duty for a handkerchief!

I had done what I could to obtain a situation for Sarah in which I thought she would be as little tempted as was possible to give way to her besetting sins, and I thankfully remember that she did well in it.

Here let me say a few words about the need for *mutual forbearance in the household*. There is a very old story of an aged couple whose quarrels had been for many years the talk of the neighbourhood, when, to the surprise of everybody, the disturbances ceased. The gossips lost their regular excitement and wonder, and curiosity took its place. Somebody at last mustered courage to ask the old man the secret of the unwonted peace. He replied with a smile, 'My old woman and I have got on all right since we got two bears to live with us.' This only increased the curiosity; but it turned out that these were named 'bear' and 'forbear.'

Ah, the presence of these two bears is absolutely essential to the happiness of every home. They are as much needed in the kitchen as in the drawing-room, and I would say to every young candidate for

a situation, 'Whatever else you may leave behind, take the two bears along with you.'

Mistresses often complain that one of their most serious difficulties arises from the disagreements amongst the servants themselves. One lady, when telling me of this domestic trouble, was ready to cry, because her efforts to induce her servants to be kind and friendly with each other had utterly failed.

'Two of them,' said she, 'are pleasant-tempered enough; but the cook and nurse are always either squabbling or sulking. We have had an interval of peace recently, for these two gave up speaking to each other about a fortnight since, and both are too proud to make any advance towards resuming friendly relations. The others are made extremely uncomfortable, and the children cannot help observing what is going on. It is a shocking example for them.'

'And are these quarrelsome girls good servants in other respects?' I asked.

'Excellent. Indeed, all four fulfil their duties to my entire satisfaction, are respectful to their employers, attentive to guests, good to the children. If it were not for the wretched contrariness of the cook and nurse towards each other, I should esteem myself uncommonly fortunate.'

In this case, you see, the comfort of a home was largely interfered with, and not only the offenders themselves were miserable, but every member of the family suffered, more or less, for want of a little of the 'bear and forbear spirit' in two of the household.

As a rule, servants are extremely reluctant to tell tales of, or to lodge complaints against, one another. This is much to their credit; though amongst such a numerous class there are sure to be some tattlers. All honour to those who, in things which affect their own comfort only, show that 'charity which suffereth long, and is kind.'

But there are cases in which it is right both to speak and act promptly and boldly. For instance, when the conduct of one makes all the rest miserable, as in a particular instance which occurs to my mind as I write.

A cook in a family where several servants were kept, was for years feared and disliked as a perfect tyrant in her own domain. She was so jealous and suspicious, that an expression of kindness and approval from the mistress to one of the other servants was resented as a personal injury to herself. The recipient would be harassed with taunts, accused of hypocrisy, and of wanting to undermine her in the good opinion of their mutual

employers. Or, as the others remarked, 'Let the mistress praise one of us, and cook will blaze like her own kitchen fire, and give us a hot time of it for days to come.'

This mistress was particularly anxious for the comfort and happiness of all under the roof. She was careful to have respectable servants, and to satisfy herself also about the character of their friends and connections. This done, she personally invited them to visit their young relatives and friends, and never had to complain that the privilege was abused.

But, to her surprise, visitors rarely came a second time during the reign of this kitchen tyrant. It was only after long endurance, and when a new cook had succeeded, that the mistress, who wished her house to be a home to her servants, found out why it was not so. Simply because they could not endure that their friends should be made uncomfortable by taunts and rudeness, and they preferred to send them from the door, or to see them anywhere or nowhere, rather than under the roof of their employers.

The cook was an excellent servant in other respects, but for years she nullified the efforts of her employers for the comfort of her fellow-servants by her jealousy, and by practising all the petty

tyrannies which a mean and suspicious nature, combined with fertility of invention, could contrive.

How much the servants endured would be difficult to tell. But they did bear, and in silence, rather than be blamed for tale-telling. They would not complain, lest their unkind fellow-servant should lose her place ; though she had not scrupled to rob them of comfort, domestic peace, and the family intercourse which the mistress both permitted and encouraged.

In this case too much forbearance was shown. I think that the right thing would have been for the servants, first, to join in remonstrating with the kitchen tyrant, stating at the same time their intention of laying the matter before their mistress should cook still refuse to hear reason. By such a course they would have saved great discomfort to themselves, have taught a much-needed lesson to one who was not fit to be trusted even with kitchen government, and they would have prevented the commands of the mistress from being a dead letter in her home.

Perhaps some of you may like a little advice as to when it is right to appeal to the mistress, and when it is wise to be silent. In this, as in every other difficulty, you will find all the guidance you

can possibly need in the Bible. Go on the grand principle of doing what God's Word and your own conscience impel you to do.

If you are aware of a wrong done to your employers, or have good cause to suspect that they are being robbed or wilfully deceived by those in whom they place confidence, you ought to speak. If through your silence the innocent would be blamed, or the guilty escape detection, you should tell what you know.

The person who, seeing wrong done, keeps silence, and lets another be injured, becomes a partaker in evil-doing. Sooner or later those who, by hiding the wrong, tacitly consent thereto, will certainly be involved in the blame also. Some may blame you for speaking ; but it is better 'that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.' So mind you suffer as a Christian should, for doing right, if you must be blamed at all.

Take another piece of advice from St. Peter's first Epistle, which is full of practical teaching for the guidance of Christians in their relations one towards another, and to their Divine Head. 'But let none of you suffer as a thief or as an evil-doer.'

Remember the value of a good name. If yours is unjustly attacked, spare no pains to remove the

false impression, and to regain the good opinion of those who have misjudged you.

‘Or as a busybody.’ See how carefully both sides are given! We are warned against keeping silent, where doing this would injure others, hide wrong-doing, or hurt our own good name. We are equally warned against tattling or busying ourselves about what does not concern us. In so many cases where a mere love of gossip would induce us to speak, it is wiser, kinder, more becoming a Christian, to be silent. A few sentences from God’s Word will be the best comment on this side of the subject, and show us the propriety of silence where we should serve no good end by speaking.

‘He that coveteth a transgression seeketh love.’ ‘He that refraineth his lips is wise.’ ‘He that uttereth a slander is a fool.’ ‘The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds.’ ‘A tale-bearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.’ ‘A whisperer separateth chief friends.’

To what does all this advice tend? Surely to teach us that, as witnesses, we should be faithful ones, telling the simple, unvarnished truth. That our lips should be ‘righteous lips.’ That we should not gossip about the faults and failings of others,

from a love of talk, and that our daily and hourly prayer should be :—

‘Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; keep the door of my lips !’

CHAPTER VI.

THOROUGHNESS — ECONOMY OF TIME — CARE OF PROPERTY — PUNCTUALITY.

MOST mistresses are anxious that household work should be well and thoroughly done. I am, however, bound, in common fairness, to say that, while many servants are careless and slippery—spending the time that ought to be occupied about their work in dawdling and gossiping—there are also mistresses who are unreasonable in their requirements. They demand impossibilities, because they have no idea of the time that is needed to ensure thoroughness in any branch of household work.

‘There is nothing I like so much as a mistress who knows what work is, and who, having done it herself, can tell how long it takes to do it real well.’

These were the words of a bonny, bright-faced

young housemaid who had lately entered upon a new place. She loved cleanliness, and did not consider that her duty was done when the ashes were removed from under the grate, and a duster lightly whisked over the tops of the tables and the seats and backs of chairs.

‘I’m not afraid of the chairs being turned round or my mistress looking into corners, or that if you lift up a book or an ornament, the shape of it will be left clear on the dusty top of the chiffonier. I like things to be just as clean and as bright all over as hands can make them. But it takes time to make them so, as well as good rubbing.’

The girl was right. And it is a great blessing to the employed when the employer has a practical knowledge of the work her servants have to do.

I rejoice to think that the cookery and domestic economy classes are doing good service in this direction, by making girls, the future mistresses of homes, acquainted with the details of household work.

‘She is cleanly, but dreadfully slow,’ is no unfrequent character from an active bustling mistress, when parting with a servant, who is perhaps less slow than thorough.

On this subject, let me say to servants, If you are not allowed the time to do your work well, take care

that you spend upon it every minute that you have allotted for the purpose. Let no one catch you gossiping or idling away your time, when you have complained that it was already insufficient for the task to be properly performed. And if, after having done your best, you are still found fault with, ask your mistress, in a respectful manner, if she will, just for once, look on whilst you do this piece of work, and note how long it takes you to do it well.

If instead of scolding on the one side, and flying into a temper and answering impertinently on the other, there were to be a fair consideration and a reasonable test such as the above, we should have fewer hasty warnings 'to leave at the month's end;' less frequent changes, and longer and more valuable service from our domestics. These, too, would not pay us less respect or care less for our interests, because they found us willing to listen patiently to a well-grounded complaint, and to redress any real grievance.

From the subject of economy of time and thoroughness in the quality of work we turn naturally to that of care in the use of the property entrusted to you who serve in the household. In respect to work there can be no better advice than this: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' So, in using the property of others,

use it as though you had earned the money which bought it.

Accidents will occasionally happen in spite of care; but numberless things are mutilated or destroyed by the want of a very little precaution. A window and door are both left open on a windy day. The blind is next seen flapping to and fro outside, and unless some watchful eye notices this, the crash of glass announces that the lath has been driven through a pane or two, valuable papers have been carried into the fire or up the chimney, a tablecloth and a number of fragile ornaments swept on to the floor, and everything that would break amongst them smashed to atoms by a little act of thoughtlessness.

Who can truly say, 'I could not help it,' when an indignant mistress reproaches the author of such waste and ruin? She may not have done it on purpose, but destruction which is caused by utter carelessness is scarcely less blamable than wilful waste.

A great deal of harm is done to furniture by rough, bouncing servants, who bang articles down on floor or table, who rush about like a whirlwind, under the impression that hurry and bustle mean industry and earnestness, who seem to think that noise is an essential accompaniment to work. These are the

people under whom the edges of our tumblers are chipped, until they become dangerous to those who use them ; in whose hands crockery is perpetually 'coming in two,' and handles as constantly 'coming off.'

Chairs are recklessly brought in contact with side-boards, and the veneering is chipped, or smooth, polished surfaces are mercilessly rubbed with rough dusters, with the result of leaving the same covered with all sorts of fine lines and scratches. Under such treatment the polished top of, say, a grand piano, assumes the appearance of an immense outline map.

All such injury to furniture and utensils becomes a double source of annoyance from the fact that a little care would have prevented it. Hurry, bustle, and bounce always hinder real work. It is the steady, methodical servant, whose work is done with the least apparent effort, but which entails the smallest amount of destruction to property and is most satisfactory in the long run.

I often think of a little figure familiar under our roof for nearly ten years, who was an admirable illustration of the value of method and of forecasting the work. Slight in frame, short in stature, and by no means strong, in many respects she was a living example of what could be effected by

steadiness and a thoughtful planning of her work. Nobody ever saw her in a hurry, or with a smutty face or untidy hair. Her gowns looked less soiled and tumbled at the week's end than those of many wearers would be after a few hours' use.

All cooking materials that could be properly prepared beforehand or over-night were always ready for use when wanted. A glance at the spotless dressers and the floors, from which, to use a popular expression, 'you might have eaten your dinner without a plate,' gave a sufficient pledge of the exquisite cleanliness of everything prepared in that kitchen and by those hands. Yet all this beautiful order and purity were the result of quiet, steady work, carefully planned and carried out regularly and methodically.

There is no department in which cleanliness can be of more importance than in that of the cook. A careless, muddling cook will use her utensils indiscriminately. She will boil her onions, for sauce, and then, after a mere wash out, will make sweet sauce for pudding in the same pan—we all know with what result. A fine, subtle flavour of onions will run through the second preparation, and will, in turn, spoil both the sauce and the pudding it is intended to improve. And yet, when fault is found, the offender will perhaps stoutly insist, and with a

certain measure of truth, that she had washed her pan quite clean. Washing will not remove strong flavours, and especially the taste of onions. A pan should be kept for these alone, and no other sauce should ever be prepared in it. It would take too much space were I to attempt to enter fully into the many little details connected with a cook's duties, so I will make my advice very brief.

Be very cleanly in kitchen utensils, person, and dress. Be specially particular about the neat arrangement of your hair, so that it may not be loose and straggling. Few things are more disgusting than the sight of hairs amongst food. Scour and scald—in addition to merely washing—all utensils. Let crockery be thoroughly cleansed from grease and brightened in the drying. Fill milk bowls with boiling water, and let it stand in them until it is cold before drying for use again. This will tend to make the milk keep better.

In using the articles of food and preparing them, avoid all waste, and be ready to render an account of everything that is entrusted to your care. There are some cooks who use articles lavishly and wastefully, and who give away what is not theirs to bestow. They have no anxiety about providing the food, no occasion to consider how bills are to be paid, and often do not know the price and value

of what they waste. They will throw bread and odd pieces amongst the swill, and let food be cast away to nourish swine, which many a widowed mother and hungry child would be thankful to receive and make use of.

Remember, you are accountable—and not to earthly employers only—for every wasted bit, whether of food or fuel. You are stewards in your position, as your master and mistress are stewards in theirs. And there is another thought I would bring before you. Every housekeeper knows that meat is daily growing dearer, and a sufficient supply becoming less and less attainable. Consider, then, that a lavish use or waste of meat helps to make it dearer still, and life harder for the poor. Out of the very scraps and crumbs, if you will only collect them, thousands of birds may be fed and the lives of the dear little songsters preserved through the cold blasts and pinching frosts of winter.

Every morning at my home, one of our kindly domestics may be seen sallying forth with a plate on which all these fragments have been collected by their united efforts. Half of the store goes to the birds in the front, half to their brethren in the back garden; and the daily scene at feeding-time is well worth watching for. I feel sure if you were to begin to care for these little feathered pensioners on human

bounty, you would find so much pleasure in doing it that nothing would induce you to give up the practice.

As I have advised nurses on no account to conceal any accident that may happen to the children under their care, so I would earnestly urge all servants to tell, and at once, of any breakage or injury to furniture. I say at once, because delay in telling always makes the task more difficult.

It is a mean thing, and an acted untruth, for a servant to hide away the fragments of broken articles, conceal the mischief done, and, perhaps, leave the place without telling what has happened. Two unpleasant results are likely to follow. A fellow-servant may be blamed for that of which she is innocent; a mistress may be put to serious inconvenience for want of an article which she believed to be safe and sound, though really it had been long broken.

Very often she will be met with a look of combined protest and mock astonishment when she asks for particulars. 'Oh, that was done months since,' is the reply given. As though the length of time which had elapsed made the loss less annoying, or the concealment less to be condemned.

Two wealthy bachelors, whose establishment was nominally under the rule of a cook-housekeeper, were

one day surprised to find that out of a large and fine set of cut wine-glasses, none remained but those they were using at the moment. The waitress was considered responsible for the safe keeping of table appointments, and she had gone on breaking and hiding, until, when a visitor came, there was no spare glass to place for his use.

The wrath of the masters may be better imagined than described. It was, however, less the loss of their property than the deceit and consequent annoyance which caused them to arrange for the prompt departure of that waitress.

So again I say, tell and at once of any accident to your employer's property. At the moment, perhaps, vexation at the loss may try your mistress's temper, and you may be sharply reproofed. Express your sorrow, if you have been careless, try to be more careful in the future. Bear the reproof meekly, and, when the first irritation is past, you will find that the prompt confession has helped to build up your own character for truthfulness and straightforwardness. It is not unlikely that the mistress will afterwards say something of this kind: 'I was vexed at the moment, but I am glad you told me the truth.' And in speaking of you to others she may blame you for carelessness; but she will be able to say, 'I can trust her word.' At any rate, your own conscience will

tell you that you have not added a wilful sin to an unintentional error.

And the ladies who rule in the house should encourage their handmaidens to tell the truth in any and every case of accident. It is rather hard to keep from speaking sharply when some fragile but much-valued article has been smashed to atoms by careless hands. But if the culprit's confession and expressions of sorrow are met with scolding and harsh words, the offender is very likely to hold her peace and hide the fragments, should she meet with a second mishap of the kind. Not that it would be right to do so; but the temptation to take such a course would be vastly increased.

Where, however, a mistress has her patience tried by repeated acts of carelessness, and the almost wilful destruction of property, she has the remedy in her own hands. She must either have a distinct understanding that whoever breaks pays, or she must part with the author of the mischief.

Punctuality in carrying out household arrangements is valuable in every home, as tending to make the domestic machinery run smoothly. In some houses it is of vital importance. Yet, all the members of a family depend more or less on each other for the power to be punctual with comfort—the children who have to go to school, the father who

must be at his place of business, the servants whose work should be completed by a given time.

A lady who was about to engage a cook was extremely particular in her inquiries about the habitual punctuality of the applicant.

‘I can be punctual if the family can,’ was the answer. ‘I like to be regular and orderly about my work, and am prepared to be so. But my difficulty has mostly been to get other people to be the same.’

The girl spoke respectfully, and was quite in earnest. The lady she addressed felt a guilty flush creeping over her own face as she listened. She knew very well that, whilst professing to exact punctuality in others, she was often sadly deficient in the practice of that virtue.

There is no doubt, however, that a punctual mistress will make her servants keep to the proper time ; but it is by no means equally sure that punctuality in the employed would have the same effect on the employers. These will sometimes say to servants, ‘You must have the meals on the table at the time. Never mind whether any one is there to eat them or not.’ But this would be a most unsatisfactory state of things. The cook would grieve over spoiled dishes ; the waiting damsel would be uncomfortable ; and, depend on it, the blame would be placed on clocks, on servants, on anything and anybody rather

than applied to themselves by those who grumble over a cold or lukewarm dinner.

I shall not soon forget my return from town on one occasion. I was half an hour late, and after I came into the house I stopped on my way upstairs to speak to a seamstress about some working materials which I had brought back with me. On finally descending I was met in the hall by that methodical cook of whom I have already written.

‘Ma’am! Are you aware that the dinner is starving?’ (meaning, ‘getting cold,’) she asked with a reproachful look on her face.

I hope I felt properly guilty. I know I blushed and said, apologetically, that if such were the case I was to blame, and not she. And I hurried to my place at table, convinced that punctuality ought to be an all-round thing, and, if exacted from servants, should also be practised by all the members of the family.

CHAPTER VII.

ON FAULT-FINDING—GIVING NOTICE TO LEAVE— AND GIVING CHARACTERS.

THERE are two practices not altogether unknown amongst servants against which it is hardly possible to protest too strongly. I allude to those of listening, in order to find out things never intended for their ears, and of prying into odd papers or letters, accidentally or trustfully left within reach. No right-minded girl, no person deserving the name of Christian, would be guilty of either practice.

If employers leave their letters and papers lying about, this certainly implies trust in their servants, and that they believe them to be too upright and honourable to be guilty of prying into their contents. If they speak of private matters in such a place and

tone that their servants could hear if they were mean enough to listen, it is a proof that they do not think them capable of such an underhand proceeding. Deserve their good opinion, dear girls, and preserve your self-respect by scorning to do, when unseen, what you would be ashamed of if detected in the act.

Servants sometimes complain that mistresses are unreasonably suspicious, and act as though they expected to be cheated at every turn—that, like Dickens's Miss Sally Brass, they would padlock everything, down to the very salt-box, until 'there was nothing that a chameleon could lunch upon'—and manifest to those whom they employ a prying spirit which they would be the first to complain of in their servants. This spirit is, however, often the harvest reaped by an upright girl from the seeds sown by a deceitful and dishonest one. When a mistress has trusted and been deceived, she is apt to become suspicious where there is no occasion to be so. The only remedy is for the new-comer so to act as to show that the more her conduct is looked into, the better *she* will be satisfied, as well as her mistress.

If, however, after a fair trial, the habit of locking up every little thing and incessant mistrustfulness should continue, a girl would be right to try for

another place, where truth and honesty were better understood and appreciated. Were I a servant, I could not endure the harass of being constantly suspected and misjudged, any more than as a mistress I would, after a fair trial, keep a servant whom I could not both trust and respect.

People tell us that now-a-days there are no old servants—that where a seven years' character used to be a common thing, one for twelve months or two years should be reckoned very good indeed. I do not agree with these sweeping statements, and my own home experience contradicts them. But I am well aware that, in many households, there is a perpetual game of Marjory-move-all going on. I believe this is for want of a little more reasonableness on both sides.

Small difficulties, which might be got over by a little patience, twist themselves into a knot which is summarily cut by the usual month's warning. If I could only persuade you never to give warning on the day that something has occurred to irritate you, I should save many of you from throwing away a good place. But if, yielding to a momentary irritation, you have done this, and are sorry for it, do not be too proud to own that you were wrong, and ask forgiveness and permission to withdraw the notice. Your mistress will respect you and value

your services all the more after such a display of right feeling and good sense.

To young mistresses I venture a word of advice. If you have something to complain about, always call your servants into your own sitting-room, after the day's work is over, and point out the fault kindly and reasonably. Say what is wrong and how it is to be amended, and be firm in exacting attention and future obedience to your orders.

Never squabble with or rate your servants. By doing so you lose your own dignity and their respect. Never reprove them in the presence of visitors. Few things are more calculated to irritate, or to provoke a disrespectful reply; besides which, it renders the guests extremely uncomfortable.

I once saw a lady who had a very *correct eye*, and who was very particular about her table arrangements, seize upon a young servant, whisk her round as she was about to leave the room, and angrily direct her attention to a dish which was the least bit awry. The girl, a new-comer, young, inexperienced, and fresh from the country, blushed, trembled, and seemed ready to sink through the floor, had it been possible. Frightened at the angry looks of her mistress, and confused at being made a centre of observation to all those strange eyes, she was, moreover, unable to comprehend what was amiss. By the

time the lady had, by shakes and jerks, aroused her to a sense of the mistake she had committed, the poor girl was hopelessly unnerved and in tears.

One blunder followed another. She handed dishes at the wrong side, spilled the liquids when attempting to pour them into glasses, was glared at by the mistress, secretly pitied by the guests, and occupied herself between times in furtively using her handkerchief to wipe away the tears which, once set flowing, were not easily stopped.

Yet an unnoticed touch from the deft hand of the lady would have straightened the dish. A few kind words and a little lesson in private, instead of the course pursued, would have revealed a disposition willing to be taught and led in the servant, and have shown the capability of the mistress to model her into a first-class parlour-maid. As it was, the girl left as soon as possible, and the mistress had to seek another maid—a difficult matter, for she had got the character of being perpetually changing her domestics. This is a real picture, and one which, with trifling variation in actual detail, I have seen enacted again and again.

‘Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.’

This advice or command, given by the hand of an inspired apostle, applies to all who bear rule over servants, whether in the place of business or the home—to mistresses as well as masters. And surely in giving that which is just and equal, we have to think of more than a mere question of wages. We should be just in our acts, reasonable in our requirements, and even in our tempers, to those who serve us.

I know one lady who, when the smallest portion of the household machinery went wrong, would fly into a violent passion and say all sorts of unjust and harsh things to the author of the mishap. Being, like most hasty people, very generous, she would next lavish gifts on those to whom conscience told her she had been too severe. Her maids calculated on this result, and one was heard to say that she enjoyed a 'flare-up' with the mistress. Her temper was soon up, but as soon over. It was worth while to put up with it quietly, 'it paid so well in the end.'

'Be just and equal.' A short sentence, but how much it says! Give praise heartily where it is fairly earned. Be equally just in pointing out what is wrong, and firm in enforcing obedience, but do it in a reasonable way—not in the heat of passion or in the presence of others, but so as to convince your

servants that you know both your own place and their duty.

Young wives, who in their early married life are often much alone, sometimes make the mistake of first being over-confidential and familiar, and then of going into the opposite extreme. They have fault-finding fits, and the damsel who has been treated as a friend and *confidante* on one day cannot understand why her girl-mistress should on the next be sharp in speech and distant in manner. If we mistresses wish to be respected, we must, as I have said, be equal in temper, reasonable in our requirements, and just in our judgments.

I have alluded to the giving of hasty notices by servants, and suggested how these should act if they feel they are likely to throw away a good place, and are sorry for it. As a mistress, I would not advise another to ask a girl to withdraw a notice given in a fit of temper. However valuable her services might be, she had better be allowed to go unless she herself asks to stay, and owns that she has been wrong.

Were the mistress to ask the servant, the latter would probably get it into her head that she was too valuable to be spared, and the notice would be repeated whenever she was found fault with, until a separation became inevitable. Reasonable Christian

girls have too much common sense and right feeling to act in this foolish manner.

On the other hand, if the mistress has been the one to give a hasty warning, and conscience tells her that she has acted on impulse and without a fair consideration of the grievance, I do not think she would lessen herself, or lose the respect of her servant, by frankly saying so, and asking the latter to remain. A good servant would show no foolish triumph, and would give herself no airs. On the contrary, she would manifest her sense of her mistress's fairness by extra gentleness of speech and manners.

It is good alike for mistress and maid, for the mother of the family, and the young people, down to the little one who is only able to lisp out his request, to practise always and under the home-roof the same politeness that we take with us into the outer world.

There is an old saying, that 'No man is a hero to his valet.' The meaning is plain. The outside world too often gets the best side of us all. At home, we give way to little tempers, use hasty words, and act towards those whom we profess to love best as we would not do in the presence of strangers. Sometimes the mistress who is admired and sought after, the girls who are called charming in society,

even the little children who have two sets of manners, one for home and the other for company use, have different verdicts passed upon them by those who serve in the house.

‘She’s no lady, or she wouldn’t speak to a servant worse than to a dog,’ is not an uncommon expression with regard to a mistress. Or, ‘If some of these fine young gentlemen could see our pretty young miss in one of her tempers, she wouldn’t be so run after,’ etc., etc.

Dear young mistresses, dear girls who look forward to being such, let me give you a hint or two. Be loving, kind, considerate, courteous, sympathetic, thoughtful for others, careful not to wound the feelings of those who dwell under the same roof with you. *Practise true politeness there, every day and to every one with whom you have to do.* Teach it to the little children, both by precept and example, and you will be doing them an inestimable service and yourselves also. That which is learned in childhood abides. That which is in hourly use is not likely to be forgotten. Those who are loved for their own sakes in the home, and whose manners are admired there, are certain to win love and to be charming when outside that hallowed circle and under other roofs.

It is next to impossible for a servant to treat a

mistress rudely if the latter carries her own politeness and good manners with her wherever she goes. And the real daughters of the family will lose no dignity, but gain much love, if they, too, thoughtfully strive to lighten the work of servants by giving no needless trouble—if, thankfully remembering the goodness of God in giving them many advantages of education and surroundings not possessed by their toiling sisters of the household, they try to make the lot of these brighter and happier. They may do this by kindly consideration, feminine sympathy, pleasant words and looks, by imparting useful information, by lending suitable books; by acting in accordance with the spirit and teaching of our Divine Lord and Master; in short, by obeying His command, 'Love one another.' 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.'

We must show that we do not wish to exact all, and give nothing. We must manifest an interest in our servants, and in those near and dear to them. We must give a tender, womanly thought to the little, lonely lassie who, having come to her first place, is frightened at the sight of so many strangers, and yearns for the familiar faces she has left behind.

Our responsibilities extend beyond the threshold.

If a mistress is a mother also, surely the thought of her own daughters will make her anxious to preserve every girl from what is impure or morally injurious. The young mistresses, in their turn, will feel anxious for the well-being of their domestics, and will strive to guard them from all evil influences, as they themselves have been guarded in their girlhoods' homes.

We mistresses, each and all, should assure ourselves that our girls pass their Sundays as God's children should spend His day. We should give them opportunities of enjoying the fresh air, which is as needful for their health as for our own. But if the girls are at a distance from their own homes and friends, we should ascertain what associates they have, and where and how a holiday is likely to be spent. We shall feel that it is our bounden duty to guard from contaminating influences these girls—the daughters of other mothers, who have been intrusted to our care, as well as to work for us and under our rule.

We shall encourage them to consult us in seasons of doubt, difficulty, or temptation. We shall help them to decide on taking the right course, and cheer and strengthen them in their efforts to resist evil.

We, too, shall have our reward; though we work

not with any thought of benefit to ourselves, but with a single-hearted desire to do good to others. There are certain tasks and duties the performance of which can be bargained for, certain work that can be paid for in current coin of the realm. But there are numberless services, labours of love, which we cannot demand and money cannot buy. In such as these we shall reap an abundant harvest.

There is another matter in which we should be just and equal; namely, in the giving of characters. Alike for the sake of the servant herself and the future mistress, we should be equally frank and impartial. Few mistresses willingly give the worst side of a servant's character. There is always the feeling that a girl's bread depends on her obtaining a situation, and that ill-success may drive her to evil courses. So, whilst no untruth is told, the whole truth certainly is not. All that can be said for the departing servant is said, the damaging circumstances are glossed over or wholly suppressed, and perhaps the lady comforts herself with the thought that she has done a kind act.

Some much-pressed house-mother takes the girl. She has probably been unsuccessful in obtaining one, and the domestic emergency is great. Too soon she finds out how one-sided was the character given—

out of kindness, or from fear of consequences it may be—and she feels that she has been cruelly deceived.

Ah, these half-truths! What mischief they do! I have always felt the importance of being just and equal in this respect, and that I owed a duty to the mistress in search of a servant, as much as to the girl in want of a place. ‘The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,’ should be our motto in character-giving.

That one and only bad servant I ever had would never have crossed our threshold but for the written character sent by her then mistress. When, after a few weeks of bitter experience, I came to analyse it, I wondered that I could have been deceived by such evasive answers to my queries, such self-evident half-truths.

That very servant, finding that no one would engage her, after an interview with me, wrote one of the most remarkable letters it was ever my lot to receive. Without for a moment professing regret for her wrong-doing, or a desire and determination to amend, she asked me to tell a falsehood in order to hide her untruthfulness and dishonesty, and obtain for her another place in which to resume her career of wickedness. What I did was to visit the different

register offices at which she had entered her name, and warn those who kept them not to send to me for a character, as I would only tell the truth, and this would prevent any lady from engaging her.

Occasionally one finds that an employer will give a tolerably favourable character, but accompany her words with looks and manner which seem to say, 'I could tell more if I chose, but I will not ;' or will merely state that the servant herself gave notice, and left by her own wish. This is neither fair to employer nor servant. A girl may have many excellent qualities, yet not prove equal to the duties she has undertaken. In such a case, I should, were I her mistress, look round for a vacant niche which she was likely to fill, and help her to obtain it. I have done so more than once with most satisfactory results. But I would never allow an inquiring mistress to be deceived, or to take into her house the seeds of trouble in the shape of an untruthful or impure-minded girl, for lack, on my part, of courage to speak of such a one as she is.

Let us, by all means, help the fallen to rise again, and stretch out the hand of love and pity to the penitent. But let us, mistresses, young and old, be

true to others and to ourselves, and not show our compassion by concealing the truth, or help the wrong-doer to obtain a place by sacrificing the peace of our neighbour's household.

CHAPTER VIII.

DRESS—VISITORS AND SYMPATHY IN CHRISTIAN WORK.

FORMERLY, there was such a decided difference between the dress of mistress and maid that there was no mistaking the one for the other. Now, much greater latitude is permitted; and it is sometimes said that, if we wish to distinguish the mistress, we must look for the more plainly dressed of the two when the maid is also present. Some ladies do not interfere in the matter so long as their domestics dress quietly and neatly when on duty.

Without going far into the question, let me give you a little advice on the subject. It will be just the same as I would offer to my own children or to any other girl who might wish for it. Regulate the amount you spend by your actual requirements. Do not spend all you can upon dress just because you have the money. Remember there are other ways in which your spare wages may be wisely and well

laid out or laid by. I say laid by, because, whatever be your income, you should try to save something out of it for the proverbial rainy day. There are plenty of ways by which thrifty people may save and invest even very small sums, and by a penny at a time, if they can afford no more.

For instance, the post office will supply you with a form on which you can stick a new postage stamp, bought with a spare penny. When twelve stamps have thus been affixed, you can take them to the post office, receive back their value in the shape of a shilling, and make that your first deposit in the savings bank there. Make a beginning, and you are almost sure to go on. If you can spare a shilling at a time, you need not buy stamps, but become a savings bank depositor at once.

It is a pleasant thing to have a little money, your own honest earnings, to fall back upon if sickness should come or you are out of place. Or you may help the good father and mother to whom you owe so much, or, if they do not need it, in due time spend your earnings on furnishing your future home. Which of us at some time has not known a girl who, having spent all her means on 'fine feathers,' has had to be a burden on hard-working parents in such seasons of trouble as come with sickness or want of employment?

Then, beside laying by money, you should have some to lend or lay out in our Master's service. Because you are young girls in situations, are you to have no share in Christian work, to do nothing for love of that dear Saviour who gave His life for you? You would be very angry indeed if any one were to say that you should have neither part nor lot in sending missionaries to the heathen, at home and abroad, in spreading the written Word of God, so that all may possess a copy, or in caring for the sick and suffering in homes and hospitals.

My own experience shows me that many amongst you give almost beyond your means, and contribute nobly and lovingly to many a good work. If some have not done so, they will, I trust, take this reminder in good part, and spare a trifle, remembering that most of our great societies owe more to the small contributions of the many than to the larger ones of the few.

Going back to the subject of dress, let me advise you to choose quiet colours and as good a material as you can afford. Such will never become conspicuous, they will wear double the time, look well to the last bit, and cost no more for making than the commonest stuff you could purchase; so there would be a real saving, to begin with, in this last item.

Have your gowns made well, but in a simple style. There is no reason why you should not display excellent taste in this matter. But good taste never chooses staring colours or extreme styles which are likely to attract notice and encourage rude remarks on the *fast* appearance of the wearer. Good taste never loads poor materials with tawdry trimmings, which only make a dress look shabby the sooner, and are equally costly and useless. Good taste and good sense alike suggest that our clothing should be in accordance with our means, and fitted for the work we have to do and the position we occupy in the world.

The above rules apply equally to every article worn. Never sacrifice the comfort of having a good supply of warm, well-made underclothing, and of being neatly and strongly shod, for the sake of mere outside finery, such as you are perhaps half-ashamed to wear, knowing that it is unsuitable, and wholly afraid to be seen in by your hard-working, sensible mother.

Lastly, save the money to pay for what you buy at the time when you get it. Those who have to run into debt usually pay dearly for the accommodation, and especially those who can least afford the extra price. Tradesmen know quite well that they run some risk in trusting young girls, who generally have

nothing but their wages to fall back upon, and whom sickness might deprive of the power to earn any. Extra risks must mean the putting on of extra profits, and thus those who run into debt pay a higher price for their articles than those who go money in hand.

Now a word about visitors. Some mistresses draw a very hard-and-fast line on this subject, and will allow none. Servants may visit their friends at stated intervals, but they are forbidden to receive even those nearest and dearest to them under the roof which shelters themselves. Most mistresses, I believe, act differently from this, and, considering what their own children would feel if they were amongst strangers, allow all reasonable liberty in this respect. A right-minded girl will never abuse this privilege, or try to introduce into the house of her employers any person of whose presence they would be likely to disapprove.

Remember, it is your duty to fall in with the rules of the household in which you serve, and employers have often very good reasons for such as may appear too strict in your eyes. In this, as in all your dealings, act straightforwardly, and never bring in a visitor by stealth, or in the absence of the family. Many a robbery has been successfully carried out through the folly of young servants who have listened

to the flattering words of chance acquaintances whose real object was to obtain a knowledge of the premises, and to find out where the valuables were kept. Through such visitors a servant's character has been lost, and a girl who would not have taken a farthing dishonestly has been suspected of being an accomplice of thieves, and punished as such.

When visitors come by permission of the mistress, I think the latter should always see them, say a few words of kindly welcome, ask after the other members of the absent family, and thus manifest her interest in what gives pleasure to her maid. She will not be the worse served for doing this, and for showing that, amid her own household cares and occupations, she has a heart large enough and warm enough to sympathise with the joys and sorrows of all around her.

But there may be, and I trust there often is, a far stronger bond of union between mistress and servant than any which could result from the mere fact of being placed in these relations one towards another. It is not work well done and wages regularly paid—not the mere ministering on the one hand and being ministered to on the other—not the being members of the same household band and dwelling under the same roof, which can create this bond of union to which I have alluded.

No, there is something better still. It is the recognition of the great truth that, while there may be a difference in our social positions and duties here, we are alike servants of a Heavenly Master. If we are both Christians we are sisters in Christ, members of one body, and looking to one glorified Head, children of the same family, with God Himself for our Father.

Some years ago I read a brief extract from an article which was published in one of the reviews—I think the *Nineteenth Century*—and by a lady writer. Though I never read the whole article, I remember the little portion I did see, and how the author suggested that we mistresses should give our servants a share with ourselves in some special Christian work, such as visiting and relieving the sick poor, etc. She also stated her belief that no lady's work could have its full value unless united with such help, and no relations with outside helpers could equal those which might subsist between Christian mistress and maid, living under one roof, knowing each other's weaknesses, and engaged in a work where the one who in other respects was first might be last, and the last first.

I have no copy of the words, and do not profess to quote them literally. But I remember the impression they produced on my mind, because they agreed not only with my own opinion, but with my practice

and the experience of years. I read the words aloud to a young girl who was at the moment preparing the table for dinner, and, as I finished them, said,—

‘We realized the truth of what this lady has written a long time ago, did we not?’

‘Yes, indeed,’ she said, her face glowing with honest pleasure, for she was and is my willing and capable helper in the conduct of a large mothers’ meeting—entering heart and soul into the work, respected and loved by the members of the class.

And those who are at home whilst she and I are at the class help also, for they take the share of work which does not belong to their departments during her absence. I am thankful to say that we never hear any one of them say, ‘It is not my place,’ but that they work together as members of a family, and, above all, as God’s children.

Years before, another girl who is now a happy wife and mother, rendered me the same kind of help at the class, and with equal interest and heartiness.

Going further back still, there comes before my mind’s eye the picture of a bright young face, that of a housemaid then in our service. I was ailing for some time and unable to go out on Sunday evenings; and when it was this girl’s turn to stay in the house, I always called her to sit with me, that we

might talk, read, and pray together. I do not remember ever spending evenings at home with more true pleasure and spiritual profit than these.

The girl was such a bright Christian; and when she began to speak of the way in which she had been led to realize the great love of our Father, God, in giving His dear Son to die for sinners, and of her share in that finished work, I used to think her dear, earnest face was one of the sweetest pictures that my eyes ever rested upon.

I never think of her without remembering the happy seasons of truly Christian communion we enjoyed, and offering a prayer that her influence in her own home may always be an equally blessed and useful one to what it was in ours. She would teach our children sweet hymns, both words and tunes, and it used to be delightful to hear her rich, full voice mingling with their childish ones in songs of praise to God.

At that time a very dear friend, a clergyman, was a frequent visitor at our house. None of our servants attended his church, but he never crossed our threshold without saying a few kind words to whichever he happened to see. He would ask after their health with the same courtesy that he manifested towards the heads of the family, and contrive, in a few syllables, to show them that he was ever solicitous to

leave a little message from his Divine Master, to sow a little seed which might produce fruit to His glory, and for the good of an immortal soul.

How this was appreciated by our girls, and especially by the dear lassie to whom I have alluded! How she would try to repay the interest thus manifested by the most thoughtful attentions that she could show when waiting at table! The clergyman's health was failing at the time, and he was ordered to winter abroad. On his return, the young waitress was the first to see him approaching the house, and, noticing that our dear friend was looking weaker and more worn than when he left England, she came to me sobbing and with her good, true face expressing the deepest sorrow.

I thought she must have received bad news from home, but as soon as she could answer she explained the cause of her tears. 'It is not that,' she said. '*They* are all well; but Mr. —— is coming up the walk, and he is looking worse than ever. He is stooping like quite an old man. I am so sorry, I am so sorry. He is so kind and good.' Some one else had to answer the door to our friend, who, not seeing the usual face, inquired after the girl. He was deeply touched on finding that her tears and trouble on his account had made her absolutely unable to meet him.

During dinner, when the girl was in attendance, it was pleasant to see the manner in which she showed her grateful sympathy by anticipating the clergyman's slightest want, by offering a little dainty dish in a sort of beseeching way, and venturing to hint that it was 'very nice,' as she lingered a moment to see if he would recall his first refusal.

Our friend's wan face lighted with a kindly smile as he said, 'I *must* taste this, as you say it is so good;' and he helped himself to a small portion, to the girl's great delight.

Afterwards he spoke of this little incident, and of the true sympathy with his weakness and suffering which she manifested in every word and act.

'In these days,' he said, 'a kind of stony unconsciousness is generally required in table attendants. But for my part, I would rather have your bright-faced waitress, whose countenance is perpetually reflecting the quick sympathies of her true, warm heart, than a whole regiment of well-drilled waiting machines.'

Do not imagine for an instant that this sympathy in work and consequent familiar intercourse ever made our servants less obedient or respectful. The contrary was the case. Communion in Christian work, life, and aim, whilst it will bring about frequent and close familiar intercourse between mistress and maid,

would be the last thing in the world to engender the sort of familiarity which 'breeds contempt.'

No. This kind of union will be productive of mutual and ever-growing affection and respect, and will alike tend to the well-being of the family itself, and of all who are brought within the sphere of its influence. Those who are Christ's servants are always more faithful to their earthly employers than are any others. Those who, filling the place of mistresses, most earnestly desire to serve the Lord, are ever the most patient in dealing with others, and most truly reasonable in their requirements.

CHAPTER IX.

'FOLLOWERS'—HELPS TO YOUNG SERVANTS— GIFTS FROM VISITORS.

'**N**O followers allowed.'

These words form no unfrequent ending to an advertisement in that column wherein the wants of mistresses are specially set forth. The expression is very comprehensive, and no doubt intended to take in visitors of every class that might be likely to inquire for a servant. But in most minds the word 'follower' has its particular as well as its general meaning, and one always associates it with a masculine hanger-on.

In a former chapter of this volume I said a few words about general visitors, and what should be the conduct both of mistresses and maids with regard to them. Now we will consider the 'follower' who may be trying to gain the affection of one of our servants, or be actually engaged to her.

We who are mothers know by experience how deep is the interest excited throughout the whole

family by the engagement of a much-loved child, especially that of a daughter. Perhaps it is even greater than in the case of a son, though our boys and girls are equally dear to us. But there is a difference in the way we look at them when the time comes for marrying and giving in marriage.

Probably for years before our son takes such a step he has been going in and out in the world, playing the man's part, and fighting its battles side by side with other men. From protecting them as she used to do, the gentle mother has learned to look up to her stalwart sons as the ones on whom, next to the father, she might herself lean. And when one of her boys goes out from the old roof to a home of his own, it is to take under his firm, but, we trust, tender guardianship, the daughter of some other loving mother. The son leaves father and mother, and cleaves to the wife whom he is pledged to protect, to comfort, to cherish, and to keep while life lasts.

But the daughter's out-going is different. She leaves the shelter of her old home, and the loving arms of the parents whose tender foresight has hitherto anticipated her wants and shielded her from every blast of trouble or temptation that human guardians have power to turn aside.

The boy went out years ago, rejoicing in his youth

and masculine strength, and proud to put it to the proof. The girl, when she passes from the roof of her parents to be mistress under that of a husband, often goes out to act an independent part for the first time in her life. Feeling doubtful as to her perfect fitness for the solemn duties before her, she looks back for counsel and guidance to the one who, if a true mother, has ever been ready with both. And the mother, if she is also a wise one, will advise without interfering, and influence for good without intruding on the almost sacred independence of her child's new position and the privacy of her home.

Naturally, from the very instant that the daughter is sought, the mother is on the alert to satisfy herself as to the worthiness of him who seeks to win her child. The subject is all-important, for it involves the happiness or misery of her darling's future life, and, as a matter of sympathy, will seriously affect her own. Should she believe the individual unworthy, what efforts will she not make to shield her child from the evil which would result from a connection with him? If otherwise, how the mother's memory goes back to her own young days, and, in the happiness of her daughter, lives them over again. Her heart expands to take in another son, her mind is full of plans on behalf of her darling, and she rejoices over her and with her with exceeding joy.

Why have I written all this about mother and daughter, and of the days when the girl is sought, wooed, and won? What has this to do with the little maid in the kitchen, or the neat-handed Phillis who waits so deftly at table, and who, while constrained to look unconscious, is very wide awake as to what is going on, and, for reasons of her own, very full of sympathy? Why? Because surely the mother whose interest in her own daughter's welfare is so deep and absorbing, should have a little care and sympathy and interest to spare for her young kitchen-maid or pretty waiting damsel, whose circumstances are in some respects similar to those of her darling girl.

These have had to leave their mothers very early in life. Often when they are still children, barely in their teens, the young creatures have begun bread-winning, and learned to shift and act for themselves when they most needed the mother's eye to watch over them, and the wise word which might have kept many a wanderer from straying into dangerous paths. Surely, when we take these girls to be members of our households, we should try not only to guard the safety of our homes, but the safety and purity of these daughters of far-away mothers.

The rule, 'No followers allowed,' carried out with rigid particularity, may preserve our houses from

idle or dangerous intruders; but, on the other hand, it throws our young servants more into the power of worthless and dissolute young men, who seek their company with no good intentions towards them. Sometimes, perhaps, such followers may only want to while away an idle hour in the company of a bright girl with a pretty face, and the girl may think no harm can result from merely talking to, or walking out with, one of whom she knows almost nothing, and whose acquaintance she has made in the street.

But the end of such intercourse is often very sad, too sad to say much about in these pages. Often the young, ignorant country girl, new to town service and city ways, is induced to accompany her 'follower' to some objectionable place of amusement. She stays out later than the appointed hour for her return, and gets into disgrace with her employers, who threaten dismissal should the offence be repeated.

Perhaps the 'follower' next waylays the girl as she is going on an errand, hears the story of her mistress's displeasure, laughs at it, and encourages the foolish young thing to 'give it her back.' The girl believes what she is told, that she can get as good a place any day, for there are more places than servants to fill them. She likes the flattery

which praises her pretty face, and carries out the evil counsel of the wily tongue.

Again the mistress has to chide her for her lagging steps, having been kept waiting whilst her young messenger spent her time in gossip. The lady has cause for complaint, and the girl knows it. But she has been incited to rudeness and rebellion, and instead of expressing regret, or promising amendment, she is saucy and defiant at first, then sullen and disobedient. So begins the trouble which too often ends in loss of place and character to the girl herself, and of life-long sorrow to the mother in her country home.

This is one instance where a little motherly oversight and a few wise words spoken kindly and in season might have saved a young life from blight and sorrow. I say might, I dare not say would, because there are girls who are too headstrong to permit the interference of a mistress in matters with which they consider she has nothing to do.

Perhaps the mistress is too much put out by the girl's conduct to take this trouble. She sees her wilful, pert, or sullen, and concludes to let her take her own way, saying to herself, 'She will rue it before long. She will have to pay for her folly and impertinence, and wish too late that she had valued the home she now enjoys under this roof.'

Dear mistresses, let me plead with you on behalf of these wilful young creatures who rush headlong into the society and the paths which cannot tend to good. Do not let their folly influence you to loose even the weak hold you may have upon them, without an effort to save them from themselves. 'Be not overcome of evil,' but strive 'to overcome evil with good.' You are older, have greater experience, and should also have more self-control. So conquer the inclination to be angry, though you may be justly displeased. Think of your own young days, when you had, and most likely needed, constant oversight, patience, and forbearance from a tender mother. Think how you were guarded all round from the risks which your young handmaiden, so early sent out into the world, has to encounter at every step of her way, and how in turn you guard your own more favoured children from the chance of temptation. And thinking of all these things, lay a kind hand upon the girl's shoulder. Look into her face with an expression on yours which shall tell her that it is because her well-being is dear to you that you seek her confidence, and desire to restrain her steps and influence her in the choice of her companions.

If you succeed in convincing the girl of your anxiety for her real good, and save her from the

probable consequences of her giddiness and folly, she will bless you, and most likely repay you by future faithful service. And if not, you will have done what you could; and while you may grieve over your ill success, conscience will approve, and the effort that sprang from a loving motherly heart will not be forgotten by the Master you have striven to obey and imitate.

As your true friend, dear girls, let me urge you to receive in a right spirit the advice of your employers, even in things which you, perhaps, think outside their province. The daughter, though out of a mother's sight, would not say that she was for that reason freed from a mother's authority. If, therefore, a mistress interests herself in your well-being when you are outside the home, is desirous that your companions should be of the right kind, and inquires especially into the character, conduct, and prospects of any one who may seek you for a wife, be thankful. Do not think that she does it out of a prying spirit or to serve any selfish end. Remember, it is just what she has done in the case of her own child, and rejoice that she cares enough for you to be anxious, not only for your present comfort, but for your life-long happiness.

Mistresses should encourage, and servants should practise, perfect openness with regard to 'followers'

or engagements. Yet there are faults on both sides, faults of concealment and of selfishness which ought not to exist.

For instance, a young girl engaged herself as parlour-maid to a lady who was accustomed to keep her servants a long time and to be most considerate in her treatment of them. This girl went with an excellent character. She had given up her place only because her late employers were removing to a distance, and she did not wish to leave the neighbourhood. Her parents' home was near, and this seemed quite a sufficient reason why she did not choose to quit it.

The girl's conduct fully justified the character given, and the lady congratulated herself on having so easily filled the vacancy caused by the marriage of a much-valued servant. At the end of two months, she was amazed at receiving the usual notice from Hannah that she was about to give up her place.

'Leave in a month!' said the lady. 'You cannot mean it. You are only just settled, as it were, and I am thoroughly satisfied with the way in which you do your work. I looked forward to keeping you for years. What is your reason for wishing to go?'

The girl hesitated, blushed, and at last owned that she was going to be married at the month's end.

Thinking that Hannah must have entered into the engagement very suddenly, the lady asked her if she were well acquainted with the character of the man to whom she was so soon to be united.

'Oh dear, yes, ma'am,' replied Hannah cheerfully. 'We went to school together when we were quite little children. We have been engaged five years. It was because he lived here, and we were going to be married so soon, that I would not leave this neighbourhood. I wanted to see to things for our house, and to help George to choose what was wanted. I couldn't have done that if I had been at a distance, so I took your place just for the three months, as I didn't want to be idle or lose that much of wages.'

The lady was justly annoyed at the girl's selfishness, and said, 'You ought to have been frank with me, Hannah, and told me exactly how you were situated. I little thought, as you went about doing your duties so well, that all the while you were simply making a convenience of me and my place to suit your own.'

Hannah looked a little ashamed, but, I am afraid, was better satisfied at having gained her end than sorry for the annoyance caused to an excellent mistress.

Another instance of selfishness which came under

my notice was on the mistress's side. Her children's nurse, who had been most devoted to her young charges, and stayed several years in her place, gave notice to leave. She, too, was going to be married.

'How very tiresome!' said the mistress, with a look of annoyance and without one sympathetic word. 'I never thought you would leave us. But it is always the way with you servants. You never think of the inconvenience a change may cause, and specially in the nursery. There is Harry, poor child! you know he is so used to you that he will not even let me attend to him. I wonder you have the heart to leave him.'

And the lady left the nursery with an injured look, to pour out her grievances in the ear of her husband.

The nurse had been allowed no chance of reply, or she could have told that love for the invalid boy had induced her to put off her marriage for a year, in order that she might watch him through a critical period. That her devotion to Harry had supplied the maternal care the boy needed, but would never have received from the selfish mother, who would say, 'I trust you thoroughly, Jephson.' Then, with scarcely a glance at her boy's face, she would leave him to the care of the faithful nurse, whilst her

evenings were spent amid gay scenes and under other roofs than her own.

No wonder that Jephson felt bitterly the selfishness and want of sympathy in her butterfly mistress, and left that house and the children she had tended with a sore heart and a sense of injustice.

'After the way I was treated, I could not have said another word about my own affairs for the world,' she remarked. 'I just stayed my time, did my work same as usual, held my tongue, and left when the day came. And the mistress sent my wages to me, and never came near to say "good-bye," or "I wish you well, Jephson." It was hard to leave Master Harry, bless him! and I don't suppose his mamma will let him be brought to see me. But I could not go to that house again, even for the child's sake, though I had lived so many years there.'

No wonder that even love for her nursling was insufficient to conquer the faithful woman's sense of his mother's selfishness. In this case the servant would have been only too glad to make her mistress fully acquainted with her position. But, while the lady trusted the servant with the care of her children, she neither felt nor manifested any interest in the person who had so long relieved her conscience of a sense of motherly responsibility towards her invalid boy.

I turn gladly from the last-quoted instances of selfishness in both mistress and maid, to recall much more agreeable pictures. I have pleasant memories of good and modest girls, who gladly appealed to the older and wiser heads of those they served, for the advice these were willing to give. Memories, too, of employers who, having first made careful inquiries into the characters of their servants' suitors, and satisfied themselves of their respectability, have given them the privileges of seeing the girls at home, at reasonable times and intervals.

Surely this is the best way of protecting our young servants from becoming a prey to the influence of bad or merely idle hangers-on, whose acquaintance could not possibly be beneficial. For, consider, it is no more unsuitable for our servants to look forward to marriage, as a woman's natural vocation, and a fitting end to service, than for our daughters to expect that they will be wives and mothers in their turn. Should we like our own girls to meet their lovers or affianced husbands in the streets, or in the houses of persons other than parents, and who have no power to influence them in any way?

If our servants have parents living in the neighbourhood, the responsibility naturally rests upon them. If not, a mistress can scarcely rid herself of

it, with respect to the young girls in her service. I acknowledge that there are many drawbacks to the admission of the servant's suitor to the master's roof. One is often found in the shyness of a kindly, true-hearted young fellow himself, who means nothing but what is honourable and right to the girl who has won his affections. He has, perhaps, never crossed the threshold of such a house as she inhabits, and he fears that he should feel very bashful and awkward, especially in the presence of her fellow-servants.

As a rule, the girl's manners are superior to those of her suitor. She may have come from a home like his own, and be the less educated of the two, and yet he is sensible of a difference vastly in her favour, because daily contact with persons of superior learning, position, and refinement has effected a great improvement in her speech and manners. So he is often the one to shrink from subjecting his country ways to the scrutiny of city eyes.

Again, as the kitchen is common ground for all the servants, there is often a difficulty about the apartment in which a girl may see her visitor. All such matters are for separate consideration, and fellow-servants may act with kindly sympathy and true delicacy towards each other under such circumstances.

I have seen difficulties overcome, opportunities a

little out of the common afforded for the young people to meet respectably. Even an occasional avoidance of a portion of the grounds by the family has given Robert an opportunity of enjoying a pleasant stroll with Mary, or an hour of blissful quiet beneath the friendly shelter of the little summer-house, whilst the girl was actually within call the whole time.

I have seen mistress and maid go out together when the latter was about to begin housekeeping, that the former might give her the benefit of her greater experience in making purchases for the future home. I well remember one girl who said, 'My bit of money would not have gone nearly so far, if it had not been for my mistress's kind advice. I had never bought things for a house before, and I should have thought more about looks than service in my purchases. But she knew all about the quality and what would suit best, and she was so careful to see that I got my money's worth. I don't know how to thank her.'

Was not this a pleasant experience both for mistress and maid? Was the lady less honoured for her womanly and motherly conduct by the rest of her domestics? Or did she receive less willing service, because she had devoted a portion of time to promote the comfort of the girl after she had passed

from under her roof? Assuredly not. Every act that shows recognition of one common humanity, and sympathy with its best and holiest feelings, not only diffuses happiness, but brings it to ourselves, and wins for us more hearty service.

I never like to turn from a pleasant picture to an ugly one, but I feel bound to give both sides. The rigid rule, 'No followers allowed,' is very often made and enforced, because the confidence of employers has been abused and kindness encroached upon. Trustworthy domestics pay penalty for the faults of others; and those who think the rule too severe, and are too upright to attempt evasion, will not take service where it is in operation.

I knew one young girl who applied for a situation, and was told by the mistress that no servants' visitor, male or female, was ever allowed under her roof. 'Then I need not trouble you any further, ma'am,' said the girl very respectfully. 'I have been engaged for three years to a young man whose character will bear looking into. We cannot marry for years to come, unless some change should take place, for he has a widowed mother to help, and two of her boys are not old enough to earn anything yet. But I am going to wait for him, if it be for ten years more. In my last place, James was allowed to come and see me at suitable times. He wanted nothing else, and

he never had a crumb in the house except the lady herself wished him to stay to a meal, and asked him. My own parents live a long way off, and James's mother too far for me to go to her house. He must come to me, and I have too much respect for him and myself to have a meeting-place, like many girls do.'

'What do you mean by a meeting-place?' asked the lady, interested by the girl's frank words and honest face.

'You know, ma'am, that young people may meet in the street, but they can't stop there in all weathers, they must be under cover; and if they have no proper friends, they perhaps go to a public-house, or some place of amusement. It must be a cheap one, as they cannot afford to spend much money, and sometimes it is not a very good one, either for young men or girls. But what else is there? Well, some woman—maybe your charwoman, or laundress, or greengrocer's wife—lets the young people have a place to sit and talk in, and they pay her for it, often enough with food or odds and ends that belong to their mistress.'

The lady reflected for a moment. She remembered instances of mysterious disappearances and extravagances which could never be accounted for, and then began to ask herself whether it might not

be worth her while to relax the rule about visitors. She had taken servants before, who professed to agree to everything and promised everything; but the result had been deceit and frequent changes. Here was this girl, who brought a good character, whose honest face commended her at once, but who would not promise observance of the rule, 'No followers allowed.' Surely she would be better worth having than many plausible but unreliable applicants for the place, who professed to look shocked at the very suggestion of male visitors.

'I think I will see your late mistress,' she said; 'and if I find that you have never abused the liberty she allowed, I may give the same.' The girl's face brightened, as she replied,—

'I shall be very glad, ma'am. You will find I have told you the truth. I should not be seeking a new place, but my mistress is giving up her own house to live with two unmarried sons at a distance.'

Inquiry satisfied the lady, and she engaged the girl, who years afterwards married from the house, and carried with her to her new home many marks of goodwill from her employers.

In the matter of 'followers' I do not for a moment presume to say that one rule could possibly apply in all cases. I merely give real instances and experi-

ences, and leave mistresses and maids to act and judge for themselves. Only to the former I would say again, 'Remember your own young days. Think of your own daughters, and, as you would lead them aright and shield them from evil, strive to advise and influence your servants. Not by continual preaching. Say the word in season, and say it in such a manner that the girls may be convinced that you speak from a real desire to benefit them, not yourselves.'

And, dear girls, be true. Do not make promises for the sake of securing a place, when you never intend to keep them. But if the rules of a house are such as you could not conform to, follow the example of the girl I have told you about. Explain your position candidly and respectfully, and leave the lady to decide whether it is worth her while to relax a rule in favour of you or not.

I might suggest one or two safeguards to young girls fresh from the country. Many of you have been Sunday scholars, and some would like to continue such, were the opportunity allowed you. Ask for it, and probably you will find that mistresses will make a little sacrifice, in order to promote what must tend to their servants' benefit. If girls of their own accord ask for continued opportunities of instruction in God's Word, and prefer the Sunday-school or adult Bible-class to the streets when it is

their day out, I think most mistresses would gladly encourage such a preference.

Young Welsh girls, in particular, will often sacrifice something in order to be near a place of worship where service is conducted in their native tongue, and they show how they value the Sunday-school by continuing as scholars years after the usual age of leaving. Since those whom they meet must have similar tastes, this fact secures for them the kind of associates that Christian employers would choose for their servants.

The Girls' Friendly Society (see No. 168 of *The Girls' Own Paper*) offers great advantages to such as are at a distance from home and friends. It is for the benefit of young persons in business, mill-hands, and even workhouse girls, as well as domestic servants; and I would advise all who are eligible to join it. It is for young people of all religious denominations.

Above all other guides and helpers, however, let me impress upon you, dear girls, the importance of seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit at every step of your way. If there is one act which is all-important, surely it is that which links your fate and your future life with that of a partner who must be yours for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health. Do not, then, begin an acquaintance

without considering the end, and asking yourself whether it will tend to your spiritual good ; whether it will merely give you a husband, or unite you to one who will walk with you on the narrow path that leads to everlasting life, will strengthen your steps, and help you, day by day, to love God more and serve Him better. Marriage is either the best and holiest of earthly ties, or it differs widely from what our loving Father in heaven meant it to be.

May all who read these chapters be kept from entering on such solemn obligations without earnest thought and prayer, and, whatever be the worldly advantages, may they only contract such marriages as they feel that God will indeed own and bless !

I have been much touched by the conduct of girls, themselves quite young, towards the still younger sisters left in the old home. The eldest of a family who gets a situation and does well, frequently sends for her sisters in turn, and helps them to obtain employment. Sometimes a first place has not been a success, or the younger girl has not had sufficient experience to fill it properly, and leaves after a brief term of service. Then the elder has a painful sense of responsibility, lest the young one should come to harm. I have known mere girls watch over such juniors with a tender care exceeding that of some mothers. Sometimes,

they have deprived themselves of really needed articles to help out the new-comer's wardrobe ; they have paid for decent lodgings for her, and even undertaken to settle the doctor's bill in a case of sickness.

I once remonstrated with a young girl about doing too much, as I feared that her sister did not appreciate her self-denial. 'Had you not better send her home again?' I said. Tears came into the girl's eyes as she said, 'There are so many of them at home, and I brought her here to relieve father and mother. I will not send her back to them if I can help it.' I admired the self-devoting goodness of this dear girl, and rejoiced with her when she at length saw her young sister in a good place and under the wise supervision of an excellent mistress.

In such a case as the above, a lady might render a real service to a good servant by allowing a young sister to spend a few days in her house, whilst on the look-out for a fitting situation. A mistress might also assist her servants to save out of their wages by allowing a sewing maid to cut out a bodice pattern, and show a girl how to put the parts of a plain frock together.

I have been urged to add a few words on the subject of visitors' presents, or I scarcely think I

should do so. The word 'vails' is little used now, but it was common enough when I was a girl amongst people older than myself. I cannot tell why it was applied in such a manner, but, as 'to vail' or 'veil' means to hide, I think the name must have been given to visitors' presents, because the money was generally slipped quietly from hand to hand, so that no bystander would see the coin in its passage. We use a much less pretty word now, and speak of giving 'tips' to porters at railway stations, or any persons whom we wish to receive recompense for personal service.

I would first say a word on this subject to servants. When you are engaged, it is an understood thing that visitors under your employers' roof shall receive during their stay all the attention that would be expected were they members of the family. They are such for the time, and as the master and mistress generally show particular anxiety for the comfort of the guests, the right-minded, unselfish servant will do the same. She, too, will be extra attentive, if she only realizes that she is a member of the family herself, and should act as entering into the feelings of those who fill the highest places in the common home. And if it should happen that in the end she receives no gift from the parting guest, surely she will not feel quite unrewarded? She will

have pleased her employers, done as she would be done by when under a roof not her own, and added much to the comfort of the temporary sojourner.

I do not for a moment intend to suggest what amounts should be given, or to which servants, when presents are made. But it often happens that, when leaving, a visitor only sees one servant, yet feels that more have contributed to her comfort. Perhaps she does not like to ask for the others, or they are so engaged that she cannot see them, and she gives the amount she intended to divide to the one only, without expressing any wish as to its being shared with the rest.

Under such circumstances, whilst no one could deny a servant's right to keep what was given, I do think that a conscientious, unselfish girl would share it with such other members of the household as she knew had shared the extra work caused by the presence of visitors.

It is quite a different matter where unusual services have been rendered by one above the rest, or in cases of illness, where the attendance has quite exceeded that to be expected under ordinary circumstances.

I can say, with true pleasure, that I have often seen these extra services rendered with such single-hearted kindness, such self-forgetfulness and devo-

tion, that no one could imagine the thought of fee or reward to be associated with them.

And I have also seen a miserable spirit of jealousy amongst fellow-servants at any little preference shown, even when the recipient had well merited it by her thoughtful attentions. I have seen kitchen servants come forward when a visitor was leaving, and ostentatiously profess to help with the luggage, when any one could see that such aid was not necessary. I have noticed others push to the front, and give some little, quite needless, touch to a visitor's wrap, in order to attract attention and gain a coveted 'tip.'

These are little meannesses, dear girls, against which I would warn any who may be guilty of them, and say: 'Act fairly and unselfishly to each other when you receive gifts. Render service as if you found a pleasure in making all around you comfortable, and not as if your eye were directed towards the possible "tip" whilst the hand ministered to the visitors' wants.'

I have delightful memories of very different conduct: of smiling faces, feet quick to run, and willing hands; hands, too, that, instead of being eagerly outstretched to receive, have shrunk from receiving, and kindly tongues which have said, as if they meant it, 'Indeed, ma'am, I don't desire anything. It has

been a real pleasure to do anything for you, and I hope I shall soon have it again.'

Sometimes, however, servants can hardly have such a feeling towards guests, because they do not act so as to deserve it. If servants can display little meannesses, so do those who ought to set them a better example. They will not only receive, but exact, many extra attentions; and when the time comes to say 'good-bye' to their entertainers, they will not notice those who have ministered to their comfort, or even give what costs nothing—a word of thanks.

Now I hold that a true lady will show her good breeding all round, and that a true Christian will show consideration for the feelings of all with whom she has to do. When she is leaving a place, she will say a farewell word to the servants; and in bestowing her present, whether little or much, she will add to it the thanks for kind attentions which by a right-minded girl will be valued more than the money. Even if the parting guest's circumstances are such that she is unable to bestow money, do not let her on that account omit the thanks which show that she appreciates and is grateful for attentions received. By such neglect she would give pain, and probably be set down as 'no lady;' not because of her want of money, but of the kindly

courtesy which is equally becoming to those of high and low degree.

Servants should also remember that a small parting gift is often no gauge of the giver's generosity or good-will. It probably costs the person of small means far more self-denial than does the lavish gift of some richer guest, who can bestow it without any personal inconvenience or being conscious of a difference.

To sum up the matter, let me repeat, 'Care for your employers' visitors in the best way possible to you, and so give them increased comfort and yourselves the pleasure of contributing to the brightness of their sojourn.' If you receive no other reward, you will have the satisfaction which generous, loving hearts always experience in having given good measure, whether it be of merchandise or of work. For, remember, 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.'

CHAPTER X.

THE ONE SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

I HAVE made no attempt to define the duties of any special household department, or to suggest what share of work should fall to each servant. Details must vary a good deal according to the number employed, and the habits and rules of each family.

My object in writing has been to offer such advice to servants, and particularly to young ones, as may help them to take a higher view of their position, its trusts and responsibilities. To show them first how great is the influence they possess, and, secondly, how they may use it for good.

Such little word-pictures as I have drawn, by way of illustrating my meaning, are all from real life and personal experience. I trust they may serve either as examples or warnings to those who look on them with an understanding eye.

I have wished to show girls in service that the very

simplest household work may be performed in such a manner as not only to please your earthly employers, but to glorify your Master in heaven.

What must you be in order to do this? Faithful, obedient, honest, and upright, true in word and deed; forbearing, kind, ready to forgive; unselfish in your dealings with your fellow-servants, loving to the little ones of the household; merciful to the dumb animals which depend on human care, careful of the property committed to your keeping; doing whatever you find to do in a large-hearted, loving spirit, so that those who see you will acknowledge that thus you are striving to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things.

Not in great things only. To do great things is the lot of but few. It is the doing well the work belonging to our own place in the world which alone is required from us. Remember the words used by Jesus in the parable of the talents. To the servant who had received but two, yet had turned them to the best account in his power, they were spoken, the same as to him who had received five:—

‘Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’

I fancy I hear some young voices addressing me

thus :—‘ You set before us a high standard ; how shall we reach it ? You own that we have difficulties to struggle with ; that we have many things to hinder us, and so much both to learn and to unlearn. Some of us come from poor homes at first, and have had very little training to fit us for service. We have idle and careless habits to amend, self-indulgent ones to fight against.

‘ Many of us have been little used to think before speaking, or to fight against hasty tempers.

‘ Perhaps we do not think as kindly of our mistresses as we ought ; but consider them more our enemies than friends, and that their object is to get as much work out of us as they can, and return us as little.

‘ We have heard people talk of servants as domestic plagues, and the “servants’ question” is often discussed as though we had no feelings at all, or else all the bad ones.

‘ No doubt we often try the patience of our mistresses by our mishaps and mistakes. But if only they would not expect us who have not had half their advantages to be perfect, to begin with, we should not get disheartened and careless about pleasing, as we often do. We want to do right, but——’

And the speakers pause, as travellers sometimes do at the foot of some lofty mountain, in doubt

whether it will be worth their while to toil onward and upwards to the summit. Ah! the climber may not be sure whether, after all his weary steps, the view will repay him. He may reach the top, and find himself wrapped in a veil of fleecy mist, through which his eyes cannot pierce, and he descends sorrowful and disappointed.

But those who are toiling heavenward, no matter how rough the path by which they follow Jesus, can never be disappointed. Each step made sure renders the next easier; each fault conquered makes the victory over another a something to be counted upon. Was the path of Jesus a smooth one? Had He no cross to carry before He won the victory over sin, Satan, death, and the grave, and returned in triumph to take again the crown eternally His own?

What was our Master's source of strength? Was it not found in frequent prayer, in communion with God, in being armed with the sword of the Spirit, even the revealed Word of God, and ever ready to use it?

Again I think I hear some of you say, 'We have very little time or opportunity for private prayer. We seldom have even a bedroom entirely to ourselves. At night we are often up late; we must rise before the rest of the family to prepare what is needed for their comfort. We feel too tired to rise earlier still, in order to get the time for prayer. During the

day, if we think we will get a spare half-hour, we are liable to many interruptions, and the sound of a bell may call us from our knees almost as soon as we have bent them at our Father's footstool. Much cannot be expected from us—the time we have for prayer is so short.'

True; and what a comfort to think that we can always count on being judged according to our opportunities by Him to whom all hearts are open and all desires known! And how sweet to remember that it is not only our prayers which find utterance, but the very desires of our hearts which are known to God! So the longing, earnest wish to be His child, and to do His will, can be read as plainly as the expressed petition can be heard by Him.

Let me ask you: Have you used all the opportunities you have had? If you have only been able to call a few moments your own, have you spent them in asking for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, who will lead you to see your need, sinfulness, helplessness, and weakness; who will reveal to you that dear Saviour in whom your wants will be supplied, your sins pardoned, and strength given you for every good word and work? Your hands may be busy, but you may lift up your heart in prayer. You may be working for an earthly employer, yet holding sweet communion with your Heavenly Father, God, and King.

It is not a long prayer that is needed. But in asking, you must want also; in coming to God, you must believe in His will and His power to hear, answer, and save to the uttermost all who approach Him in the name of Jesus.

A short time since, I read the following anecdote :

‘At the battle of Edgehill, brave Lord Lindsay, with his son, Lord Willoughby, headed the royal foot-guards. Immediately before charging, he prayed aloud in these words, “O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me.” Then turning to his men, he said, “March on, boys.”’ I cannot tell you how often this little story has come into my mind since I read it, or how frequently I have repeated, from my heart, the substance of that short prayer, ‘If I forget Thee, O Lord, do not Thou forget me.’

And though you and I are placed in very different circumstances from those in which the brave old soldier who uttered it found himself, we also must march to battle every day and hour of our lives—the world, the sinful desires of our own hearts, and the temptations of Satan, being the foes we have to face, and, in God’s strength and by His grace, to overcome.

We can go to the Bible for samples of short prayers, which obtained sufficient and speedy answers. ‘God be merciful to me a sinner,’ gained one with

enough of comfort to send home justified the penitent publican. At the cry, 'Lord, save, or we perish,' Jesus arose, rebuked the winds and waves, and there was a great calm. 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest to Thy kingdom,' called back the assurance from the dying Saviour to the sinner, enduring a punishment which he owned to be the just reward of his deeds, 'This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.' Short petition, and what a brief reply! but enough to take away the load of guilt, the dread of coming judgment, and the sting of death itself from the thief upon the cross.

Let these examples cheer and comfort you when, amid the daily occupations of a life of service, you lament that you have so little time for prayer or quiet communion with God. If you are in earnest in wishing for them, you will find more opportunities for both than you at first imagined to be within your reach.

I remember being much struck with a prayer of which I can only recall a few words, but these always remain and often recur to my mind: 'O God, when Thou comest to number up Thy jewels, do not forget that I cost Thee as dear as any.'

Surely if we think what a price has been paid to redeem a sinner from death, we shall have boldness to ask that, with His dear Son, God will also, for His

sake, freely give you all other good things. Do not be cast down: the way is open, the invitation is for you, the welcome is certain, and none need be discouraged. Come in heart, though your hands may be busy and your feet running to and fro. Lift up your voice, or your thoughts only, in prayer to God, though you cannot bend the knee. You will never come to the Source of strength and be sent away without a supply, for the fountain of God's love is alike eternal and inexhaustible.

Before I finish this chapter, let me suggest a few short prayers for your use. We are told 'in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving,' to make our requests known unto God. We can bring the little matters as well as the great things of our daily life, and these words encourage us not only to ask but to supplicate, or beg in earnest, that God will undertake for us. Also in asking for new mercies, to remember past blessings, and to thank God for them, whether spiritual or temporal ones.

When we are dressing in the morning, we may say,—

'O God, I thank Thee for quiet sleep and rest ; for health, strength, safety, friends, food and shelter ; but most of all for the gift of Thy dear Son, my Saviour.'

When commencing our daily work,—

‘O Lord, help me to do everything as for Thee.

‘To take everything as from Thee.

‘To use all I have for Thy glory.’

Through the day, and when in company with others,—

‘Help me to act as remembering that Thou God seest me.

‘To speak as knowing that Thou hearest every word.

‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, for Thou knowest my inmost thoughts and desires.’

In time of temptation,—

‘Help me, O God, to be true and just in all my dealings, not forgetting that for all my actions I must give an account unto Thee.’

If unjustly blamed or provoked,—

‘O blessed Saviour, help Thy servant to copy Thy example, and to be like Thee, meek, lowly, patient under provocation, kind and ready to forgive.’

If feeling helpless and ignorant,—

‘What I know not, teach Thou me.’

If disheartened at the commonness of the work we have to do,—

‘O my Father, if I can do but little, help me to do that little well. If I have but one talent, enable me to use it for the good of others, the welfare of my own soul, and, above all, for Thy glory.’

Then we should not only pray for ourselves, but as members of the family we live in, for the parents, children, our fellow-servants and absent friends, and as God's children for all His family everywhere.

However weary we may be at night, we may say these few words,—

‘O God, for Jesus’ sake forgive all I have done wrong during this day. I thank Thee for all Thy good gifts, and pray that Thou wilt keep me and all dear to me in peace and safety, through the hours of the darkness.’

As a last thought, I would suggest that if the mistress will kneel with her maid, and offer their united requests to God, incalculable benefits would result to themselves and to the household in which they rule or serve.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED.

ACCORDING to a learned writer the relationship of master and servant is one founded on convenience, whereby a person is directed to call in the assistance of others where his own skill and labour will not be sufficient to answer the cares incumbent on him. It is a relationship which has existed from time immemorial, though in olden times the respective positions of a master and his servant were much more akin to each other than they are in the present day. Of old the servant was more in the position of a slave, whose life and body were entirely at the disposal of his master, but as the age became more enlightened his position improved. All traces of slavery in England vanished by the end of the sixteenth century, and thenceforth the relation of master and servant became one of pure contract.

In the present day a servant may, therefore, be

defined as 'a person who voluntarily agrees, either for wages or not, to subject himself at all times during the period of service to the lawful orders and directions of another in respect of certain work to be done.' It follows from this that a master is a person who is entitled to give such orders and to have them obeyed.

From the foregoing definition it will be seen that the term 'servant' has a very extensive meaning, and includes every person who is under the orders of another, no matter what his duties may be; but the following lines have reference to domestic or household servants only. Domestic servants are sometimes called menial servants, but there is a distinction in the meaning of the two words. The word 'menial' has a wider signification than the word 'domestic,' and includes it. Every servant who at all times during the service is under the immediate control, discipline, and management of his or her master or mistress, and is liable also to attend their persons, is a menial servant; whereas those only who form part of the family household are domestic servants. There is no hard-and-fast rule as to who are domestic or menial servants, but each case depends on its own circumstances. All indoor servants whose duty it is to attend on their masters and perform household acts are clearly menial and

domestic servants, and this will include a coachman or gardener living in a lodge or other separate cottage, but it will not include a farm bailiff, though living in the house. Neither is a governess a menial servant, from the position she holds in the family of her employer and in society generally.

The contract for the hire of a servant by a married woman as mistress of her husband's house is a good and binding one, and her husband will in most cases be bound by it to pay the servant's wages; for, although it is the wife who actually engages the servant, and who will during the service probably be the person to whom the servant will look for her orders, still the wife only acts as her husband's agent and by his authority. This authority may be given expressly or may be implied by circumstances. A servant, suitable to their degree in life, engaged and hired by the wife can recover wages from the husband. Where a husband and wife do not live together, it depends on the circumstances of the case whether or not the husband is liable. For instance, if when living apart the husband allows the wife sufficient means to enable her to maintain herself in her proper position, he cannot be made liable for the wages, nor can he where he has expressly forbidden his wife to hire a servant, if the latter is aware of the fact.

[As this chapter appears in a book devoted to matters of feminine interest, the word 'mistress' will be used throughout the rest of it instead of master, though the latter must be understood to be included and for the same reason the servant will be referred to by words indicative of the female sex, although the law laid down is equally applicable to males.]

With regard to the duration of the period of service, the contract of hiring between a mistress and servant is deemed to be a general one, and to last for the period of a year; and where there is no express mention made of the time for which the hiring is to continue, or of the time for giving notice, it is understood that the hiring is for a year, but may be determined at any moment by either party giving to the other a month's notice, or warning, or a month's wages in lieu of notice. Where, however, the duration of the engagement is expressly mentioned, the presumption that it is for a year is rebutted; and where there is nothing to show that it is not intended to be a yearly hiring, the payment of wages at short intervals, such as a fortnight or a month, will not make it less a hiring to last for a year, nor even the payment of wages by the week, where the engagement was to be determined by a month's notice. As before stated, it is a well-known rule—founded solely on custom, however—that a contract of service may

be determined by either the mistress or servant giving to the other a month's notice, and at the expiration of this month, on the servant's leaving, she must be paid her full wages up to that time.

The service may also be determined at a moment's notice on payment by the party giving the notice to the other of a sum equivalent to a month's wages. (These remarks do not apply to the case of a mistress summarily dismissing a servant for misconduct, which subject will be mentioned later on.) If a servant gives notice and leaves there and then, she is entitled to be paid a proportionate part of the wages accrued since the last day of payment up to the time of leaving, but in return she must pay her mistress a month's wages as compensation for not serving the month out. If, however, a servant packs up her boxes and goes away without saying anything about it, she utterly forfeits all claim to any wages which have accrued since the last day of payment, and cannot, after wilfully violating the contract according to which she was hired, claim the sum to which her wages would have amounted had she kept her contract, merely deducting therefrom one month's wages.

Some persons may perhaps think this somewhat harsh, but it is nevertheless the law, and, moreover, it is more consistent with honesty and common-sense

than to allow a servant to break a contract, and at the same time claim a benefit under it, when upon simply giving notice to the mistress and paying, or agreeing to allow the mistress to deduct from the amount due to her, a month's wages, she can leave at any time. The distinction between leaving at a moment's notice and leaving without notice at all may seem to some perhaps rather fine, but the practical effect of adhering to the strict letter of the law is merely to compel a servant to give her mistress notice when she wants to leave, which can be but little trouble to the servant, and will, in most cases, save the mistress a good deal of unnecessary trouble and inconvenience, and perhaps loss. So that if a servant is paid on the first of each month, and on the fifteenth of the month she gives notice to leave, she may go there and then, and the mistress must pay her the amount of wages earned in those fifteen days ; but the servant must pay the mistress a full month's wages as compensation for not staying the month out. But if, instead of giving notice, the servant simply goes away without saying a word, in that case the wages which had accrued between the first and the fifteenth would be absolutely forfeited.

The service is also put an end to by the death of the employer, and, of course, by the death of the servant. If, therefore, a servant be discharged on the

death of the employer, she can claim and must be paid wages from the time of the last payment up to the death. If, however, the servant is kept on by the representatives of the deceased to look after things, she will then be their servant, and they must pay her. If a servant dies during the service, all wages due to her up to the time of her death must be paid to her representatives, who may sue for the same if withheld.

One of the cases in which erroneous impressions frequently exist is as to what will justify a mistress in summarily dismissing a servant. The following are the principal grounds which will justify the discharge of a servant at a moment's notice :—1, Wilful disobedience to any lawful order ; 2, gross moral misconduct ; 3, habitual negligence ; 4, incompetence or permanent incapacity from illness.

As to wilful disobedience, if a servant will not obey a lawful order she must suffer for her obstinacy. If a servant will persist in going out, or standing at the street door, and such like, after having been forbidden to do so, such conduct will justify instant dismissal. In one case a female servant persisted in going out against her mistress's orders, though it was to visit a dying mother, and she was thereupon dismissed. It was subsequently decided by the judges that such summary dismissal was justifiable. This case is not

quoted as an example to others to do likewise, but simply to show under what circumstances summary dismissal is justifiable. The mistress's orders must be confined to those services for which the servant was hired, and a mere obstinate refusal to do some particular act will not justify dismissal, the refusal must be persistent.

Again, theft, immorality, drunkenness, and such like, all constitute good grounds for discharging a servant. If a servant is grossly rude and insolent, she may be at once dismissed; and if she is violent, and uses abusive language to her mistress or one of the family, the latter may send for a policeman and give her into custody.

If a servant will not do her work, or is habitually negligent in it, she may be sent away at once; but mere occasional neglect, which does not cause injury, does not justify instant dismissal without compensation. And, again, if a servant is hired for a particular purpose, and proves utterly incompetent to perform it, this is a good ground for discharge. For instance, if you engage a cook who represents herself to be thoroughly proficient and highly trained in the culinary art, and you pay her high wages, you will be quite justified in dismissing her if she altogether fails to redeem her profession in any essential particular. As a rule, however, it is not safe to dismiss ordinary

domestics without notice or payment of wages for incompetence, for it is common knowledge that a great number of servants offer themselves, and are hired to perform, services which they are utterly incapable of rendering. Want of experience, clumsiness, absence of skill and finish about their work must be expected when untrained servants at low wages are hired, and must be taken as part of the bargain, and it would be safe to dismiss only in the higher branches of domestic service, when special knowledge and skill are necessary, but are not forthcoming in the servant who professed them, as in the case of the cook just mentioned. Of course, when a servant is dismissed for any of the above offences, she forfeits all claim to any wages which have accrued since the last day of payment, in the same manner as if she left without notice.

A temporary illness, with incapacity for work, is not a good ground for discharging a servant unless the contract has been rescinded ; but permanent illness is a good ground for dismissal. The wages that have been earned by the servant up to the time of the illness must be paid, because it is no fault of hers that she cannot continue the service ; and unless the contract is put an end to, there is no suspension of the right to wages because of her illness and incapacity to work. It may as well be stated here

that a servant cannot legally compel a master or mistress to find her medicine when she is sick, or surgical attendance when she has met with an accident, unless the illness or accident is the direct result of fulfilling a lawful command. However, very slight evidence will fix the master or mistress with liability, and it is probable that if a servant were ill and sent for a medical man with the master's knowledge, the latter would have to pay for the attendance. Indeed, in one case a servant was suddenly taken ill and sent for a doctor, and on the matter subsequently coming to the master's knowledge he sent his own doctor. It was held that he was liable to pay the surgeon called in by the servant, simply because his wife knew that he had been called in, and did not express any disapprobation.

Now as to character. No mistress is legally bound to give her domestic or menial servant a character. It is, however, the duty of a mistress to state fairly and honestly what she knows of a servant when applied to by any one who may be about to take the servant into their employ; and those who are about to employ them have a corresponding interest in knowing the truth concerning them, so that they may be rightly informed as to those who are coming to form part of their domestic household. Masters and mistresses should be freely, unreservedly, and truthfully out-

spoken as to their opinion of those servants who have left their service, not keeping back that which is unfavourable, nor speaking ill of them, nor recklessly exaggerating their faults and shortcomings. For while the law in the interests of society holds the communication of the character of servants privileged, yet a deliberately stated falsehood would be evidence of malice, and would tend to deprive the communication of its privilege, and render the person making it liable to an action at the suit of the servant. The mistress is in duty bound to state not only what she knows of the servant at the time of her discharge, but if she knows of any circumstance subsequently happening of which the inquirer is entitled to be informed, also to tell further what she conscientiously believes to be the case; therefore, if a good character is at first given, and the mistress subsequently finds out things unfavourable to the servant, it is her duty to communicate the discovery to the person to whom the character has been given.

Any communication made by a mistress as to the character of a servant—no matter how damaging such a character may be—if fairly and honestly made, is a privileged communication; that is to say, that such communication will not render the mistress liable to any action by the servant for slander. This privilege arises from the duty which, as before stated

lies upon all mistresses to state fully and fairly the truth about a servant, whether in her favour or against her ; and a mistress, so long as she does not go out of her way to injure, need not be afraid of telling the truth about the real character of any servant. Any person knowingly giving a false character to another person about to hire the servant, if the latter subsequently robs or injures his or her master or mistress, is guilty of a criminal offence which renders him liable to a penalty of £20, or three months' imprisonment with hard labour. But a false character *bonâ fide* believed to be true will not render the giver so liable.

When a servant enters into the service of a mistress, it is her duty to fulfil the engagement to the best of her ability ; to be honest, respectful, and diligent, to take due and proper care of her mistress's property, and to obey all lawful orders. These orders must be lawful and within the scope of the employment for which the servant was hired ; and no servant is obliged to obey an order attended with risk ; for instance, a lady's-maid would not be obliged to clean the scullery, and such like.

It is the duty of a master to supply a servant with proper food and shelter, and to pay the wages agreed on between them.

A master may not under any circumstances chastise a servant, no matter how incorrigible. If they cannot agree, the servant must be discharged. A master is not liable to a servant for any injuries inflicted by fellow-servants in the ordinary discharge of their duty; for a servant, when he or she engages to serve, impliedly undertakes as between himself or herself and the employer to run all the risks of the service. This branch of the law is, however, somewhat complicated, and in case of an accident happening, the liability or non-liability of the master or mistress would depend so much on the actual circumstances of the particular case, that it is impossible, in a chapter of this nature, to lay down any general rules bearing on the subject; and the only safe course under such circumstances would be to lay the case before a solicitor, and be guided by his advice.

Lastly, as to the liability of a master or mistress for the acts of the servant.

The principle on which a master or mistress is liable for the actions of their servant is that of agency. The mere relation of master and servant does not invest the latter with a right to pledge the master's credit; and if the servant purchase goods on credit without the leave of the master, no liability attaches

to the latter. But if a master holds out a servant as his authorized and accredited representative, it is only right and just that he should accept responsibility for his acts. For instance, where the master is in the habit of sending the servant to buy goods upon credit, and is not in the habit of paying for such goods at the time of buying, but on a particular occasion does furnish the servant with money to pay for such goods, and the servant either loses or steals the money, but orders the goods, the master is liable, because the tradesman has been in the habit of supplying goods on credit. But when the master is in the habit of supplying his servant with money to pay cash down for the goods he orders, and the servant steals or loses the money, but orders the goods, the master will not be liable, because he has always been in the habit of sending the servant with the money, and nothing but the master's express authority to the tradesman to supply the goods on credit will render him liable.

In conclusion, it may be stated generally that a master is liable for all the acts of a servant which come within the scope of the latter's employment, however wrongful and negligent such acts may be, but is not responsible for the wrongful act of a servant unless that act be done in the execution of the authority given by him in the course of the employment,

for beyond the scope of his employment he or she is as much a stranger to the master as to any third person, and his or her act cannot, therefore, be regarded as the act of the master.

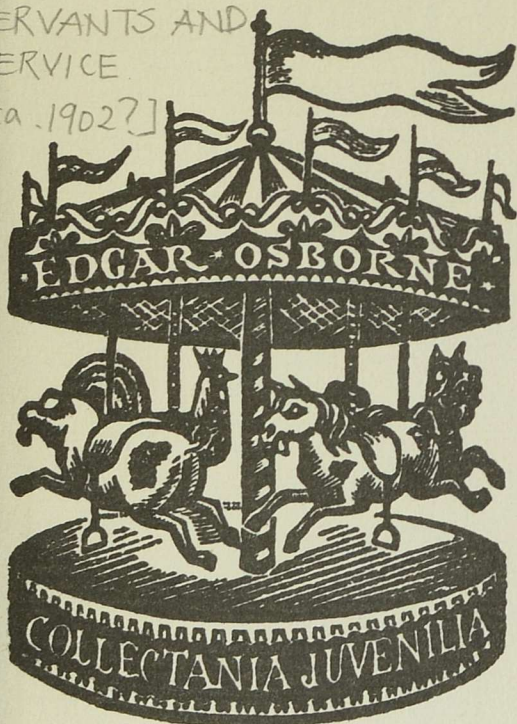
THE END.

LAMB, RUTH

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