

AS THE GIRL SEES IT.

SERVANTS HAVE VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT OF HOUSEWORK.

Failings of Mistresses Freely Discussed. How the Girls Who Do Kitchen Work Regard the Actions of Autocratic Women Who Are More Fortunate.

At a little gathering of working girls I chanced to overhear the mistresses discussed from her maid's standpoint. In the group were some eight or ten servants. Two of them were desirous of securing places, and were making eager inquiries about certain women who were known to be without help.

Mary was out of a place and Mrs. Smith, Bridget's former mistress, was endeavoring to engage her. Bridget listened nervously to the statement of the case, and then her words burst forth in a torrent: "I would sooner starve than go back to her. Sure, she gave me three dollars a week, and there was a second girl and a washerwoman, too, but for all that, and though there were only two in the family, I wouldn't go back again for no amount of money."

"And I didn't dare to have company either. What did she think I could do all evening anyway? I can't read, and she knows it. I've heard her complain often enough of being lonely when her husband was away and no one to call, and goodness knows she had her books and magazines and music and fancy work. And that was her house, too, and of course she would feel more interest in it than I would. But she expected me to be in every evening of my life and never see my friends. I stood it for nearly a year, for I hate to change places, but I tell you I'd have gone crazy sure if I'd staid a week longer."

A very animated discussion followed Bridget's harangue, and it was most obvious that the "evening" was a sore topic with the girls. Help chanced to be very scarce in the city, and there were evidently certain women who would find it extremely difficult to get girls because of their stand on this question.

Apparently the girls did not wish to be unreasonable. At least they agreed repeatedly. They were willing to remain at home whenever there was any real emergency demanding their presence. When no such cases arose, however, they felt that they were entitled to some liberty after a hard day's work.

"How about Mrs. Brown?" questioned Mary. "She hasn't got a girl either. "I don't believe you'd like her at all," volunteered another of the group. "You dunn't eat in the dining room, and you can't use the same dishes that the family does. She keeps cheaper ones for the girl. Then, too, she'll buy cheap meat and cheap butter for you, and you won't dare touch what the family has. I know all about her. I've tried it there. I used to have hard work getting a square meal sometimes."

"I wish Mrs. A. wanted a girl," was Mary's next remark. It was evident that Mrs. A. was well known, at least by reputation, judging from the complimentary chorus that greeted this last utterance. "When she wants a girl she can get twenty. "Her servants have to do their work well, but she knows how to treat them. "Her girls never leave unless they are or get married. "She is a real lady. "She doesn't poke her nose into a girl's private affairs."

A running commentary on well known women of the place followed, and some of the strictures passed were very keen.

"I staid a month once at Mrs. D.'s, but she thought she could go into my room and look through all my things whenever she wanted to. I found her reading my letters more than once. I wonder how she would like to have had me going through her things that way. I would have had just as much right to do it as she had. "Mrs. F. was awfully funny. She was always leaving a ten cent piece or a quarter around some place to see if I would take it. I tumbled quick enough for her little game, but it made me mad. She had the worst children I ever saw. They had to mind her, but she let them be as impudent to the girls as they chose, I never heard children talk so in all my life, and their mother seemed to think it was all right no matter what they said to me.

"The oldest boy slapped me in the face one day, and I put him out of the kitchen. I wouldn't stand that sort of thing, you can just bet. Then there was a scene. The mother scolded me, but never said a word to the child, so I up and told her that I wouldn't stay another hour unless she would keep the youngsters out of the kitchen and make them behave respectably to me. She wouldn't do it, of course, and I left. It was in the midst of a large washing, too, but I didn't care one bit. "You know Mrs. M.? Well, she doesn't know any more about housekeeping than a baby does. She wouldn't own up to it, though, and she used to act as wise as an old grandmother. She never knew what to order for a meal, so at last she began to give me published menus. Well, half the time I couldn't get the things in those old bills of fare. They weren't to be had in the market, and that is all there was about it. So I got in the habit of buying just what I could, and she never knew the difference between the printed bill of fare and mine, for I'd never let on.

"I wonder if any of you ever lived with Mrs. O.," remarked another girl, who had kept silent up to this point, "because if you haven't, you don't know a thing about work. She only kept one girl, and I had to do all the work, even the washing and ironing. There were eight in the family, too. She never did an earthly thing, not even to make her own bed or look after the mending. I had it all to do, and half the time I had to mind the baby while cooking or washing. Then she had an awful lot of company. I've ironed there sometimes until 3 o'clock in the morning, and that wasn't any fun either, for I had to be up again at 6 to get breakfast. I stood it for more than two years, though, for I was green then. Besides, I couldn't help liking her too. But, I tell you, I wouldn't go back again."—Miss M. C. Jones in Pittsburg Dispatch.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

An Ideal Gentleman and the Perfect Blossom of American Manhood. [Special Correspondence.]

WASHINGTON, Conn., July 28.—With the public life of George William Curtis, now believed to be, unhappily, near his end, every cultured American is acquainted; but comparatively few of his countrymen have known of him in his private capacity, for he has always been extremely modest and reserved, as men of his rare stamp proverbially are. As a man he is more remarkable, more exceptional than as a journalist, an author or an orator.

Since he first drew attention in youth by his brilliant and scholarly letters from the east in The Tribune until his recent illness he has been wholly devoted to principle, to wholesome reforms, to the diffusion of liberal ideas. He has been on the right side of every question, and yet has ever shown—with all his earnestness—moderation, tolerance and generosity. This is so unusual that those who did not understand him have sometimes styled him a rosewater advocate, a dandified defender of dainty convictions, and the like.

A nature so sensitive yet so firm, so generous yet so uncompromising, so considerate yet so courageous, is entirely beyond the comprehension of the average mind—unwilling to accept what it cannot explain. Above everything else, Curtis is instinctively and completely a gentleman, in an ideal sense—the facts of whose unpretending life would put reproach on the pompous chronicles of many a trumpeted hero. He is the culmination and perfect blossom of the highest and truest American manhood, unsurpassed if equaled by that of older and more resounding civilizations.

While a public man and in the loftiest sense a politician, he has never filled any public office, which is a severe reflection on the republic, since no American of his time has been better qualified for the most exalted positions.

What a national senator, what a governor of the great state of New York; what a minister to any foreign court he would have made! What honor he would have reflected on his native land! What laudable pride the best of us would have felt in him! And when we remember many of the men who have occupied such places we must admit, with a sense of shame, that in the great democracy of the world the best fitted are the least likely to be chosen.

Nevertheless, his influence for good must have been strong and felt in countless quiet ways, less directly than indirectly, not by his writings and speeches alone but by his uniform kindness and courtesy and what may be called the salubrity of his example. Such a life as his can never be in vain; its mental and moral beauty cannot fail of wide productivity.

It has been by no means eventful; his brief connection with The Tribune, his editorship, with others, of the first Putnam's Magazine, in which he had a pecuniary interest, and his long association with the Harpers comprise its main features, exclusive of his lectures and literary and political addresses.

His most representative work, perhaps, is "Prue and I," originally contributed to Putnam's, which no appreciative reader can readily forget. It is one of the choicest, daintiest specimens of our literature and must become an American classic. The reveries and reflections of the old bookkeeper convey a clear and eloquent impression of the mind and temperament of the author, who has in a special degree the uncommon and precious gift of sympathy.

The financial failure of the publishers of the magazine in which Curtis was a silent partner, though not, it is said, legally responsible, swallowed up his private fortune, inherited from his father, and left him wholly dependent on his own exertions. He might easily have avoided responsibility for the debts of the house, but he preferred poverty to the slightest blur on his escutcheon. After the loss of his fortune he was still heavily in debt, and to discharge it he labored faithfully for some twenty years.

When Henry J. Raymond died suddenly, the New York Times offered Curtis three times the salary he was reputed to be receiving from the Harpers. He declined the generous offer, and made no mention of it to his employers. But, having heard of it through others, they voluntarily advanced it to the figure that had been named by the newspaper.

Although poor, in a New York sense, most of his life, he has again and again declined all compensation for elaborate addresses for academic anniversaries, for eulogies on distinguished men, etc. No amount of persuasion would induce him to change his mind. Generosity has ever been one of his shining virtues.

He has always been ready to lend any body in need, whether actual or imagined, a helping hand. The amount of service he has rendered gratuitously to every year to all manner of applicants is beyond yearly object proposed, is beyond calculation and the belief of ordinary selfishness. Young authors and aspirants for literary fame have taxed his time and patience most unreasonably, without the slightest rebuff or sympathy of irritation. The spirit of courtesy and chivalry is incarnate in him. His fine eye on Lowell—his last public appearance in New York—would apply almost word for word to himself. If he should die his death would be a loss to the nation and humanity. Men of his order are not born once in a generation. JUSTUS HENRI BROWNE.

Women Must Bring Peace. Women in politics must bring in peace rather than war; their ways must be "ways of pleasantness"; they must not criticise or carp at one another in newspaper or in convention. We believe it would be to the advantage of every woman politician if she would answer every press reporter as one of our readers did at the Cincinnati convention: "You cannot inter-fer- with me at the expense of any other woman; I have no criticism to make—at least, not for the public ear."

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