

# Queer Domestic Feature In New Zealand

(Copyright, 1901, by Frank G. Carpenter.)  
WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Jan. 19.  
—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—  
WANTED—Lady help. Address, Private Family, Herald office.  
WANTED—Situation as Lady Help or Nurse in small family. Apply to Miss Mary \_\_\_\_\_ street, Wellington.  
WANTED—By Domesticated Young Lady; position as Companion or Help; town or country. Apply X. O. F., Herald office.  
These three advertisements I clip from the "situations wanted" column of the

lady help received them and played the Lady Bountiful. She entertained them, serving cakes and tea. She rang the bell for the cook, who was a general, and told her to bring in the tea. The cook did so, but when I came home I found her raging. She gave me notice and told me she did not propose to be ordered about by any lady help. I had to almost get down on my knees to keep her. I have her still, but my lady help has been told that she must transmit all orders through me. I find that the servant girl rules here

of labor, as made by the woman inspector of factories and the woman who is in charge of the woman's branch here at Wellington. The latter states that 346 girls have been given places during the past year. It also gives the following points as to how servants should be treated in order to make them efficient. It suggests that mothers should make domestic work more attractive to their daughters, and that they should work with them. It advises mistresses to work with their servants somewhat as follows:  
"A mistress who has but one servant should work with her during the morning hours. Under such circumstances a girl will become very proficient and by this means domestic matters will move along on oiled wheels. The mistress who does nothing to help her servant and is always hurrying her wears the girl out. It is she who brings domestic service into bad repute, she who is driving the girls into the factories."  
"I find that servants are becoming more scarce every year. Even the old women who used to be a trouble to the office have found employment, nearly all of them in the country. I find that some girls engage places and then do not go to them. They perhaps find something better in the meanwhile and break their engagements. I would suggest that the government provide fines for such offenses, as they cause great inconvenience to employers. As it is now if an employer fails to take a girl after he has engaged her he has to give her a week's pay."

They would then take on a fresh lot on the same terms. By the laws it is now provided that no employe must be paid less than a certain sum and that girls under 18 cannot work in any kind of an establishment for less than \$1 per week. If girls are taken into the factories at an earlier age than this they must show that they have some education. No girl under 15 will be admitted to a factory without she has passed through the fourth grade of the public schools.  
The law provides that all factories shall have proper sanitary arrangements. The buildings must be well ventilated, be provided with fire escapes and so arranged that the women can have the necessary privacy as to many things.  
These labor laws are by no means dead letters. Employers are fined when they transgress them. I have just been looking over a list of cases which illustrate this. One man who cut short the dinner hour of his girls paid \$10 and costs and another, a restaurant keeper, who kept his waitresses at work for eleven and one-half hours one day, had to pay a fine of \$36, although one of the girls had had three afternoons off that week. Another res-

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For sale by Sherman & McConnell Drug Co., Omaha.



PERSPECTIVE OF THE NEW SOUTH OMAHA HIGH SCHOOL.

Morning Herald. They give you some idea of one of the distinct professions open to women in New Zealand. This is known as lady helping. The term "lady help" is as common here as "cook" or "chambermaid" is in the United States. It is used as to a certain class of servants and it means that the servant is to be treated as a member of the family.

There are two classes of hired girls in New Zealand. One is the lady help, the other is the general house servant. The lady help does the same work as "the generals." She cooks, makes the beds, sweeps the floors, washes and irons and sometimes helps her mistress dress. She is supposed to sit down at the table with the family at meals and to be treated as an assistant of her mistress. She is not classed as a servant, although she is expected to do servant's work and often more than would be demanded of the general house servant.

When I first heard the expression lady help I thought it was one merely expressive of the reign of the servant girl, which now prevails in Australasia. I soon found that it had a distinct meaning. To get at the exact difference between a lady help and a "general" servant I inquired of the lady clerk of one of the chief hotels in New Zealand. She replied:

"The chief difference is in the manner of address. You call a 'general' by her first name, such as Polly, Mary or Sallie, but the lady help is always addressed as miss. The mistress is supposed to assist the lady help in doing the housework, but in some families the lady help is treated worse than a scullion. She does all the work of the general servant and receives only half as much wages. I believe some women advertise for lady helps just because they can get them more cheaply."

"But will they work for less wages?" I asked. "I should think they would want more?"

"They usually get one-third less than the general house servants," was the reply. "I know some who work for 5 shillings (\$1.25) per week, while 'generals' get 10, 12 and 15 shillings and upward. You see, the lady help pretends that she has a little better blood and breeding than the 'general.' She wants to rank higher in the social scale, and she pays for it."

### Lady Helps at Dinner.

I have been much amused at the airs of the New Zealand hired girls. The lady helps in some families are greater sticklers for their dignity than any queen upon a throne. They seem to think themselves guests of their mistresses and express their indignation when asked to do what they consider menial things. "One of my helps," said a dear old New Zealand lady to me, "came down to dinner the first night after her engagement in a décolleté evening dress. She wore low slippers and had earrings and brooch of paste diamonds. She paid no attention to waiting on the table, and when her master asked her to get up and hand something from the sideboard she grew very indignant."

"How about the ordinary servants," I asked. "Do they like the lady helps?"

"You mean the generals?" said the old lady. "The ordinary hired girl is known as the general house servant and is called the general for short. The generals rather despise the lady helps. They feel, and rightly, that they are masquerading under false pretenses. They feel themselves fully the equals of the lady helps, and rather better, as they are not ashamed of being known as doing that for which they are paid. The ordinary general will not allow a lady help to order her about. She will take her directions only from the mistress of the house. I happened to be away from home on one day of last week when some of my men friends called. The

even more omnipotently than in the United States. The mistresses are at the mercy of their servants, who to some extent dictate their own wages and their own hours off. Every now and then you see an article in the paper which advocates the establishment of an eight-hour law for house servants, and at present every hired girl in New Zealand has one half holiday a week, in addition to Sunday afternoons, and as a usual thing every other Sunday off. In the country it is almost impossible to get servants, and in the towns the servants are leaving to work in the factories, and this notwithstanding the wages in the fac-

ories are often less than those of house servants, especially when the matter of board is taken into consideration.

Here are the wages. In the towns general house servants get on the average \$2.50 per week, many receiving as much as \$3.75. Nursemaids are paid from \$1.25 to \$2.50 per week, while laundresses receive up to \$4. Cooks are paid from \$3 to \$6 a week and sewing women in Wellington who live at the house get as high as \$6. In other places their wages are lower.

It seems funny to think of a government opening offices to give servant girls employment, but this is one of the ways of New Zealand. The premier started it some years ago when he found the employment agencies were imposing upon the servant girls. He told me how it happened. Said he:

"I was connected with the department of works at the time. I found that the servant girls were being charged exorbitantly by the employment agencies and that they were often sent by the agents to improper places. I started a bureau and fixed the rules for all such offices. I charged the girls 1 shilling, or 25 cents, for registration, and that gave them a place. That is the rate that the employment agencies now charge throughout the colony. We have a branch of the labor department which furnishes employment for the unemployed. We find it works fairly well."

### How to Train Your Servant Girls.

Since my talk with the premier I have looked over the reports of the department

This is the statement of Helen Stavelly, officer in charge of the woman's branch of the labor department at Wellington.  
**How Factory Girls Are Treated.**  
The New Zealand government has a woman inspector of factories connected with its labor bureau. This is Margaret Scott Hawthorne. It is her business to visit the shops, factories and work rooms where women are employed and to see that the laws concerning them are carried out. The head of the department of labor has given me her last report, from which I condense a few statements. She says:

"The question of forty-eight hours per week is still a matter of bitter complaint. In many factories half an hour only is given for lunch, and if the women take a half hour off in the middle of the day they have to work a half hour in the evening to make up their forty-eight hours per week."  
"I find that women and girls employed in the shops (stores) work harder than many people imagine. A regular hour for closing should be adopted. Many of the girls are quite done up at 4 p. m. when tea time comes and are not fit for another hour and

them no further employment. They would then take on a fresh lot on the same terms. By the laws it is now provided that no employe must be paid less than a certain sum and that girls under 18 cannot work in any kind of an establishment for less than \$1 per week. If girls are taken into the factories at an earlier age than this they must show that they have some education. No girl under 15 will be admitted to a factory without she has passed through the fourth grade of the public schools.

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(Continued on Eighth Page.)

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