

PUT YOURSELF IN HER PLACE

BY JANE SEYMOUR KLINK

IN beginning the consideration of a question which touches the American home in its quickest part, let me be pardoned for saying that I have sat in intelligence offices, my letters of reference in my hand; have passed the scrutiny of the householder seeking a servant; have been engaged as one, and gone into the kitchen or the butler's pantry; that I have had my hours of domestic service and my "days out;" earned and taken my wages; scored my failures and successes, my disappointments and satisfactions. I have experienced the eternal truth that to every question there are two sides.

Until a few years ago the question of domestic service had been set aside as a woman's affair by those endeavoring to solve the world's problems, with the result that it has grown constantly more complex, and the solution more difficult. It never was merely a woman's problem. It was, and it always will be, a part of the great labor problem; and it is recognized also that the character of the problem has been influenced by shifting conditions, economic and social. But granted all this, what are you going to do about it? Though it be the same old labor problem, though its character change with altering of social conditions, whether it hang on the law of supply and demand or be in conflict with the American spirit, here is the situation; and something must be done.

Factories are overwhelmed with applicants for work, sweat shops flourish on cheap and abundant labor, department stores turn away thousands of would-be salesgirls, typewriters are legion, there are more teachers than there are places, and the cry of the unemployed is often heard in the land. Yet households are broken up, cafés glitter, restaurants issue

cheap meal tickets, boarding-houses multiply, and the American home is yearly growing less, because the American housekeeper cannot obtain willing and competent service. In factories are girls who would rather cook, in shops are women who would make good housekeepers; hundreds of typewriters who would make creditable waitresses are reeling off badly spelled words, and many are teaching school who should be doing anything else in the world. The Woman's Educational and Industrial Union of Boston made a systematic effort to attract the workers in shops and factories to domestic service, but with signal failure. From five hundred and sixty-four women who were asked to consider housework, only thirty-six applied, and these were not altogether satisfactory. Their dislike for the work is frankly stated to be on account of the long hours, no evenings for themselves, the isolation from other workers, and the social stigma that attaches to the occupation.

Here we have our dilemma. On one side is wanted work; on the other workers. Is it not possible, is it not reasonable, that these needs should be satisfied each by the other, and that this work and these workers should be brought into contact agreeable and beneficial to both?

The social aspect of domestic service has been changed by the fact that, since 1860, succeeding tides of immigration from various countries have swept over the United States, and the foreigners who replaced the "help" of New England had been fitted neither by birth nor environment for the social equality which had been granted to their predecessors as a matter of course. These newcomers were not "help," they were "servants," and a different appreciation was placed on their

services, a different status given to the employment. This term servant, I believe, has more real effect in deterring American girls from entering household service than any other one thing, operating most unfavorably among just that class of intelligent, capable girls whose help is needed to elevate and dignify the occupation. It is all very well to say that the term servant is a generic one, and that any one working for a cash equivalent under authority is the servant of those whose orders are to be obeyed. That may be true, but socially — and this is the aspect we are considering — this term servant has become so restricted to those who perform household service that its ordinary use carries no other signification. The native-born American objects to being placed in any position where there is not at least the semblance of freedom. It would seem to be the most natural thing in the world that when domestic employees have married and have families of their own, good household workers should be found among their children. But they are brought up rather to be anything else, because such parents wish their children to be just as good as or a bit better than anybody's children; whether that to be called "a servant" carries too much of a demeaning implication, or for whatever other reason. One bright girl who was the cook in a home where I was employed, invariably referred to us as "the kitchen mechanics," another always called the maids "us girls," still another "the kitchen people;" and in all association with maids in service, I have never heard them call themselves servants. Furthermore, the occupation is regarded as one affording little opportunity to rise in the world. If fortunate ones have risen, the fact that they have been servants is carefully concealed. The railway millionaire may be proud of the fact that he once peddled peanuts on the train, the bonanza king that he began as the mule driver of an ore car; but what woman will say with pride, "Yes, I once was a cook for Mrs. B——, and tried to do my work well"?

To establish a school, and frankly call it one for the training of servants, is distinctly against present tendencies; the name alone would kill it. Train domestic employees, home workers, household aids, just as much as you can, but let the term servant be left out, possibly even from the signs of employment bureaus, you must combat an unappeasable prejudice. Of the principal of a normal school where an excellent course in cooking was given I asked, "What is the object in taking this course, — is it obligatory?"

"They wish specially to teach cooking, and take it in addition to their regular work."

"What is the object in view in teaching cooking to the children?"

"Simply, madam, to help them make better homes; the aim is to improve the homes."

"But some of these pupils will have to earn their own living; will not these cooking lessons open another avenue of employment?"

"Madam, we are not training servants."

Now as to supply and demand. The ranks of household employees are recruited mainly from the immigrants, but their number is far less than the calls for them. Any girl coming to this country, and willing to take a place as a cook or waitress, can find work three times over the moment she steps on land. We must look for other sources of supply. We must train and educate our own American girls to fill these places, classifying these girls as part of the great labor problem which here demands and should engage concerted effort in its solution. Certainly, as other phases of this general problem have been treated with at least partial success, this specific phase of this same general problem can be treated in like manner. Whatever the individual views as to trades-unionism, its methods, its abuses, or its excesses, are we not all prepared to admit in this day that there must have been certain wrongs, and some justice in the

demands of wage-earners, since the improvements as to hours, as to wages, and as to the physical conditions of work-rooms and surroundings are now assented to by all employers, indeed conceded by all employers to be a distinct advantage both to capital and to labor? And surely the servant problem has never yet presented the complications, the embarrassments, the possibilities of revolution, that were presented so long ago in the problem of the organized wage-earners declining to accept unconditional terms of employment from capital.

Then the question arises: "Would you have a union of domestic employees?" That is not the real question. The real question is: here are certain conditions of labor as to hours, duties, wages, and standards of life, which demand adjustment; if these other conditions in factory, mill, or foundry could be adjusted, what are the conditions here, favorable or unfavorable to the domestic employee, that make it so difficult to reach such readjustment as has been proved feasible in other fields of employment?

In the matter of wages the houseworker has the advantage of the outside worker in respect of net returns for the services performed. A good general housemaid in Alameda, a suburb of San Francisco, gets twenty-five dollars a month. She does all the washing but the shirts and collars. In Chicago a girl for general housework receives as high as five dollars a week, with neither washing nor ironing; while in New York a general housemaid at four and a half dollars a week is expected, as a rule, to do the laundry work, excepting shirts and collars. A man attends to the porches, brasses, and furnace. In Boston a general housemaid averages four and a half or five dollars a week, usually doing the laundry work. There is no organized union, but the tacit agreement among domestic employees as to the rate of wages is strong; they are rather overpaid than underpaid, and these wages are clear to those who receive them, no part being expended, as in the

case of other wage-earners, for house rent and food.

But the house employees have made complaint about other conditions of labor which may be summed up under the heads of rooms, food, and bathing facilities. I have known girls who have had ill-ventilated basement rooms, stifling in summer, freezing in winter, flooded by storms. I have seen a closet off the kitchen used as a sleeping apartment for two of the employees. I have myself slept for a week upon a table; but it seems reasonable to think this is not the rule. With two exceptions a clean, sweet room was given to me. If the room were shared with another maid, there were generally separate beds. My experience has been that the rooms, while fairly well lighted, seldom have the gas or electric light so placed that one can read, write, or sew with comfort. For bathing facilities, the tendency in the newer houses and apartments is to have a maids' bathroom; in the older houses, the personal equation plays a part. In one such I asked whether I could have the privilege of the bathroom, and the answer was, —

"Certainly. I would a great deal rather know that you used it than feel that you needed to."

In an apartment where there was only one bathroom, the lady said, "If my girls are real nice I allow them to use the bathroom."

Often the laundry tubs are made to serve, but there are difficulties in the way of their use for bathing that I never could bring myself to surmount.

Regarding the table, I have known girls working in households where they have not had enough to eat, but these cases have been few and far between. Whether the family be rich, well to do, or with a comparatively small income, the general feeling is a fear lest the household employee have not enough, rather than too much. I have known this to be the case, even where strict economy was carefully practiced. Usually separate dishes, plated ware, tablecloths, and nap-

kins are provided for the employees. The single exception to that rule was noteworthy. There were three to be served in the kitchen, and the table service was rather scanty. There were no napkins. In cleaning out the table drawers and washing up dish towels, I discovered a very old worn piece of tablecloth, just a nice, soft rag. Without asking permission I tore it into three pieces. Palm Sunday furnished palms for napkin rings, and we ate in comfort. Mrs. —, looking in the drawer, asked what those were.

"They are table napkins," I said.

"I never give napkins in the kitchen," she replied.

"I am sorry," I said, "to have torn it without asking you, but we all have been used to napkins, and I did not think you would mind."

She made no verbal reply, but threw the napkins, Palm Sunday rings and all, in the garbage barrel. I still am wondering why it made her so uncomfortable to know that the household employees used table napkins, even though they were torn and ragged.

Speaking by and large, the general disposition seems to be to provide well for the employee's "inner man." Mrs. — may buy thousand-dollar pictures for the parlor, and expect the bone of a two-pound steak from which four have dined to serve as the basis of a dinner for two people in the kitchen; but she is rather the exception than the rule, and in regard to food, it is safe to say that the household employee is generally better fed than any other class of workmen. I have sat night after night in a Boston café, and seen women and girls come in and dine with unfailing regularity off tea and rolls, costing ten cents. Yet they had been working hard all day, and, to judge by their looks, needed something more substantial. And many more have not even that, but cook in their rooms, reducing the cost of living to that of simple existence.

As to the employee's hours of work and time off, these are largely individual mat-

ters, yet not entirely so. There is misapprehension on both sides regarding this. Taking the general houseworker as an illustration, her hours from time of rising until she ceases to be "on call" in the evening, are usually from six o'clock A. M. until nine o'clock P. M., fifteen hours, with ordinarily every other Thursday and every other Sunday off. Sometimes the Thursday off means going out as soon as the morning's work is done, and remaining until it is time to prepare dinner, thus having the whole day to one's self. Sometimes it means going away directly after luncheon, and spending afternoon and evening out. Sometimes it means going as soon as possible after luncheon and coming home in time to prepare dinner.

The Sunday off generally means an early dinner, any time from one until three, and leaving after the work is done, having first left everything ready for supper. The days off are usually stipulated for, but the manner of their granting is at the discretion of the mistress.

Now, concerning hours of work, the household employee, particularly the general houseworker, is likely to say that she works from six in the morning until nine at night. This is not quite true. If she worked in a factory or a shop, she would not count her hours from the time of rising until retiring, but from the time that she began her duties until the hour of dismissal, counting out the time taken for luncheon. A cash girl arrives at eight o'clock A. M., goes at six o'clock P. M., with say an hour off for luncheon, working nine hours. The general housemaid may rise at six A. M., but she usually begins work at 6.30 A. M. and finishes perhaps at 8.30 P. M., and is on call half an hour longer. There are fourteen hours and a half to be accounted for. Take off an hour for the three meals. Unless on washday, there usually are, there always should be, two hours off in the afternoon, when she is simply on call. But she is not free, she cannot rest. Taking out the time for meals, and two

hours and a half on call, there are still eleven hours of work. Were this toil unremitting it could not be borne, but is it?

One can sit down to peel potatoes and apples, to "top and tail the gooseberries," hull strawberries, chop meats, "and many other things too numerous to mention." Then the grocer and the butcher come for orders and frequently linger for a moment's chat; the postman is really a welcome friend; there is often yesterday's paper to be glanced at; in fact, there are many opportunities for rest, of which full advantage is taken, and on the whole the pleasure in the duties is not so overbalanced by fatigue that work becomes labor. This gain, being both physical and economic, admits the possibility of longer hours of employment. All housekeepers are not like the woman in Chicago, who built her house so that the kitchen had a very nice outlook, and then boarded up the lower part of the window, so that "the girl's attention should not be taken from her work."

More than one lady has said to me, "I am very good to my girls; they have from two to three hours every afternoon to sit down except on washing and ironing days."

"What time do you breakfast?" I ask.

The answer is generally, "Half-past seven."

"At what time do you dine?"

"Half-past six."

"That means that your maid is in the kitchen from 6.30 A. M. until nine P. M., does it not?"

"Yes."

"Isn't that fourteen hours and a half?"

"Ye-e-es" — reluctantly.

"Does she not deserve two or three hours in the afternoon, especially if she be on call all of that time?"

"I never thought of it in that way."

A lady who is more practically interested in this question than any one I know said to me, "Miss Klink, I thought I had my household well regulated, and I was *amazed* to find that my parlor maid

was busy and on call twelve hours each day."

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that, though the hours are indefinite, yet because the work admits of change and periods of rest the grievance often sounds harder than it really is, and to one who has worked with them, domestic employees will readily admit that such is the case.

Employers do not always realize how much work is done on the maids' days off. I find on my Sundays off I have worked from eight to eleven hours — and yet it was called "my day out" — and I had "not much to do but get the meals." Eight hours would be a fair day's work, and I never had less than that, excepting at one place in Boston. The work was continuous, as well, so that when at four or five o'clock I was ready for my outing I was too tired to do anything but go and sit in the park and rest.

The question of hours leaves some things to be desired. On the other hand, what does the employer receive in return for just conditions and fair wage, — "service that is faithful and efficient in its grade"? That she does not is evident from the fact that the employer is the one who complains most. The causes of complaint may be summed up somewhat in this manner:—

Both experienced and inexperienced girls demand the same wages.

The grade of service is out of proportion to the wages given.

There is no guarantee that the domestic employee will remain with the employer.

Well, these things being true, who should unite to remedy them, the mistresses or the maids?

As most of the training of domestic employees has been done in the households, the different grades of service can but reflect upon the different grades of teachers, and additional emphasis is given to the fact that not every American woman can keep house.

Why are domestics likely to leave at any moment? One answer may be seen

in the character of one of my typical places. In many respects it was agreeable, but the master of the house was forever fussing around the kitchen, and his manner was snappish and disagreeable to the last degree. No woman could stand it. Over and over again I said to myself, "He is a little chimney and soon heated." Your home may be all that is desired, but your children may not be; you "can't kill them off," as a lady said to me, but would you blame your cook if she sought a place where the family was smaller, other things being equal? You may have a small family, and on that account you expect your maid to do outside work and beat the rugs. Can you blame her if she prefers a place where a man is hired to do such things? You may be a most considerate mistress, but if your kitchen measures ninety-eight *inches* by seventy-four inches, and in that kitchen are placed cupboard, sink, ice chest, and gas range, could you blame your maid of all work if, feeling "like a bull in a china shop," she sought a larger sphere? There is another, more potent, reason for a girl's going. Facilities of travel have so increased the mobility of labor, that a girl thinks less to-day of going from Boston to the Pacific coast than she would have thought a hundred years ago of going from Boston to Roxbury.

Apparently the employers have the more grounds for complaint, therefore it is from them that the initiative should naturally come. Reform, with its educative influences both on those above and on those below, is needed, — not revolution. More education is needed in the science and art of housekeeping, which comes neither by inspiration nor with the possession of mother's cookbook and a supply of household linen. If it be a talent, or instinct, it needs developing, adapting, training. Housekeeping involves a knowledge of food values, dietetic combinations, practical chemistry, on the one hand; on the other, of market prices, the cost of the household plant, allowance for its wear and tear, and a just idea of

the time required to perform particular tasks.

Mrs. A—— said to me, "Jane, it will take you half an hour to scrub your kitchen floor."

Now scrubbing this kitchen floor included also wiping up the butler's pantry, hall, and kitchen closet. The kitchen itself was about sixteen feet square, with little oilcloth paths wherever I did not want them, and two stoves to retard the cleaning process. I swept the kitchen thoroughly, removed and washed the oilcloths, wiped up pantries, and the like, and set to work on the floor proper. Twenty minutes of my half hour were gone. Perhaps I was slow, I do not know, but glancing at the clock I went to work with plenty of soap and water, and the courage of desperation. I was behind the stove when the doorbell rang. I wriggled out, washed and wiped my hands, took off my big brown apron, put my bow straight, and went to the door. Then upstairs two flights and down again, roll up sleeves, slip into the big apron, and return to the floor. I had no sooner rounded one stove and thrown a nice scrubby splash over a fresh area, than the bell rang again. I answered it and, returning, got down to business once more. Five different times did that doorbell ring the knell of scrubbing. The floor was not finished in half an hour!

It is true that the study of domestic science is introduced into the curricula of girls' schools, courses in household economics are given in colleges, special schools in cookery, and colleges of domestic science have been established, and cooking is generally taught in the public schools. But with the possible exception of the special schools in cookery, such as Miss Farmer's in Boston, the general aim of those attending is not that they may thus be better qualified to take charge of their own houses, but rather that they may become either teachers of cooking, or managing housekeepers in institutions. But if training be needed for institutional management, why not

for the house? Philip Gilbert Hamerton writes: "The importance of scientific cookery can hardly be exaggerated. This is one of those matters which people cannot be brought to consider seriously; but cookery in its perfection — the great science of preparing food in the way best suited to our use — is really the most important of all sciences, and the mother of the arts. . . . A scientific cook will keep you in regular health, when an ignorant one will offer you the daily alternative of starving or indigestion."

Why is it that while many women will admit that they cannot sew, acknowledge that they cannot cook, there is yet to be found the woman who confesses her inability to keep house? She may say she does not like to do it, or that she "cannot keep house so well as Mrs. B——;" but she does not say that she cannot do it. Yet how many can? More theoretical and technical knowledge on the employer's part of the duties to be performed would give a better idea of the time which should be allowed for certain tasks, the manner in which they should be done, and also a clearer judgment as to the amount of wages which should be paid for such service, and the number of hours required.

By special courtesy I visited a cooking class one morning, which was composed of young housekeepers. They sat around a table, each armed with a cookbook, from which the teacher read the lesson and explained the chemistry of the compounds. For instance, in making Scotch broth the meat was to be put into boiling water and then allowed to simmer gently for an hour and a half, so that it should still retain some of its juices.

"I always put mine on in cold water," said one.

"I took anything that came handy, hot or cold," from another.

"I just told the girl to put it on and cook it," a third remarked to me, *sotto voce*.

The menu consisted of Scotch broth, broiled scrod, potato balls, egg salad,

boiled dressing, graham muffins, cheese straws, lemon tartlets, and apple puffs. Different tasks were assigned to each, and we went to the kitchen; the whole mechanism of the stove was explained, a fire was lighted, and its care given to one of the class. Her look of dire dismay was amusing. "But I don't know how."

"You'll learn," responded the teacher.

"Then there was hurrying to and fro."

The fire-lady vibrated tremulously between the ice-box and the fire-box, banging the lids impartially. Meat and butter were washed, flour and sugar measured, eggs and dressing beaten, apples and potatoes peeled, fish scraped and cheese grated. Seven women were taking hold of one luncheon. The boiled dressing had to be remade; the fire was a roaring success; but the centre of attraction was the pastry. Each woman had a finger in the pie, and folded and rolled and patted and cut in turn. The luncheon was excellent. But this is what I kept thinking: "One pair of hands is ordinarily expected to do all this work, one pair of feet to do all this running, one head to keep all these things in mind. Certainly this training will help these women to appreciate practically the fact that these things take time." Sure enough. Just then a little lady said to me, "I never thought things took so long."

But some one says, "You cannot send every employee to a cooking school." No more can you; nevertheless, they need more education. They must get it somehow. And though there may be differences of opinion as to how much the housekeeper needs, there is among them only one voice when the training of the employee is in question. Well, how shall this be accomplished? Thus far the efforts made toward the training of domestic employees have not been signally successful. There is a school for domestic employees connected with the Y.W. C. A. of Boston. The girls are given a home and six months' training in general housework, together with lessons, in so far as it is practicable, in the chemistry of foods.

During the fall and winter months, Miss Farmer has a special class for cooks on Wednesday evenings, at which there is an average attendance of seventy-five to a hundred women; the cost of each lesson being fifty cents, which is sometimes defrayed by the girls, sometimes by their employers. In Pratt Institute there is a like class from October to April, with an average attendance of seventy-five. A similar one is connected with Drexel Institute, and many others may be scattered through the land; but the fact is that they are not patronized by those who most need the lessons.

Take the immigrant. What is the use of going even to a free school when she can obtain employment instantly, and begin to refund the passage money which in nine cases out of ten has been advanced to her? The girl born upon American soil usually has early grasped the American axiom that the way to do a thing is to do it, and she takes a place and does it. Why should she go to school? If she can learn at some one's else cost rather than her own, and be paid for the trouble, why not take that way? Going to an employment bureau in Boston, and showing my references, I asked for work. The matron in charge questioned me: "What have you been doing?"

"General housework, but not any laundry."

"What wages have you been getting?"

"Five dollars a week."

"Can you cook?"

"Yes, I am a good plain cook."

"Can you cook meats, make soups, salads, hot breads, pies, and cakes?"

"Yes, I can do all that."

"Well, why don't you go out as a cook, then? I can get you a good place right away."

"I cannot make puff paste nor timbales; besides, I do not know whether I could cook well enough. I have never gone out just as a cook."

"Well, you had better go to cooking school; it will pay you."

Very sensible advice, and I heard her

give it to others as well. Did they take it? In most cases — no.

One of the pleasantest classes I ever taught was in San Francisco under the principalship of Mr. James G. Kennedy. The boys and girls often had to leave school at an early age to help take care of the family. Cooking was introduced into the course of study. I was delighted, for I thought it would not only help the girls to make their homes more attractive, but provide a sure way of self-support when it became necessary for them to leave school. The following conversation took place one afternoon in my classroom:—

"Do you know, girls, I am surprised. We have all been so interested in that kitchen upstairs, and yet — Do you not like the cooking lessons?"

"Oh yes, Miss Klink."

"Yet here we have been talking for half an hour. You have been telling me what you intended to be and to do in life, and not one has mentioned cooking. I had not expected it of the boys, they will be cooked for, I hope; but — girls, not one single one has said that she was going to do housework. Tell me why."

There was a chorus of responses.

"It is nicer to work in a store; you are let off evenings, so you can go out and enjoy yourself."

"And you don't have no work on Sundays, neither."

"If you're a servant there is n't any place where your beau can come to see you, but just the kitchen."

"And our mothers want us at home at night." This from a dear little Minna whose ambition had been to "just get married and keep house like mother."

"It is awful lonely, nobody comes to see you hardly ever." As Bella was an inveterate talker, her objection carried weight.

"Yes, Miss Klink, and your work is never done; you are always busy all the time."

"We are not training servants" in our public schools.

But in every rank of life homemakers might be trained either to make their own or other homes better. The problem is largely one of supply and demand, and the best source of supply is the American girls, many of whom are growing up to poverty, and worse, because they do not get the right training when they need it.

Perhaps it may be wise to state that all the illustrations used in these articles are those which have occurred in my own observation and experience in those cities which I considered to be typical. People have said to me, "But, Miss Klink, people would see you were different from the ordinary maid, and treat you accordingly." That may be true, but I do not think so. I believe we are all nearer the commonplace than we think we are, and given a different dress, a different style of wearing the hair, above all, a different environment, and few of us rise so completely above these things as to be particularly noticeable. Take many a maid, dress her in her mistress's clothes, and could a casual observer tell who was who? Turn the case the other way. One lady said to me, "You seem to be above your position." I replied that I had not always "lived out." Another employer, of whom I shall always think with pleasure, said, "It has been so nice to have you with me; you are educated, and yet you keep your place." Did I not "keep my place" because of my education? One employer corrected herself in the use of "Miss Jane" nearly every time she asked me to do anything. However, I cannot say that I impressed the majority of my employers as being anything else than I represented myself to be,—a woman eager for work, and anxious to do it just as well as she knew how.

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When I first determined to undertake this investigation, while endeavoring to preserve an open mind, I must say that my sympathies were with the maid; and, commiserating her, I put myself as far as possible in her place. I felt that she was a downtrodden creature. Going out as a domestic employee, I expected to be lonely. Well, I was. I experienced to the full the loneliness of one who is a member of the household but not of the family, the isolation of the stranger in a strange land. I expected to wear caps and aprons, and I did; it was a small matter. I was prepared to have every one call me by my first name, and was seldom disappointed.

But for one thing I was not prepared, and that was that I should pity my mistress. My experiences as a domestic employee led me to see the difficulties of the employer, more clearly than I had ever imagined, through the light of my own mistakes,—contrasting the service I was giving with what I felt I should give. When I made a meat pie with a crust that might have been a blanket, do you not suppose I imagined what my feelings would have been, had any one placed that creation before me? I was as sorry that it had to be eaten as I was that it had been made. When, one day, in a wild hurry, I took the wrong jar from the cold closet and filled the water glasses with gasoline, was I sorrier for myself or for my employer when my offense "smelt to heaven"?

While performing the duties of the maid, I have instinctively put myself in the place of the mistress, and for that reason I shall discuss this matter of domestic service again, to see how the present tendencies can be shaped into policies which may induce action leading to some result.

ISIDRO ¹

BY MARY AUSTIN

XXV

IN WHICH MASCADO HEARS NEWS

THE keepers of the camp lay supine in the late yellow light, on beds of skins or heaped brown needles of the pines, following the shade around. The women, of whom there were three or four with the renegades, stooped at their interminable puttering housewifery by the cold ashes of their careless hearths.

Isidro lay apart from the camp. He had his back to the Indians, and stared into the hot sunshine lying heavily on the fern beginning to curl brownly at the edges. Fading torches of castillea stood up here and there, and tall yellow lilies running fast to seed. The air above the meadow was weighted with the scent of the sun-steeped fern; small broken winds wafted it to him, palpable, like wisps of blown hair. It recalled a day when a gust of warm sweet rain had sent him and the lad to shelter under a madroño on the hill above Monterey. They had to run for it, crowding against the tree bole shoulder to shoulder, with the boy's hair blown across his cheek. He was conscious of a thrill that flew to his heart at the recollection and settled there.

Arnaldo lay on the earth the full width of the camp from Escobar. He seemed asleep, and now drew up a limb and now thrust it out in the abandon of drowsing indolence. Every move carried him an inch or two nearer the edge of the rose thickets and deep fern. Arnaldo was, in fact, widest awake of any at Hidden Waters, bent upon a series of experiments to discover how far and by what means he could get away from the camp without exciting suspicion. For the tracker had made up his mind to escape. Devotion to

Escobar, in whose service he held himself to be, had kept him faithful to his bonds, but now the virtue was gone out of patience. He understood better than Escobar how the campaign went against the renegades, and in the event of Urbano's absence at any critical moment of defeat, doubted if Mascado would have the ability or the wish to save his prisoners. Besides, the tracker was greatly bored by the company of the renegades; the food was poor, and Isidro had no more cigarettes, and though he managed to win all the young man's coin at cards one day, Escobar as regularly won it back the next. The escape must be made good in broad day, when the prisoners had the freedom of the camp, being bound at night and placed between watchers. Therefore he lay awake and experimented while the camp dozed. Being so alert, he caught the first motion of approach, and guessed what it augured by the manner of it. The noise of battle had not penetrated so far in the thick wood; the panic of flight, sobered by distance, brought the refugees up at nearly their normal discretion. They came noiselessly enough, dropping from the trackless stony rim of the hollow, or by secret trails through the manzanita. They cast down their arms as they came, and trod upon them with moccasined feet; they dropped to earth by the unlit hearths and turned their backs upon their kind. One who had broken his bow across his knee stood up and made a song of it, treading upon the fragments as he sang.

This is the bow, — the war-weapon,
The heart of a juniper tree.
False, false is the heart,
For it answered not to the cord,
For it spake not truly the will of the bow-
man.