

The Young Couple with a Maid

By Maria Parloa

The Third of a Series of Half-Hour Domestic Economy Talks

I AM ASKED to answer the following questions put by young housekeepers: "What is the smallest amount upon which two people and a maid can live?"



ILLUSTRATION BY FRANCIS W. BAKER

What should be the duties of the maid? Conditions were always the same it would not be difficult to answer these questions; but much depends upon the standards of living and where one lives.

In a small town or country place the cost of living, as a whole, is less than in a city. The tastes and habits of a family have a controlling influence on the amount of income necessary to satisfy each family. My experience has been that, no matter what the income, a certain amount of care and economy must be practiced in every well-regulated household. Extravagance and waste are most demoralizing. On the other hand, penuriousness is likely to warp and harden a character.

It is more what we give to the world than what we get from it that makes life worth living. Every couple should resolve that the world shall be better because of the home they make. When they live up to such a resolve little economies and personal sacrifices will strengthen character and add a joy to life, and the small income may be a blessing to young people, teaching them the value of money, self-sacrifice and self-control.

Standards of Living

WHEN two young people begin house-keeping it is most important that they should have some fixed standard of living, no matter how small or how large the income may be. Without ideals or standards the tendency is to live up to, and beyond, one's income. Then come debts, worry, and often crime, disgrace and ruin.

A young couple should ask themselves: What are the things most worth while in our home and our life? Having carefully weighed the answers they should then fix the standard of living to accord with the ideals thus set. Experience may prove that the standard adopted was not the best, but it will not be difficult to change it to a better form. The standards might, for example, be embodied in the following resolves:

We shall not have anything that we cannot pay for.

Our house or apartment must be sanitary and conveniently arranged. It must be in a congenial neighborhood and convenient to business.

The furnishing shall be so good and simple that the work of caring for it shall be slight.

The food must be of a kind that shall be the best for health and efficiency.

The clothing shall be plain, so that we may spend more for literature and mental improvement.

We shall live so simply that there shall be no undue expenditure of time, nerve force or money in operating the house.

A given percentage of the income shall be put aside for insurance and an emergency fund. A certain percentage of the income shall be devoted to church work and charity.

We shall try to live true, uplifting lives, and to practice the golden rule.

With such standards a family may be very happy and useful on a most modest income.

How \$1500 a Year May be Spent

TWENTY-EIGHT dollars and eighty-four cents a week for a family of two and a maid may seem a generous sum when compared with ten dollars for two people, and fifteen dollars for four people. But with this larger income the standard of living is changed. A better house in a more desirable locality means more for rent, fuel and light. A maid in the household adds a good deal to the operating expenses. Her wages, board, the food that is wasted, the fuel, light, etc., will amount to not less than \$300 a year. On the other hand, if a girl is fairly capable, honest and faithful she may add greatly to the comfort and happiness of the home.

If \$1500 is all the income a young couple have I should advise them to dispense with a maid. A young woman in good health ought to be able to do the housework for two people. The husband should look after the heating and heavy lifting. Have a woman one day in the week; she can do the laundry-work and cleaning in alternate weeks. If a young wife has no practical knowledge of household work this is the quickest and best way for her to learn it.

How I should divide the income of \$1000 and \$500 dollars:

Rent	\$100
Food	400
Service	75
Fuel	150
Light	25
Repairs and replenishing	40
Clothing	200

The Duties of the Maid

THERE are trained general-housework girls who can do satisfactorily all the work of a small establishment, but such girls command from sixteen to thirty dollars a month.

When the wages are as low as twelve dollars a month the housekeeper must be satisfied with an untrained servant. In this case she must teach the maid how to do the work, and also gradually how to take responsibility. Naturally, it is important that the housekeeper be well trained herself. So I repeat my advice: Do your own work until you have become mistress of the art of housekeeping. A year or two of such work will be of much value to you all your life. There may be great pleasure in this work if you do it cheerfully and intelligently.

If you must have an untrained maid I should advise a strong, willing, young girl; she will be easier to teach than an older person. As soon as she is well taught and has become of real value to you she will probably have offers of higher wages elsewhere, and since you cannot give her more than twelve dollars a month you will, no doubt, part with tears and regrets on both sides. Do not let this discourage you, but be thankful that you had the willing, cheerful service so long a time, and that through your training she is enabled to do better work for herself and others. Take another girl and do as well for her as if you were sure of keeping her always.

As to the duties of such a maid, after she has been trained, they should in a small house include practically all the work. On washing and ironing days it will relieve her if you will do the chamber-work and any brushing up and dusting that are necessary.

System and Regularity Important

IN A HOUSEHOLD there is nothing more demoralizing than irregularity and want of system.

Housework includes such a wide range of duties that it is not possible to accomplish them all without some friction and fatigue unless there is a systematic plan to follow. Therefore, make a well-defined outline of the daily and special work. Hang a copy of this in your own room and one in the kitchen. See that this outline is carried out under all ordinary circumstances. Of course, you will exercise common-sense and common humanity when conditions are unfavorable to the following out of the plan in all its details. Naturally, where and how you live will make some difference in the duties of the maid. In an apartment she is relieved from some of the work that she must perform in a house. For example, in an apartment there are no side-walks or stairs to be kept clean, and the janitor sends up the coal and takes away the ashes and other refuse; while in a private house this work must be done by the maid.

Having carefully outlined the duties of the maid, consider what are the duties of yourself and the other members of the household. Each one should be careful not to make unnecessary work. Each person should keep his or her personal belongings in order. Let it be one of the rules of the house that as soon as one is done with an article it shall be put in its proper place. This will keep the house in order and save a world of time and friction. It is especially important that this should be done in the kitchen and pantries. As far as possible have regular hours for meals and for rising and retiring.

In every ideal home each member is responsible for some household duty. Let each member of your family have some daily household task to perform. The responsibility for such work is conducive to interest and unity in the home.

The following schedule of work may assist you in arranging your outline for your maid:

Outline of a Maid's Daily Work

RISE early; air the dining-room; prepare and serve the breakfast; eat her own breakfast; air the bedrooms (if the members of the family have not already done this); clear the table; air and put the dining-room in order; wash the dishes and put the kitchen in order; do the chamber-work, and sweep piazzas, steps, walks, etc. Do the special work for the day. Prepare and serve the noon meal; wash the dishes; air and put kitchen and dining-room in order. Two or three hours' rest. Prepare the evening meal; wash dishes, etc. Open the beds and see that the rooms are in order for the night.

Each day will have a special duty, such as washing, ironing, cleaning, and so on. When there is a good deal of this special work the maid should be relieved of some of

kitchen and pantries clean and orderly. The housekeeper should be careful to leave the kitchen as clean and orderly as she finds it. The maid should be encouraged to go out each week; she will be healthier, happier and better for the change. It is not good for her to be out at night after ten o'clock, nor to have a key to get in whenever she pleases. There are times when a maid cannot get home until eleven o'clock or later, but this should be the exception, not the rule.

Remember that if you take a young girl into your employ you are in a measure responsible for her physical, moral and material condition. She will naturally take you for her standard in manners and morals, and if you will you can guide her in the selection and care of her clothing, in making the savings against the time of need, and in the choice of her pleasures and her friends.

How to Train a Green Girl

IF A GIRL is interested to learn, and is clean and painstaking, it will pay to train her; but it is not worth while to waste one's self on an indifferent servant.

Having secured a willing girl explain to her on what condition you will teach her—that is, she must be clean, orderly, willing and careful. Do not try to accomplish too much at once. The first things to be taught are management of the fire, dish-washing, table-setting, sweeping and dusting. The cleaning of vegetables and the cooking of simple dishes may be taught the first days. She will probably be wasteful in paring vegetables and fruits, and perhaps will not wash the vegetables clean. Now is the time to fix the habit of doing these things right. Be gentle and firm, but do not accept bad work. It may be that you will be obliged to have dishes and towels washed over several times. The table may have to be reset, the bed remade, etc. It will not do to discourage her by correcting her for all these things at once; it must be line upon line, and precept upon precept, and always with patience, firmness and gentleness. After showing her once or twice let her do the work alone. Praise her whenever you can, and encourage her to think she can do even better.

The right kind of girl will have made a good deal of progress at the end of a month. You will be obliged to supervise and do most of the cooking for months. This is a part of the work that you cannot leave to her, because failures mean waste and discomfort. I should teach her to make coffee and tea, cook cereals, roast, broil and boil meats and fish, cook vegetables, and bake bread. Other things should follow slowly.

The Proper Care of Food

FOOD is such an important factor in the health, happiness and efficiency of a family, that I trust you will give it careful study. Do not turn this important work over to a maid until she is capable of preparing the food in a healthful and economical manner.

With proper care there need be no waste of food. Teach your maid to follow exact rules, to be careful of her materials, to save all left-overs and to utilize them. I often find that it is not difficult to get people to save the left-overs, but most difficult to get them to remember to use them. Have proper receptacles for the food materials and teach your maid to put the articles into them as soon as they are received. Have plates, bowls, cups, etc., of common ware, on which to set away food. Never allow the table-ware to be used for this purpose. Insist upon the food being taken care of as soon as it comes from the table. It is often spoiled by standing in the hot kitchen. Make it a point to have the cooking dishes thoroughly washed, rinsed and wiped. It is necessary to use plenty of soap on greasy dishes, and if this is not all rinsed off it will spoil the flavor of the food. Supply plenty of dish-towels and insist upon having them washed and scalded every day. If the maid can be taught to put things in their place as soon as she is done with them, to wash her dishes as she goes along, to wipe dirt or moisture from tables or floor as soon as she sees it, she will be able to keep her kitchen and pantries clean and orderly, and will have ample time for her other work.

Waiting on the table and on the door are two important duties of the maid. Of course she cannot be in the dining-room throughout the meal, but she can put the courses on the table, pour the water, pass the food, etc. When waiting on the door or on the table she should wear large white aprons, which are provided by the housekeeper. She should be careful to have clean hands and a clean apron when she makes the beds, that she may not soil the bedding.

Many of the things that I have mentioned



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