

Germany. We have had registration of midwives here for more than 100 years. Later on I will write you another letter.

GERMANIA.

THE SERVANT QUESTION, FROM THE AMERICAN SIDE.

Do you, my sisters, my sheltered, English sisters, do you ever imagine you have had to face the servant question?

I believe on general lines you think you have; just as on general lines we should not be doing our duty by our generation if we did not aver that things are not "as they were,"—say twenty years ago; meaning, of course, that they have greatly deteriorated. The deterioration, by the way, has been going on since Adam, which is a gloomy thought. But, in practical detail, do you really think you have the least notion, the most remote conception, of what it is actually to suffer from your servants?

I know that when at home I have heard complaints. A friend, I remember, comparing notes of when we and the world were younger, mentioned, in accents that compelled sympathy, that servants now-a-days were her chief difficulty, the ever-present fly in the ointment.

"Did I," she queried, "have any trouble?"

Did I have trouble!

Eagerly we turned to thrash out together our common woes, but a few minutes found me dumb, bewildered. Were we discussing the same topic? Eliza, I remembered Eliza, had after only six years forsaken her kitchen and the easy dominion of my friend's servants' hall, and *married!* and the cook who reigned in her stead owned a bicycle, insisted on an afternoon off every week, and her young man on Sunday evening. Kate, a pretty parlour maid I missed and inquired after, had also left at the end of four years, and with no other excuse than the desire to "better" herself, and exchange a peaceful, country rectory for the giddy joys of the neighbouring cathedral town. As for the kitchen maids!—but words failed, I had a vision of Kaleidoscopic changes from which however I emerged bewildered by the final note, "no one need expect to keep one over two years."

Two years!

I took the part of audience: you don't describe the San Francisco earthquake to one worrying over the fall of some plaster. It was no moment to assert that did I ever keep a servant six years I should seriously think of pensioning her, or to describe in the simplest language my feelings when I changed my entire staff three times in as many months; or to ask if she had ever been awaked in the wintry dawn to hear that no cook has appeared and "Lily she say *she* won't cook no breakfast."

There is a grim, grim reality about what we euphemistically call our "Help" in this country that stamps itself soon and indelibly upon the most sanguine character. And perhaps nowhere is it more hampering than in the busy hospital life. To be greeted in the morning, when one's mood is most uncertain, by harassed complaints that the Ward Maids in A and B wards are both absent and that no one has yet come in their places, and that John

And you know what has happened.

John is your best orderly, and John invariably has a "lady friend" just suitable for the vacant post, anything but the actual work he should be engaged in always appealing to John. Apparently she always lives miles from the hospital, to judge by the time it takes John to collect her, but by the time every registry has been telephoned to and, the work of the day well hindered, John will reappear, if it is your lucky day, accompanied by a pair of "lady friends." An irritable eye and a gait less assured than usual proclaim all too clearly why John has taken two hours to find his friends. If you are wise you take no notice, but if you show, however slightly, your exasperation, or if through some mischance some misguided person falls foul of John, then at the end of an hour John will reappear at your office door—John, immaculately dressed in gleaming collar and irreproachable overcoat, hat in hand, and armed with his "suit case" to bid you farewell and hope, darkly, that you won't be long in getting another "boy." One day I hope to have the wit to open that suit case and see if it is really packed. Just how to deal with this crisis, I assure you it must not be the same way twice, you must leave to the inspiration of the moment. If you hit the right note the clouds clear like magic and John returns to his work almost, but never quite, inclined to do his shamefully-neglected morning work. If not, John goes—I assure you he does; and he may or he may not return in a few days repentant, pleading to be taken back, and welcomed with open arms by all the indiscreet people in the hospital who have not the disciplining of John at heart.

A very little upsets our John—if the weather is hot and depressing, or gay and suggestive of holiday-making, if there is a rush of work, or if—but this is when you are very new—you have expected him to do ever so little of some one else's—then will a smiling, well-dressed John, with the inevitable suit case in hand, appear, and tell you his uncle has died in Kentucky, and he must catch the night train. He will be back in a week. You look your doubts; he reiterates his good intentions, backed by an ingratiating smile, and a "for I surely love to work for you," and you have looked your last on John.

If John is very considerate he may forestall his communication by introducing a friend to your notice as peculiarly fit for the situation he meditates leaving. It will transpire that he has had him about several days "showing him the work," and parenthetically giving you a character as a mistress one may reasonably hope to get along with.

My servants are coloured, and were it not for the humour and amusement they unintentionally supply I am persuaded they would materially shorten the life they so consistently harass.

One of my early ventures was a gaunt negress about six feet high of a peculiarly independent character. She spent, what I feel justified in describing as her more active moments, at various committees, the burial committee, of which she was chairman, being one which impressed itself most vividly on my imagination. When in the hospital she passed most of her day in scrubbing with more haste than efficiency. One day noticing a gleam of improve-

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