

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
ACADEMY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF WOMEN

THE ACADEMY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK  
1910

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THE ACADEMY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

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## INTRODUCTION

Of all the problems that have come in the train of the industrial revolution none are more perplexing than those that concern women. It is a wearisome commonplace that the factory has taken over much of the industrial work of the home, and that women have followed their work into the factory; but the fundamental change thus introduced into their life has not always been clearly seen. Formerly home and industry were synonymous terms for them; training for industry was training in household management. To-day industrial work is sharply separated from the management of the home, and there has come into the occupation of women a dualism that finds no parallel in the life of men. Most of the difficulties of women in industry relate themselves in some way to this fact.

An unregulated competitive system is good only for the strong. Women, by virtue of their double relation as industrial producers and as homemakers and mothers, are industrially weak. Most women are fundamentally interested in the home rather than the factory, and industrial occupation is only an interlude in their real business. Working women so-called are mostly mere girls under twenty-five who go to work with no thought of industry as a permanent career. Uninterested, untrained, unskilled, they are on a low level of efficiency, and they have little motive for climbing to a higher level. In industry a few years, then out of it into the home, they lack the discipline and solidity that come with a permanent life task. Small wonder that they crowd the unskilled labor market, and that their work commands a mere pittance.

Inefficient in their industrial work, they tend to become quite as inefficient in their function of homekeepers: for during the very years when they might otherwise be acquiring the household arts, they are busy in shop or factory, subject to a discipline requiring obedience to mechanical routine rather than that power of thoughtful initiative which marks the skilful

homemaker. Moreover, they become accustomed to the stimulus and excitement of the crowd, so that they do not want to be alone, and home life they too often find monotonous and uninteresting. The untrained, unskilled factory hand becomes the untrained, unskilled wife and mother.

Working women are not only untrained and inefficient, but industrially ignorant and lacking in standards. Hence they put up with whatever conditions the employer imposes. They do not “make a fuss,” and therefore they get treatment to which no man would submit. Moreover, such a large proportion of them are mere “pin-money girls” that there is no minimum standard of wages, such as is furnished for men by the necessary cost of maintaining a family. Women’s wages are perhaps in a majority of cases simply supplementary earnings, and the wages of all women, self-dependent or not, tend to be fixed on the assumption that they will live parasitically on their relatives. As a result of this lack of standards, the whole subject of the pay and conditions of women’s work is a veritable chaos. Standardization has been well worked out in many men’s trades, and technical progress has followed. In women’s occupations it is often easier for an unprogressive employer to throw the burden of his backwardness on docile women employes by paying low wages than it is to keep up with the march of improvement in machinery and methods. So much for the human element in this problem.

On the industrial side we find, as is more than once pointed out in these papers, that industry as now organized takes no cognizance of the special needs of the worker. Competitive cheapness must be obtained at all costs. If the worker does not insist on his rights, he gets small part of the benefits of progress. Hence changes in machinery and organization bring little advantage to women workers; such changes, in fact, are frequently carried through with distinct loss to them, however great the gain to society in general. But more than this, our present industry is made for men, and it wants only standard workers, working standard hours at standard speed. The workers must conform to this inelastic system or go without a job. Most women are physically incapable, without permanent injury to themselves and the race, of enduring for ten hours a

day the strain to which modern industry subjects them; yet they are trying to conform to its mechanical routine instead of insisting that it be changed to meet their needs. So long as this change is not made, so long will women's industrial work continue a social menace.

We face, then, a double difficulty. In the first place, woman's twofold function apparently necessitates a double preparation and a divided interest and life; in the second place, our industry demands a standardized worker for the whole of his time. In consequence of this situation, women throughout the period of factory labor have been among the greatest sufferers from low wages, long hours, and unsanitary conditions. They are the very type of worker to whom the Marxian analysis in all its rigor most nearly applies, uninterested, inefficient, ignorant, untrained, standardless. With the exception of children, they constitute the most easily exploited labor force in existing society, and they are mercilessly exploited. The new social freedom of industrial life combines with low wages to tempt and drive working girls to easier means of obtaining the pleasure they normally must have, and a grave social problem thus emerges. The changed industrial situation evidently demands a new economic and social adjustment.

A glance at the state of public opinion throws some light on the general nature of the adjustment required. Women are paid less than men primarily because they will take less, not because their work is worth less or because they need less; and public opinion acquiesces without protest. If the school pays women less than men simply because it can get them for less, how much more will the factory do the same. The public does not object because it thinks of women as dependent on their male relatives and hence not requiring a living wage. This was natural enough so long as they earned their living by household management and production, leaving to men the provision of money income. But the moment women entered the industrial field the whole situation changed. Public opinion has not yet taken cognizance of this fact. Economic conditions and social organization are out of joint. We need to readjust our ideas and our organization to the new economic facts; but

in consequence of an ignorant public opinion and a sluggish social conscience the readjustment is delayed and women are suffering sadly from overwork, underpay, injurious working conditions and neglect of training for industry and the home.

We are just beginning to feel our way toward this readjustment, which involves at least four things: 1. Giving women the training necessary for their home work. 2. Making them efficient industrial producers. 3. Making them “work conscious” and giving them industrial standards. 4. Insuring them proper pay, hours and conditions, by adjusting the demands of industry to their needs and capacity. To accomplish these ends three chief means are commonly urged, industrial training, trade unionism and legislation.

Industrial, or perhaps better vocational training, is as yet scarcely past the first stages of experimentation, and we do not clearly understand its proper aims or methods. Apparently we may rightly demand of the school that it give girls a reasonable training for their work as mothers and homekeepers, at the same time that it imparts to them a degree of technical skill in industrial work, and above all, that power of adaptation to changing conditions so imperatively demanded by modern economic life. A vague statement of this kind, indeed, means little, and discussions of industrial training are at present too full of vague generalizations. What we need is a series of careful studies of particular trades in particular places, and of the possibilities of the schools in connection therewith. It is only when we get this intimate knowledge of economic conditions and build our training on it, that the training becomes of much value in the large process of social readjustment. Otherwise we may help a few girls to get better wages, but that is about all, and even that is problematical. The combination, however, of an efficient system of trade investigation, a scientifically organized and conducted employment bureau, and an intelligent educational scheme is full of promise.

Permanent organization of women workers has hitherto proved difficult, if not impossible, by reason of the youth, inexperience, ignorance and short trade life of the young women concerned. Women’s unions have come and gone,

often leaving behind them certain permanent gains. In making girls industrially self-conscious, in setting standards of work and pay, in arousing public interest and awaking public conscience, thus preparing the way for legislation, they have performed valuable service even when short-lived. Sometimes a situation like that created by the New York shirtwaist strike gives opportunity to focus public attention on the condition of women workers. Great as its immediate services may be, organization at present reaches but a small fraction of women workers, and its permanent value in the larger view perhaps lies chiefly in educating working women, employers and the public to higher standards of employment and pay.

There remains the method of legislation. While law follows in the wake of public opinion in a democracy, industrial betterment often lags considerably behind the general progress of public intelligence, and the law can push the backward employer up to the level of the more enlightened one. The great advantage of the legal method is its uniformity; it puts all employers and establishments on the same basis. Moreover, its gains are usually fairly secure. A standard once embodied in law is harder to break down than a mere trade standard attained by union pressure, for example. Hence in the case of women workers, where conditions for individual improvement are unfavorable, where union methods are difficult of application, the process of readjustment will doubtless go forward largely by legal enactment. We shall see an increasing body of law governing the conditions under which women work. As the community finds that it has no other way of protecting itself against the injury it suffers from present conditions of employment of women, it will more and more resort to the prescribing of minimum legal limits below which they may not be crowded.

Fortunately for progress in this respect, our courts have generally looked with relative favor on legislation for women. The right of the state to exercise the police power to protect the health of women for the sake of future generations is now clearly established in the court of last resort. All that is necessary for the incorporation of a new requirement into the legal standard is to convince the courts of its relation to health

—a method employed with success in the Oregon and Illinois ten-hour cases. Thus far such legislation has dealt chiefly with hours, but the principle is capable of almost indefinite extension. As we approach the question of general working conditions and the more purely economic consideration of wages, the limitations of the legal method come more clearly into view; none the less the use of that method must extend beyond the present limits.

Fortunately also the method of legal enactment can be applied in some measure to bring about those modifications in the demands of industry that are necessary for women. Abandoning the fatuous attempt to keep women out of industrial life, we shall set about the task of humanizing industry by ridding it of the conditions that make wholesome life difficult for workers to attain. Realizing the greater needs of women, we may first set legal standards for them alone; and then, just as was the case in the early fight for a shorter workday, the advantage legally conceded to women may be extended to men as well. Slowly public opinion advances toward more enlightened views, and social and legal organization gradually improve with it. Following the economic upheaval that we call the economic revolution, a tremendously complex and difficult readjustment has been necessary, one made more difficult by the fact that it must be worked out in a democratic society. In the peculiarly difficult and trying situation of women during this readjustment we find abundant justification for social action to protect them against the dangers to which they are exposed, and abundant demand for the most thoroughgoing investigation on which to base such action. The present collection of papers is an attempt to state some of the manifold aspects of the problem and to discuss some of the proposed means of solution.

H. R. M.

# THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S WORK IN THE UNITED STATES

HELEN L. SUMNER

Washington, D. C.

The history of women's work in the United States is the story of an economic and industrial readjustment which is by no means yet complete. Women have worked since the world began, and at the dawn of history their labor was probably as important in family or tribal economy as it is to-day in the industrial world. Since early colonial days in this country, moreover, women have worked for gain, sometimes selling to the local storekeeper the products of leisure hours spent in spinning, weaving, knitting or sewing, sometimes themselves keeping little shops, and sometimes hiring themselves out to work in the families of their neighbors. But during the nineteenth century a great transformation occurred which has materially changed woman's economic position.

Woman's work may be divided into five general categories: unpaid labor, independent gainful labor, domestic service, wage labor in manufacturing industries and wage labor in trade and transportation. In all these varieties of work great changes have taken place. In the first place technical improvements have removed from the home to the factory and workshop a large part of the labor formerly carried on almost exclusively by women. Women naturally followed their occupations, and in doing so changed their economic status from that of unpaid laborers to that of paid laborers. Though the number gainfully employed has materially increased, however, the amount of unremunerated home work performed by women must still be considerably larger than the amount of gainful labor, for in 1900 only about one fifth of all females 16 years of age and over were breadwinners.<sup>[1]</sup>

Not only have unpaid, home-working women been transformed into paid factory operatives, but both independent home workers and wage-earning home workers have been transferred to factories and workshops. This change is especially evident in the comparatively backward clothing industries, which the sewing machine and artificial power have gradually driven from the home to the shop and, in some branches, to the factory. In the early days of wholesale clothing manufacture in this country all the work, except the cutting, was done for piece wages in the homes of the workers. Gradually, however, the industry has been drawn into sweatshops and factories. Independent domestic production, meanwhile, except in certain lines like dressmaking and to a slight extent the preserving of fruit and making of jelly, has practically become a thing of the past. The movement away from home work can hardly be regretted, however, in view of the fact that the entire history of women's work shows that their wage labor under the domestic system has almost invariably been under worse conditions of hours, wages and general sanitation than their wage labor under the factory system.

There has probably been, moreover, a material increase in the proportion of women wage earners as compared with independent producers. Before the introduction of machinery wage labor generally meant domestic service. There were, of course, exceptions. Early instances are well known of women spinners gathered together in groups and paid fixed sums, and women were early employed to sort and cut rags in paper mills. But the range of wage-earning occupations open to them has enormously increased, while it is doubtful whether any larger proportion are now engaged in independent industry than were so engaged two centuries ago. In commercial and professional pursuits, it is true, the opportunities for independent business have very greatly increased, but in manufacturing industries, as a result of the unprecedented growth of wholesale production, they have materially narrowed for women as well as for men.

The wage-earning opportunities of women in the three great groups of occupations, domestic service, manufacturing

industries, and trade and transportation, have also changed decidedly. Thousands, of course, have always been employed in domestic service, which has acted as the complement of the industrial pursuits. The opportunity to “hire out” has continually confronted the working woman and frequently, when she complained that her conditions of work were hard and her pay inadequate, she has been admonished by philanthropists and even by economists to betake herself to the kitchen, whose homelike conditions, high wages and pressing need of her labor have always been loudly proclaimed. The conditions and problems of domestic service, indeed, have changed far less than those of any other occupation. Nevertheless, the proportion of all gainfully employed women engaged in domestic and personal service has steadily decreased.<sup>[2]</sup>

In the manufacturing industries, on the other hand, great changes have taken place. The entrance of women into these industries may be attributed to three principal causes, machinery, artificial power and division of labor. All of these are in part the cause and in part the effect of an unprecedented development of wholesale, as opposed to retail production, and this growth of wholesale trade is itself primarily the result of improved means of communication and transportation.

These three factors have also caused a considerable amount of shifting of occupations. Under the domestic system of labor woman’s work and man’s work were clearly defined, women doing the spinning, part of the weaving, the knitting, the sewing and generally the cooking. But with the introduction of machinery for spinning and weaving thousands of hand workers were thrown out of employment. It is not surprising to learn that the first spinners and weavers by machinery were women. Later, however, mule spindles, operated by men, were introduced for part of the work. In certain other cases, too, machinery has caused the substitution of men for women in industries formerly considered as belonging to woman’s sphere. Women’s suits, for instance, are now largely made by men tailors, and men dressmakers and milliners are not uncommon. Men bake our bread and brew our ale and wash

our clothes in the steam laundry. At present men even clean our houses by the vacuum process.

One result has been that thousands of women who, under the old régime, would have sat calmly like Priscilla by the window spinning, have been forced to seek other occupations. When the industrial revolution transformed the textile industries they naturally turned to the only other employment for which they were trained, sewing. This, however, only increased the pressure of competition in the sewing trades, already sufficiently supplied with laborers. In the middle of the century, moreover, before any effective readjustment had taken place, the sewing machine was introduced, greatly increasing productivity and at the same time further sharpening competition.

Thus the increased productivity due to machinery and the simultaneous loss, by reason of the greater adaptability of men to certain machines, of woman's practical monopoly of the textile trades has caused intense competition and has forced many women into other industries, not traditionally theirs. From the beginning, however, their choice of occupations has been hampered by custom. As early as 1829 a writer in the *Boston Courier*<sup>[3]</sup> said:

Custom and long habit have closed the doors of very many employments against the industry and perseverance of woman. She has been taught to deem so many occupations masculine, and made only for men, that, excluded by a mistaken deference to the world's opinion, from innumerable labors, most happily adapted to her physical constitution, the competition for the few places left open to her, has occasioned a reduction in the estimated value of her labor, until it has fallen below the minimum, and is no longer adequate to present comfortable subsistence, much less to the necessary provision against age and infirmity, or the every day contingencies of mortality.

Economic necessity, however, with division of labor as its chief tool, sometimes aided by power machinery and sometimes alone, has gradually opened up new industries to

women. As early as 1832 they were employed in as many as one hundred different occupations. In many of these, to be sure, they were as rare as women blacksmiths are today. But in 1836 a committee of the National Trades' Union, appointed to inquire into the evils of "female labor," reported that in the New England States "printing, saddling, brush making, tailoring, whip making and many other trades are in a certain measure governed by females," and added that of the fifty-eight societies composing the Trades' Union of Philadelphia, twenty four were "seriously affected by female labor."<sup>[4]</sup> The census of 1850 enumerated nearly one hundred and seventy-five different manufacturing industries in which women were employed, and the number has steadily increased until there is now scarcely an industry in which they are not to be found.

Usually, however, they have been employed, in the first instance, only in the least skilled and most poorly paid occupations, and have not competed directly with men. This has been due in part to custom and prejudice, perhaps, but primarily it has been due to lack of training and ambition, and to general irresponsibility. One of the causes, to be sure, of the lack of training and ambition is the knowledge that well-paid positions are seldom given to women. A much more vital cause, however, is to be found in the lack of connection between the work and the girl's natural ambitions. Before the industrial revolution women were probably as skilful and efficient in their lines of industry as men in theirs. The occupations taught girls at that time were theirs for life and naturally they took great pride and pleasure in becoming proficient in work which prepared them for marriage and for the career which nearly every young girl, with wholesome instincts, looks forward to as her ideal, the keeping of the home and the care of children. But when the connection was lost between work and marriage, when girls were forced by machinery and division of labor to undertake tasks which had no vital interest to them, there grew up a hybrid class of women workers in whose lives there is contradiction and internal if not external discord. Their work no longer fits in with their ideals and has lost its charm.

Even in industries which, like the textile and sewing trades, belong to women by long inheritance, machinery and division of labor have so transformed processes that both the individuality of their work and the original incentive to industry have been wholly lost in a standardized product. Moreover, in their traditional sphere of employment and especially in the sewing trade, competition has been so keen that the conditions under which they have worked have been, upon the whole, more degrading and more hopeless than in any other class of occupations. From the very beginning of the wholesale clothing manufacture in this country, indeed, five elements, home work, the sweating system, the contract and sub-contract systems increasing the number of middlemen between producer and consumer, the exaggerated overstrain due to piece payment, and the fact that the clothing trades have served as the general dumping ground of the unskilled, inefficient and casual women workers, have produced a condition of almost pure industrial anarchy.

It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the greatest economic success of women wage earners in manufacturing industries has been attained in occupations in which they have competed directly with men. Women printers and cigarmakers, who in many cases have been introduced as the result of strikes, have generally earned higher wages than their sisters who have made shirts and artificial flowers. Usually, however, when, as in certain classes of cigar making, they have entirely displaced men, they have soon lost their economic advantage. And it is exceedingly doubtful whether, in such cases, women have gained as much as men have lost. Certainly they have not regained what they themselves have lost through being displaced by men in their customary sphere of employment.

The occupations grouped under the title "trade and transportation," most of which are new and offer, therefore, no problems of displacement, have furnished working women, in general, their most remunerative employments. This, too, is the group of industries in which, within recent years, the most rapid increase in the number and proportion of women workers has taken place.<sup>[5]</sup> Though the number of saleswomen, stenographers, clerks, bookkeepers, telegraph and telephone

operators, and so forth, is still small as compared with the number of women textile factory operatives, seamstresses, boot and shoemakers, paper box makers, and so on, it is rapidly increasing. In this movement, moreover, there is evident more than anywhere else a certain hopeful tendency for working women to push up from the level of purely mechanical pursuits to the level of semi-intellectual labor. The trade and transportation industries are, roughly speaking, middle-class employments, as contrasted with the manufacturing industries, which are, roughly speaking, working-class employments.

Women's wages have always been excessively low and their hours excessively long. About 1830 Mathew Carey estimated that in Philadelphia, New York, Boston and Baltimore there were between 18,000 and 20,000 working women, at least 12,000 of whom could not earn, by constant employment for 16 hours out of the 24, more than \$1.25 per week. At this rate he figured that, allowing for the loss of one day a week through sickness, unemployment or the care of children, and counting lodging at 50 cents and fuel at 12½ cents a week, a woman would have left for food and clothing just \$22.50 per year. A good seamstress without children and employed all the time he figured could earn \$1.12½ per week or \$58.50 per year, out of which she would have to pay 50 cents per week for rent, 15 cents per week for fuel, 8 cents per week for soap, candles, etc., and \$10 for shoes and clothing—which would leave her for food and drink 2¾ cents per day. If she was hampered by the care of children, was unemployed one day a week, or was slow or unskilled, he figured that, at the same rates of expenditure, she would have a yearly deficit of \$11.56.

[6] The situation of the working women in the cities of this country during the early decades of the nineteenth century was, indeed, as characterized by the New York *Daily Sentinel*, the first daily labor paper in this country, “frightful, nay disgraceful to our country, ... a gangrenous spot on the body politic, a national wound that ought to be visited and dressed, lest it rankle and irritate the whole system.”[7]

Fifteen years later conditions were little better. An investigation of “female labor” in New York in 1845 led to the

assertion by the *New York Tribune* that there were in that city about 50,000 working women, onehalf of whom earned wages averaging less than \$2 per week, and to the further statement that the girls who flocked to that city from every part of the country to work as shoe binders, type rubbers, artificial-flower makers, match-box makers, straw braiders, etc., found competition so keen that they were obliged “to snatch at the privilege of working on any terms.” “They find,” said the *Tribune*, “that by working from fifteen to eighteen hours a day they cannot possibly earn more than from one to three dollars a week, and this, deducting the time they are out of employment every year, will barely serve to furnish them the scantiest and poorest food, which, from its monotony and its unhealthy quality, induces disgust, loathing and disease. They have thus absolutely nothing left for clothes, recreation, sickness, books or intellectual improvement.”<sup>[8]</sup>

In 1863 the average wages paid to women in New York, taking all the trades together, were said to have been about \$2 a week, and the hours ranged from eleven to sixteen a day.<sup>[9]</sup> And in 1887 it was stated that in New York City nine thousand and in Chicago over five thousand women earned less than \$3 per week.<sup>[10]</sup>

Some of these statements may be exaggerations, but there can be no doubt that, throughout the entire history of women in industry in this country, their wages, in thousands of cases, have been inadequate for decent support. Their wages, too, have been far below those of men. In 1833<sup>[11]</sup> and again in 1868<sup>[12]</sup> it was stated that women’s wages were, on an average, only about one fourth what men received. Moreover, it has been authoritatively stated that during the civil war period the wages of women increased less than those of men, while their cost of living rose out of all proportion.<sup>[13]</sup>

It is probable that, in general, women’s wages have been less flexible, more subject to the influence of custom and less to the influence of demand and supply, than men’s. Unfortunately custom in this case has furnished a standard of exploitation and not of protection. It is probable, too, that working women have suffered more than working men from

periods of panic and depression, for such periods, like war, have thrown upon their own resources thousands of women who in normal times are supported by their male relatives.

In the textile industries wages, during the first half of the nineteenth century at least, were higher than in the clothing trades. The Lowell girls during the so-called "golden era" earned from \$1.50 to \$2 per week in addition to their board of \$1.25. Their day's work, however, varied from 11 hours and 24 minutes in December and January to 13 hours and 31 minutes in April, and averaged 12 hours and 13 minutes, or 73½ hours per week.<sup>[14]</sup> It must be remembered, moreover, that there were in this country, during these early years, two distinct systems of factory labor, the factory boarding-house system of Lowell, Dover, N. H., and other places in that neighborhood, and the family system which prevailed in Fall River, throughout Rhode Island, and generally in New York, New Jersey and Maryland. In the factories operated on the family system of labor wages were distinctly lower than in those of the Lowell type, and were frequently paid in store orders. In these factories, too, hours were longer, being in summer 13¾ per day and averaging throughout the year 75½ per week<sup>[15]</sup>. Girls, moreover, went to work at an earlier age. Child laborers whom the Lowell manufacturers could not afford to keep in their factory boarding houses were employed in large numbers.

The general conditions under which women have toiled in this country have been little if any better than their wages and their hours. During the years when Lowell is supposed to have been a busy paradise, with flowers blooming in the factory windows, poetry and hymns pasted on the walls, and the *Lowell Offering* furnishing an outlet for the exuberant literary activities of the operatives, the ventilation, both of factories and of boarding houses, was absolutely inadequate. In the boarding houses from four to six and sometimes even eight girls slept in one room about 14 by 16 ft., and from twelve to sixteen girls in a hot, ill-ventilated attic. In winter the factories were lighted by lamps. One woman who testified before the Massachusetts Committee on Hours of Labor in 1845 stated that, in the room where she worked, along with about 130 other women, 11 men and 12 children, there were 293 small

lamps and 61 large lamps which were sometimes lighted in the morning as well as in the evening<sup>[16]</sup>. The lack of ventilation in the mills and boarding houses of Lowell was in 1849 made the subject of a report to the American Medical Association by Dr. Josiah Curtis, and in the same year the physician of the Lowell Hospital, established by the manufacturing corporations exclusively for the use of operatives, attributed to lack of ventilation in the cotton mills the fact that, since the founding of the hospital nine years before, over half the patients had suffered from typhoid fever.

Typhoid fever, however, was doubtless a far less general result of these conditions than consumption. Even the *Lowell Offering*, which found no evils in factory labor except long hours and excused these on the ground that long hours were universal throughout New England, bears evidence in practically every number that tuberculosis of the lungs was the great scourge of the factories. The labor papers, moreover, as early as 1836, began to point out the direct connection between factory labor and consumption. In 1845, too the *United States Journal* published a poem by Andrew McDonald, the first verse of which reads:<sup>[17]</sup>

Go look at Lowell's pomp and gold  
Wrung from the orphan and the old;  
See pale consumption's death-glazed eye—  
The hectic cheek, and know not why.  
Yes, these combine to make thy wealth  
“Lord of the Loom,” and glittering pelf.

There is no reason to believe that conditions were any better, if as good, in other manufacturing districts. In the clothing industry, moreover, which has long been concentrated in cities, overcrowding and unsanitary housing conditions in horrible variety have furnished the environment of working women. Whole blocks of tenements, too, have been rented out to families in New York for the manufacture of cigars. As early as 1877 the United Cigar Manufacturers' Association, an organization of small employers, condemned as unsanitary these tenement cigar factories where the babies rolled on the floor in waste tobacco, and the housework, the cooking, the

cleaning of children and the trade of cigar making were all carried on in one room.<sup>[18]</sup>

From these evil conditions, low wages, long hours and unwholesome sanitary arrangements, immigrant women have naturally been the greatest sufferers, for, like their husbands and brothers, they have been obliged to begin at the bottom. Irish women first entered the factories of New England, for example, as waste pickers and scrub women. But their daughters became spinners and weavers. There have been, however, certain exceptions to this rule. The skilled Bohemian women cigar makers who came to New York in the seventies, for instance, earned from the first comparatively high wages. Foreign girls who have gone into domestic service, moreover, have frequently earned higher wages than American girls who have chosen to be, for example, saleswomen.

The chief forces which have tended to improve the condition of working women have been trade unions, industrial education and legislation. In certain industries, especially shoe making, cigar making, printing and collar and cuff making, trade unions have brought about higher wages, shorter hours or better conditions in certain localities. Women shoe-binders, about one thousand in number, won a strike for higher wages at Lynn as early as 1834,<sup>[19]</sup> and during the sixties and seventies the Daughters of St. Crispin protected the working women of their craft. Women members were admitted into the Cigar Makers' International Union in 1867 and were prominent in the great strike of 1877. The International Typographical Union admitted women in 1869. Probably no organization of women workers, however, has been more effective than the Collar Laundry Union of Troy, N. Y., the predecessor of the Shirt, Waist and Laundry Workers' International Union. During the sixties the Collar Laundry Union is said to have raised the wages of its members from \$2 or \$3 to \$14 a week, and to have contributed \$1000 in aid of Troy iron molders on strike against a reduction of wages, and \$500 in aid of striking bricklayers in New York.<sup>[20]</sup>

The tailoresses of New York, moreover, were organized as early as 1825, and in 1831 sixteen hundred tailoresses and

seamstresses of that city went on strike for an elaborate wage scale covering a large variety of work, and remained out for four or five weeks.<sup>[21]</sup> Considering that the population of New York in 1830 was under 200,000, this strike bears comparison with the great shirt-waist workers' strike of 1909-1910. Two years later the journeyman tailors of Baltimore were assisting the tailoresses of that city in a "stand-out" for higher wages,<sup>[22]</sup> and in the summer of 1844 the Boston tailors aided a large and apparently successful strike of sewing women.<sup>[23]</sup> In 1851 an effort to assist some six thousand shirt sewers in New York led to the foundation of a shirt sewers' coöperative union, which prospered for several years.<sup>[24]</sup> Many other organizations of sewing women have been formed and have conducted strikes, which have sometimes succeeded and sometimes failed.

In the textile industries, too, a long series of efforts by operatives to improve their own situation began with the picturesque strike of four hundred women and girls in Dover, N. H., in 1828, when the operatives paraded the town with flags and inscriptions and the factory agent advertised for two or three hundred "better-behaved women."<sup>[25]</sup> The long and bitterly contested but successful strike of the Fall River weavers against a reduction of wages in 1875 was led by women who went out after the Weavers' Union, composed of men, had voted to accept the reduction.<sup>[26]</sup>

Many other examples of effective trade-union activity among women workers might be cited. These women's organizations, moreover, have proved powerful factors in the fight for ten-hour laws.

The industrial schools and business colleges which began to spring up in the sixties and seventies have also furnished important aid to working women. Apprenticeship for girls has always been a farce. Even in colonial days girl apprentices were rarely taught a trade of any kind, and early in the nineteenth century apprenticeship for girls, as well as for boys, came to be generally a means of securing cheap child labor. After the industrial revolution, indeed, the condition of working women, as regards skill and efficiency, was probably distinctly lower than before they became wage earners.

Industrial schools, however, have been very slow of development. Business colleges, on the other hand, began during the eighties to receive large numbers of women students, and have materially aided in opening up in the trade and transportation industries remunerative occupations for women.

Some progress, moreover, has been made through legislation. Laws compelling seats for women employees have helped wherever they have been enforced. Sanitary legislation, too, has effected certain improvements, though it is doubtful whether, on the whole, such legislation has as yet more than balanced the ill results of the greater concentration of population and the greater strain of work.

In a number of states legislation has also brought an answer to the prayer of the “unknown factory girl” of 1846,

God grant, that, in the mills, a day  
May be but “Ten Hours” long.<sup>[27]</sup>

But at the same time the speed and intensity of work have been greatly increased. Until about 1836, for example, a girl weaver tended, as a rule, only two looms, and if she wished to be absent for half a day, it was customary for her to ask two of her friends to tend an extra loom apiece so she should not lose her wages. By 1876 one girl tended six and sometimes eight looms. Meanwhile, too, the speed had been increased. In 1873 it was estimated that a girl spinner tended from two to three times as many spindles as she did in 1849.<sup>[28]</sup> This tendency to multiply the amount of work to be performed in a given time has continued active. Piece wages have meanwhile fallen so that the total earnings of the operatives have not been increased, but, taking into consideration the cost of living, have rather been decreased.

In the sewing trades, too, the intensity of work has been very greatly increased by the use of the sewing machine, particularly when power-driven, by the resulting minute subdivision of labor, and by the sweating system. A certain amount of division of labor was practised, it is true, long before the invention of the sewing machine. Vest making, for

example, was a separate and distinct business. But it was not until after the introduction of the machine that much progress was made in dividing the work upon a single garment. The sub-contract or sweating system, too, appears to have originated at least as early as 1844,<sup>[29]</sup> but probably did not assume an important place until introduced about 1863 by contractors for army clothing. At first, moreover, the work for the sub-contractors was nearly all done in the homes. The need, however, for capital to invest in machines and later in power to run the machines, naturally tended to gather the workers into sweat shops, into small establishments, and then into factories where every possible incentive was offered to the most intense concentration of energies and to excessive speed. As in the textile factories, too, piece-rate wages have fallen automatically with productivity so that, whatever the exertion required and the number of garments turned out, remuneration has remained near the subsistence level.

The history of women in industry is, in short, the story of the transfer of women workers from the home to the factory, from labor in harmony with their deepest ambitions to monotonous, nerve-racking work, divided and subdivided until the woman, like the traditional tailor who is called the ninth part of a man, is merely a fraction, and sometimes an almost infinitesimal fragment, of an artisan. It is a story of long hours, overwork, unwholesome conditions of life and labor and miserably low wages. It is a story of the underbidding of men bread winners by women, who have been driven by dire necessity, by a lower standard of living, or by the sense of ultimate dependence upon some man, even if he be only a hypothetical husband, to offer their services upon the bargain counter of the labor market. It is a story of the futile efforts of misdirected charity, whether that of fathers and brothers, of factory boarding houses or of philanthropic organizations, to aid the oppressed working women by offering them partial support, thereby enabling them to accept wages below the subsistence level, and still hold together soul and body. It is, finally, a story of wasted human lives, some of them wasted in the desperate effort to snatch from the world a little share of joy, and some of them wasted through disease and death or

through the loss of the powers of body and mind required for efficient motherhood.

That such has been the history of women in industry is due in part to their lack of training, skill and vital interest in their work. In part it is due to excessive competition in their traditional occupations, combined with a variety of impediments, some of them rooted in established customs and ideals and some of them perhaps inherent in woman herself, to their free movement into new occupations, into the higher paid positions and into less congested communities. In part, however, it is due to the lack of appreciation of the need for legislative action.

The four great curses of working women have always been, as they are today, insufficient wages, intense and often unfair competition, overstrain due to long hours, heavy work or unhygienic conditions, and the lack of diversified skill, or of any opportunity or incentive to acquire and display ability and wisely-directed energy. The story of woman's wage labor is, therefore, pitifully sad and in many respects discouraging. But it is the story of an industrial readjustment which is not yet near completion, and there is good reason to believe that the turning point has been reached and that better things are in store for the working woman. When we realize, however, what the economic position of women has been in the past and through how many generations large numbers of them have toiled under conditions which involved not only terrible suffering to themselves, but shocking waste to the community, it becomes evident that the present problem will not solve itself, but demands of our generation the best thought, the best energy, and the most thorough legislative regulation designed to conserve the human resources bound up in the mothers of the nation.

## FOOTNOTES:

[1] In 1870, the earliest year for which statistics are available, 14.7%, and in 1900 20.6% of the female population 16 years of age and over were breadwinners.

[2] In 1870, 58.1% and in 1900 only 39.4% of all females 10 years of age and over engaged in gainful occupations were in the division “domestic and personal service.”

[3] *Boston Courier*, July 13, 1829.

[4] From the proceedings of the National Trades’ Union, published in the *National Laborer*, Nov. 12, 1836, and reprinted in the *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. vi, pp. 285-6.

[5] In 1870 nearly 20% of all females 10 years of age and over engaged in gainful occupations were in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits and only 1% in trade and transportation, but in 1900, while the proportion of women in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits had increased to 24.7%, the proportion in trade and transportation had increased to 9.4%.

[6] Carey, *Miscellaneous Pamphlets*, Phila., 1831, “To the Ladies who have undertaken to establish a House of Industry in New York,” and “To the Editor of the New York *Daily Sentinel*,” *Select Excerpta* (A collection of newspaper clippings made by Matthew Carey, now in the Ridgway Branch of the Library Company, Philadelphia), vol. 13, pp. 138-142; *Appeal to the Wealthy of the Land*, 3d ed., p. 15.

[7] Quoted in Carey, *Miscellaneous Pamphlets*, No. 12, Philadelphia, 1831.

[8] *New York Daily Tribune*, July 9, August 19, 1845.

[9] *Fincher’s Trades’ Review*, Nov. 21, 1863.

[10] *Industrial Leader*, July 9, 1887.

[11] *Workingman’s Shield*, Cincinnati, Jan. 12, 1833.

[12] *Workingman’s Advocate*, Chicago, June 6, 1868.

[13] Mitchell, *History of the Greenbacks*, p. 307.

[14] Montgomery, *Practical Detail of the Cotton Manufacture of the United States*, 1840, pp. 173-174.

[15] Montgomery, *op. cit.*

[16] *Massachusetts House Document*, no. 50, 1845, p. 3.

[17] Quoted in the *Voice of Industry*, a labor paper published in Lowell, Nov. 28, 1845.

[18] *New York Sun*, Dec. 3, 1877.

[19] *Lynn Record*, Jan. 1, 8, March 12, 1834.

[20] *The American Workman*, Boston, Aug. 7, 1869; *Workingman’s Advocate*, Chicago, April 28, 1866; *The Revolution*, N. Y., Oct. 8, 1868.

[21] Carey’s *Select Excerpta*, Vol. 4, pp. 11-12.

[22] *Baltimore Republican*, Oct. 2, 1833.

[23] *Peoples’ Paper*, Cincinnati, Sept. 22, Oct. 6, 1844.

[24] *New York Daily Tribune*, July 31, Sept. 11, 1851; June 8, 1853.

[25] *Mechanics' Free Press*, Phila., Jan. 17, 1829; *New York American*, Jan. 5, 1829; *National Gazette*, Phila., Jan. 7, 1829.

[26] Baxter, C. H., *History of the Fall River Strike*, 1875.

[27] *Voice of Industry*, Feb. 20, 1846.

[28] Gray, *Argument on Petition for Ten-Hour Law*, 1873, pp. 21-22.

[29] In that year it was said that a man and two women working together from twelve to sixteen hours a day earned a dollar among them, and that the women, if they did not belong to the family, received each about \$1.25 a week for their work. *Workingman's Advocate*, July 27, 1844.

# CHANGES IN WOMEN'S WORK IN BINDERIES<sup>[30]</sup>

MARY VAN KLEECK

Committee on Women's Work, New York City

"Bookbinding is a very uncertain trade," said a forewoman who had held her position fourteen years; "I wouldn't advise any young girl to go into it. There is so much machinery now. Where a girl used to make eight or nine dollars, she now makes five or six, and that's not a living. Also you never know when you'll be laid off. Take the magazine binderies. They don't keep the girls a full month. Ten days is their month. Twelve days is a long month. It's a bad arrangement to do thirty days' work in twelve. You have to pay board every week."

Remarks like these were made by many girls employed in the bookbinding trade in New York. For the most part they did not see reasons or remedies for the conditions which they faced, but by daily experience they had learned this fact of change as it appeared in numerous guises, irregular employment, irregular hours, hit-or-miss methods of learning, cuts in wages, and the displacement of workers by the coming of machines. If their impressions be correct, more important than any photographic description of their economic position, regarded as a static thing, is an account of changes in conditions and their effect on women workers.

If we attempt to verify the statements of the workers by the official figures in the census, showing the proportion of men and women employed in binderies at successive enumerations, <sup>[31]</sup> we shall be surprised and somewhat bewildered. In 1870 30% were women, 70% were men; in 1880 39.7% were women, 60.3% were men; in 1890 48.5% were women, 51.5% were men; in 1900 51.6% were women, 48.4% were men.

This rapid shifting of the relative proportion of men and women would lead the statistician to suppose that in this trade was to be found a perfect example of the displacement of men by women. Behind the figures one seems to read the story of a struggle in which men have been the losers. Yet the comments of workers and employers, and the conditions actually witnessed in binderies in New York contradict this reading of census figures. Evidently more facts are needed in order to understand what is happening in the trade.

The bindery trade in New York employs about five thousand women, a third of all the women at work in binderies in the United States. A few are at work in hand binderies, where craftsmen of two or three centuries ago would find tools and methods not entirely unfamiliar. Others work in "edition binderies," where machines bind books by the thousands. Others work in pamphlet binderies, or magazine binderies. The methods and conditions differ in these different branches of the trade.

Whether a book is bound by hand or machine, whether it is covered with levant or paper, whether it is sewed with linen thread or stitched with wire, certain processes are necessary. The sheets must be folded into portable size, the folded sections must be held together in proper order, and the whole must be covered. It is in the matter of the covering that the branches of the trade differ most widely. The making of the hand-bound book, designed to last longest, demands the most numerous processes. At the other extreme is the paper-covered pamphlet.

The machine method of binding books omits many processes of hand binding, and combines others into one simple operation. In hand binding, one book is the center of attention until it is finished, and each volume requires slightly different treatment. In machine binding, the method is to repeat one process thousands of times, adopting the factory system with its division of processes and its labor-saving machines. A pamphlet should be folded and its sections placed in proper order as accurately as a book bound in cloth or morocco, but as it is to be covered only with heavy paper, it requires no such careful pressing, trimming, and retrimming,

rounding and backing, glueing, lining-up, drawing-in, and all the other diverse manipulations by which the artistic binder assures the preservation of the sheets in a solid and substantial cover made by hand. A periodical is a species of pamphlet, but it is distinguished by uniformity of size week after week or month after month. Thus it lends itself admirably to machine production.

Women are standing on the threshold of the bindery trade. All the work of preparing the sheets is theirs, folding, placing them in sequence, and attaching them together with paste, thread or wire. In pamphlet binding they put on the covers, but in edition binderies, they have no share at all in the important work of the forwarding department, and they enter the finishing department only in order to lay the gold on the covers and to examine and wrap the completed volumes. Will the process of change give them greater or less opportunities?

The machine is the great fact which looms large before the eyes of bindery women, when they describe changes in their trade. They accept it as they would accept a rainy day but it usually spells "out of work" for someone in the bindery, and the calamity of unemployment is more immediate and real to the workers than are the advantages of better methods of production.

The different methods of folding sheets illustrate the development of machinery. Often these different methods are found together in one workroom. For example, in an edition bindery in New York the sheets are fed into one of the six point folding machines or placed in the automatic folder or, very rarely, folded by hand. In the first case, girls sitting on high stools feed each separate sheet into the machine, placing the printed dots on needle-like points, which serve as guides, while their helpers, the learners, take out the folded sections and "jog" them straight on tables. If the pages are to be folded by the automatic machine, they are placed in the proper position under two rubber knuckles, which push them toward the folding rollers. The forewoman, in addition to her other work, keeps watch to see that the folding is properly done, but no hand work is required except to pile the sheets under the rubber fingers and to lift the folded sections from the boxes

into which the machine delivers them. Between the “point” machine and the “automatic” was another invention not found in this bindery. In it the points gave place to automatic gauges, and the girl who fed it need only flick the sheet from the pile so that the machine could grip it. By dispensing with the points on which each sheet must be fitted much time was saved. Obviously the next step was to supply an automatic feeder.

The stories of displaced workers illustrate what happens when new machines are introduced. One girl had been employed in bindery work three years. As a learner, she had “knocked up” sections folded by the “point” machine. She was paid three dollars a week, and continued the same process one year. Then when a vacancy occurred, she was given a chance to operate the machine. It was not easy to learn, nor could it be done in a day or a week. At first she received a weekly wage of four dollars and fifty cents, but “advanced rapidly” until she was earning nine dollars.

One day an automatic machine appeared in the workroom and proved so successful that it was used in preference to the point folders. This girl was given hand folding, which is “terrible work.” It is hard to earn a living wage by hand folding. The worker is paid a cent or a cent and a half for folding one hundred sheets if one fold is necessary. If the sheets are large and heavy like those in a dictionary the work of folding is very exhausting, although the pay may be higher. If one is paid four cents for one hundred sheets, she must fold nearly three thousand sheets in a day or seventeen thousand five hundred in a week to earn seven dollars. Moreover, each sheet must be folded three times, and each fold creased smooth by drawing the bone folding knife across the heavy paper. This girl was paid four cents a hundred for folding the pages of an encyclopedia, but she could not earn more than seven dollars a week, in spite of her efforts to work rapidly. She left because she was not needed for hand folding and the forewoman thought that there would be no more work for “point feeders.” She advised her to learn some other process.

An employment bureau sent her to a bindery where a point feeder was needed, but the machine was not the same make as the one which she had been operating, and therefore she was

not employed. After a fruitless search for work in her trade, she was employed by a manufacturer of neckwear as a learner without wages. Later, as an experienced operator, she earned seven to nine dollars a week.

Another girl had operated a point folding machine in a large edition bindery. Newer inventions were introduced, and gradually more and more work was transferred to them. This girl was a piece worker, and her wages were depressed steadily as the machine which she was operating fell into disuse. She had learned only two other processes, hand folding and filling the boxes of the gathering machine. There was no gathering machine in this bindery, and the prices for hand folding were not high enough to yield a living wage. This girl and her sister, also a bookbinder, lived alone, and were dependent on their own earnings. She had decided to look for work in another bindery, when the forewoman offered to teach her to gather by hand. Gathering is not easy work. "At first," she said, "I was so tired at night I could hardly keep my eyes open at supper. I said yesterday I wished I had one of those things you put on your feet to measure the distance you walk; I'd like to know how many miles I walk in a day. There's no boys to carry our work. The folding machines are at the other end of the bindery, and we carry the work the distance from one street to another. That's a block. If there are forty sections in a book, we walk it forty times for that one book." Nevertheless her experience in handling sheets made it possible for her to learn the new process easily, so that by the end of six months she was earning approximately ten to eleven dollars a week piece work, whereas the point folding machine had yielded her a maximum of nine or ten dollars.

An expert wirestitcher in a magazine bindery sometimes earned twenty-four dollars in the busiest week of the month when she worked overtime. When a combined gathering and wirestitching machine was introduced for binding small magazines, she was transferred to work on a weekly periodical whose pages were too large to fit the new machine. Her work was inserting during part of the week and mailing during the rest of the time. She earned ten to eleven dollars piece work,

and had steadier employment than if she had continued to stitch the monthly magazine.

A gatherer, who had had long experience, “made a fuss” when the gathering machine was introduced, and was given an opportunity to operate it at a wage of eighteen dollars, the regular rate paid to men for this work. Young girls were employed to fill the boxes. The other gatherers were obliged to learn other processes in this establishment or seek work elsewhere.

The important fact common to these stories is that there was no systematic effort to prevent the maladjustment which was due not to the inefficiency of the workers but to change in industrial organization. The displaced employes had not been in a position accurately to foresee these changes; the appearance of the machine in the workroom was usually their first warning that they must seek other occupations. Time was lost in the effort to make the required readjustments. It does not appear that this loss of time was a necessary evil. On the other hand, it is evident that solutions were possible, and that the suffering of the workers was due to the fact that readjustments were matters of chance rather than forethought.

There is another fact, almost as important as the introduction of machinery, and that is the failure to introduce it. Of the 306 binderies visited in the course of this investigation, including temporary departments of printing offices, lithographing establishments and other branches of the industry, there were only nine in which no handworkers were employed.

In 234 some machine was used.

In 66 no machines were used.

In 6 the use of machines was not ascertained.

In 20 a gathering machine was found.

In 269 no gathering machine was found.

In 17 the use of a gathering machine was not ascertained.

In 112 a folding machine was found.

In 181 no folding machine was found.

In 13 the use of a folding machine was not ascertained.

Several employers discussed the use of machinery and gave their reasons for not introducing it. Small firms could not run the risk of investing capital in machines which might change soon again. It was better to be a specialist in one process and give out part of the work to other establishments. Others did not have large enough orders to keep a machine for one process in motion all day. High rents prevented others from providing larger space for machinery. Others were inert. As long as there were girls willing to take low wages for handwork, it was just as well to continue in the old way.

This failure to introduce machines brings about a diversity in methods which is very confusing to the worker. It prevents the establishment of a standard and makes necessary a different bargain in each factory. "You see every bindery is a little different," said one woman; "when you go to a new place you never can tell what it will be like." In so far as machines compel uniformity, they help to standardize both processes and conditions of work.

The way in which machinery breaks up a trade into establishments making a specialty of one branch of work has been noted. The other form of specialization is illustrated in the case of employes who practise only one process in the workroom. This sort of specialization does not seem to be inevitable. In a bindery in New York where there were machines for every process, "all round" workers were in demand, and those who could turn from one process to another were not laid off. But, however great may be the demand for employes experienced in more than one line of work, it is the tendency of machinery to force a worker to practise only one. If you are a piece-worker, to lose practise means to lose wages. On the other hand, the machine will not yield its maximum profit unless it be kept in constant operation. Thus while general practise in all branches of the trade brings to the worker the desirable power of adjustment to changing conditions, nevertheless the employer's wish to keep his machines in motion, and the piece worker's eagerness not to lose the speed which comes from constant practise, both tend

to organize the bindery force in separate departments, whose workers are not interchangeable. The same demand of the machine, that it be fed with enough work to keep it in constant motion, forces the employer either to specialize in one department, or to secure more orders and to enlarge his establishment.

It is obvious that the larger the establishment, the more successful will be the attempt to keep every machine in motion throughout the working day. The feeder of the machine will then have little opportunity to practise other processes. "Establishments are now so large that a woman learns only one process," said one superintendent; "for example, she becomes a sewer and does nothing but that." In the light of this fact, the census figures showing the size of establishments are significant. In New York State in 1905, 53.9% of the total number of wage earners were employed in 26 binderies, 8.6% of the total number of establishments in the trade. There were 6 more binderies counted in New York State in 1905 than in 1900 (304 in 1905, 298 in 1900) while wage earners increased 11.6% or 832 in number.

Specialization shows itself in another way, namely, in an inability to turn from one kind of product to another. There is a large bindery in New York where several periodicals are bound. A girl employed there complained of the irregularity of her work. "It seems pretty hard on a girl," she said, "to have to stay home two days in the week and then have to work so hard the other days." Her employment was due to the different methods of binding different periodicals. Two weekly magazines were brought to the bindery on Tuesday and must be mailed on Thursday. Hand folders and wirestitchers were needed to bind them. An engineer's magazine must be bound between Tuesday and Friday. The work on this was hand folding, gathering by machine, and sewing by machine, instead of wirestitching. Another publication was brought from the printer on Friday and issued on Monday. It was folded by machine and wirestitched. On Friday evening and Saturday there was no work for a hand folder or an operator of the sewing machine. Wednesday was the busiest day in the bindery; two magazines must be completed for the mailers on

Thursday. Overtime was usual on that day. This girl could fold by hand, fill the gathering machine and operate the sewing machine. She worked from Tuesday to Friday. The issues of the magazine had been smaller than usual and her earnings were reduced. She reported that at hand folding, if there were plenty of work, she could earn seventy-five cents or a dollar a day. For filling the gathering machine the rate was eighteen cents an hour or one dollar fifty-three cents a day. But there had been so little work that her earnings in the past three weeks had been:

January 4th-10th, \$3.19;

January 11th-17th, \$7.75;

January 18th-26th, \$3.21.

If she had been steadily employed, she could have earned five or six dollars a week as a hand folder, or nine dollars and nine cents for filling the gathering machine. "There isn't much chance for a sewer any more in magazine binderies," she said; "you know nearly all the magazines used to be sewed, but now they are wirestitched."

When different kinds of orders demand different processes, the specialist must be prepared to face not only change in machinery, but change in the size or character of her employer's orders. This sort of change may affect the organization of the workroom. Recently a magazine, which had been gathered by machine, was enlarged by doubling the size of its pages. Thereafter a force of inserters was employed, and there was no work for gatherers. It may affect the process and its demands on the worker. In one bindery a little girl was employed to cut off books for one machine, earning four dollars. "I can keep up with the machine when the books are the right size," she said; "but it's awful when they're thin." It may affect wages. One girl who had been employed to operate the sewing machine in the book department was transferred to the magazine department where her work was to look over sheets folded by machine and to fill the boxes of the gathering machine. Her pay was reduced from ten dollars to a wage varying from five to seven dollars according to the kind of work assigned to her. This transfer from work on one product to another requiring different processes was due to the fact that

much of the book work formerly done by this firm was withdrawn by a large publishing house which had recently organized its own bindery.

If we trace the history of the folding machine or the gathering machine we find that with the development of automatic feeding devices the tendency is to dispense with the work of women and to employ men to care for the machines. It is not a displacement of women by men; it is rather the substitution of rubber fingers or other automatic feeders for women's hands, and as a result a reorganization of the force.

What then is the meaning of the census figures which tell us that in 1870 30% of the bookbinders were women and 70% were men, while in 1900, 51.6% were women and 48.4% were men? In the absence of any data as to the number employed in different branches of the trade in 1870 and in 1900, the answer must be in part merely hypothetical. Judging by present tendencies in the trade the cause of change in the proportion of men and women would appear to be twofold. It has been pointed out that the share of women in hand binding is relatively small, that they do only the folding, gathering and sewing, and that the numerous processes of forwarding and finishing are usually in the hands of men. Hence in the early days of the trade, when hand binderies predominated, men were in the majority. In the development of the industry two important changes have taken place. With the introduction of machinery, many processes of forwarding and finishing were omitted, while others were combined in one simple operation. At the same time there was a great increase in the production of pamphlets, which need only to be folded, gathered, stitched and covered. The first decreased the relative number of men needed in edition binderies; the second increased the demand for the processes always performed by women. Thus it would appear that without any shifting of the line between men's work and women's work, the proportion of women steadily increased between 1870 and 1900.

If during the three decades between 1870 and 1900 there was a struggle between men and women and a transfer of processes to women, it seems to have left no trace on present trade conditions. The instances of this kind of transfer are so

scattered as to seem the exceptions that prove the rule. The possibility of carrying on more processes than their present share in the trade does not appear to be a burning question among the women. One employer, in charge of an edition bindery, said that the issue had never been raised. "The women would just say, 'It's men's work.'" One girl, who had fed a ruling machine, work requiring no skill, was asked if she had ever wished to learn to operate the machine. "Oh, no," she said; "ruling is gentlemen's work. There are no lady rulers. The gentlemen have their hands in the ink pots all day, and no lady wants to get her hands inked like that." "A woman can learn to feed the ruling machine in a day," said another; "she doesn't need to bother with managing it." "The smell of the glue is awful," said another, speaking of covering; "it's men's work." Another, describing a machine which could fold, gather and insert, said, "It's men's work," although each one of these processes formerly had belonged to women.

Nor do employers appear to have given much thought to the question. One, an "art binder," said that the work of women was restricted only by the trade union, and that they were capable of doing men's work. He added, however, that a woman would find it difficult to do the work fast enough to make it profitable. Another, the superintendent of an edition bindery, said that the work of women was restricted by capacity, not by the rule of any organization; they would not have strength to handle the machines which the men operate. Another, a "job binder," said that he employed women for temporary work only, because they were not strong enough to lift books and be "generally useful." "If you employ a woman, you can't give her anything but sewing," said another job binder; "while a man can turn his hand to other things."

But the superintendent of a magazine bindery said that there was no process in his workroom which could not be done by women. "I could put a girl to work operating the cutting machine," he said, "if I paid her eighteen dollars a week. I could have a woman tend the large folding machines if I paid the union scale. I don't know why I don't, except that I don't see any good reason why I should."

In the course of the inquiry, there have been more numerous instances of the transfer of women's work to men and boys. Men have been found operating folding machines and sewing machines, feeding the ruling machines and folding and sewing by hand. Boys have been found emptying boxes of the folding machine, sewing by hand, cleaning off the books after they have been stamped, and operating the wirestitching machine. The development of automatic feeding devices for the folding machine and the invention of gathering machines and covering machines have caused these processes to be transferred to men in many binderies. Indeed, the census of 1905 showed that in the five years since 1900 the number of bindery women had not increased so rapidly as the number of men, and that women no longer outnumbered men.

A woman who had fed a point folding machine and was displaced by the "automatic" tended by a man, remarked, "A man is paid according to what he knows, and not according to what he does." It is certainly true that the tender of a large complex machine, with all the devices for feeding itself, must be one who knows rather than one who does. Women, without mechanical training, have small chance of adjusting themselves to new occupations.

In view of these changes, the future of women's work in binderies is hard to predict. In art binding a few well-educated women have proved themselves capable of performing every process from the folding of the sheets to the tooling of the cover. There would seem to be an opportunity for growth in this branch of the trade, and it is the opinion of some binders that women could be trained to carry on this work in all its departments. In machine binderies it would seem to be largely the lack of mechanical skill, or of opportunity to acquire it, which prevents women's adjusting themselves to new inventions.

The bookbinding trade is not an example of extraordinary industrial evils. Its significance is to be found rather in its illustration of the common lot of women in many occupations. It is not alone in binderies that conditions of industry change rapidly; that machines cause a reorganization of work and then give place to new inventions and new conditions; that speed

seems to be the most essential requirement; that women work exhaustingly long hours in the busy season; that specialization appears inevitable, although the continual repetition of one process weakens the power of adjustment which is most needed in a changing environment; that irregularity of employment means loss of all or part of the wages in the dull season; and that the income at best is scarcely sufficient for self support. The experiences of bindery girls illustrate these conditions, yet they also point to several possible methods of improvement.

The encouraging facts in connection with women's work in binderies in New York are, first, that the state has already begun a policy of deliberate intervention. It has prohibited the employment of children under fourteen years of age. It has safeguarded them between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, limiting their working hours to eight in a day. It has made increasingly strict demands regarding the sanitary conditions of factories. It has recognized the principle of limiting the hours of labor of women, however faulty its provision may be for this purpose.

Second, there is a growing interest in industrial education in public schools.

Third, more than twelve hundred bindery women in New York are members of the women's local of the bookbinders' union, while a league of employers has been formed to deal collectively with the union and thus to "abolish in the bindery trade the system of making individual labor contracts, and to introduce the more equitable system of forming collective labor contracts."

The bindery girls' experiences indicate that in so far as adaptation to change is a matter of chance, women are not profiting by changes or gaining new opportunities. On the contrary their standard of living is menaced by uncertainty. The danger to be feared is the danger of neglect. The remedy would seem to be the substitution of forethought for chance, the safeguarding of minimum standards by education, organization and legislation.

## FOOTNOTES:

[30] This article is based on a chapter of a report not yet published on women's work in binderies in New York. It is the result of an investigation carried on for the Alliance Employment Bureau of New York from the autumn of 1907 until the spring of 1909. Every bindery in the borough of Manhattan was visited, and 205 women employed in the trade were interviewed at their homes or in the office of the bureau.

[31] *U. S. Census, 1900. Occupations*, pp. LII, CXXXVI.

# THE TRAINING OF MILLINERY WORKERS

ALICE P. BARROWS

Committee on Women's Work, New York City

“We have no time for learners.”—“Learning is nothing but running errands.”—“It's always experience, experience they want, and I didn't have it, so what was the use?”—“Trade schools are no good. It is altogether different outside.” These were some of the remarks heard at the beginning of an investigation of workers in the millinery trade<sup>[32]</sup> which led to an intensive study of the training of girls for that occupation. “Industrial education” is a large, general term. What it meant to the workers in one trade throws much light upon it, and suggests a method for dealing with a subject which is at present rather topheavy with theories.

Probably no trade in which girls are employed could illustrate better than millinery the present status of industrial education for girls in New York City. There are more women in this trade than in any other except the clothing trades. There are more classes in millinery than in any other women's trade except dress making. It is one of the first industrial subjects introduced into the school curriculum. Yet an investigation of workers in millinery showed that these classes were being formed when there was little information upon the most important factors in the problem of trade training—that is, the girls, the schools where they had received their previous instruction, and the trade in which they worked.

It is not easy to describe the millinery trade clearly because the essence of the description is to show that it cannot be made clear. If the next few paragraphs leave the reader with an impression of chaos then the description has been successful. “The millinery trade is about twenty-five different trades,” said one employer. This statement does not give a true impression because it does not show that each branch overlaps and

penetrates into every other in a most confusing manner. Millinery shops are of all types, in all parts of the city, with all kinds of work. Broadly speaking, the establishments can be divided into wholesale and retail, and in general it may be said that in wholesale shops "it's speed we want," and in retail, "careful, neat hand workers." Actually, such definitions of the trade are not true to fact. Every variety of hat is made in all kinds of ways whether manufactured at wholesale or retail. There are "trimmed hats" and "untrimmed hats," "ready-to-wear hats," "artistic millinery," "home-made hats," and "tailor hats." At first glance, it would seem that the trade is an excellent example of the subdivision of labor. The important point to the worker, however, is that sometimes it illustrates this subdivision of labor and sometimes it does not. Trimmed hats are found in the same establishments with untrimmed and ready-to-wear hats, or with only one or with neither. Artistic millinery is found in exclusive private shops and in sweatshops. Tailor hats are made in the same establishments with trimmed and untrimmed hats or in shops by themselves. Home-made hats are found to be contract work for great factories, or "neighborhood work for a few friends."

Naturally, this lack of system and standard is reflected in the demands made upon workers. In general, it may be said that there are four stages in making a hat,—designing it, making the frame, covering the frame, and trimming it. And in general it may be stated that there are seven kinds of positions open to a girl looking for work in millinery. She may be a learner, an improver, a preparer, a milliner, a copyist, a trimmer, or a designer. But when a girl starts to look for work as preparer, for example, she may turn toward a Fifth avenue shop where she must be a "neat worker" who can make frames accurately by hand, and "have an eye for color and form"; here she may advance from preparer to designer; or she may find her way into a shop a few doors away where she does not need to make frames because they have two girls who make all the frames; or she may apply at a department store where in one department she will have an opportunity to do all the kinds of work found in the Fifth avenue shop, "only not so particular"; or she may go into the ready-to-wear department where "you

never make a frame but cover with straw and stick on a rosette”; or she may join the throng of girls pouring into a Broadway wholesale house, and as she walks up the stairs she may stop at any one of the five floors and enter a “millinery establishment.” But in one she will be asked to do straw operating all day; in another to make dozens of wire frames a day; in another to trim hats by the dozen and never make frames; in another to work at nothing but millinery ornaments. In the autumn of 1908 she finds it difficult to get a position as preparer because “the machines are driving them out”; and in the spring of 1909 preparers are in great demand because “the styles have changed this season, and hand work has come back this month.” In any case, she thinks herself fortunate if she works more than six months a year at \$5 a week in not more than three or four positions. No prophecy can be made about the kind of skill which will be demanded in any shop.

But if no two establishments are alike in methods of work, they all have one characteristic in common. The slack season descends upon employers and workers alike. Taking the employers’ statements, the millinery year is at best only seven or eight months long, divided into fall and spring seasons. The fall season, starting on Division street and lower Broadway in July, gains headway in August, rushes up Fifth avenue in September, and then gradually spreads out north and south, east and west, lingering for the longest time where the current is least swift. Third avenue and Fifth avenue, Grand street and Harlem cannot buy early and all at once. In any case, the season disappears before Christmas. The spring season begins in January, and gains speed until the Easter rush, after which workers are laid off in great numbers.

“It is terrifically hard work while it lasts,” said one employer. If it is terrifically hard work for the employer with some capital, credit and business shrewdness, it is obvious that to the girl with no capital, no credit and no knowledge of trade conditions except as represented by her place, “laid off—slack” means an even more serious loss. According to census figures, 64% of the women employed in retail establishments are out of work in January. In August 65% are unemployed. In September, the busy wholesale month in the autumn, there is

no room for 11% of the number needed in the spring. In June 45% are out of work. Of 639 positions in millinery held by the group of workers investigated, 447, or more than two-thirds, lasted less than six months. Although they sometimes found work in other trades when laid off from millinery, 60% of those who could estimate the time lost were unemployed more than three months in the year. "Millinery gets on my nerves," said one girl, "because there is always the worry about the seasons."

The following is a calendar of a girl who had worked in millinery for a year. She was particularly fortunate in getting subsidiary work.

August—Worked 3 weeks at millinery on Third avenue. Worked 1 week on Broadway. Laid off—slack.

September—Looked for work.

October—Worked at millinery on Sixth avenue 4 weeks.

November—Worked at millinery on Sixth avenue 3 weeks. Laid off—slack. Sold candy one week. Left to return to millinery.

December—Worked 3 weeks at millinery on Sixth avenue until the day before Christmas. Laid off—slack. Sold candy one week.

January—Sold candy one month.

February—Returned to millinery.

March—Worked at millinery.

April—Worked at millinery.

May—Worked at millinery. Laid off—slack.

June—Looked for work.

July—Looked for work.

The season also has its effect upon workroom conditions. "It's rush, rush all the time and then nothing to do." In 62% of the shops investigated the girls worked nine to nine and a half hours daily. A large majority had a working week of fifty to

fifty-five hours. In only eight was the week less than fifty hours. In 86% of the shops the day's work lasted regularly until six o'clock or later—an important fact when the question of evening school work is to be considered. 71% of the girls worked overtime in the busy season. During the overtime season the total hours varied from less than ten up to fifteen a day.

The wages which workers in millinery receive are not such as to compensate them for short seasons and long hours. The average wage is between seven and eight dollars. Considered from the point of view of yearly income, the weekly average of seven or eight dollars is reduced 25 or even 50% by the slack season. A liberal estimate of the average wage, allowing for loss of time, would be five dollars. But the keynote of the wage question in millinery is lack of standard. The workers have no trade union large enough to sign contracts with employers. The only bargain is the individual bargain. If the method of payment is by the piece, "you never know what you are going to get." As one girl expressed it: "Piece work is bad because you are always fussing about the price. At that French place, they said they'd pay you seventeen cents a hat but at the end of the week you would find they had made it fourteen cents. It was awful. You had the same fight every season over the prices. Instead of giving you what you ought to get they'd say to themselves, 'We'll make it \$2.50 a dozen, and if they will work for that, all right; if not we can make it \$3.'"

A tabulation of wages received in 738 positions held by 201 workers shows what a variation in wages there is in positions called by the same name. The variations are as follows:

- Learners: 0 to \$5.
- Improvers: less than \$2 to \$8.
- Preparers: \$2 to \$15.
- Milliners: \$4 to \$12 or \$15.
- Makers: \$4 to \$9.
- Copyists: \$4 to \$15 or more.
- Trimmers: \$6 to \$25 or more.

Facts such as these have been used in other countries as an argument for the establishment of minimum wage boards in

millinery. Public opinion in this country does not yet demand such action.

If these facts about conditions in the millinery trade prove anything they prove that “learning to make hats” is a very different thing from “learning the millinery trade.” The experiences of millinery workers would seem to suggest that in modern times, perhaps even more than in the days when industrial conditions were less complex, apprenticeship must include learning the trade as well as one process in it, if the workers are to be efficient. A milliner who does not know that millinery means machine work and hand work, speed work and careful work, that the seasons are irregular, that the wages are unstandardized, and that conditions are constantly changing, is in no position to become efficient. Such knowledge is part of her job, and it is as necessary that she should understand her various relations to the trade in which she is working as that she should master the technique of the machine that she is operating. Power to adapt to different types of establishments, to varied kinds of work, and to fluctuating seasons, rather than specialization in a particular process, is a practical necessity for the girl who would earn her own living. According to the testimony of both workers and employers she does not get this power in the trade itself; employers have no time for learners, and the girl finds that “learning is nothing but running errands.” According to the same testimony, the schools do not know the trade and do not prepare their pupils to do any one thing well. In order to test the truth of these criticisms, millinery classes were investigated in the course of this study, and their graduates were interviewed.

The visits to these classes were profitable in three ways. They brought out the prevalent ideals in regard to women’s work, the tendencies in the past with respect to methods of teaching trade courses, and the possible questions which need to be considered in plans for the industrial education of girls. Half the group of workers investigated had attended classes where millinery was taught. There were sixty-two of these classes in the city, of which only three aimed specifically to prepare girls for trade. The others gave courses “for home and trade use”; that is, they aimed primarily to teach women to

make their own hats, but girls could also enter the class if they wished to prepare for trade.

The three schools which aimed at trade preparation dealt with three different types of girls. One was founded in order to prepare the fourteen-year-old girl who is forced to leave school at the earliest time allowed by law; one would take no girls under sixteen years of age; the third gave training to immigrant girls of any age. They were all alike in that they knew little about their pupils' previous schooling or their experiences after they went to work. Only one attempted to make any investigation of trade conditions. In regard to methods of instruction, only one sifted its applicants by requiring them to state whether they intended to work at the trade. Only one tried to eliminate the unfit by taking girls on trial. Only one attempted any instruction in trade conditions, and that one found it difficult to give such instruction to the type of girls with whom it was dealing. The aim of this "academic" work was to supply the lack in the general education of the fourteen-year-old girl. To do this, courses in English, arithmetic and civics were given. Civics included "industrial history, cultivation, manufacture, and transportation of materials, citizenship, commerce, philanthropics, history of Manhattan and social ethics." The time allotted to English, arithmetic and civics was one hour a week for each. The course was six months long. All preparation on these subjects had to be done by the pupils during this one hour in the classroom. The graduates from only one of these schools had anything favorable to say about the work. After visiting the schools and following up the experience of the pupils who had taken courses there, it was easy to understand why the girls thought that it was "altogether different outside." On the other hand, daily indications of the complexities of the conditions "outside" gave us a sympathetic realization of the size of the task which the schools had undertaken.

As classes in industrial training will ultimately find their way into the public school system, not only is it important to understand the aims and methods of the trade schools, but it is also desirable to know what has already been done in the way of industrial training in the public schools. At the time of this

investigation millinery was taught in forty-five evening schools in New York City. Thirty-nine of these were elementary schools. The investigation of these schools was profitable because it threw light upon the function of evening schools, their connection with day schools, their conception of the aim of industrial courses for girls, and finally the effect of these ideals upon the actual formation of a trade class in one evening school.

The school buildings are very imposing. One finds no difficulty in locating them at night even at a distance of two or three blocks. A great dark building occupying about one-third of the noisy, crowded block, gives notice to the visitor that she is headed in the right direction. The school always looks impressively quiet and remote. Few windows are lighted and only one door is open. After picking her way through crowded streets, stepping around small children, narrowly avoiding collisions with innumerable boys and girls darting in and out among the crowds, the visitor finds the inside of the building quite deserted, and her footsteps echo in the great, gray, empty basement. She can find no one to direct her to the principal, but presently seeing a few girls straggling up the fireproof stairs she follows them to the assembly room, a waste of empty desks. At one end is a long desk where the principal is seated. Often she has been teaching all day in a day school. Soon a girl enters slowly and hesitatingly, and slips into a chair near the door, where she stays until the principal turns to her with, "What can I do for you?" Bashfully the girl comes up to the desk and whispers down into it that she wants "to take up millinery."—"Your name?"—"Sadie Schwartz."—"Address?"—"— East —."—"Age?"—"Fourteen."—"Have you left school?"—"Yes." Sometimes the question is asked, "Are you working? At what occupation?" Sometimes it is omitted. Then the principal concludes, "Here are two cards. Keep one and give one to the teacher. The millinery class is down the hall on the right-hand side." This is the extent of the consultation before entering a class.

After the girl has been in the class a short time, she learns that most of the girls are taking the course so that they can

learn to make their own hats. More and more girls come as Easter approaches. They can stay as long as they like, and go when they like. They can even keep on making their own hats for two years or more.

“It is rather unfortunate that the board of education supplies the materials,” said one teacher; “because I have known of cases where the girls come simply to get a hat and then leave. For example, I know of one case where a girl at the end of a few weeks asked to be transferred from the millinery class and when asked her reason, said that she wanted to go into dressmaking because ‘I’ve got a hat and now I would like a dress to match.’”

“You don’t learn anything in evening school,” said a girl who was in trade; “every night it is a little on a hat, and one hat a year.”

During the year 1908-9, a well-known educator asked the following question in a course upon social life and the school curriculum: “Upon what questions in the community would you desire to be informed so as to adapt a course of study to the social conditions in that community?” That question sums up the problem of industrial education. The schools which have just been described exemplify some of the chief methods advocated at present for making this adaptation. A study of them also shows what happens when there is little or no information, or desire for information, about the social conditions of the community in which such courses are being given. One of the best known city superintendents of schools writes in a recent report:<sup>[33]</sup>

“The establishment of trade schools by the public school authorities is now a matter of discussion in every manufacturing city in the land. Manufacturers and philanthropists alike are clamoring for the introduction of industrial training into the public schools.... The true reason for industrial education lies ... in the fundamental conception of modern education—to fit the child for his life environment.... In the public discussion of this subject there has been much exhortation, much denunciation, much eloquence, but little practical wisdom or suggestion.”

Such a quotation is itself full of practical wisdom, for it goes to the root of the difficulty in stating that the object of education is to fit the child for his environment. Yet if this is the purpose of schools, it is obvious that accurate knowledge of the environment is a first essential in educational plans. This raises a fundamental question in regard to trade-school training. Should we not start a department of investigation even before we form the trade school, and should we not continue such a department as long as the school continues? If the trade schools which everyone is advocating are not based upon accurate knowledge of the conditions they have to meet, it seems safe to say that they will result only in the disappointment of the girls, the increased exasperation of the employers, and the humiliation of the schools. Familiarity with some establishments, and "being in touch" with trade is not knowledge of trade conditions. Trade is complex. Preparing for trade is like preparing for the weather. You never can tell what is going to happen next. Weather prophets are not infallible, yet experience has proved that it is desirable at least to attempt to work out a scientific method of studying weather conditions. There seems to be no good reason why we should not apply scientific methods to the study of social as well as physical conditions.

For instance, investigation of the millinery trade proved it to be an industry in process of transition from home to factory, with all the confusion in processes that is involved in such transition. Yet only one of all the schools studied made any attempt to discover the demands of this trade. Investigation showed that an understanding of industrial conditions is as necessary for efficiency as ability to make a hat. Yet only one school tried to give an understanding of those conditions, and the time given to such study was totally inadequate. Investigation proved that one cause contributing to short seasons and low wages was the oversupply of workers. Yet there were more classes in millinery than in any other trade in the city, except one. Investigation revealed the fact that instead of specialization, the ability to adapt is of primary importance to the worker. Yet psychology and practical experience alike

make it clear that such ability cannot be given in a six months' course.

This brings us to the second factor in the problem about which there is little information—the workers themselves. When the whole subject of industrial training is in such an experimental stage it is unfortunate that only one school has attempted to keep systematic records of pupils. To fail to keep such records is like trying to erect a building with no knowledge of the materials. If such records had been kept it is probable that the attempt to train immature fourteen-year-old girls in six months for a trade like millinery would have been abandoned long ago. It is even possible that the advocates of trade education would have been driven to realize that efficiency in industry, as in everything else, depends not upon a desk knowledge of the three R's, but upon a sound, vital, general education which gives power of adaptation. Even a slight acquaintance with women workers in industry brings out the fact that they lack this power, which comes from training of the mind. Why have girls been permitted to leave school without receiving this training? If the first essential for fitness to survive in modern life is the adaptability which comes from a well-trained mind, and if the function of the schools is to develop such fitness, are they giving the required training? If not, can the curriculum be changed so that the general schooling shall be more real, more connected with life? It is a matter of concern to school authorities that so many children leave the grammar school before graduation. Out of 201 millinery workers, 104 began work when they were between fourteen and sixteen years of age; eight started before they were fourteen; twenty left school before they were fourteen. Of these 201 girls, 152 attended school in New York City. Of these 152, eight attended parochial schools, 144 public schools. Of the 144 who attended public schools, only thirty-three were graduated. Such facts are used as arguments for starting trade schools which shall prepare girls and boys for their life work. To some of us they seem to be cogent reasons for trying to discover how these grammar schools can be revitalized so that the graduates will be prepared for life. It is said that the pupils leave because they do not see that school is

preparing them to earn their own living. The one hundred millinery workers who had studied in trade classes said that the instruction there did not help them to earn their living.

Where does the fault lie? A study of one trade in which girls are working suggests that reorganization of general education is the most vital factor in industrial training. This suggestion may be mistaken; for it is based upon knowledge of conditions in only three trades for women—millinery, and two others investigated at the same time. It is evident that the question can be conclusively answered only after exhaustive study of girls, of schools and of trades. From the point of view of manufacturers, workers and educators, such investigation is of primary importance. To those who are eager for plans by which individual girls may get training immediately, the comparatively slow gathering of information does not appeal. Nevertheless, such information will have to be obtained sometime. Such investigation should be systematically made. It is not easy, but it is practicable, if we reduce the problem to its simplest terms. We should divide up each city into comparatively small units for investigation, the village communities, as it were, that make up the city. By taking the schools as the center of these communities and by studying the pupils—their personal and family history, their education, and their experiences in trade,—it would be possible to collect information which would give a sound basis either for reconstruction of the general school education or for the formation of a system of trade schools.

### FOOTNOTES:

[32] This article is based upon a report not yet published on *women at work in millinery shops in New York City*. It is the result of an investigation carried on for the Alliance Employment Bureau of New York from the autumn of 1907 until the spring of 1909. Two hundred millinery girls were interviewed at home or in the office of the bureau and questioned about their wages, hours, trade history, regularity of employment and training for work. Their names were secured from girls' clubs, trade classes, employment bureaus, and fellow-workers. More than two hundred shops, including all in which the two hundred workers had been employed since July, 1907, were visited and questions asked about training of learners, wages, hours, seasons, demand and

opportunities for experts, and the employer's opinion of trade-school training.

[\[33\]](#) *Tenth Annual Report of the City Superintendent of Schools*, New York City, July, 1908.

# TRAINING FOR SALESMANSHIP

ELIZABETH B. BUTLER

Bureau of Social Research, New York City

Since women began to be employed in mercantile houses, the public has gradually become accustomed to inefficient service. Since their employment has been extended from a few departments to most of the departments, and since public school children and ambitious factory girls alike have competed by thousands for department-store positions, the public has gradually accepted this kind of inefficiency as characteristic of retail employes. Yet at times customers grow restive. At times the marginal increase in buying which can be stimulated by intelligent service is abruptly checked by the absence of intelligence. This is a serious matter to competing concerns. The volume of sales is influenced not only by the quality of goods and the appearance of the store, but by fractional differences in courtesy and understanding. How to acquire employes with such qualities, or how to develop such qualities in employes, has become a managerial issue.

The acuteness of this issue is illustrated in the everyday experience of the department-store customer. You go into a store with the intent, we will say, of buying a linen collar. Having discovered the counter where such articles are for sale, you make toward it and glance with an unkindly eye over the stock displayed. Such collars as hang suspended from the steel display form have eyelet decorations too obviously machine made, whereas your desire is for something less pretentious and more genuine. You attract the eye of a young person and make known your wants. "I don't wait on collars," she replies; "the saleslady at the end of the counter will attend to you." Thereupon you pursue "the saleslady at the end of the counter," who has been conversing with her friend who "waits on neckwear." You ask her if she can wait on you, and somewhat reluctantly she returns. Signifying your taste as to collars, you casually observe the expression of disapproval with which she pulls out a box and sets it before you. She waits in silence while you look over the contents of the box. If you ask her the price, she tells you but vouchsafes no further information. Then with a desire to solve the situation rapidly, you seize the first collar that appears to you at all suitable, order half a dozen like it, look at your watch and discover that over twenty minutes have passed since you entered the store, receive your change and depart.

You have your collars, and your unreasoned feeling is that you have secured them as against the enemy. You have a sense of having been actively combating a negative opposition to something, an indifference not fundamentally hostile perhaps, but translated into hostility because of your

too definite intention to purchase a specific article. You reflect that had you removed two of the much-eyelleted collars from the steel display form and handed them to the lady with the remark that you would take them, she might have viewed your interruption of her conversation with more complacency. But you required her to lift down a box. Your choice was not to her taste. Your order might perhaps have been called conservative. The result was a perceptible variation in the density of the atmospheric waves between the saleslady and yourself.

Yet on further reflection you realize that after all your saleslady cannot be held accountable for duties which she does not understand. You have wanted attention, advice, understanding service. After some difficulty you have secured a collar. The saleslady thought that you were quite capable of knowing what you wanted and choosing it for yourself. In the concrete both the saleslady and yourself have meant the same thing. Where you have differed was in your interpretation of ways of reaching the concrete. You have wanted an expert; you have met a “counterserver.”

And what but “counterservice” can we expect of the thousands of young girls drafted yearly into this occupation? Neither training nor experience is required of them. They may be and are both casual and unskilled. Saleswomen longer with the house show the newcomer where stock is kept, and if kindly disposed, give her suggestions as to the personal peculiarities of the buyer. Some one tells her the custom of the house as regards saleschecks and other records, and with this preliminary information she sallies forth to represent her employer to his clientele. Her time is occupied by her duties so far as she understands them. She stays in the department to which she is assigned, keeps her stock dusted and in order, tries to remember what new stock comes in, and when customers are around does not converse more than necessary with her co-workers; if a customer asks for something that is in stock, she produces it and awaits decision; if a customer asks for something that is not in stock, she states the fact.

She may not be notably careless and inattentive. Floor-walkers and department managers seek constantly to eradicate careless employes, to arouse in their force a feeling of loyalty, a desire to give conscientious service. It is more difficult to set forth a notion of adequate service. When a girl is doing her best, it is not always clear how to suggest to her that her “best” might be higher in standard, that instead of merely producing an article asked for, she might be of real service to the customer in suggestions and in information about the stock, that in other words she might be an expert instead of a mere counter attendant. To quote from a recent book:<sup>[34]</sup> “For a salesperson to know what gives the article its price value, whether it is style, novelty, utility, bulk, rarity of material, to know under what circumstances it can best be used as a staple, for beauty, for use, for occasional service, for steady wear—and many points other than these—and to adapt this knowledge to each customer—is to become a

specialist and to be sought after for advice as the man or woman in the private office is, not to be approached as a mere lackey to pass goods back and forth over the counter.”

But how is this expert knowledge to be obtained? How is the salesperson to learn to recognize types of personality, to grasp what selling points make the strongest appeal to each type—to whom she should emphasize utility, to whom beauty, to whom durability—and by what personal qualities she may gain the attention of each type, focus attention till it becomes interest and finally clinch the decision to buy? How is she to be taught the use of her own personality as a business asset?

Nothing in the past experience of most saleswomen can give them a clue as to the “how.” Few have bought extensively, and few have an environment which would make them judges of quality. Even inborn taste must suffer through inexperience. The saleswoman cannot rely on her own judgment for the ability to give expert advice, and who is there to teach her? Her co-workers are not competent, the floor managers are not competent, the department buyers are too busy. As to understanding her customers, she is still more hopelessly without a source of instruction. She continues to do her best, and her best is ineffective.

Her work is routine, monotonous. She regards it and herself mechanically. As an unskilled laborer, she can command no more than the wages of unskilled labor. She finds herself confronted with the need of dressing and appearing “like a lady,” when her pay, which represents the worth of her service to her employer, cannot be regarded as more than a supplementary wage. Advancement is slow, and the limit to advancement appears to the majority inexorable. Low wages in themselves tend to chill and depress ambition. The girl’s mechanical attitude toward her work is intensified. Lack of training, low wages, lack of opportunity for training: these characteristics of the situation form a circle within which the saleswoman stands bound.

And not only saleswomen, but customers and merchants suffer from this state of things. Constantly annoyed by the inadequacy of their force, some merchants have already made a beginning toward stemming the tide of unsatisfactory service. Many a store now has classes to instruct newcomers for an hour or so each morning in making out saleschecks, and to inform them as to the policy of the store. In some cases regular morning talks for a half hour every day must be attended by new and old hands as well, with the idea that matters of common interest may be freely discussed and that ideas of loyalty may thereby be instilled. Yet while these classes tend to produce right feeling toward the work and hence are fundamentally useful, they represent only the germ of vocational training.

For that is what saleswomen need—training for their particular occupation, instruction in the definite principles of applied psychology upon which their day’s work is based. What form such instruction will

ultimately take is still matter for conjecture. No one will assert that experiments now in the making are final, but simply that by their initial success they point the way to more conclusive organization. It may be of interest if a statement is made here about the training for saleswomen now offered in Boston and New York.

The Boston experiment was begun in 1905 under the auspices of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. A class was started with eight young girls who were given lectures and some practise selling in the food salesroom and handwork shop of the Union, but after their three months' course those who found store positions had to go in as stock or cash girls. In January, 1906, when the second class was started, the coöperation of one store was secured. The Union class was allowed to sell in the store on Mondays for the experience and a small compensation, and the firm expressed a willingness to consider promising candidates for positions in their store. Yet as the school had nothing definite to offer its pupils, it failed to attract the type of girl most wanted by the stores.

It was felt that more coöperation with the stores was necessary. The plans of the course were explained to several of the merchants and the coöperation of six leading stores was obtained to the extent that the superintendents formed an advisory committee, meeting once a month with the president of the Union and the director of the class for conference. The policy, as planned with the advisory committee, was that candidates should be sent to the Union class from the stores, and admitted to the school if approved by the director. After one month in the class, candidates were promised store experience in the store which had accepted them, on Mondays, and the stores paid for this service \$1 per day. They were also guaranteed permanent positions in these stores at the close of the course, if their work was satisfactory after one month's probation.<sup>[35]</sup> On this basis, a class with sixteen pupils opened in October, 1906. It was found, however, that more store experience was necessary for the best results, and the time schedule was accordingly changed so that every day from 8.30 to 11. and from 4.30 to 5.30 the pupils were in school and the rest of the day in the stores. This half-time work was paid for by the stores at the rate of three dollars a week.

When the next class opened in February, there were nearly one hundred applicants, from which the school selected twenty-one, the limit of the class room. Many applicants gave up positions which they had already secured, for the sake of the training, and others for whom there was then no room, filled a waiting list. Since then, the school has been busy making history. The following statements by Mrs. Prince, director of the school, explain the most recent changes: "At first, the stores paid the girls \$3 a week for half time, but since last September (1908), the girls have been given full-time wages and allowed the three hours each morning for three months of training. The stores found the graduates so efficient that they cordially made this concession, and at the same time asked if I would

choose candidates from the stores. This I do now, going to the superintendents' offices and interviewing the girls there.

“The girls chosen are usually from the bargain counter, or those who are to be promoted from cash and bundle work or those who have shown good spirit, but who have gone to work at fourteen years and lack training and right standards. Sometimes girls who have just entered the store are chosen. Wages of candidates range from \$5 to \$8, but at the end of the course a graduate is guaranteed \$6 as a minimum wage, and her advance depends upon her own ability.

“The girls are in the school every day from 8.30 to 11.30; then after an hour for luncheon, they go to the stores for the rest of the day, that is, from 12.30 to 5.30. My plan with the class is to take one big subject every day: all lectures are reviewed orally and the girls write all significant points in note books.”

The subject matter of the class, planned with the view of making efficient, successful saleswomen, has emphasized five main lines of study: 1. The development of a wholesome, attractive personality. Hygiene, especially personal hygiene. This includes study of daily menus for saleswomen, ventilation, bathing, sleep, exercise, recreation. 2. The general system of stores: sales-slip practice, store directory, business arithmetic, business forms and cash accounts, lectures. 3. Qualities of stock: color, design, textiles. 4. Selling as a science: discussion of store experiences, talks on salesmanship, such as attitude to firm, customer, and fellow-employee, demonstration of selling in class, salesmanship lectures. 5. The right attitude toward the work.

The following schedule gives the present arrangement of lectures and talks in the Boston school:

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
8:30	Store discussion	Hygiene	Sales slip	Arithmetic	Sales slip	Business forms & cash acct.
9:15	Salesmanship talk	Outline in note-book	Demonstration of salesmanship by selling in class	Color	Outlines and notes	Textiles
10:00	Notes	Lecture		Color	Lecture	Textiles
11:00	Spelling English	Notes	Notes on sales observed	Spelling English	Review of Lectures	Notes

The New York experiment is of more recent date, and has shaped itself differently. Its beginnings in the fall of 1908 are due chiefly to the efforts of Mrs. Anna Garlin Spencer, who persuaded the officers of the board of

education to introduce a class in salesmanship in the public night schools, and to Miss Diana Hirschler, formerly welfare secretary in Wm. Filene's Sons Co. of Boston, who conducted the class. The class was intended primarily for saleswomen already at work who wished to equip themselves more thoroughly. The first night there was not a single enrolment, but as news of the course spread, the attendance reached an average of twenty-five. This in itself—this attendance night after night of girls already tired by their work during the day—is evidence of the strong appeal made by the class.

Unlike most other kinds of industrial training, salesmanship classes require neither tools nor special equipment. They do require teachers and a text book. While Miss Hirschler was teaching her classes, she began writing a text book and making plans for training other teachers so that the value of the class might be extended to more than could be enrolled for her instruction. The newly-established New York Institute of Mercantile Training engaged Miss Hirschler and adopted her plans. Classes for window trimmers and sign writers were already under way. To them were added offices and staff for a school of salesmanship. It was a moot point for a while whether classes for salespersons should actually be held in these offices, or whether the scope of the work should be extended to reach the present directors of salespersons,—the store superintendents who now in so many cases hold morning classes for sections of their force. This latter course, Miss Hirschler decided, would be the best one to follow. Whereas by the former plan she might make more efficient a handful out of the thousands of salespeople in this one city, by the latter plan she would indirectly be reaching thousands not only in New York, but in as many other American cities as had stores to coöperate with her. The essential thing, she felt, was to train teachers. At present there were few even would-be teachers. While we were waiting for them, we might use the present situation by helping to make more efficient the involuntary teachers, the men at the head of stores who now ineffectually seek to grapple with the difficulties of their selling force.

Accordingly a correspondence school was started for store superintendents. While the general outline of the text book is followed, this course is adapted individually to each student. In a number of cases Miss Hirschler has visited the stores, personally looked over the situation, and made suggestions as to the organization of salesmanship classes, the selection of applicants, and the best methods of securing the coöperation of the salespeople. Enrolled in her course are store superintendents from New England, the South and the far West. Each one of these men is in turn reaching hundreds, sometimes thousands of salespeople.

The next step neither Miss Hirschler nor we who are the consumers can prophesy with certainty. Yet it seems reasonable to expect that in time store officials, who at best can give only a small part of their time to teaching their employes, will wish to be relieved of this task by

professional teachers of salesmanship who, like other vocational teachers, give all their time to their work. By that time we shall have passed out of the period of experimentation. We shall have reached a point where we can say with definiteness what part of the student's time should be spent in the study of textiles, what part in the study of color and design, what part in the study of applied psychology. We shall have reached a conclusion as to the relative value of lecture work and practise selling.

Selling goods may thus have become as definite and recognized a vocation as plumbing or dressmaking. Thus defined and established, this vocation which could have been taught in the beginning only by the faith and courage of private interests, may come to its own by recognition among the vocational day courses now being started in our system of public instruction.

#### **FOOTNOTES:**

[34] *The Art of Retail Selling*, by Diana Hirschler. New York Institute of Mercantile Training, 1909.

[35] *Training for Saleswomen*, by Lucinda W. Prince. *Federation Bulletin*, February, 1908.

# THE EDUCATION AND EFFICIENCY OF WOMEN<sup>[36]</sup>

EMILY GREENE BALCH

Wellesley College

Women in modern production are a misfit. They are like the dog that puzzled the expressman in the classic story. “*He* don’t know where he wants to go, and *we* don’t know where he wants to go; he’s eat his tag.”

Is not this sense of misadjustment, of being astray, due to the fact that, industry being arranged to meet its end of private profits, human nature has to adjust itself as best it can to industrial conditions, instead of industrial conditions adjusting themselves to human nature? The troubles that result from this system make themselves felt everywhere, among men as well as women, but most seriously among the weakest competitors, and especially among wage-earning children and women.

My subject is education and efficiency, but I do not propose to go over the well-worn arguments to show that we ought at once to establish schools for trade training. It is now pretty generally understood that this is true. I want to raise a more far-reaching question—can women be economically efficient in production, production being organized as it now is?

The lives of both men and women have certain permanent aspects; whether in the stone age or in the twentieth century they must rear their descendants, they must between them produce material support for themselves and for the growing generation, they must lead their own personal lives and feed and discipline and “invite” their own souls and minds. There is always this trinity of their racial, their economic, and their inner life.

But while both men and women have this three-fold function, the differences in their racial life involve far-reaching economic consequences. Motherhood is an occupation as

fatherhood is not, and this deeply affects woman's industry. Even in the primitive world, where industry is largely a household matter for all, woman's activity is bound to the hearthstone more closely than man's, for the bearing and rearing of children is intertwined with all her other business, and conditions it. This makes housework with all its ramifications and outlying branches the great feminine profession throughout the ages.

Consequently when industry, passing from the control of the worker to that of the owner of the business, assumed its modern specialized form and took work and workers out of the home into the factory and workshop, this change, carried out with no regard for the results on the workers themselves, affected the lives of women in ways which are not paralleled in those of men. Besides other consequences, it greatly lessened woman's efficiency both as mother and as worker.

Under the old régime there was an effective unity in women's lives, an organic harmony of function with function. The claims of motherhood and of work upon woman harmonized, because she herself was in control and arranged the conditions of her industry to fit her duties and disabilities as wife and mother. For herself and for her household she planned the various tasks with a view to strength, convenience and training for development. Besides the unity of motherhood and industry, there was unity of education and industry, of preparation and practise. The girl was essentially an apprentice of the housekeeper, whether mother or mistress. Her lessons were indistinguishable from her labor. From a little child she was working as well as learning, and also till she was at the head of her own home she was learning as well as working. Read Solomon's description, or even better, Xenophon's charming sketch in his *Economicus*, for a picture of feminine household industry on a rather large scale. We need not conceive this stage as ideal. The point is that there was a natural adjustment of work to worker which modern industry undermines in three ways—in separating work from the home, in separating work from education, and in shaping the conditions and concomitants of work without regard to the powers, tastes, or needs of the workers.

Before endeavoring to analyze these effects let us consider various types of modern women in whose lives all the different difficulties interact, shaping their fate, too often, in most strange and inharmonious fashion.

First let us take the professional woman. If she leads a single life she cuts the Gordian knot of the incompatibility of work and marriage. This is simple, certainly, but quite abnormal. While it is doubtless a happy solution in many cases, it is certainly undesirable that large numbers of women should adopt it, especially if we may suppose that a class of celibate professional women withdraw from the race the inheritance of some degree of picked intellectual ability. It has been argued, by Sidney Webb if I remember rightly, that the rule disqualifying married women for public-school teaching tends to keep a selected group of women out of marriage; a practical exclusion from marriage of women who succeed in medicine, law, architecture, art and business would be, from this point of view, at least an equally serious loss as regards quality if not quantity.

If a woman is able to combine professional activity with marriage and motherhood, as some have been so brilliantly successful in doing, this is because professional work is often more like the old housework than is factory work as regards elasticity and the possible adjustment of time and amount of work to personal convenience.

As our second group let us take well-to-do married women who command domestic service and nursery assistance. Such a woman has the maximum of freedom in ordering her own life, yet, even so, under the mould of the general situation, how chaotic her life history is likely to be. Suppose that she is at a finishing school till she “comes out” in society, or that she goes to college and at twenty-two comes home again to live, not choosing a professional career. Although she is only half conscious of the situation she practically waits for a few years to see whether or not marriage is to be her lot. Probably her natural mates are not yet financially able to offer marriage, and, again, more or less conscious of her rather humiliating situation, she becomes seriously and definitely interested in some specialized activity. By distinct preparation or simply by

practise she fits herself for the work that she has found to do; then, just as she is well engaged in this work, the critical moment arrives and she marries. For some years her profession is motherhood, though this is the last thing for which she has thought of fitting herself; and then again her life takes a new turn. Her children are no longer children; they are at college or at work or married; or her daughter at home, perhaps without liking to say so, yearns to be intrusted with the home administration, for a while at least. Whether or not the mother resigns any of her housekeeping duties, motherhood is no longer a business that fills her days and gives adequate employment to her powers; again she seeks for occupation.

Such women, with the unmarried women of leisure, make the most disposable force in our society, but one very variously disposed. Some of them, the spenders, live purely parasitic lives, absorbing the services of others and consuming social wealth without rendering any return. Others, at the opposite extreme, perform work that is unpaid and that could not be paid for, work that demands experimentation, initiative and devotion. The work of a man or woman who combines with the chance gift of economic freedom the chance gift of genius consecrated to service—the work of a Charles Darwin, a William Morris, a Josephine Shaw Lowell, or a Jane Addams—is a pearl beyond price, but probably common people (that is, most of us) work better under a reasonable degree of pressure.

Our next social class is the married women who do their own work, as we say. For them life retains in the main its primitive harmony, except that they are less likely than women of old to come to their life work adequately prepared to carry on a household on the highest plane practicable with the resources available under contemporary conditions.

Our last class is the working women. The woman who does her own work is not, in the curious development of our phraseology, a working woman, though we may believe that the mother of a brood of children for whom she cleans, cooks, sews, washes and nurses does some work. On the other hand, the working woman is not, in our common phrase, occupied in

“doing her own work,” and truly, the work at which she is set might appear to be almost anybody’s rather than hers, if its unsuitability to her needs and powers is any criterion. While her school, however imperfect it may have been, was designed to meet her needs, was administered with the object of advancing her interests, her workshop, on the contrary, seeks quite a different end—the owner’s profits. If she prospers or suffers through its conditions, that is a wholly alien consideration. The work is not her own, both because the product is not hers and because the conditions under which the work is carried on have no relation to her needs.

The education of the girl who is to enter industry generally fails as yet, however well intended, to fit her effectively for her working career. Most working girls, indeed, leave school at fourteen, when they are in any case too young to be efficient. Then come the proverbial wasted years of casual and demoralizing employment, till at eighteen or so the young workers find their footing and for five years, it may be, rank as working women. Then to most of them comes marriage. They entered industry untrained, now they enter married life untrained, if not unfitted, for such life, and at a less adaptable age than earlier. To a considerable extent the economic virtues of the factory are virtues that the girl cannot carry over into her housework, and its weaknesses are weaknesses that lessen her success as wife and mother. Industry tends to unfit her for home making if it tends to make her a creature of mechanical routine, unused to self-direction, unplastic, bored by privacy and not bored by machine monotony; if it accustoms her to an inapplicable scale and range of expenditure which assigns too much money to clothes (which are necessary to the status and earning power of the worker as they are not to mothers and children) and too little to adequate nourishment which, important to the adult, is fundamental to the health of children. Worst of all, the employments of working women tend, as has now been shown, more commonly and more seriously than has been at all generally understood, to unfit women, nervously and physically, for bearing children.

When we try to disentangle the confusions illustrated in these varying types of lives we see that one of the main causes

of trouble is the fact that modern industry is largely incompatible, while work lasts, with the functions of wife and mother or that at least it militates against them. We have seen some of the ways in which this simple fact of the incompatibility of two fundamental functions distracts and deforms women's lives.

A result of this divorce of industrial and married life is the fact that it is impossible to predict whether a given girl will spend her life in the home or in the working world, commercial, industrial or professional, and that consequently she commonly fails to prepare for either. We have indeed some professional training, some business training, and are just beginning to have some trade training; training for the home vocations has hardly got commonly beyond some cooking and sewing in the grades—most desirable as far as it goes. In Utopia, I dare say that every girl when she becomes engaged to be married, receives, besides her general education and her trade training, six months of gratuitous and compulsory vocational preparation for homemaking, and that this training for the bride, and a course in the ethics and hygiene of marriage for both bride and groom, is there required before a marriage license can be issued; moreover, I imagine that there every woman expecting her first child is given a scholarship providing instruction and medical advice for some months before and after the child is born, the conditions depending upon individual circumstances. In the real world some of our grossest evils are related to the lack of preparation for the most vital relations of life. Uncertainty as to her vocation not only prevents a girl's being trained for either household or industrial life, but it makes her a most destructive element in competitive wage earning. She does not care to make herself efficient in industry, for she hopes soon to marry, and meanwhile the semi-self-supporting woman drags down the pay of women wholly dependent on their own earnings and also that of men, perhaps including that of the man who might marry her but cannot afford it, thus increasing the chances against her in the lottery of marriage.

While this conflict between the call to industry and the call to marriage confuses women's lives but not men's, the divorce

of education from practise is much the same for men and for women both in its grounds and in its results. And first as to the causes.

Industry being organized by the employer for his own purposes, the worker is regarded simply as a means to the commercial end of maximum cheapness of production. This cheapness is attained, or at any rate has been commonly supposed to be attained, by the maximum of specialization and the maximum of routine and uniformity. The specialization of functions has appeared to the employer to make any education of the worker unnecessary and to make it possible to eliminate from the workshop the costly and troublesome business of teaching the trade, a policy that has had consequences to industry and citizenship that we are just beginning to realize. Up to this time the school has not averted these consequences by creating an effective substitute for apprenticeship. In the old days it could properly devote itself to academic branches, and even today, largely as a matter of habit inherited from those days, schooling continues as a general thing to have no bearing on the productive labor that the pupils engage in later, but is wholly general, with the marked defects as well as the merits of education of this type.

Not only has industrial training thus fallen between two stools, having been dropped from the workroom and not undertaken by the school, but the whole program of general education is controlled by the industrial situation. The routine and uniformity of modern production mean that the worker must work at the standard pace for the standard number of hours or drop out. This is less true of piece work, at least in theory; in practise the worker's need of money is likely to force the pace and stretch the hours to the limit of possibility. As regards occupation it is all or nothing; the employer will not accept workers who cannot give themselves entire. This is, I think, the element of truth in the emphasis of socialists on their thesis that the worker sells not his labor, but his labor power. So children once surrendered to competitive industry are surrendered altogether and for good—they are absorbed and exhausted.

Because work is so organized that it is not fit for young people immature in body and mind and that they are not fit for it, we keep them out of all real work until we are ready to have them do nothing but work. And conversely, until they go to work once for all they are occupied with schooling and schooling only. Consequently life is broken into great indigestible lumps—first all study, then all work,—into unrelated phases which fail mutually to strengthen each other. Work and study ought to go on together, work beginning in the kindergarten years and education continuing to the end of life or at least so long as the mind remains receptive.

When boys and girls are needed to help at home while they are getting their schooling the situation is more natural, and if the child is not under too much pressure, better. But the child of the tenement or the fashionable apartment house cannot get this training in helpful labor parallel with his schooling as does the boy on the farm. So all work is postponed till school days are over and all schooling stops when work begins. One result is that some of us are busy teaching subjects fit only for mature minds to immature boys and girls on the assumption that they will never have another chance at education. I was once in a French boarding-school where the pupils learned by heart critical estimates of classical authors whom they had not read. On my questioning the practise I was told that though these sentences were not intelligible now they would recur to the pupils' minds when in later life they read the authors in question.

We need to study the psychology of intellectual hunger and the history of the ripening of the human mind. Surely there should be opportunities for the mature to study history, economics, politics, natural science, religion, literature and philosophy,—opportunities, I mean, for intervals of continuous, intensive study by those inclined to it, not solely opportunities for weary, sleepy men and women in fag ends of time to hear lectures or to prepare for examinations.

In work planned as employers have planned it not only is education eliminated from employment and employment deferred to the close of the generally meager period of education, but the advantage of the individual is disregarded in

the arrangement of the work, to the great disadvantage of the worker and the community at large, if not, in the first instance, of the employer.

One of the effects of this is the waste or misuse of all laborers, like the married woman or child, who cannot give standard work under standard conditions. In the work of the school or the household, which is planned with reference to the worker, there is room for the delicate, the dull, the special student, the child and the elderly person. No one is unemployable, no portion of strength or capacity is unusable. In the factory of the Amana community, which is conducted, as one might say, on family principles, I was struck by the large number of really old men at the looms. Those who can no longer endure the hot work in the hay fields find occupation here, and those who can advantageously work irregularly for a few hours a day, but not more, are given the employment that they are fit for and that is good for them. This capacity to use all available labor power is one reason, perhaps, why the Amana communists wax richer year by year and hire outside workers to do much of their hardest work; perhaps, too, it makes for a happier and longer, because more occupied, old age.

But in competitive employment workers who are below the standard, if not excluded and therefore wasted, are likely to be forced to conform to unsuitable hours and working arrangements. Moreover they are likely to drag down wages and to render more difficult the attempts of the normal workers to improve conditions. The standard minimum wage, with provision of "sub-minimum" wage scales for the handicapped, seems the only device to prevent their destructive effect on wage standards. As regards children, society adopts the policy of complete withdrawal from industry, not because it is good for a child to spend all his time in schooling, but because, as has been said, industry will not adapt its routine to juvenile requirements, and precludes almost all chance for education after work is once entered upon.

As regards married women in industry, the situation is much the same as the situation with regard to children. They should stay out wholly because it is disastrous to the family for them

to go in wholly and unreservedly, because their subsidized competition is likely to be injurious, and finally because the conditions of work are apt to be ruinous to their health. And yet for women after marriage to abstain from all employment outside the household is often wasteful and altogether undesirable. If married women could work some hours a day, or some days a week, or some months a year, or some years and not others, as circumstances indicated (as they conceivably might do under a more elastic and adaptable organization of employment), and if they could do so without damage to wage standards or workshop discipline, it would seem advantageous, in more ways than one, for them not to drop out of industry at marriage. Both marriage and employment might become sufficiently universal to make it usual to train every girl for both, at least in a general way. If marriage did not appear to girls (quite fallaciously in most cases) as a way of getting supported without working, their interest in increasing their earning power would be greater; if wives were normally and properly contributors in some degree to the money income of the family, marriage would be more general and, above all, earlier, especially if the giving of allowances to mothers, of which Mr. Wells dreams, ever came into practice.

All this troubling of the waters of life is so familiar that it is perhaps not possible for us fully to appreciate or understand it. The conditions can doubtless be much ameliorated, but no reforms can make right a system that sins in its foundations. As has been said, the system sins because it puts production before people, with the results, so far as women are concerned, that we have seen. Two of the fundamental parts of their activity are made almost incompatible, so that we have unmarried workers and unworking wives, and workers and wives alike untrained because of the paralyzing uncertainty of the future. Moreover, men and women alike suffer from the separation of education and work, which makes work dull and education unreal and gives to the boy and girl more lessons than they can digest and to the man and woman too few; they both suffer also, if not equally, from the industrial system which shapes all the conditions of industrial life to ends extraneous to the welfare of the workpeople.

That our lives are made thus to fit the convenience of industry, not industry to fit the convenience of human lives, is historically explicable and even justifiable. So long as there is difficulty in getting the bare necessities of living every other consideration must give way. The overriding object must be the amount of product, not comfort or development by the way. Health and happiness are then a necessary sacrifice to mammon. They are luxuries which the poverty-stricken do not afford themselves. Moreover, to do things pleasantly, or even to do them in the way that is most economical and effective in the long run requires not only capital but a social direction of capital that can be the fruit only of a long and painful evolution. Because our industry is conducted piecemeal by dividend hunters it is carried on, if we regard it as a whole, in a near-sighted and extravagant way. Above all, it wastes talent and physical stamina, beside devastating the private happiness of employes, and nowhere is it more uneconomical than in its use of women's strength and capacity and, above all, in its wastage of her health.

We are just on the eve of being socially conscious enough to perceive these things and prosperous enough to afford a different policy. Is it insane to hope that in the fulness of time industry will be so arranged as to advance human life by its process as well as by its produce; to hope that we shall have, as one might say, a maternal government acting on the principles of the mother of a great and busy household who makes education and work coöperate throughout, who cares for her family and economizes and develops their powers and makes their complete welfare her controlling object? My contention is that while we cannot make women efficient in any complete sense under conditions which so militate against their efficiency, we can make them less and less inefficient as we shape education to that end, and as we get increasing control of industrial conditions in the interests of human life in its wholeness.

**FOOTNOTES:**

[36] A paper presented at the meeting of the Academy of Political Science, December 3, 1909.

# STANDARDS OF LIVING AND THE SELF-DEPENDENT WOMAN

SUSAN M. KINGSBURY

Simmons College, and Women's Educational and Industrial  
Union, Boston

An investigation of the cost of living may look ultimately toward minimum wage laws, or it may aim at the creation of opportunities for industrial education which shall result in ability to earn a certain desired wage; but the immediate object of all such study is to determine a desirable standard, and every consideration of the cost of living is prefaced by a discussion of the importance and difficulty of fixing standards. The method must be to discover what expenditure the average family or individual under normal conditions finds actually necessary; but heretofore essential study of the habits and needs of self-supporting women has been lacking.

The following significant differences between wage-earning women and men have become apparent from an examination of census returns and a study of more than a thousand working women in and around Boston, in connection with the promotion of savings-bank insurance:

1. A large majority of wage-earning women are under thirty years of age. In our cities the average age is below twenty-five.
2. The larger part are living at home, or in the families of relatives, friends or acquaintances.
3. A very large proportion of those living at home turn in all their earnings to the family purse and receive back only so much as is necessary, without knowing whether their contribution is above or below the expenditure on their account. The young men of the family, on the other hand, are not expected to contribute to the family income, unless it be to pay board.

4. A woman is not usually responsible for the support of a family, nor is she looking forward to the carrying of such a burden.

5. She often has obligations for the full or partial support of members of the family, but these obligations decrease or cease as she grows older.

6. She enters a gainful occupation with a different point of view from that of a man. It may be that she has obligations to meet, or it may be that she is a “pin-money girl”; but in most cases she is not looking forward to continuous self-support.

How, then, is the standard for women to be set? To attain a certain standard they may spend much less money, or with a given expenditure they may reach a much higher standard than would be the case if their conditions and outlook were the same as men’s. On the other hand, the obligations resting on women may be, and often are, much greater than the demands on men of similar age. The income necessary to maintain a given standard of living may therefore be much less than we should anticipate, or it may be much greater. One thing seems evident—that the burdens will probably decrease rather than increase. Therefore the necessity for advancement and the responsibility for saving is recognized neither by the worker nor by the public.

These difficulties make intensive investigation the more essential, in order to discover the actual present cost of living of self-dependent women and to find out the significance of variations in this cost. Modern tendencies to reduce wages to the minimum cost of living or to force them up to meet the demands of increasing luxury may mean too serious results to permit of continued ignorance. The danger of setting the standard according to the needs of one group, thus working injury to another, must be averted.

The studies upon which this paper is based fall into two groups. One, of college graduates, members of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, mostly teachers (317 in number), is easiest to interpret, because it is the result of study by persons of the same class or thoroughly conversant with the needs of that class.<sup>[37]</sup> The material for this study was secured from

schedules filled out by 413 women, who are graduates of about forty colleges, and who are at present residing in almost every state in the union. It is furthermore representative in that it includes women whose homes are in large, medium and small towns, and whose experience ranges from one to forty-one years of service.

The other two studies are of women engaged in industrial and commercial pursuits. One of these is the result of a year's experience in preaching the gospel of saving to thirteen hundred women through savings bank insurance.<sup>[38]</sup> The women are engaged in unskilled industries such as laundering, in the semi-skilled industry of making knitted underwear, and in the skilled industry of straw-hat manufacture. Naturally in this study the cost of living is approached through a consideration of ability or inability to save. Savings should of course be included as a necessary part of living expenses, and where pay is insufficient to make saving possible, the wage received is certainly not a living wage. The general responsibility for the support of the family, whether the girl is living at home or boarding, the tendency to give all earnings to the mother, the effort to save and its success or failure—all these conditions are portrayed in this study.

The most important contribution, however, is that which comes from the research department of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, through its fellow, Miss Louise Marion Bosworth,—a study commenced under Miss Mabel Parton, director.<sup>[39]</sup> This study by Miss Bosworth contains a discussion of the general economic history, the income, and the expenditures for rent, food, clothing, health, savings, and other purposes, of four hundred fifty working women, thirty of whom kept account books for Miss Bosworth for a year or more, and two hundred twenty of whom Miss Bosworth interviewed personally. One hundred fifty were interviewed by Miss Jane Barclay, a fellow of the department, and fifty by other research fellows. Miss Bosworth's study deals with three hundred fifty women living independently, and presents also the standards of one hundred living at home. The Women's Educational and Industrial Union, working for the betterment of industrial conditions among self-supporting

women by both direct and indirect educational methods, has unusual opportunities for continuous study of the actual expenses and the standards of living of such women, together with the effect of those standards on their efficiency.

A study of the budgets of self-dependent women has a twofold object: first, to enable the public to know in how far women are self-supporting; and second, to discover what income is required to make a woman self-supporting. In other words, such study should show what income is necessary for each group in order to maintain and increase its efficiency. Merely to state that a certain number actually live on a certain income is to neglect the essential question of how they live. The less educated woman cannot be expected to use the same ability in spending as her more highly trained sister; nor can the latter be satisfied with the taste of the less educated woman. The average demands of the average woman in each group must always be kept in mind.

It may be well first to present briefly the more pertinent conclusions of the study of professional women, since the general standards are more familiar to us. The expenditures reported by college women are arranged in three groups, minimum, medium and maximum. The total expenditures of the first group range from \$550 to \$725, in which an allowance of \$200 to \$350 is made for "living expenses," and \$150 to \$175 for clothing. A woman whose income is at this minimum cannot save; it represents the cost of living of an apprentice. The medium expenditures are from \$785 to \$1,075 exclusive of savings, and the maximum \$1,225 to \$1,750 exclusive of savings. The medium figures include \$300 to \$450 for living, and \$200 to \$250 for clothing; the maximum, \$500 to \$700 for living, and \$275 to \$350 for clothing.

A woman of experience voices the general opinion that the medium range of expenditure in the teaching profession today is too low for thorough efficiency; for in such a budget no account can be made of many of the essentials of life. Thus it omits:

1. Any peculiar demands upon one's purse through obligations to one's family.

2. Expenses of the vacation season like extra board, extra laundry bills, railroad fares and extra sundries.

3. Expenses which come from social convention and social relations, such as Christmas, birthday and wedding gifts, even small ones, occasional lunching with friends, possible college class reunions, and the like.

4. Expression of one's esthetic tastes in concerts and pictures.

5. Recreation of any sort during the working year.

6. Miscellaneous trifling but accumulating expenses which are sure to occur.

At the present time 72% of the women prepared for teaching by college training are earning the medium salary or less. Grouping this class by years of experience, salaries do not reach the medium figure until a woman has been at work ten to fifteen years. If we accept these expenditures as a standard, then we find only a small proportion of college women able to attain it. The unfortunate method of determining necessary expenditure by estimate is well illustrated by the returns from these college women. The cost of actual living and clothing is often accepted as covering the essentials; but in fact the items for incidentals, carfares, professional expenses and sundries sum up to almost the same amount as the cost of sustenance, especially in the smaller budgets. Such an allowance would usually be considered excessive, but a careful review of the items indicates that this proportion of expenditure for sundries is legitimate.

In addition to this general but important conclusion that the standard of living based on the returns quoted above is too low in most cases to secure efficiency, and hence promotion and advancement, the following significant conditions must be faced by those concerned with the problem of salaries:

1. To maintain and increase efficiency and earning capacity in the teaching profession, women must be prepared to give from two to five years to graduate study.

2. Independent income ought not to be counted on to supplement earned income.

3. The relation of cost of living to efficiency should be better understood in order to lead teachers to insist upon advancement, even at sacrifice of personal preference for locality and conditions of living.

4. Although there is no prevailing standard of living, and the relation between expenditure and income or between the various phases of expenditure does not seem to be set, college women should try to set a standard as quickly as possible.

In the study of wage-earning girls made by the research department of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, the cost of living of girls who reside with their families is considered separately. Since the aim is primarily to discover the cost of living of the self-dependent girl, the number of the other class studied is small, consisting chiefly of immigrant girls and girls in the suburbs earning a good salary and living at home or with relatives.

On the other hand, the study of the savings bank insurance committee deals very largely with girls living at home, so that the two studies supplement each other. The low contributions to the family reported by Miss Bosworth show that the girl earning three to five dollars is barely able to live, but her evidence that the higher-paid girl contributes a larger sum (about four dollars and a half a week) to the family, and supplements her payments by labor in the home indicates that she is really self-supporting, because she is living practically under a coöperative system. What she thus saves over the girl who spends five or six dollars a week for sustenance results in a higher standard of living or an opportunity to save. It is doubtless due to this lower cost of board and room while living at home that the girl who in Miss Bosworth's study does not receive a living wage is in Miss French's experience able to begin to save. Here, furthermore, is doubtless the explanation of the fact that while a girl living alone is generally not able to live on a satisfactory standard under a wage of nine dollars a week, the girl living at home, or coöperatively, begins to save on a six to nine-dollar wage.

Taking up simply the woman living alone, we find ourselves confronted with a study of factory workers, waitresses, clerks, saleswomen and kitchen workers. A standard of housing is far easier to determine than one of food. Size of room and location naturally affect rents; but it is hard to reach satisfactory conclusions concerning number of windows, sunlight, heat, bathroom accommodations, and number of roommates. Provision for food is made in the following ways:

1. Cooking in one's own room.
2. Basement dining rooms.
3. Working girls' homes.
4. Meals included for service in restaurants and hotels.

They are presented in order of excellence. "Home cooking" means serious danger to health; over-fatigue results in cold meals or no meals rather than expenditure of the energy necessary for preparation. The basement dining room serving twenty-one meals for \$3 is "invariably poor," says Miss Bosworth. Strictly speaking, the subsidized working girls' home should not be considered in a discussion of the standards of independent working girls. To calculate a "living wage" on such a basis does injustice to thousands of girls who could not if they would find accommodation in working girls' homes.

What standard, then, are these girls able to attain? Miss Bosworth says: "Between the three, four and five-dollar woman and the next higher division there is a big increase in food expenditures, corresponding to the jump in rent found at this same point. Also corresponding to the rent, the difference between the six, seven and eight-dollar group and the next higher is less marked. Either, then, the increase in wage up to eight dollars goes at once into food and rent, or as is probable, this marks the point of departure from the intolerably crowded share in a tenement dweller's home to the perhaps equally comfortless but more independent room in a lodging house. In paying the increased amount of room rent the three advantages the girl on higher wages gains are a room to herself, heat of some sort, and sunshine. These advantages come to the

majority only when the wage has reached at least \$9.” In securing food, the girl on the higher wage patronizes the \$4 dining rooms, which are “so attractive in appearance, and so adequate in food as to be thoroughly satisfactory.”

The subject of clothing brings at once two great problems. Here the measure of the standard of living is apparent. A girl may make sacrifices in room and board without immediate effect upon her opportunities to secure employment: but a sacrifice in dress may mean the loss of position—such is the consensus of opinion. The custom of instalment buying follows as a natural result. It is in the field of dress that the individual ability of the girl is most apparent. Innate taste, knowledge of materials, physical strength and opportunity to hunt bargains, readiness to forfeit sleep in order to get time to remodel or make clothes—all these things tell. Home and school training may help raise standards. Miss Bosworth concludes: “The average working woman, with only the average ability to manage her wardrobe economically, with the average trade demands on it, and with the average amount of time for sewing and mending, cannot dress on less than \$1 a week as a minimum, and does not need as a dress allowance more than \$2 a week.” Elsewhere she states: “The severest strain of providing clothes comes on incomes under \$9; when an income of \$12 is reached, the strain is perceptibly lessened.”

Apparently a satisfactory standard—one which affords a room meeting reasonable requirements, nourishing food, respectable clothing, medical attendance, and incidentals of simple type, requires a wage of not less than \$9.

I regret that the shortness of space prevents a glance at the contributions of the working girl to church, charity and the support of others, or her expenditures for self-education and recreation. Suffice it to say that the amount which goes for charity, for necessary incidentals and for education bears a creditable relation to that expended for recreation.

The savings bank insurance study is most significant in its confirmation of the inadequacy of a three to five-dollar or even a six to eight-dollar wage. Even though the girls whose records

were thus secured came largely from the group living at home, it was only in the nine to twelve-dollar wage group that real savings became possible.

One scarcely dares accept the conclusion suggested by these facts, that the minimum wage should be not less than \$9, there are so many modifying circumstances. Nor dares one assert that certain sums represent the "cost of living", it is so hard to determine a standard of living. How can we fix the minimum or average of rent? How can we place a limit on expenditure for food and clothing? How can we tell how much of inefficiency is due to inadequacy of food, clothing and shelter, how much to lack of training, how much to youth? All results thus far obtained are only indicative; intensive scientific investigation and cautious interpretation are needed to establish conclusions that shall command general assent.

### FOOTNOTES:

[37] See report on "The Economic Efficiency of College Women," by the writer of this paper, published in the *Magazine of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae*, February, 1910.

[38] Miss Davida C. French was director of the savings bank insurance committee of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, 1909-1910, under which this study was made.

[39] The results of the investigation will be published this year. Information with regard to this publication may be secured from the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, 264 Boylston St., Boston, Mass.

# A NEW SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT<sup>[40]</sup>

MARY KINGSBURY SIMKHOVITCH

Greenwich House, New York City

The entrance of women into industry means that they are going out from the home. Closely related to the new economic status of women is a new social adjustment to a larger world. I shall not attempt in this paper to go beyond the consideration of what is happening before our eyes in New York.

It is very interesting to see how much more concerned people are about growing boys in great cities than they are about girls. This is really illogical, for what is happening to girls is happening in a very special way to the race. Everyone says glibly enough that the position of woman in any society is an index of that society's civilization. This fact seems to be perceived, however, rather as some sort of bookish generalization than as a subject of social concern, which ought to be connected with a positive social purpose.

It would be idle to claim that the situation of the young girl entering industry in New York to-day is in any way socially satisfactory. It is not. There is a social—or as some prefer to call it, moral—instability at the present time that is very serious. The purity of the working girl is under a terrific strain, and it is criminal to close our eyes to the fact. Those who know this to be the case seem almost committed to a policy of silence. While they realize the gravity of the facts, they are also among the sincerest admirers and friends of the working girl, and they do not want to create the impression that there is anything inherently debased about this army of youthful women workers. It would, in fact, be a total misrepresentation to picture the working girl as in any way different from any other girl. She is, of course, the same sort of person as the society girl or the so-called middle-class girl, but her position at just this juncture is a more difficult one than that of any other young woman, for she is stepping out from the most old-

fashioned type of family into the newest type of industry. This new social adjustment is just as inevitable as the economic adjustments that followed the industrial revolution.

The working girl is stepping out of the most intimate, the most mutually conscious type of family life that exists, that of humble people. This old patriarchal family has a strength and an intensive character that other families lack. Exceptions to the type in no way alter the general rule. The father is an unremitting toiler but his pleasures are centered in the home and the family. The mother is the disburser of the weekly income handed to her intact in the Saturday night envelope. Her power and influence are supreme as long as the family holds together. The children early absorb the traditional ideas of the parents undiluted by the variations presented to families of larger income where tutors, dancing instructors and music teachers share or supersede the parents' care. There is thus built up a solid structure of tradition, interdependence and loyalty with which the family life of other economic groups cannot compare. This structure, seemingly almost absolutely firm, is undergoing under modern city conditions a strain never met before, and the family is not holding its own. What cause is at work to alter the ancient type? Undoubtedly the breakup is a byproduct of the industrial revolution. Many of the old duties and opportunities of women have been taken from them. The introduction of a greater variety of diet involving less cooking, the greater simplicity in decoration involving less cleaning, the communal care of garbage, the central system of heating and lighting, the cheapness of ready-made clothing, all these changes have lessened the burden of housework and to a certain extent have freed the housewife from drudgery. The care of children is increasingly being taken over by the community with its kindergartens, its public schools, its parks, its recreation centers, its nurses and its hospitals. Thus while the woman is still the dominating figure in the home, the center of gravity of that home so to speak has shifted; and we find the life that was once that of the home is now that of the community as well. It is the old process of differentiation from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. It is because there is less to do at home that the children must of

economic necessity find their life outside. The daughter who would once have stayed at home to help with the children now becomes the public school teacher and helps many children. The daughter who would once have made the clothes of her sister is now making the clothes of other sisters at the dressmaker's or in the factory.

The entrance of women into industry is an act of necessity. Women have in the beginning gone to work in factories and in shops and in all occupations outside the home, not from choice but because the industrial revolution has so altered the conditions of life that such a departure from the home was rendered inevitable. Woman has entered industry half-heartedly. She is not work-conscious as she is home-conscious. The old home tradition remains with her as a powerful sentiment. Her interest is the home. She expects to return to a home life of her own. Industrial work is a mere interlude. It is this work interlude that is so fraught with danger from the very fact that it is a makeshift. It is still unrelated to the deepest conscious or unconscious purpose of the girl.

When we say the New York working girl whom do we mean? We mean to a certain extent the American girl, *i. e.*, the girl who has drifted to New York from up state or from other states. Such girls are homeless here. The difficulty is not the inadequacy of home life, but its absolute lack. For these girls some substitute must be provided. But the great bulk of girls in industry in New York are not American, but Irish, Jewish, and last of all, Italian. Taken as a whole, it cannot be said that the Irish girl's entrance into industry has corrupted her as a woman. Surrounded by temptation, keenly enjoying pleasure, the Irish girl yet possesses that combination of reserve, good taste and self-possession that protects her more surely than any mere parental inhibition. But in addition to the protection of the family, she enjoys the aid of religion, which constantly inculcates the preservation of purity. The Irish girl is a religious girl, a devoted Catholic. Ever before her is a picture of the ideal woman, Mary the Mother of God. "Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners now and in the hour of death," is said daily by thousands of Irish girls before they go to work and before they lie down to sleep. Mechanical as this

may often be, it is a mental habit as strong as a physical habit. And habits serve as a prop to the will when stress comes. It would be near the truth to say that whatever the reason,—Catholic training, native chastity, an inborn sense of restraint and good taste, or all these together, Irish girls form but a small element of the group of women workers in danger of corruption.

This danger is more intimately connected with Jewish and Italian girls. The Jewish girl comes from a protected and highly developed family life. She also has been brought up in a great traditional religion as her spiritual environment. But the orthodox Jewish religion, though fundamentally social in character, is often apperceived as merely a racial custom. The Jewish ideas of the family and of religion are so intimately connected that the child who is ceasing to be held by one will not be held by the other. In this respect there is a great difference between the Catholic and the Jew. The Catholic girl thinks of her religion as greater than anything else, including the family; the Jewish girl thinks of her religion as part of her family life, to stand or fall together with it. Moreover, though in both religions man is priest—in one as head of the church and in the other as head of the family—yet in the Jewish religion there is nothing corresponding to that devotion to the Virgin which naively and almost hypnotically involves an unconscious idealism of womanhood. The Jewish girl also, while perhaps not personally so proud as the Irish, is in many ways more ambitious and purposive. She desires to have all that the world offers. This purposive characteristic, so noble if devoted to high ends, and so dangerous if directed to pleasure alone, is seen more evidently in the Jewish girl than in any other.

A high purpose saves. Among the prostitutes of this city, I doubt if you can find one who is either a revolutionist, a socialist, a Zionist, a good trade unionist, or an ardent suffragist. Most of those poor girls are they who in their innocent natural desire for pleasure, unchecked by high enthusiasm for anything else, are finally dragged down to a terrible payment for the pleasures they so normally demand. Why is it that among the Jewish girls who have gone wrong

we find no socialists, no revolutionists, no trade unionists? Obviously because devotion to a cause gives rise to a consuming self-respect. The compelling power of a great cause brings the same results as the sanctions of religion. A cause that becomes a passion ennobles one. Personal indulgence is obliterated and pleasure becomes identified with devotion to this cause or is incidental to it. We cannot expect that all working girls will be drawn to any of these particular causes which I have enumerated, but some spiritual interest they must have—something bigger than themselves and their own pleasures.

With the Italian girl just now beginning to enter industry in large numbers the situation again is different. Though Catholic, she seems not to have the purposive character in her religious life that marks the Irish girl. Religion is not so full of conscious meaning for her. In her home life she has thus far been and still is probably the most carefully chaperoned girl in America. From the protection of her father she goes straight to that of her husband. Never standing on her own feet, she fails to develop that independence without which as mother she loses control of her children, to their serious loss. They refuse obedience to her authority. But now at last this charming girl who has hitherto known only the controlled existence of the home is leaving it for the uncontrolled life of that larger world which she enters as industrial worker. How is she to learn to feel safe in this bigger world when her parents and her brothers do not think her so? She can never feel safe until she is safe, and she will not be safe until she learns the self-reliance and independence that come from the double security bestowed by some large spiritual enthusiasm and by economic independence. The old-fashioned girl living and working exclusively in the home was safe in a negative way. She was safe because she had no opportunity for anything but safety. This negative safety breaks down when one leaves the home. Safety in the larger world is secured only by some positive force that enables a girl to prefer the higher to the lower. These positive safeguards are, as we have seen, of various kinds; they are religion, or socialism, or trade unionism, or any compelling form of social or political development. They all involve an

individual direct relationship between the girl and her desire. She is a person with her own hopes. She is freed from entanglements. She attains a purity very different from that feeble inhibited negative thing which comes from outward protection alone.

But there is another side to this question. It is nonsense to suppose that any spiritual enthusiasm, no matter how powerful, will be adequate to protect the girl whose wage it is impossible to live on. I take it for granted that this economic aspect of the case is clear to everyone. It is silly, not to say criminal, for us to suppose that girls are going to starve or go without decent clothes or deprive themselves of all pleasures because they cannot pay their own way. There will be cases of heroism always. I think now of a poor little restaurant-worker friend of mine, who with \$4 a week with two meals a day pays for room and clothing and yet keeps straight, though with never a penny for any kind of pleasure. All honor to her, but no credit to us that we allow such strain. Thousands of girls are living in New York, on less than a living wage, not eating enough, not having proper room or clothing and yet keeping straight. But others—and these too are doubtless in the thousands—are too normal to deprive themselves of their rights in the world. Their perfectly innocent love of pleasure becomes transmuted through gradual corrupting relationships into a life of degradation. Inextricably bound together in the life of the young girl are her impulses and her ideals. Free play for both and training for both are demanded for the flowering of her womanhood. To grow, to play, to have friends, to make love, are all normal elements that go to make up the life of the young. Not only is pleasure their right but it is a racial necessity. In the old home the family life itself was the center of all the social gatherings, or if social pleasures were to be found elsewhere it was in other affiliated homes, so that in that network of home life a sort of tribal pleasure was developed where free play to all these youthful emotions could be granted. But in the life of the great city the young girl can find little within the narrow confines of her crowded home to hold her ardent attention. In the midst of the ever-intensifying excitement with which she is surrounded she can find nothing

appealing enough to attract her interest except those great congregate forms of enjoyment which center about the dance hall, the theater and the brilliant amusement resort. These commercialized pleasure places are far lighter, airier and more beautiful than any small home can be. They represent roominess, freedom, grandeur, all of which appeal to the blossoming passion of the young. There is something almost terrible in the careless way in which society both indulges and neglects the young girl. The over-stimulation of all this excitement is dangerous enough in itself but when coupled with so little that safeguards the ardor of youth it forms an appeal almost impossible of resistance. And these pleasures cannot be had for nothing. Where the girls cannot pay their cost, there are attendant circumstances which turn the natural channels of joy into debasement. The young men of the big cities today are not gallantly paying the way of these girls for nothing. Though the price may not be that which leads to despair, it often involves a lowering of the finer instinct and a gradual deterioration of the appreciation of personal purity which is one of the most beautiful flowers of civilization. The fathers and mothers of this great army of girls in industry can no longer furnish the pleasures the girls want. If then they seek them outside the home, the community itself must become the foster father and mother.

Already our communities are seeing that girls like boys must be trained for the industry which they are bound to enter. There is a pestilential group among us composed of those people who are insistent that the working classes should be taught "useful" things. All of us who live in settlements know this kind of person only too well. "Do you teach cooking? Do you teach sewing?" they ask. In these things perhaps they will take an interest, but a class for dancing or preparation for a play or an evening's sing, such persons will regard as frills and not "useful" work. As if there were anything more useful than helping to create a social atmosphere congenial enough to hold a girl's interest! For it is from such a sympathetic background that enthusiasms spring.

Pleasures are necessary and the community must take the place of the old home by protecting the young in their

pleasures and by offering them such pleasures as shall enrich rather than debase the emotional and spiritual life. Dance halls properly controlled, clean cheap theaters, amusement resorts freed from the harpies that too frequently gather there—all these are necessary in a program of social adjustment. A living wage is also essential. But beyond these the girl at work, like all women of every class, must develop a deep self-respect, a regard for herself as an industrial worker, a conviction that she is responsible for the conditions under which she works, a desire to control these conditions through such social or political means as are adequate for that end. She must not take the apologetic position, “I have to go to work,” but rather the proud point of view, “As a worker I am a responsible person with a social purpose.”

The woman movement has sometimes been interpreted by rich women as giving them the privilege of doing what they like and by the respectable middle class as furnishing a means of dignifying leisure. Among working women, however, it has made little headway. I say this realizing that there are thousands of whom this is not true. But the working woman in New York, as I have said, still retains the tradition of home life as her most cherished sentiment, expecting to return from industry to a home of her own. And the very beauty and power of this old ideal obscures the fact that the home of the future must be strong enough to stand all the strain to which in the nature of the case it will be subjected. To stand its ground it needs not the negative submission of dependents, but the co-operation of strong independent individuals. The new working woman's movement when under way will have within it certain sounder elements than the movement among middle-class and wealthy women. For in industry one learns promptness, order and adaptation to ends—in other words, efficiency. Bringing back this business sense into the home and enlarging it by those spiritual enthusiasms which give a sense of roominess and freedom, no matter what one's daily task may be, the working woman, when once this new social adjustment has been made, will be a new kind of new woman in whose consciousness the destinies of home, industry and society will be seen as fused into one. Her duties toward

society and toward the home will be seen to be indissolubly connected. And when her children are born she will see to it that the old negative protection of the home shall be supplemented by the positive elements of protection, the chief of which is the flame of a positive enthusiasm. But this desirable end, this real social adjustment, will not take place unless society is prepared to adopt a practical program embodying these three elements—proper opportunities for pleasure, a living wage and the cultivation of independence, self-respect and idealism.

### **FOOTNOTES:**

[\[40\]](#) A paper presented at the meeting of the Academy of Political Science, December 4, 1909.

# MARRIED WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

FLORENCE KELLEY

General Secretary, National Consumers' League

Throughout all history married women have carried on productive industry, feeding and clothing the race. And in that coöperative commonwealth which some of us hope to see, they will undoubtedly again participate largely and beneficently in the industrial work of the community.

It is perfectly easy to conceive of a prosperous village in New England or the state of Washington, with coöperative intensive culture of gardens and orchards, with coöperative dairy, laundry, bakery, store and workshops. In such a village the high school might well have as its adjunct a nursery where the oldest girls could learn the art of caring for babies and little children, as the normal school of today has its kindergarten and primary classes for the benefit alike of the children and the teachers in training. The citizens of such a village would obviously be highly enlightened folk, and might be expected to limit their working day to four, five, or six hours. Given these easily conceivable conditions, the industrial work of mothers of children as young as one year might perhaps be an asset for every one concerned.

It is, indeed, one serious charge in the indictment against the present competitive organization of industry that the industrial employment of married women to-day does harm and only harm. With the increasing industrial work of married women in our competitive industry comes increase in the number of children who are never born. In industrial centers, the world over, wherever records are kept, the decreasing birth rate manifests itself. Where this is due to drugs or surgery it is of the gravest social significance. Childless working wives are a permanently demoralizing influence for husbands. If these are inclined to idleness they can idle the more because the wives work. However disposed to hard work the men may be, the

presence in the market of a throng of unorganized and irregular workers (and married women are both more unorganized and more irregular than others) presses upon the wage rate of men. Whether the wife leaves home to work in cotton mill or laundry, or whether she stays at home working under the sweating system, she suffers the disadvantage of carrying the double burden and enduring the twofold strain of home maker and wage earner. And she presses upon the wage scale of her competitors as the subsidized or presumably subsidized worker must always do.

Aside from childless wives, married women wage earners consist of deserted mothers, widowed mothers and women who have both children and husband. All these are ordinarily subsidized workers, the deserted and widowed receiving charitable relief, and the women with husbands having, at least in the theory which underlies their wages, some support from them.

The heaviest strain of all falls upon the wife who has husband and children and is still herself a wage earner; for she has usually child-bearing as well as wage-earning duties. Even where her wage earning is due to the husband's tuberculosis, or epilepsy, or other disability, this does not ordinarily end the growth in number of mouths for which the industrially working mother attempts to provide.

Here and there, even in the great cities, an exceptional woman may be found who has endured to middle life, or even longer, this double strain, and has brought up children creditable in every way. Such rare women are usually immigrants of peasant stock, fresh from rural life in the old country, and merely serve, exceptions as they are, to prove the rule.

Whether the wage-earning mother leaves home, or brings her work into the home, her children pay the penalty. If she is away, they are upon the street or locked into their rooms. From the street to the court is but a short step. From the locked room to the grave has been for unknown thousands of children a step almost as short, many having been burned and others reduced by the long intervals between feedings to that exhaustion in

which any disease is fatal. Most dangerous of all to the young victims of their mothers' absence, are the unskilled ministrations of older sisters, those hapless little girls ironically known as "little mothers." These keep neither the babies nor the nursing bottles clean; nor do they keep the milk cool and shielded from flies. They have no regular hours for feeding or naps. They let the baby fall, or tumble down stairs with it. And in all the cruel process their own backs grow crooked and they are robbed of school life and of the care-free hours of play. Even where the mother does her industrial work at home, the older girl suffers from the delegated care of the younger children, and there is a strong tendency for the dwelling to be dirty and neglected, and for all the children to be pressed into service at the earliest possible moment, at cost of school attendance and of play.

Homework, which is peculiarly the domain of married women, forces rents up, because the worker must be near the factory. This promotes congestion of population, to the advantage of no one but the landowner.

Even the employer is injured by the presence in the market of a body of homeworking women. By their cheapness he is tempted to defer installing the newest machines and most up-to-date methods. Enlightened employers who do make such provision have competing against them the parasite employers who drag out an incompetent existence because they can extort from their homeworking employes the contribution to their running expenses of rent, heat, light and cleaning.

In the employment of married women, as in all other industrial evils, it is ultimately the whole community which pays. Whether the children die before or after birth, the moral tone of the population suffers and hearts are hardened by acquiescence in cruelty and law breaking. Whether the surviving children (by reason of their mother's absence or her neglect in her overwrought and harassed presence) become invalids or criminals, they do not suffer without sending in their bill to the community which tolerates their sufferings. In the growth of vice, crime and inefficiency, and in the spread of communicable disease, consciously or unconsciously, the

whole community pays its bill to the children whom it has deprived of their mothers.

In this country we do not know the number of wage-earning mothers either at home or elsewhere. Our records, official and unofficial, are as defective in this regard as in all others. We cherish a general impression, as pleasing as it is erroneous, that the old usage persists under which, in the early days of the republic, the father commonly maintained his family until the children had had some share of school life, and thereafter father and children supported the mother.

In the textile and needle trades, however, even this tradition never prevailed, and of late a contingent of the washerwomen of yore seem to have moved bodily into the steam laundries of today.

Now cities which are centers of the textile industry are, and for sixty years notoriously have been, the centers also of the labor of women and children, of infant mortality, tuberculosis, immorality and drink. This was the thesis of Friedrich Engels' volume on *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. Even today in Saxon Chemnitz and in New England Fall River, wage-earning mothers away from their homes and children are a characteristic and sorrowful feature of the dominant local industry.

A perverse element in the problem, which would be humorous if it were not tragic, is the encouragement persistently given by philanthropists to the wage-earning labor of married women. Day nurseries, charity kindergartens, charity sewing rooms, doles of home sewing, cash relief contingent upon the recipient's taking whatever work she may be offered, are all still in vogue in the year 1910.

The monstrous idea has been seriously advocated (without editorial denunciation) in the columns of *Charities* that a night nursery might enable women to work at night after they have cared for their children by day! A shameful spectacle visible every night in our cities is the army of widowed mothers on their knees scrubbing the floors of railway stations, stores and office buildings. This noxious task is sacred to them because the work is so ill paid and so loathsome that men will not do it.

The opportunity to enlist in this pitiable cohort of night toilers is commonly obtained for the widowed mothers by their influential philanthropic friends.

And in all these cases the obvious fact is overlooked that such charitable effort is inevitably self-defeating. Overworked mothers, like other overworked human beings, break down and are added to that burden of the dependent sick which society perpetually creates for itself.

We have preferred to live in a fool's paradise, ignoring the social implications of our stupendous industrial development. We have, therefore, adopted only one of all the palliatives with which other industrial nations have been experimenting during the past sixty years.

In our textile manufacturing states the men (though a minority of employes in the industry) have succeeded in so bringing to bear their trade organizations and their votes as to obtain legal restrictions upon the working hours of women in industry. For married women the net result of this palliative measure has, however, proved largely illusory. Every shortening of the working day tends to be followed by speeding up of the machinery to keep the output as large as before, or by a cut in wages due to reduced output if no change is made in the speed. Now married women, particularly when mothers of young children, are inevitably the least organized and self-defending part of the adult working class. And they have, in fact, suffered both speeding up and the worst rates of wages in their branches of industry. Thus the numbers of married women enabled to continue in industrial employment without breaking down have not necessarily been greatly increased by our one attempt at legislation in behalf of their health.

Because we have never observed or recorded the facts in relation to the industrial work of married women we have no statutory provision for rest before and after confinement, yet many textile manufacturing communities have their body of knowledge (common and appalling knowledge) of children born in the mill, or of mothers returning to looms or spinning frames when their babies are but three or four days old.

Those industrial nations which scorn the fool's paradise gather the facts, face the truth, and act upon it. Thus Bavaria, which accepts as inevitable the factory work of mothers of young children, began in 1908 to encourage employers to establish nurseries in the mills and permit mothers to go to them at regular intervals. The government voted 50,000 marks for payment to physicians and nurses who supervise the nurseries. The avowed object of these institutions is to reduce the disease which has ravaged bottle-fed babies left to the care of neighbors and of older brothers and sisters. In Italy, also, for several years employers have been constrained by law to give to mothers regular intervals for nursing their babies.

Fourteen nations of Europe, and the state of Massachusetts, have abolished night work by women in manufacture. This is obviously a boon to working mothers.

For the protection alike of the community and the workers, England, Germany, Austria and New York state have all been vainly striving for twenty years to devise legislation which would minimize the evils attending homework, yet would not abolish it. During this effort the tenement houses licensed for homework in New York City alone have reached the appalling number of twelve thousand.

In England a long agitation has resulted in the enactment of the trade boards law, in force since January 1st, 1910, providing for the creation of minimum wage boards and the establishment of minimum wage scales. How effective this may prove time alone can tell.

Several lines of action are clearly desirable and possible:

1. There must be a body of knowledge which we do not yet possess as to the number of married women at work and the industries which employ them, and this must be kept up to date from year to year. Why have the federal and state bureaus of labor statistics hitherto neglected this inquiry?

2. Such laws as are already in force against deserting husbands and fathers can be more rigorously enforced than is common at present, and their scope can be widened.

3. Orphans and widowed mothers of young children can be pensioned and removed from the labor market. This is the most useful palliative yet attempted.

4. The lives and working careers of husbands and fathers can be prolonged by prevention of accidents and disease. Effort in a large way to this end is only now beginning.

5. Those legislative measures which make work more endurable for all women (such as the obligatory provision of seats) can be promoted with especial reference to the urgent needs of married women.

6. A campaign of education among philanthropists can be carried on to induce them to cease from their cruelty to widows and deserted wives, and to lead them to imagine how any one of themselves would feel if she had to work all day in a mill or factory or laundry and then gather her babies from the day nursery for the night.

7. Public opinion can be created in favor of a minimum wage sufficient to enable fathers to support their families without help from wage-earning wives.

8. Finally, effort to substitute coöperative work for competitive work can be promoted. And herein lies the ultimate solution of the problem of married women's industrial employment. For it is only in the coöperative commonwealth that they can find just and beneficent conditions in which to carry on those industries which were theirs from the foundation of human life.

# THE ECONOMICS OF “EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK” IN THE SCHOOLS OF NEW YORK CITY

JOHN MARTIN

Board of Education, New York City

For some time the Interborough Association of Women Teachers in New York City has conducted a vigorous agitation under the banner “Equal pay for equal work”. This motto has won wide acceptance. Taken literally “Equal pay for equal work” is self-evidently just and reasonable, and persons or governing bodies who oppose it are put on the defensive. But in connection with the schools the phrase is not to be taken literally.

It is a factory phrase. For manual workers equal pay for equal work is embodied in the piece-work system, a system generally preferred when the work is of a routine character and when the output of each worker under exactly the same conditions can be measured with precision. A fixed piece price is paid for spinning a yard of cotton, for cutting a dozen coats, for rolling a ton of steel, for making a gross of paper boxes, for stitching a score of shirtwaists. Though in fact men and women rarely perform the same process, even when they work in the same factory, yet the pay per unit is fixed regardless of the age, sex, color, or competence of the worker. There is equal pay for equal work. Superior skill means superior speed and increased output, and pay is proportioned simply to output.

But nobody has ever found a satisfactory way to measure the output of a teacher. In England one way has been tried. In the early seventies, when the public schools were made in part an imperial charge, the manufacturers, who were dominant in Parliament, were anxious lest the imperial grants should be so awarded as to encourage laziness among teachers. Somebody hit on the phrase, “Payment by results.” That settled the matter.

The phrase caught the fancy of men who ran woolen mills and iron works, men who wanted some rule of thumb by which to measure whether the nation was getting what it paid for. So every year an imperial inspector visited the schools and put to each boy and girl a test in reading, writing, arithmetic, and so on. The exact number of sums worked without mistake, and of misspelt words in the dictation exercises, the precise number of errors each youngster made in reading—all were written down, and the money paid by the government to help that school was proportioned to those returns.

Sometimes a teacher's salary consisted of the grants so obtained; always the teacher's professional standing and promotion were determined by these miscalled "results." In consequence the teacher who was most cruel, who kept children late in school, who sacrificed most relentlessly the finer parts of education, who drove the helpless youngsters at the bayonet's point, as it were, who wasted no precious moments in merely training the faculties—that teacher got the most money and the most rapid advancement. To their honor be it said that the teachers of England for decades combated the hideous system. At last they convinced legislators that the growth of a child's mind, the emanations of a teacher's spirit, cannot be measured by yard stick or quart pot, and the system of "payment by results" was relegated to museums of instruments of torture.

America has been free from any factory method of attempting to gauge the teacher's work. Nobody has ever seriously proposed to establish piecework in schools and so give equal pay for equal work. The battle cry, like most political catch-words, is inexact and misleading. The Interborough Association means by the "equal pay" principle the merging of the salary schedules where the schedules now distinguish between men and women, so that, whatever other differences of qualification the schedules take into account, they shall ignore differences of sex in the teachers.

To determine the economic and pedagogical results which would flow from the adoption of this principle it is necessary to examine first the system upon which the existing schedules are constructed. Why are thirty-one complicated schedules,

which group teachers by a variety of standards, adopted at all? Why is not each teacher judged individually? Because, in New York, where the army of teachers, instructors, directors, principals and superintendents numbers 17,073, individual treatment is physically impossible, and, if it were tried, the schools would be permeated with politics. Perforce the army is divided into a few groups and the members of the same group are paid upon principles which ignore their individual differences of quality.

In constructing salary schedules what elements are taken into account? A number can be detected, of which the chief are: 1. A living wage. 2. Years of experience or age. 3. Length and quality of preparation for the work. 4. Responsibility of the duty performed. 5. Total demand upon the taxpayer which the schedules entail and willingness of the taxpayer to meet the demand. 6. Adjustment over a long period of the supply of teachers to the demand.

Consider these elements separately.

1. A teacher is expected from the first month of work to be self-supporting and to live in a manner befitting the dignity of the profession. Not simply a bare subsistence, but refined recreation and continued culture as well as freedom from economic anxiety about the future are essential to the discharge of the teacher's high duties. On what sum can a young person in New York secure these advantages? That sum must fix the minimum paid even though stark necessity would force sufficient unfortunates to accept less, temporarily, if less were offered. For some years the New York minimum has been \$600 for the first year, an amount, as I shall show later, admitted to be inadequate at present.

2. Normally, by added experience, a teacher for several years becomes more valuable year by year. Therefore an annual increase of salary is granted automatically, falling like the rain upon the just and the unjust, except that the eighth and thirteenth increments are given only upon satisfactory reports of the teacher's work. In practice the increment is hardly ever withheld. But no attempt is made to determine at what age a teacher reaches maximum efficiency. Maximum salary for

grade work in the elementary schools is reached by women in 16 years and by men in 12 years, not because the men reach their maximum efficiency more rapidly than women, but because a more rapid advance to their highest salary has been judged necessary to hold them in the profession. Probably most men and women are as efficient after five or six years' service as they ever become for grade work.

3. A minimum qualification of scholarship, character and experience is set for all teachers, but the minimum for a teacher of the graduating class in the elementary schools is higher than for the lower grades and for the high schools higher than for the graduating class. Therefore the salaries for these upper positions are also higher.

Even if additional academic preparation be not requisite for teaching higher grades, it is desirable to have some "plums" in the schools, that can be given to the pick of the staff for encouragement. Some breaks in the monotony of equal pay for equal age stimulate a body of workers to do their best in competition for the "plums." Therefore extra emoluments have been given to teachers of the seventh and eight years.

4. Further, the greater the responsibility the higher the pay. Principals are paid more than class teachers, superintendents more than principals.

5. Schedules must be so adjusted as not to make upon the taxpayer a larger gross demand than he will honor. Quite properly the cost of education mounts ever higher; but, in any year, there is a maximum which the taxpayer will allow without rebellion, a highest measure compounded of his ability to pay, the value he sets upon education and the influence of the most enlightened citizens upon him. Presumably if teachers were paid the salaries of ambassadors the highest talent in the country would be attracted to the profession. But ambassadorial emoluments, however desirable they might be both for the nation and for the teachers, are practically unattainable. Taxpayers will not adopt, thus far, Froebel's injunction: "Let us live for our children."

6. Over a long period the supply of teachers of requisite quality should equal the demand, and salaries that will attract

the supply must be paid. What is the requisite quality? There's the rub. Examinations tell only part of the truth; college training cannot make "silk purses out of sows' ears." Only roughly can the expert superintendent tell whether the quality among ten thousand teachers is as good today as it was ten years ago. Teaching is an art for which the elusive quality of personality—the product of heredity, early surroundings, home influences, native gifts—is as essential as for painting. Of two painters who have had precisely the same masters and the same experience, one may produce masterpieces fit for an imperial gallery and the other daubs fit for a saloon; just so of two teachers of equal academic training, one may radiate noble, the other ignoble influences. Who shall measure the personality of the teacher or compass the growth of the pupil's intelligence? No radiometer can register the emanations of a teacher's spirit, no X-rays expose the buddings of a child's mind.

When the refined daughters of Massachusetts left the cotton mills of Lowell and their places were supplied by peasant immigrants who could not read the "Lowell Offering" which their predecessors published, the quality of the cotton sheeting did not deteriorate, because the character of the operator is not embodied in cotton goods. But, should the same change occur among teachers, the quality of the children at graduation would inevitably run down; for the teacher's spirit, partly reproduced in the children, is the most precious element of their education. Therefore, no requirement for the schools is more sternly peremptory than that salaries for teachers shall be sufficient to attract a high quality of persons.

At this point we encounter the central claim of the Interborough Association of Women Teachers. For reasons over which the educational authorities have no control men teachers of as high a personal quality as women teachers cannot, over a long period, be secured and held for the same pay. That fact is demonstrated by the present experience of the high schools.

After extended investigation Mr. Frederick H. Paine says:

The board of education appointed during the period September 1909 to February 1910, 100 men, of whom 22 refused appointment, leaving a total of 78 places filled, while 116 vacancies still exist.

The eligible list now contains 61 names, of all classes, who will accept appointment, but, as experience shows, a large proportion will not be available by the time appointment here is offered them. Examinations for license have been held frequently. The last examination, held in November, 1909, added but sixty-four men to the lists, a totally insufficient supply.

Substitutes, an inexperienced teaching force, must be used in boys' schools, and only women can be appointed to mixed high schools.

An inquiry of the deans of various New England and New York colleges shows that the number of graduates of those institutions who enter the teaching profession has greatly diminished within ten years. At Yale University the decrease is from 12 per cent to less than 2 per cent.

On the average, private schools pay higher salaries to men than the public high schools, although paying lower salaries than do the public high schools to women, and, accordingly, women are more attracted to the public high schools.

It is plain, therefore, that more is involved in the request of the Interborough Association than the removal of artificial, irritating distinctions. The recognition of the element of supply and demand involves the recognition of sex among teachers.

Before examining the effects, economic and pedagogic, which would follow upon the adoption of the suggestions of the organized women teachers it must be reiterated that salary schedules, in point of fact, are not and cannot be constructed in conformity to any abstract principle. They are necessarily a resultant of many forces, the best solution of a vexing problem by the authorities, after due consideration of all the factors. Salaries are settled by the pragmatic method. Whatever

schedules work out best in practice, not so much for the teachers as for the children, those schedules are most “just,” most “moral,” most in harmony with the will of the universe.

That the Interborough Association found the problem insoluble upon ideal principles is shown by the latest schedules which they themselves have presented for adoption. These schedules maintain all but one of the elements which appear in the existing schedules; and, even that one, sex, is acknowledged by the provision that teachers of boys’ classes shall receive \$180 a year more than teachers of girls’ classes. This acknowledgment strips their contention of that moral quality with which some have endowed it. “A new commandment I give unto you, that you pay men and women of the same age the same salary” has been presented as the twentieth century addition to the decalogue. But if the priestesses who announce this amendment to the moral law themselves assert that it is harder to teach boys than girls, perhaps educational authorities are not altogether wicked when they acknowledge that it is harder to secure boys than girls as teachers, when they grow up.

Neither do the schedules proposed by the Interborough Association, any more than the official schedules, “provide but one salary for one and the same position.” On the contrary, under them any position between the kindergarten and the seventh grade may be filled by teachers with salaries varying from \$720 to \$1,515. One teacher of the graduating class may receive less than a thousand dollars (the scales are not definite enough to show the exact minimum), another \$2,400. Positions in high schools of exactly the same character and difficulty may be filled by assistant teachers at salaries varying from \$1,300 to \$2,400. The only positions for which the schedules of the Interborough Association “provide but one salary for one and the same position” are the city superintendent of schools, the associate city superintendents, the members of the board of examiners and some directors of special branches.

If the principle of the same salary schedules for men and for women were mandatory, either the women’s salaries might be raised or the men’s salaries reduced. Either process would

have palpable consequences, economic and pedagogic. Consider the results of each method separately.

1. To equalize the salaries of all women who were teaching in the same grades as men, with those of the men employed in such grades, in May 1909, would have entailed a cost that year of \$7,837,662. But since that date men who were teaching in grades below the sixth have been transferred, so that today, it is estimated, the cost would be below seven million dollars per annum. A large part of that increase would be of the nature of a “bonus” to the women, a bonus, say some legislators, no more justifiable than would be an extra price paid for goods by city officers to women because they were charming.

If the board of education, when appointing new teachers, would save no money by appointing women in preference to men, it is certain that the proportion of men appointed, supposing the rates of pay were high enough to attract men at all, would be much increased. Men would drive out women just as women when they were cheaper have driven out men. Most authorities would agree that such a result would be beneficial to the schools, which sadly need more men; and some approve the dogma of “equal pay” because they desire such a result. The same result could be won at much less cost if the board of education determined to ignore the savings to be made by appointing women and, for the sake of keeping the virile elements in the school, should appoint under its own schedules the dearer men.

2. If the salaries of men were reduced so as to conform to the salaries of women the effects would be considerable.

The cost for teachers would decrease by an amount which nobody has cared to waste labor in estimating, because nobody imagines that either the authorities or the men teachers would permit that experiment and the women teachers would be no more content than anybody else to see it tried. Naturally they do not wish the “equal pay” principle to be applied in a way to put no more money into their pockets. Primarily and properly they seek higher salaries; they would burn no incense to a dogma which promised them no increase.

The pedagogical results of lowering the schedules for men would be disastrous, for, unless the standard of quality in candidates were shamefully lowered, new men would not enter the system and the little band of 2,099 men teachers who now add the male influence to the female influence of their 14,974 women colleagues would fast diminish and soon approach extinction. Then the schools would be entirely feminized, an outcome so bad that even enthusiasts for economy hardly dare openly advocate reducing the men's pay.

Is the agitation of the women teachers, then, altogether unjustifiable and doomed to be fruitless? Not at all. Already it has had two good effects.

1. It has called public attention to what Governor Hughes styled "glaring inequalities" in the salary schedules. Since the schedules embody the judgment of their builders on a variety of elements, some of them, such as "personality", quite impalpable, none of them measurable with instruments of precision, the schedules can never satisfy every critic. Always the critic's judgment of the relative values of academic scholarship, experience, technical skill and so on, may differ from the judgment of the authorities. However, the women teachers have convinced the board of education that the existing differentials between men and women are generally too heavy. For example, of the teachers in elementary schools women start at \$600 a year and by yearly increments of \$40 go up to \$1,240 and men start at \$900 a year and by yearly increments of \$105 go up to \$2,150. That difference is not demanded by the circumstances.

But the differences between salaries of teachers of different ages, which are conspicuous in the schedules framed by the Interborough Association, are equally flagrant and open to attack. In fact any schedules which assume that teachers of different ages who are doing analogous work should receive pay for their years as well as for their effort are vulnerable to a logician's spear.

One teacher of two years' experience may possibly do better than another twelve years her senior. The younger may have the divine gift of teaching which comes only by nature; the

older be a mere drudge, a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. Yet the older, under the schedules of the Interborough Association, would continue to receive a much higher salary than the younger. That may be proper, and is certainly unavoidable, but it mocks at logic and at “equal pay for equal work.”

In a large system like New York’s there is always here and there an old teacher, who though getting the maximum salary, is well known to be doing the feeblest work. The logic of equal pay for equal work would require that the salary of such a veteran be pared down to the bone as is done in manual industries, where, under the piece-work system, no account is taken of the age of the worker, but relentlessly the older man or woman is challenged to keep the pace of colleagues in their prime. When sorrow, sickness or old age weakens the powers nobody proposes to increase the rates to make up for lessening speed, but the worn-out worker is thrown aside.

More humanely and with higher logic the worn-out teacher in New York is retired upon a pension. It is known that old age gradually brings weariness and ossification, and the veteran, whose strength has been sucked by successive generations of youngsters, must yield the leadership, for the good of the service, to the younger generation that, in Ibsen’s phrase, is “knocking at the door”. One year the veteran is assumed to be worth the highest salary; the next year she is pensioned off, as if from one week to the next her efficiency had dropped from maximum near to minimum. Actually the powers may have been declining for some years before the teacher’s withdrawal and the strict logician would object, therefore, to the size of the salary received. But abstract logic is no guide. Teachers must be paid and pensioned on pragmatic principles; whatever system works out best for the schools is most desirable.

2. The agitation of the Interborough Association has forced part of the public to admit the need for a general increase of teachers’ salaries, an increase which shall be so distributed as to minimize the inequalities. After the legislature in 1907 had passed a law embodying the women teachers’ demands and repassed it over the veto of Mayor McClellan, Governor Hughes in turn vetoed it, but showed that he thought the

schedules should be revised. In 1907 and again in 1908 a special committee of the board of education, after careful deliberation, recommended tentative new schedules, which were approved by the board. In 1908 and in 1909 the board included in the budget as presented to the board of estimate and apportionment requests for appropriations which would enable it to put the amended schedules into effect. Its request was denied.

Altogether the proposed schedules would entail salary increases for 1910 aggregating \$2,639,762 to 14,751 women and aggregating \$206,215 to 582 men, a total increment, for the first year of operation, of \$2,845,977. Of all the men educators the salaries of 28 per cent would be raised. Of all the women educators the salaries of 98 per cent would be raised. The mass of the women teachers would have their salaries raised about twenty per cent.

This schedule, like all others, is vulnerable at points. Kindergarten teachers will complain because they are treated less generously than grade teachers, for hitherto they have been under the same schedule. But kindergartners have recently glutted the market and one way to persuade them to prepare for other work, where they are more needed, is to make their increases smaller.

The Interborough Association of Women Teachers criticizes the proposed schedules. The salaries of male teachers should not be raised, says the Association, "because these men are already receiving higher salaries than women occupying the same position."

Since no men are employed in the lower five grades, the so-called principle does not affect the majority of the women teachers, those who teach these grades. The board, recognizing that their salaries are inadequate, proposes to enlarge the salaries generously. But the Interborough Association says in effect: "We will not approve an addition of \$2,639,762 to the salaries of women, because at the same time you add \$206,215 to the salaries of men. We demand that the women who, being in the majority and now receiving the smallest salaries, will receive under the board's schedules all the increases which

they expect, shall forego these increases until the board approves further increases exclusively for the better-paid women teachers, aggregating another three or four million dollars.”

So long as the majority of the women teachers, those in the lower grades, by their silence approve the assumption that they desire to sacrifice some two million dollars a year for the sake of the abstract doctrine which their richer sisters propound, so long the board of estimate, always vigilantly watched by the organized tax payers, will have a good excuse for keeping things as they are. Why should any guardians of the public purse incur the dislike of tax payers for the sake of teachers who show no eagerness for the attainable and promise neither gratitude nor contentment? The policy of all or nothing is heroic, but unbusinesslike.

Should the teachers, men and women in harmony, unite with the board of education in a campaign of enlightenment in favor of the tentative schedules, perhaps amended in spots, they might convince the tax payers that the proposed increases are necessary for the following reasons:

1. The cost of living has notoriously increased since the present schedules were established, increased by at least the fifteen to twenty per cent by which the new schedules would increase most salaries. Therefore, in reality, the teachers who secure increases would be getting no higher “purchasing power” than the old schedules were meant to give them. The 1500 men whose salaries would be unaltered, are peacefully accepting a reduced purchasing power.

2. While at one time teaching was the most desirable work open to well-educated women in large numbers, the occupations now open to them are happily increasing. The schools must now compete with commerce, law, medicine, literature and journalism, for women of the best type. Unless the schools offer a career as lucrative as the office, the bar and the desk, the quality of women entering the teaching profession will deteriorate and the children suffer.

3. For men and women of the same ability the standard of living, in all classes, is rising. Each year the nation, and

especially New York City, grows richer, luxuries become comforts and comforts necessities. Everybody, from immigrant to millionaire, expects to live better today than he did two or three decades ago. Houses, food, clothing, holidays, culture, travel—the son demands all of better quality than satisfied the father. Teachers should share this general rise in the standard of living, or their profession will lose caste, and the rising generation will lose the influence of teachers who command public respect.

A survey of the whole situation, then, indicates that the cry “Equal pay for equal work” is as misleading to the teachers, who understand its import, as to the casual hearer, who takes it literally. In the latter it arouses false ideas; in the former false hopes. Like a will o’ the wisp it lures into a morass. Only those who, ignoring its gleam and earnest to make whatever advance is practicable, march steadily along the beaten highway, each year come nearer their goal.

# WOMEN AND THE TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

ALICE HENRY

Editor Woman's Department, *Union Labor Advocate* of  
Chicago.

The story of woman in the labor movement has yet to be written. In its completeness no one knows the story, and those who know sections of it most intimately are too busy living their own parts in that story to be able to pause long enough to play at being its chroniclers. For to be part of a movement is more absorbing than to write about it. Whom then shall we ask? To whom shall we turn for even an imperfect knowledge of the story, at once great and sordid, tragic and commonplace, of woman's side of the labor movement? To whom, you would say, but the worker herself? And where does the worker speak with such clearness, such unfaltering steadiness, as through her union, the organization of her trade?

In the industrial maze the individual worker cannot interpret her own life story from her knowledge of the little patch of life which is all her hurried fingers ever touch. Only an organization can be the interpreter here. Fortunately for the student the organization can act as interpreter, both for the organized women who have been drawn into the labor movement and for those less fortunate who are struggling on single-handed. Organized and unorganized workers almost always come into pretty close relations in one way and another. Besides, the movement in its modern developments is still so young among us that there is scarcely a woman worker in the organizations who has not begun her trade life as an unorganized toiler.

Speaking broadly, the points upon which the trade-union movement concentrates are the raising of wages, the

shortening of hours, the diminution of seasonal work, the abolition or reduction of piece work, with its resultant of speeding-up, the maintaining of sanitary conditions, the enforcement of laws against child labor and other industrial abuses, the abolition of taxes for power, thread and needles, and of unfair fines for petty or unproved offenses. A single case taken from a non-union trade must serve to suggest the conditions that make organization a necessity. Seventeen years ago in the bag and hemp factories of St. Louis, girl experts turned out 460 yards of material in a twelve-hour day, the pay being 24 cents per bolt (of from 60 to 66 yards). These girls earned \$1.84 per day (on the 60-yard bolt). Now a girl cannot hold her job under a thousand yards in a ten-hour day. The fastest possible worker can turn out only 1200 yards, and the price has dropped to 15 cents per 100 yards as against the old rate of 24 cents per bolt of from 60 to 66 yards. The workers have to fill the shuttle every two or three minutes, so that the strain of vigilance is never relaxed. One year is spent in learning the trade, and operators last only three years after that.

How successful organization has been is well shown by numerous examples. In the instances which follow, taken from the convention handbook of the National Woman's Trade Union League, the advantages gained in some of the trades apply to all establishments working under agreement with any and every local union of the national organization. In other cases the diminution of hours, the increase of wages and the improvement of conditions are limited to the factories or shops in certain cities only. Even bearing this qualification in mind, these gains, following in the train of collective bargaining, are sufficiently impressive.

## **SEWING TRADES**

In the sewing trades there are many sub-divisions, including such varied groups of workers as these: home finishers, coat makers, pants makers, vest makers, shirt, collar and cuff makers, overall makers, white goods workers, corset makers, shirtwaist makers, skirt makers, cloak and suit tailors, button-hole makers, lace makers and embroiderers. All employed in

these occupations can belong to one of the two great national unions, the United Garment Workers of America and the International Ladies' Garment Workers. Wherever these unions control the trade they have abolished child labor, have established the eight-hour day and in some cities the forty-four-hour week, have insisted upon sanitary conditions, and have obtained time and a half in wages for overtime work. The general wage has been increased over fifty %.

## **GLOVE WORKERS**

In this trade the union has abolished the practice of compelling a girl to pay for her sewing machine (perhaps \$60 for a \$35 machine) or else to rent it at 50 cents a week. Under non-union conditions she has to buy her own needles and oil, pay 40 cents a week for power, and stand the cost of all breakages. The organization has abolished all these causes of complaint, has reduced hours from twelve to nine and eight and a half, and has established a Saturday half holiday. This union has been very successful in eliminating the pacemaker as a factor in controlling the price of piece work, for the price is now determined by the speed of the average worker, not the fastest one.

## **BOOT AND SHOE WORKERS**

Here the union has increased wages by 40%. Unionized women shoe workers are entitled when sick to \$5 a week benefit for thirteen weeks in one year. There is also a death benefit of \$50, after six months' membership, and \$100 after a two years' membership. All members are entitled to \$4 a week strike pay.

## **LAUNDRY WORKERS**

In one city organization has reduced the hours of work from eighteen and twelve (in the rush season) to nine, and has increased wages 50%. In another city the union has reduced the hours of work from eighteen and twelve to nine, and has

increased wages from \$15 a month to \$9 a week minimum and \$15 a week average.

## **BEER BOTTLERS**

The work done by women and girls in breweries involves standing all day. If they are washers they cannot keep themselves dry, and in winter the open doors keep the great bottling rooms very cold. Broken glass and exploding bottles are constantly injuring the faces and cutting the hands of both washers and labelers. In Chicago organization has reduced the hours from nine to eight. The wages run from \$3.50 to \$5.50 in non-unionized establishments. In one city where the girls are unionized they are paid \$7.20 a week and overtime at the rate of time and a half. Among men this is a highly unionized trade; consequently girls ought everywhere to have the protection of a common organization.

## **CIGAR MAKERS**

There is a great contrast between union factories and some non-union establishments. The union has successfully insisted upon good ventilation, clean floors, walls and toilets, clean paste in little individual jars (to fasten the ends of the cigars), an eight-hour day and no child labor. Among all cigar makers the death rate from tuberculosis is 61% of all deaths, according to government statistics. Among union cigar makers according to the last obtainable report (1905) the tuberculosis death rate was only 24%.

## **ELECTRICAL WORKERS**

The electrical workers' trade is one into which women are coming in increasing numbers because, as one foreman said, they receive 40% less wages than men and do 25% more work. This trade is a long way yet from the ideal of equal pay for equal work, but the union established for the girls a minimum wage scale of \$5 a week at the very first, and last year this was increased to \$6. Hours have been cut from ten a day to eight

and a half on five days of the week and four and a half on Saturday.

## **BINDERY WOMEN**

It would be vain for an individual girl to go to the foreman or the manager in a bindery and refuse to use bronze powder for lettering because it is deadly to the lungs, or to explain that for a girl to work on a numbering machine with her foot at the rate of 25,000 impressions a day is dangerous to her health. But this is just what the locals of bindery women through their delegates are explaining to employers the country over, and employers are heeding them. These organized girls have an eight-hour day and wages have increased by 35 and even 50%. Sick members get a \$3 benefit for thirteen weeks, and at death a benefit of \$50 is paid.

## **TEACHERS**

The teachers of Chicago in the year 1902 could look forward to a maximum salary in the primary grades of \$800, in the grammar grades of \$825. The efforts of their organization, the Teachers' Federation, have raised the maximum salary in the primary grades to \$1,075 and in the grammar grades to \$1,100, an increase of \$275. The money to meet this additional expense has been found for the board of education through the successful tax suit promoted by the Teachers' Federation itself. Teachers' pensions are now on a solid basis. The pension fund is supported by contributions, with a small addition from the public funds. The fact of having this small addition, whose validity has been passed upon by the courts, establishes the right of the public school teacher to a pension from public funds.

## **MUSICIANS**

The American Federation of Musicians has greatly improved conditions for its membership, which includes women. A non-union player at a dance gets from \$2 to \$4 a night and may have to play until daylight. Not so union

players. They can ask \$6 until 2 a. m. and \$1 for every hour thereafter. The Chicago and St. Louis locals have established regulation uniforms for their members, which is a great economy.

## **VAUDEVILLE ARTISTS**

Vaudeville actresses have to be grateful for the safer and more decent conditions which their mixed union has brought to them. Separate and sanitary dressing rooms are now to be found in the unionized five and ten-cent theaters in Chicago. An act which formerly might have had to be repeated fifteen times, cannot be asked for more than eight times on a holiday and four times on other days.

## **WAITRESSES**

Unorganized waitresses often have to work seven days a week and sometimes fourteen hours a day; they have to provide their own uniform and pay for its laundering. Organized waitresses have a ten-hour day and a six-day week. Their wages have risen from \$5 and \$6 to \$7 and \$8 per week and meals. Their uniforms and laundry expenses are found for them. They enjoy a \$3 sick benefit for thirteen weeks and the union pays a \$50 death benefit.

There are some trades which have been organized and which yet record thus far no marked improvement in the condition of the workers. This may be either because the organization has been in existence too short a time or because of other reasons. Among such trades are sheepskin workers, badge, banner and regalia workers, human hair workers and commercial telegraphers. Even in these trades steady educational and organizing work is proceeding. Moreover the union may have been an influence preventing further wage cutting, higher speeding up or the imposition of more overtime.

The trade union is the great school for working girls. There they are taught the principles of collective bargaining. They learn to discuss difficulties with employers, free from the

rasping sense of personal grievance. They learn to give and take with equanimity, to balance a greater advantage against a lesser one. In union meetings and conferences where they meet on an equality with their brothers it is the girl of sober judgment, good humor and ready wit who becomes a leader, and influences her more inexperienced sister to follow her.

The trade union is educating the community as well as the girl. There is a growing tendency among men and women of the teaching, clerical and other non-manual occupations to recognize the common interest of all workers, and to form under one name or another associations to affiliate with the labor movement. One of the largest of these is the Teachers' Federation of Chicago which has now been many years in existence. More recently stenographers' and typists' associations have been formed in New York and Chicago. The formation of actors' and musicians' associations is additional proof of the same spirit.

The influence upon the whole community of organized insistence upon human conditions for the worker is marked. Trade-union standards tend eventually to become the standards toward which all non-union establishments that claim to treat their employees well voluntarily approximate. Trade-union standards are the standards up to which decent non-union employers keep steadily inching along in respect to hours and conditions of work, and often even in respect to that most crucial test of all, wages. Trade-union standards are, in short, always tending to become in the eyes of the public the normal standards in the whole world of industry. Indeed everywhere the paradox is to be noticed that the non-union girl benefits remarkably as the result of the existence of a union in her trade. Under pressure of competition employers frequently state that their trade will not bear shorter hours or higher wages. Curiously enough, such statements are much more frequently made in unorganized than organized trades, and the employers more frequently act up to their statements.

Unions, furthermore, have an important indirect influence on legislation. In trade after trade, the benefits of shorter hours have been gained through organization in states where there was no legislation and no prospect of it. This is seen in many

branches of the garment-making industry, among waitresses, tobacco strippers, printers and bindery women all over the United States. A ten-hour day, a nine-hour day, an eight-hour day, even a forty-four-hour week, for different bodies of these workers, have been for them the fruits of organization. These advantages gained, the evidence of workers who enjoy shorter hours and the experience of employers who conduct their establishments under a system of shorter hours form the strongest and most practical argument by which legislators are influenced to consider the practicability and desirability of the shorter working day.

Trade unions, indeed, cannot beat back the ocean, though they have been known to think they could. They cannot raise wages beyond certain limits, though the obstacles that bar further upward movement in a particular trade may be quite beyond the ken of the wisest in or out of the labor movement. They cannot always prevent wages from falling, whether that fall be expressed in actual cash or measured in purchasing power. International competition, the introduction of machinery, or the opening of fresh reservoirs of cheaper foreign labor may press wages down with irresistible force.

But more and more unions ought to be able to lessen the cruel abruptness with which such changes fall upon the worker. By no known means can the action of economic forces be prevented, but their incidence can and should be altered.

Under our present chaotic no-system every mechanical improvement, every migration of population, the entrance of women into trades followed by men, or even the paltriest change of fashion in shirtwaists or hatpins, may bring in its train frightful suffering and destruction of life and all that makes life valuable, instead of a peaceful shifting of workers and re-alloting of tasks. All this might be largely prevented. The right of the worker, for instance, to demand notice when any great alteration in a factory process is impending would in itself do much to make adjustment to social changes smooth and relatively easy. Great suffering unquestionably resulted from the introduction of the linotype, but it was nothing to what would have been but for the fact that the printers were a strongly organized body and were able to make conditions

with employers when the machine was first introduced. What the printers were able to do on a small scale the organized labor movement ought to be able to do for all workers.

On another side, moreover, the woman trade unionist comes up against a dead wall. No matter what her standing in her union, no matter how justly and fairly she be treated by her men fellow workers in the labor movement, the fact remains that she is not a voter. One hand is tied. Till she has the vote she can not as a member of the union have the same influence upon its policies as if she were a man and a voter, nor outside can her services be of the same value to the union as if she were enfranchised.

As regards her special needs as a woman, her organization does not speak for her, nor can she insist that it shall speak for her as it would do if she were a man. For instance, badly as striking men are often treated at the hands of the courts, striking women fare worse. It was not a trade unionist but a suffragist, Mrs. Rachel Foster Avery, who drew attention to the widely different treatment meted out to the striking chauffeurs and the striking shirtwaist makers in New York City, where the offenses with which the women were charged were far more trivial than those of which the men were accused. Whether it is in an industrial dispute, in the legislature, or in the courts, that woman is struggling for what she considers her rights, it is always political weapons which in the last resort are turned against her, and she stands helpless, for she has no political weapon wherewith she may defend herself and press her claim to attention.

If the trade union be the only audible voice of the worker in any trade, the association of women's unions known as the National Women's Trade Union League is the expression of the women's side of the whole trade-union movement of the United States. It has taken up the special work of organization among women undistracted by the much larger mass of general field work that falls to men. The idea of the league originated with William English Walling, who got the suggestion from observation of the working of the British Women's Trade Union League. Their plan was adapted to suit American conditions. The American league is a federation of

women's trade unions, which admits also organizations such as clubs and societies declaring themselves in sympathy with the cause of labor. It has also a large individual membership composed of trade unionists (men and women) and of other sympathizers. In this broad basis of membership lies its strength. It links into bonds of active practical endeavor after better conditions persons in every class of society, while any tendency to slip into unreal or unpractical methods is checked by the provision that on all boards whether national or local a majority of the members must always be trade-unionist women.

The league platform demands:

1. Organization of all workers into trade unions.
2. Equal pay for equal work.
3. An eight-hour day.
4. A minimum wage scale.
5. Full citizenship for women.
6. All principles involved in the economic program of the American Federation of Labor.

In both its national and its local organizations the league spends much of its energy in the adjustment of labor difficulties among women workers, in giving active assistance in time of strikes and in presenting actual industrial conditions through lectures and literature to universities, churches, clubs and trade unions. It presses home the increasing dangers of industrial overstrain on the health of women, the necessity for collective bargaining, wise labor legislation and full citizenship for women. Through its membership, representing many thousands of working women, the league is able to obtain for the use of social workers, investigators and students actual first-hand information regarding the dangers of wrong industrial conditions.

The reasons why such an organization must be more elastic than a body like the American Federation of Labor, is because of the very different relation in which women stand to organized industry. The connection of the great bulk of women

with their trade is not permanent. Seven years is the average duration of women's wage-earning life. The average woman unionist is a mere girl. An organization of men, in which mature men are the leaders and in which the rank and file join for life, has a solidity and permanence which unaided groups of young girls, groups with membership necessarily fluctuating, can never achieve.

What more right and fitting then that the maternal principle in the community as represented by the motherhood of the country should ally itself with this movement in support of good conditions and happy lives for the future mothers of the country? This is strikingly put in Mrs. Raymond Robins' address as president at the second biennial convention of the National Women's Trade Union League: "It has happily fallen to the lot of the Women's Trade Union League to have charge and supervision of the kindergarten department in the great school of organized labor. It is for this reason that music and merry-making is so essential a feature of our league work, with books and story telling and all that makes for color and music and laughter and that leads to essential human fellowship—a sure foundation for the industrial union of our younger sisters. We know that we need them; they will later know how greatly they needed us."

# **A WOMAN'S STRIKE—AN APPRECIATION OF THE SHIRTWAIST MAKERS OF NEW YORK**

HELEN MAROT

Women's Trade Union League, New York City.

The usual object of monographs on strikes which appear in economic journals is to state impartially both sides of the controversy, so that students and a public more or less remote from labor struggles may estimate their merits. Such monographs are presentations of well-defined facts which are reducible at times to mathematical certainties. They recognize that passionate human feeling has swayed action on both sides and the endeavor is to lift labor disputes from the heat of emotion to intellectual consideration. These monographs may give correct estimates of strikes in industries thoroughly organized both as to capital and labor. Strikes in such industries are often the result of bad business management or a slip in judgment on one side or the other. But the great number of strikes occur in industries imperfectly organized; the passion or emotion which swings the battle is as important a factor as is either an extortionate demand for wages or a flagrant exploitation of wage earners. It is well that the public shall estimate this strike and that, but to do so it must also understand the motive forces.

The present article does not attempt to estimate either the moral or the economic factors in the recent shirtwaist-makers' strike of New York, but to lay before the reader some of those motive forces which may be counted upon in strikes composed of like elements, especially in strikes of women in unorganized trades.

The shirtwaist-makers' "general strike," as it is called, followed an eleven years' attempt to organize the trade. The

union had been unable during this time to affect to any appreciable extent the conditions of work. In its efforts during 1908-9 to maintain the union in the various shops and to prevent the discharge of members who were active union workers, it lost heavily. The effort resolved itself in 1909 into the establishment of the right to organize. The strike in the Triangle Waist Company turned on this issue.

The story of the events leading up to the Triangle strike as told by a leading member of the firm practically agrees with the story told by the strikers. The company had undertaken to organize its employes into a club, with benefits attached. The good faith of the company as well as the working-out of the benefit was questioned by the workers. The scheme failed and the workers joined the waist-makers' union. One day without warning a few weeks later one hundred and fifty of the employes were dropped, the explanation being given by the employers that there was no work. The following day the company advertised for workers. In telling the story later they said that they had received an unexpected order, but admitted their refusal to re-employ the workers discharged the day previous. The union then declared a strike, or acknowledged a lockout, and picketing began.

The strike or lockout occurred out of the busy season, with a large supply at hand of workers unorganized and unemployed. Practical trade unionists believed that the manufacturers felt certain of success on account of their ability to draw to an unlimited extent from an unorganized labor market and to employ a guard sufficiently strong to prevent the strikers from reaching the workers with their appeals to join them. But the ninety girls and sixty men strikers were not practical; they were Russian Jews who saw in the lockout an attempt at oppression. In their resistance, which was instinctive, they did not count their chances of winning; they felt that they had been wronged and they rebelled. This quick resentment is characteristic of the Russian Jewish factory worker. The men strikers were intimidated and lost heart, but the women carried on the picketing, suffering arrest and abuse from the police and the guards employed by the manufacturers. At the end of the

third week they appealed to the women's trade union league to protect them, if they could, against false arrest.

The league is organized to promote trade unions among women, and its membership is composed of people of leisure as well as of workers. A brief inspection by the league of the action of the pickets, the police, the strike breakers and the workers in the factory showed that the pickets had been intimidated, that the attitude of the police was aggressive and that the guards employed by the firm were insolent. The league acted as complainant at police headquarters and cross-examined the arrested strikers; it served as witness for the strikers in the magistrates' court and became convinced of official prejudice in the police department against the strikers and a strong partisan attitude in favor of the manufacturers. The activity and interest of women, some of whom were plainly women of leisure, was curiously disconcerting to the manufacturers and every effort was used to divert them. At last a young woman prominent in public affairs in New York and a member of the league, was arrested while acting as volunteer picket. Here at last was "copy" for the press.

During the five weeks of the strike, previous to the publicity, the forty thousand waist makers employed in the several hundred shops in New York were with a few exceptions here and there unconscious of the struggle of their fellow workers in the Triangle. There was no means of communication among them, as the labor press reached comparatively few. In the weeks before the general strike was called the forty thousand shirtwaist makers were forty thousand separate individuals. So far were they from being conscious of their similarity that they might have been as many individual workers employed in ways as widely separated as people of different trades, or as members of different social groups.

The arrests of sympathizers aroused sufficient public interest for the press to continue the story for ten days, including in the reports the treatment of the strikers. This furnished the union its opportunity. It knew the temper of the workers and pushed the story still further through shop propaganda. After three weeks of newspaper publicity and

shop propaganda the reports came back to the union that the workers were aroused. It was alarming to the friends of the union to see the confidence of the union officers before issuing the call to strike. Trade unionists reminded the officers that the history of general strikes in unorganized trades was the history of failure. They invariably answered with a smile of assurance, "Wait and see."

The call was issued Monday night, November 22nd, at a great mass meeting in Cooper Union addressed by the president of the American Federation of Labor. "I did not go to bed Monday night;" said the secretary of the union, "our Executive Board was in session from midnight until six a. m. I left the meeting and went out to Broadway near Bleecker street. I shall never again see such a sight. Out of every shirtwaist factory, in answer to the call, the workers poured and the halls which had been engaged for them were quickly filled." In some of these halls the girls were buoyant, confident; in others there were girls who were frightened at what they had done. When the latter were asked why they had come out in sympathy, they said; "How could you help it when a girl in your shop gets up and says, 'Come girls, come, all the shirtwaist makers are going out'?"

As nearly as can be estimated, thirty thousand workers answered the call, or seventy-five per cent of the trade. Of these six thousand were Russian men; two thousand Italian women; possibly one thousand American women and about twenty or twenty-one thousand Russian Jewish girls. The Italians throughout the strike were a constantly appearing and disappearing factor but the part played by the American girls was clearly defined.

The American girls who struck came out in sympathy for the "foreigners" who struck for a principle, but the former were not in sympathy with the principle; they did not want a union; they imagined that the conditions in the factories where the Russian and Italian girls worked were worse than their own. They are in the habit of thinking that the employers treat foreign girls with less consideration, and they are sorry for them. In striking they were self-conscious philanthropists. They were honestly disinterested and as genuinely sympathetic

as were the women of leisure who later took an active part in helping the strike. They acknowledged no interests in common with the others, but if necessary they were prepared to sacrifice a week or two of work. Unfortunately the sacrifice required of them was greater than they had counted on. The "foreigners" regarded them as just fellow workers and insisted on their joining the union, in spite of their constant protestation, "We have no grievance; we only struck in sympathy." But the Russians failed to be grateful, took for granted a common cause and demanded that all shirtwaist makers, regardless of race or creed, continue the strike until they were recognized by the employers as a part of the union. This difference in attitude and understanding was a heavy strain on the generosity of the American girls. It is believed, however, that the latter would have been equal to what their fellow workers expected, if their meetings had been left to the guidance of American men and women who understood their prejudices. But the Russian men trusted no one entirely to impart the enthusiasm necessary for the cause. It was the daily, almost hourly, tutelage which the Russian men insisted on the American girls' accepting, rather than the prolongation of the strike beyond the time they had expected, that sent the American girls back as "scabs." There were several signs that the two or three weeks' experience as strikers was having its effect on them, and that with proper care this difficult group of workers might have been organized. For instance, "scab" had become an opprobrious term to them during their short strike period, and on returning to work they accepted the epithet from their fellow workers with great reluctance and even protestation. Their sense of superiority also had received a severe shock; they could never again be quite so confident that they did not in the nature of things belong to the labor group.

If the shirtwaist trade in New York had been dominated by any other nationality than the Russian, it is possible that other methods of organizing the trade would have been adopted rather than the general strike. The Russian workers who fill New York factories are ever ready to rebel against suggestion of oppression and are of all people the most responsive to an idea to which is attached an ideal. The union officers

understood this and it was because they understood the Russian element in the trade that they answered, "Wait and see," when their friends urged caution before calling a general strike in an unorganized trade. They knew their people and others did not.

The feature of the strike which was as noteworthy as the response of thirty thousand unorganized workers, was the unyielding and uncompromising temper of the strikers. This was due not to the influence of nationality, but to the dominant sex. The same temper displayed in the shirtwaist strike is found in other strikes of women, until we have now a trade-union truism, that "women make the best strikers." Women's economic position furnishes two reasons for their being the best strikers; one is their less permanent attitude toward their trade, and the other their lighter financial burdens. While these economic factors help to make women good strikers, the genius for sacrifice and the ability to sustain, over prolonged periods, response to emotional appeals are also important causes. Working women have been less ready than men to make the initial sacrifice that trade-union membership calls for, but when they reach the point of striking they give themselves as fully and as instinctively to the cause as they give themselves in their personal relationships. It is important, therefore, in following the action of the shirtwaist makers, to remember that eighty per cent were women, and women without trade-union experience.

When the shirtwaist strikers were gathered in separate groups, according to their factories, in almost every available hall on the East Side, the great majority of them received their first instruction in the principles of unionism and learned the necessity of organization in their own trade. The quick response of women to the new doctrine gave to the meetings a spirit of revival. Like new converts they accepted the new doctrine in its entirety and insisted to the last on the "closed shop". But it was not only the enthusiasm of new converts which made them refuse to accept anything short of the closed shop. In embracing the idea of solidarity they realized their own weakness as individual bargainers. "How long," the one-week or two-weeks-old union girls said, "do you think we

could keep what the employer says he will give us without the union? Just as soon as the busy season is over it would be the same as before.”

Instructions were given to each separate group of strikers to make out a wage scale if they thought they should be paid an increase, or to make out other specific demands before conferring with their employers on terms of settlement. The uniform contract drawn up by the union, beside requiring a union shop, required also the abolition of the sub-contract system; payment of wages once a week; a fifty-two-hour week; limitation of overtime in any one day to two hours and to not later than 9 p. m.; also payment for all material and implements by employers. Important as were the specific demands, they were lightly regarded in comparison with the issue of a union shop.

Nothing can illustrate this better than the strikers' treatment of the arbitration proposal which was the outcome of a conference between their representatives and the employers. In December word came to the union secretary that the manufacturers would probably consider arbitration if the union was ready to submit its differences to a board. The officers made reply in the affirmative and communicated their action at once to the strikers. Many of the strikers had no idea what arbitration meant, but as it became clear to them they asked, some of them menacingly, “Do you mean to arbitrate the recognition of the union?” It took courage to answer these inexperienced unionists and uncompromising girls that arbitration would include the question of the union as well as other matters. The proposition was met with a storm of opposition. When the strikers at last discovered that all their representatives counseled arbitration, with great reluctance they gave way, but at no time was the body of strikers in favor of it. A few days later, when the arbitrators who represented them reported that the manufacturers on their side refused to arbitrate the question of the union, they resumed their strike with an apparent feeling of security and relief. Again later they showed the same uncompromising attitude when their representatives in the conference reported back that the manufacturers would concede important points in regard to

wage and factory conditions, but would not recognize the union. The recommendations of the conference were rejected without reservation by the whole body.

The strikers at this time lost some of their sympathizers. An uncompromising attitude is good trade-union tactics up to a certain point, but the shirtwaist makers were violating all traditions. Their refusal to accept anything short of the closed shop indicated to many a state of mind which was as irresponsible as it was reckless. Their position may have been reckless, but it was not irresponsible. Their sometime sympathizers did not realize the endurance of the women or the force of their enthusiasm, but insisted on the twenty to thirty thousand raw recruits becoming sophisticated unionists in thirteen short weeks.

It was after the new year that the endurance of the girls was put to the test. During the thirteen weeks benefits were paid out averaging less than \$2 for each striker. Many of them refused to accept benefits, so that the married men could be paid more. The complaints of hardships came almost without exception from the men. Occasionally it was discovered that a girl was having one meal a day and even at times none at all.

In spite of being underfed and often thinly clad, the girls took upon themselves the duty of picketing, believing that the men would be more severely handled. Picketing is a physical and nervous strain under the best conditions, but it is the spirit of martyrdom that sends young girls of their own volition, often insufficiently clad and fed, to patrol the streets in mid-winter with the temperature low and with snow on the ground, some days freezing and some days melting. After two or three hours of such exposure, often ill from cold, they returned to headquarters, which were held for the majority in rooms dark and unheated, to await further orders.

It takes uncommon courage to endure such physical exposure, but these striking girls underwent as well the nervous strain of imminent arrest, the harsh treatment of the police, insults, threats and even actual assaults from the rough men who stood around the factory doors. During the thirteen weeks over six hundred girls were arrested; thirteen were

sentenced to five days in the workhouse and several were detained a week or ten days in the Tombs.

The pickets, with strangely few exceptions, during the first few weeks showed remarkable self-control. They had been cautioned from the first hour of the strike to insist on their legal rights as pickets, but to give no excuse for arrest. Like all other instructions, they accepted this literally. They desired to be good soldiers and every nerve was strained to obey orders. But for many the provocations were too great and retaliation began after the fifth week. It occurred around the factories where the strikers were losing, where peace methods were failing and where the passivity of the pickets was taunted as cowardice. But curiously enough, during this time the arrests in proportion to the number still on strike were fewer than during the earlier period and the sentences in the courts were lighter. The change in the treatment of pickets came with the change in the city administration. Apparently, peaceful picketing during the first two months of the strike had been treated as an unlawful act.

The difficulty throughout the strike of inducing the strikers to accept compromise measures increased as the weeks wore on. However, seventeen contracts were signed in these latter weeks which did not give the union a voice in determining conditions of work of all workers in the factory. During the ten weeks previous, contracts were signed which covered all the workers in three hundred and twelve factories. Before the strike every shop was "open" and in most of them there was not a union worker. In thirteen short weeks three hundred and twelve shops had been converted into "closed" or full union contract shops.

But the significance of the strike is not in the actual gain to the shirtwaist makers of three hundred union shops, for there was great weakness in the ranks of the opposition. Trade-union gains, moreover, are measured by what an organization can hold rather than by what it can immediately gain. The shirtwaist makers' strike was characteristic of all strikes in which women play an active part. It was marked by complete self-surrender to a cause, emotional endurance, fearlessness and entire willingness to face danger and suffering. The strike at

times seemed to be an expression of the woman's movement rather than the labor movement. This phase was emphasized by the wide expression of sympathy which it drew from women outside the ranks of labor.

It was fortunate for strike purposes but otherwise unfortunate that the press, in publishing accounts of the strike, treated the active public expression of interest of a large body of women sympathizers with sensational snobbery. It was a matter of wide public comment that women of wealth should contribute sums of money to the strike, that they should admit factory girls to exclusive club rooms, and should hold mass meetings in their behalf. If, as was charged, any of the women who entered the strike did so from sensational or personal motives, they were disarmed when they came into contact with the strikers. Their earnestness of purpose, their complete abandon to their cause, their simple acceptance of outside interest and sympathy as though their cause were the cause of all, was a bid for kinship that broke down all barriers. Women who came to act as witnesses of the arrests around the factories ended by picketing side by side with the strikers. These volunteer pickets accepted, moreover, whatever rough treatment was offered, and when arrested, asked for no favors that were not given the strikers themselves.

The strike brought about adjustments in values as well as in relationships. Before the strike was over federations of professional women and women of leisure were endorsing organization for working women, and individually these women were acknowledging the truth of such observations as that made by one of the strikers on her return from a visit to a private school where she had been invited to tell about the strike. Her story of the strike led to questions in regard to trade unions. On her return her comment was, "Oh they are lovely girls, they are so kind—but I didn't believe any girls could be so ignorant."

The strike was an awakening for working women in many industries, and it did more to give the women of the professions and the women of leisure a new point of view and a realization of the necessity for organization among working

women than any other single event in the history of the labor movement in this country.

# VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR WOMEN

SARAH LOUISE ARNOLD

Dean of Simmons College, Boston

Popular discussions of industrial training are rendered difficult by the fact that the subject has as yet no fixed vocabulary. Professional training, vocational training, industrial training, manual training, are often used interchangeably. We shall use the phrase "vocational training," and shall understand it to include such education as aims to secure efficiency in the occupation followed for self-maintenance, whether such occupation be the merest task or the complex administration of a business or a profession.

It is evident that such training involves education for general intelligence, as well as technical training with a specific end in view. It is also clear that the training may be brief and elementary if the task is simple; the trade school, or apprenticeship, or even the brief course of lessons given by another worker may suffice where the work calls for little skill and involves little variety. As the task grows in difficulty, requiring application of principles, demanding judgment, broad experience, ability to deal with and to direct others, the training must be proportionately increased. The demand for general intelligence also grows correspondingly.

The instrument for vocational training, then, may be the shop, in which knowledge of the art is handed along from one worker to another through simple apprenticeship; or the trade school, in which a brief course of instruction is given, with emphasis upon technical details and swiftness of accomplishment; or the technical college, which provides longer courses of instruction, combining academic and technical programs, alternating the lecture room with the shop; or actual apprenticeship in business; or professional training,

superadded to the ordinary program afforded by school and college.

Is vocational training necessary for women? As a matter of fact, women are already in trades and professions. For years they have been filling our factories, stores, offices and schools. We have made public provision for the preparation of teachers, and many states likewise train women for the practice of medicine. Hospitals have provided training schools for nurses. In these fields some provision has been made for the appropriate education of women for their work. Enough experience has been accumulated to show that training for the vocation is always beneficial, and usually essential.

The ordinary woman, however, has little specific training for the most important work which she has to do in the world. It is left to her mother alone to teach her how to maintain her home and to meet the needs of her children. If the mother is ignorant, the daughter is untaught, and a long train of evils follows in consequence. As this matter concerns the general welfare the evils should be prevented, if possible, by general education.

It is generally conceded that in preparing a girl for her work we have to consider two vocations as probable or possible:— first, maintenance of the home, with the care and rearing of children; second, the vocation by which self-maintenance may be assured in the period before she becomes a homemaker, or during the time when she is obliged to support herself and her children. Since the first or major vocation is essential to the general welfare it must always be linked with the second or minor vocation. Therefore no work for woman can be urged or defended which tends to lessen her efficiency in her major occupation.

Yet at this point we neither think nor speak clearly. Vocational training for women would be less complex if their economic contribution as homemakers were fairly considered. A woman is said to “earn her living” only when she works outside her own home, receiving money for her work. The moment her wage-earning power is transferred to her home she is supposed to be dependent upon father or husband, no

matter how great the compensating service which she renders. A teacher earning twelve hundred dollars a year resigns her position, marries, cares for home, husband and children, transferring her income-earning power to the duties required in the service of the household. Is she not still self-supporting,—more than self-supporting? Out of the family income, through her ability, knowledge and skill, she is enabled to save a fair margin. If the family were bereft of her contribution the margin would be quickly swallowed by wages paid to housekeeper, nurse, seamstress, cook and others, who together fail to fill her place. Many a family becomes a public charge when the mother dies. If it were possible to fix according to some scale the economic value of woman's contribution in the home, it would immediately be evident that the training which makes her a better and more efficient homemaker is of direct economic advantage to the community. Vagueness of preparation would probably disappear with clearer understanding of the relation of her work to the public good.

One of the first principles of vocational training for women, then, is that such training should insure greater ability, judgment and skill in the major vocation, thus securing the intelligent maintenance of the home. The second principle, or corollary, is that the minor vocation should be so conducted as not to interfere with the fulfilment of the first or major task.

The need of vocational training for women presses most heavily where self-support is imperative in early years. Discussion of the subject may be clouded by the fact that the obvious need varies widely—according to the opportunity and environment of the group under discussion. For the sake of clearness, then, we will consider three groups. In the first group we count the young girls who are forced to leave school at the earliest possible or permitted age in order to engage in some specific occupation for self-support or to assist in the support of the family. In this large company we find most of the daughters of recent immigrants, as well as many other girls whose families have very limited means, or who have suffered stress through illness or other unusual hardship. The farm, the factory, the office, the store, are already employing these girls

in large numbers, unskilled in the beginning and often, except as to some small task, unskilled in the end.

Should such girls be deprived of the essential instruction formerly accredited to the home, and go from their years of employment to their future homes as ignorantly as they entered upon their daily task in the shop? Are they in any sense fitted for the larger responsibility which the major vocation brings? Are their years of trade experience made profitable by wise choice and fair preparation, or do they encounter by chance the immediate demand of some trade, using them for its advantage as part of a machine demanding swiftness and dexterity in a single operation, repeated countless times, and considering the salability of the product and not the welfare of the young worker?

If such conditions exist—and we know that they do—these girls should be as far as possible protected by suitable education in advance, which should develop skill and judgment, acquaint them in some measure with fair trade conditions, make choice of occupation to some degree possible, and safeguard their health and the interests of their future homes. Concerning the need of such trade training there is now little disagreement—the fact is generally conceded. The main question is whether it should be supplied at public expense, and by what means. Private philanthropy, by intelligent and generous experiment, has paved the way.

The second group to be considered may roughly include the girls whose entrance upon gainful occupations is longer delayed, but who must as a matter of course look forward to self-maintenance. These girls avail themselves of the opportunities afforded by the ordinary program of the graded schools, and may or may not add some portion or all of the high-school course. They have had a more generous inheritance than the first group. Their homes are usually better endowed, or they may be the younger sisters of members of the first group. Their need is less pressing—but by no means less real. The school should test, and if need be, supplement their preparation for the responsibilities centering upon the home. It should also make them to some degree technically ready for a wholesome occupation, affording a living wage.

Otherwise they too are at the mercy of trade conditions, earning a scant income at an employment selected by chance.

To the third group will be assigned all women whose opportunities of education exceed high-school training. For them vocational preparation may be assigned to the college period or may possibly follow it.

It is often assumed that academic training in itself gives technical skill, that the young woman who graduates from college is thereby prepared for any task which may confront her. This is a misconception of the function of the college. If it does its work well, a good foundation is laid, certain aptitudes and habits of thought are developed, which should make progress in any art or craft more rapid, and judgment more intelligent. On the other hand, long years given to purely academic work, away from the normal conditions of the working world, permit certain powers to lie dormant. Students are trained to deliberation rather than to action. The college woman may need adjustment to the conditions of the shop, the office, or even the school. Training which presupposes the task and keeps it in mind certainly advances the general preparation of any student for her work. If we acquaint her with the immediate problems of the task the necessary period of apprenticeship is shortened and rapid advancement assured. Such training seems reasonable. Why should the education of the girl lie completely outside her work in the world? Why should so deep a gulf be fixed between the school and the later task?

The vocational aim need not diminish the so-called cultural value of a subject. Need the study of bacteriology become less "broadening" because the nurse-to-be recognizes its relation to her future work, knowing that she is to apply its truths in sanitation and disinfection, in antiseptic precautions, in securing surgical cleanliness? Is the "social worker" of tomorrow a less intelligent student of economics to-day because she is conscious of the problem with which she personally is to deal? On the other hand, is a girl more liberally educated because for four "finishing" years of her education her program of studies tacitly ignores all reference to the sacred responsibility which she is so soon to assume—or

which she must help others to meet? Rather, is not the whole course of study enlightened and informed by recognition of the goal and by conscious endeavor to reach it? If this be true, education which includes vocational training is far more liberal than that which ignores or excludes it.

It seems to the writer that the trend of educational thought is in this direction. The college woman as well as her less favored sister must be trained, “not simply to be good, but to be good for something”, not simply to be wise, but to be fully and definitely prepared for service;—and this conception is perhaps the most important contribution of higher education to the advancement of vocational training. Remote as it may seem, it nevertheless influences the general ideal. We cannot expect the average parent to take pains to insure in his daughter’s education the thing which the college despises.

If we accept the proposition that the maintenance of the home is woman’s major vocation, all women are included in the group for whom vocational training is essential. The responsibility of providing such instruction is divided between home and school. Exactly as practise under shop conditions is essential for complete industrial training, so practise in a home with wise guidance under normal conditions is indispensable to the best preparation for maintaining a home. Girls who are so fortunate as to live in homes where this instruction is afforded are therefore least in need of supplemental instruction in the public school or other instruction provided for the purpose. The girl who is most in need of industrial training for self maintenance is also likely to be in greatest need of training for home-keeping. Unless she is taught better she will perpetuate the same type of home from which she has sprung, and this in itself is a menace to the community. There is, then, a double reason for providing adequate training in home matters for girls in the more favored homes. Out of their abundance they must help lift the standard of those who are less favored. Home training, however, must be supplemented by general school instruction which approves the higher standard of living, and shows its relation to the community. It is to the advantage of both these groups that standards of right living should be set forth in the schools and approved by them.

It follows that the largest possible influence is inherent in the position of the college woman whose training leads her to recognize the relation of the home to the community, who fits herself to assume her own responsibilities intelligently, and who uses her influence in lifting the standard of the homes which have been less intelligently administered. The college has an indispensable part to play in the development of vocational training. As soon as the college for women incorporates into its accepted program courses which will assist in conscious preparation for the maintenance of the home, the standard of living throughout the country will feel its beneficent influence.

The vocational aim being openly and generally accepted, the public schools will provide for appropriate training. This will include: 1. Provision of courses tending toward intelligent home administration in all programs outlined for women and girls. 2. Some means of testing proficiency in these arts and principles, however acquired, so that at least a minimum amount of preparation will be exacted of all girls. 3. The establishment of centers where household administration can be taught by example and practise as well as by precept. By means of supplementary vacation schools, evening schools and continuation schools, housekeepers, young mothers and others in need of specific instruction may receive the necessary help exactly as the plumber may now reinforce his knowledge through a course in an evening school.

The agencies thus far enumerated will provide the elementary instruction immediately required. Such instruction, however, will not be possible unless suitable teachers are provided, and these must naturally be women of large opportunity and experience. This presupposes higher courses in technical schools or colleges which consider the problem in the large and train teachers and workers for leadership. Again it becomes clear that the college should establish proper technical courses.

The need of three agencies for vocational training is apparent: for the immediate need of the young beginner, the trade school; for the middle group, the technical high school; for the leader, the technical college.

The trade school and the vocational center meet the immediate need of the young worker. Exactly as the girl from the poor and meager home must depend upon intelligent instruction to raise her standard of living, so her judgment and skill must be reinforced when she confronts the problem of self-maintenance. She is pushed by necessity into the ranks of wage-earners, knowing nothing of the field she is entering, and she must make the best terms she can with those who take advantage of her ignorance. As an unskilled worker she must follow the crowd and take what she can get. General schooling has left the hand unskilled and the judgment untrained. She has neither knowledge of her own ability, nor the immediate advantage of a known employment. She is entitled to instruction which considers not trade profit alone but the advantage of the worker, which makes possible intelligent choice of the best course available and shortens the period of unpaid apprenticeship. In short, the education which she sorely needs as she faces self-maintenance is specific preparation for wage earning and the conditions involved in it.

Two conditions are essential to this training: first, a thread of manual vocational work throughout the ordinary school program for all girls, to train hand and eye and develop taste and judgment along practical lines; second, special schools for industrial training, with brief, intensive courses, to which girls may be sent for a preparatory period when facing the necessity of self-maintenance, the minimum requirement of general training having been covered in the ordinary school. These centers of industrial or trade training should be separate from the academic centers and should supply as far as possible the conditions of apprenticeship. They should be free from the fixed classifications and grades of the school, and should afford illustrations and types of vocational experience. To such public provision as may be made for such centers, private philanthropy will for a long while bring its aid, for vocational training must be tied to individual conditions and must ask for coöperation from manufacturer and employer. Supervised apprenticeship in chosen places of work will for a time take the place of organized training schools, as for example, in the case of the hospital dietitian, the house decorator, and the

photographer. But elementary courses, requiring accuracy, speed, and an ordinary degree of skill, may even now be provided by the school. The seamstress, the machine operator, the saleswoman, the typewriter, the clerk, the bookkeeper may be trained in such centers.

The technical high school meets the needs of the second group by providing courses which develop manual dexterity, and acquaint the student with the outlines of some practical employment. Notable examples of such schools in New England are the technical high schools of Newton, Springfield, and Boston. In these schools the academic requirement is lessened and courses are arranged in sewing, dressmaking, millinery, cooking, laundry work, household decoration, and sanitation, with ample training in commercial subjects and preparation for clerical work, including stenography, typewriting and bookkeeping. So far as possible the school product is expected to be of service just like the ordinary commercial product. In one school the girls prepare the luncheons which are served to instructors and classes. In another the garments made are sold to cover the cost of material. These schools provide adequate instruction in household arts and at the same time pave the way for a useful vocation. The numbers that flock to them testify to the demand for such training, and many girls who otherwise would have withdrawn at the end of the grammar-school course are glad to remain and profit by the practical opportunity thus afforded. Already the effect of the instruction is shown in increased wage-earning power. Those who have followed the movement are equally sure that the individual homes profit by the vocational training.

An interesting example of the technical college is afforded by the recent development of Simmons College in Boston. This college was endowed by its founder, John Simmons, as an institution through whose offices women might be prepared for self-maintenance through appropriate training in art, science and industry. The trustees to whom the gift was confided made a careful study of the problem of education for self-maintenance, and eight years ago the college opened its doors. It provided courses of training for high school

graduates, the programs in every case assuring technical instruction for certain fields of work, with the related academic training necessitated by the task. The work attempted is indicated by the various departments—household economics, library training, secretarial training, training in science (including preparation for nursing and for the study of medicine), and training for social service. The regular programs cover four years.

One hundred and twenty-five students appeared the first year; in the fifth, the college numbered over six hundred. The demand for its graduates has been constant. The register of graduates indicates this demand and shows the variety of positions for which the students have been technically trained and which they are now acceptably filling. The range of compensation exceeds that of the average college graduate, and in some fields is far above it. This is particularly true where executive ability, creative imagination, and the power of directing others are essential. In such positions technical training shows its worth.

The work of the secretary illustrates the need of technical training. The young woman who enters the course arranged for the secretarial school knows in advance something of the scope and character of the duties awaiting her. She knows that she must possess technical skill, that she must become an accurate and expert stenographer and typewriter, must understand accounts, must be able to file letters and find them after they have been filed, must transcribe dictation whatever the vocabulary involved, and must be familiar with business methods. She cannot follow the prescribed technical courses without becoming familiar with the personal requirements as well,—dignity, reserve, professional honor, promptness, patience, courtesy, adherence to contract, responsibility for service. All these are clearly set forth in the preparation of the secretary. This technical preparation is added to academic training, including English, modern languages, certain courses in science, economics, psychology and ethics, as in the ordinary college. At the end of the course the student is technically prepared for a position as college registrar, secretary to president or professor, to author or publisher, to

lawyer or physician. She soon becomes capable of research or of executive organization. She commands from the beginning a better compensation than the apprentice could possibly receive. Already experience has shown the economic value of the training. Similar experience has proved the wisdom of vocational courses outlined for managers of institutions, for dietitians in hospitals, for stewards, for directors of lunchrooms, for visitors to the poor, for librarians, nurses and social workers.

“What is my work to be? How can I prepare myself to do it successfully and through it to minister to human need?” These are the questions which the student is constantly asking as she confronts her task. The very presence and recognition of the task give point to the preparation and prevent it from being a mere course of training for one’s own sake.

Conference with parents as well as with students shows the origin of the demand for vocational training in colleges. The assured expectation of self-maintenance; the desire to be prepared for self-maintenance, should necessity arise; the recognition of the necessity of preparation for home responsibilities; the demand for executive experts with an understanding of industrial conditions; the dearth of workers properly trained for their task; the taste and liking for practical affairs; the desire to be of definite service in the world—all these are factors in the student’s demand for vocational training. The woman with one talent emerges from the course prepared to perform some one task well and glad to meet its demands. It is a privilege and not a burden to be shirked. The ten-talent woman goes out with the power to modify circumstances, to improve conditions, to direct enterprises, to assume executive control. In either case the vocational aim is essential.

Already trade schools, technical high schools and technical colleges are answering the demand for vocational training, and proving the existence of the need. Public opinion asks that woman be trained for her work. The one thing needful is that the school, as a public servant, shall come to recognize its true relation to this economic problem.

# **TRAINING THE YOUNGEST GIRLS FOR WAGE EARNING**

## **SYSTEMS TO BE FOUND AT PRESENT IN EUROPE AND AMERICA**

MARY SCHENCK WOOLMAN

Professor of Domestic Art, Teachers College, Columbia University, and Director of the Manhattan Trade School for Girls

At the present time, even though the work has been but lately begun, excellent examples of trade and vocational education for girls can be seen in both Europe and America. The European schools have long since passed the experimental stage and are usually a regular part of the system of public instruction, supported by governmental grants. On the other hand with us this class of training, being new and as yet in a more or less tentative stage, is chiefly in private hands. The foreign schools give us valuable suggestions, but the direct copy of their work, successful as it is according to the special needs of paternal governments, is not altogether fitted to a growing democracy like the United States. National desires and needs plus the requirements of the community where the schools are placed must influence the trades selected, the course of study and the methods of instruction in every good school. European systems are adapted to the national and municipal conditions of their varied peoples.

The majority of the professional schools for girls abroad are planned for the middle classes who are in fairly comfortable circumstances and can therefore pay fees and take several years for training. It is only incidentally that such institutions help the poorer working people. With us such instruction must be arranged for all classes. It is no unusual thing to hear those who have visited the professional schools abroad recommend the incorporation of such instruction into our educational

system to help wage earners, forgetting that four or five-year trade courses, often with fees and competitive examinations for entrance, would be impossible for the daughters of the poor working classes in our large industrial cities. Our problem deals with the poorest as well as the well-to-do, the foreigner and the native-born.

The meeting of the need of the lowest-class worker is perhaps more pressing with us, for in European countries children are apt to continue in the occupation of their parents, and labor on the farm or at small home trades or in little shops or markets, as their ancestors did before them. Lines of class demarcation greatly effect schemes of education in Europe, and such discrimination is accepted as necessary. With us on the other hand the workers of the lowest rank are always struggling to get ahead, hence our schools must allow for such upward movement. Moreover, the wages of workers in this group are at the lowest figure, as they are forced by poverty to accept any wage they can get. The schools, then, must also study the industrial condition of the group and improve it.

Different types of education have been organized to train the youthful workers who rush into positions the moment the law will allow them to obtain working papers. The girls of this type cannot take advantage of the *Ecoles Professionnelles* of France, Italy and Belgium, of the *Frauenarbeitsschulen* of Germany or of the vocational and technical high schools of America. They have not the requisite education for entrance in the majority of cases and they have at best but a few months or a year to spare for training. The schools which have been planned to aid them in self-support may be grouped roughly under the following heads:

1. Elementary Vocational Schools.—Industrial training of a general character in the last two or three grades of the elementary school, which sends the pupils into life with a good practical working foundation.

2. Continuation Schools.—Weekday or Sunday classes for workers under sixteen years of age, which will help them to obtain a further practical education while they are working for self-support.

3. Apprenticeship, Trade or Factory Schools.—Special trade training after the compulsory school age is passed or in the year following graduation from the elementary school, consisting of shop practice which can be taken by those who can still give a little additional time to training and who can thus be prepared to enter some good trade or business position closed to the untrained. Girls can thus enter industry with the ability to make a living wage and with the hope of rising.

1. The elementary vocational school aims to help the poorest and youngest workers. As large numbers of girls in the great industrial cities of the world are forced, on account of the poverty of their families, to go to work as soon as they reach the age when the law allows them to take out working papers, this class of school aims to provide them with an education immediately available for use. The *Volksschulen* of Germany and the *Ecoles Primaires* of France and Belgium have tried to meet this situation by making handwork compulsory through each year of the school. The American public school has done this intermittently, but now that the country is awake to the needs of the working class, severe criticism is heard everywhere of the general trend of our common schools in helping the few who go on to higher education, but doing little for the many who do not. Investigation of the mental and manual condition of the great body of our young wage earners shows them unable to use their hands well or to utilize their academic education. The unskilled trades which alone are open to them do not require much use of their academic education which after a year or two is almost forgotten. If they manage to get into the better positions they are unable to hold them, for their education has not been of the kind to help them practically in trade. The trouble is not that the education is not good, but that it is not put to practical use by these young wage earners after they leave school.

Workers of the lowest grade in the large industrial cities of the United States have to face a difficult economic problem. The father can seldom make enough to support his family well, so the mother is compelled to assist. The children as they reach fourteen, usually before they have completed the elementary school, are forced to take any position they can get, whether

healthful or not, whether offering opportunities or not. These fourteen-year-old workers are too young to go to school at night to continue their education, for their strength is sapped by day work; they are too poor to go to a trade school, for their wage cannot be given up by their families and the public school can offer them no more than free education (except in rare instances). Competitive examinations to obtain a supporting scholarship are generally beyond their reach, for they are handicapped by foreign birth, underfeeding and lack of mental acumen. As a consequence they are easily distanced in scholarship by the children of the middle-class workers who need the help less. The girls have to meet the most severe strain of the labor market; they must have money; they underbid their fellows and overcrowd the unskilled trades. The life itself is harder on them than on the boys, both physically and spiritually. These little girls are crowding into the labor market in appalling numbers. Their parents naturally want them to be self-supporting, but know not how to help them. They are often willing to sacrifice themselves and keep the children in school until graduation, but the girls resent the present course of study as useless and get out of school as quickly as possible. On the other hand both parents and children appreciate a curriculum which offers directly available, practical training, and they will do much to obtain it. Hence lately some of the wiser educators have offered industrial courses in the last three grades of the school to induce children to remain longer and to give them a good foundation adaptable to trade or to home use.

In 1907 the public schools of Boston began experiments in various parts of the city looking toward special vocational courses in the sixth and seventh grades. The North Bennett Street school was chosen as one center for industrial work. A special building was set aside and furnished with class rooms for sewing, textiles and design and was also equipped with kitchen, dining room and bedroom, thus giving excellent opportunity for applied lessons in housekeeping and housefurnishing. Fifty girls from the Hancock school in the neighborhood are chosen and are divided into two groups. They alternate with each other in taking academic and

industrial work, both morning and afternoon being utilized. They have six and a half hours of academic work to three and a half of industrial. The course of study recognizes woman's relation to wage earning and to the home, and the culture and technical work are well interrelated. The movement, already showing success, aims to vitalize the regular school studies, to gain the interest of the girls so they will remain in school until graduation, to enable each girl to determine intelligently her life work and finally to direct her into higher grades of occupation.

New York City has also started similar work in the special classes organized to help pupils who while old enough to have their working papers have not met the educational requirements. Other cities have also begun experiments of a like character, handwork and connected academic study being features in all these schools. Some of our private schools also are making special investigation of the varied conditions and needs of the people and are trying to adapt their work to these needs, so that when boys and girls are forced to leave school they will have a usable education. Examples of such wise adaptation to conditions can be found in the Ethical Culture school and the Speyer school in New York City.

Perhaps the most significant work of this character at the present time is in Germany. *Stadtschulrat* Dr. Georg Kerschensteiner of Munich, realizing that both boys and girls were dropping out of the *Volksschulen* at the first opportunity possible, planned a new and excellent course of practical study elective in the eighth school year. The work was begun in 1896. Many children remained in school to try it and so valuable did the experiment prove that the course was later made compulsory. Dr. Kerschensteiner felt that girls will eventually fall into one of the following classes: housewives who take charge of affairs at home, domestic servants, workers in commercial or industrial positions, governesses, teachers or companions. After the seventh grade each girl chooses the field for which she would like to prepare, and in the eighth grade the foundation is laid for future success in her chosen occupation. The eighth-grade work is not professional but is broadly vocational. The pupils take the entire course, after

which they are given a “leaving certificate” and can go to work; but formal education is not yet over, for they must attend a continuation school for one year at hours allowed by their employers. Each one is thus prepared for future usefulness, and German life and industries reap the benefit.

The curriculum of the eighth-grade class is as follows:

Religion (always given in German schools) 2 hours weekly; household management and cookery, 8 hours; needlework, such as is needed in the household, 4 hours; German, in business correspondence, moral and ethical training, reading lessons, including domestic subjects, hygiene and German family life, 6 hours.

Arithmetic, management of domestic accounts, elements of commercial arithmetic, cost of living and the maintenance of the home, 4 hours.

Gymnastics and singing are also included in the curriculum.

As a part of the training in household management there is instruction in clothing and housing which covers:

*a.* Study of the body.—Its functions and its care, breathing, circulation of the blood and properties of heat radiation and evaporation, and the preservation and regulation of heat through clothing.

*b.* The textile materials, raw and manufactured.—Their physical properties and use as clothing, hygienic rules, taste and suitability in dress, wet and dry cleansing of clothing, the bed and bedding.

*c.* Housing.—The properties of building materials, the position of the house, heating, lighting, ventilation and disinfection, hygienic rules in the household, and furnishing.

II. The continuation school helps those girls who are forced by poverty to go to work without sufficient education by giving them opportunity for further training in the evening, on Sunday or on weekday afternoons. Such schools are well developed in Germany. Compulsory day continuation schools (*Fortbildungsschulen*) are found in Bavaria, with Baden,

Württemberg and Prussia inclined to follow closely. They aim not only to continue the intellectual and moral culture of the students, but to prepare them for definite trades and occupations. The work for girls is less developed along commercial and industrial lines than that for boys, but in domestic features is very comprehensive. There are usually three divisions of work for girls—commercial, for clerks and secretaries; domestic, for training in home occupations; and industrial, for arts such as dressmaking, millinery, lingerie, art needlework, machine embroidery, designing, bookbinding and photography. Germany considers that such schools prevent the waste of life which occurs when workers are uneducated and unprepared. As these schools have employers of labor on their boards of management the work is practical and is kept up to the requirements of industry.

In Bavaria, as has been said before, when a girl legally finishes her compulsory education she can go to work, but she is not therefore released from school. She is offered her choice of the following courses:

*a.* The eighth-grade class for one year, 30 hours weekly, and the Sunday school or weekly continuation class for a year following.

*b.* A school which meets on Sunday for three years, 3½ hours a week.

*c.* A commercial or domestic continuation school for three years, 5 to 10 hours weekly.

*d.* A division of the three years of required education between these various kinds of schools.

Thus the Bavarian girl has a fine opportunity to prepare for her future and to be ready for her lifework no matter what it is. The eighth-grade work is duplicated in the continuation class, so that if the family finances are so straitened that the daughter cannot attend the eighth-grade class for a year, she can still obtain this valuable training in afternoon and Sunday classes. The government requirement that employers must allow their young employes to attend day school during each week is a wise one, for these girls are too young to profit by night

instruction. The training has been found to give a good economic return, for the workrooms gradually obtain skilled help and the worker is enabled to obtain a good position and become a valuable citizen.

An excellent *Fortbildungsschule* is the *Frauenarbeitsschule*, carried on at *Oberangerstrasse 17*, Munich. The building, once a palace, is large, simple and adequate; the work is excellent and well organized. The handwork is carried to a high pitch of technical skill and the domestic instruction offers opportunities for specialists.

One of the earliest continuation schools for girls was the Victoria *Fortbildungsschule* in Berlin, opened in 1878. The majority of the pupils are from the families of artisans and small tradesmen, and not from those of day laborers and factory hands. Opportunities for training on all sides of woman's life are offered, the work is excellently done and a beautiful spirit of service pervades the school. Each girl's characteristics are carefully studied and she is given the training best adapted to her. From such teaching it is not wonderful that there is an appearance of thrift and happiness among the German people.

Continuation classes in America up to the present have not been exactly like the German ones. Night classes under public instruction have offered academic, commercial and domestic courses of all kinds; but the aim has been general helpfulness rather than direct aid to young wage earners by supplementing with special training their defective preparation for business positions. The difference between the two governments is a factor in the situation. The German government can make such courses compulsory between definite ages and can require manufacturers to give up their young employes during certain hours of the day; but with us the wish of the voters of a city must be considered. The majority of our employers assert that competition is too close for any one firm to try the experiment unless all do the same, and to compel all means tedious legislation. It is of interest to know, however, that this interrelation between factory and school has already been tried with success for boys in Massachusetts and Ohio, and that the latter state will make the same experiment for girls. The

following plan is in use in Cincinnati: The manufacturers agree to send boys from among their employes to attend school and at the same time to pay them a regular wage. The board of education provides the teachers, and the work in general is technical with as close application as possible to the special factory in which the boys are employed. A period each day is devoted to general shop questions, shop practise, economic and civic questions. Practise in spelling, writing and reading in connection with the story of industries is given. It is expected that it will take four years for the average boy to complete the course, a period which corresponds to the four years of apprenticeship demanded by the unions. Reports are sent to employers of the attendance of their employes. As children under sixteen can work but eight hours a day, *i. e.*, 48 hours a week, the employer gives up four hours of this for school training. The boy therefore is in the shop for 44 hours and at school four hours per week. A bill has been introduced into the Ohio legislature recommending that this kind of instruction be made compulsory. The fact that a girl's business life is of uncertain duration makes more difficult a similar plan for her education, as employers are less inclined to allow her to take instruction in business hours. Many of the Cincinnati workrooms, however, have agreed to try the experiment.

A form of continuation work which promises well in trades employing boys is the school within the factory. When this education aims to develop the students broadly and not alone for specific use in one enterprise, it is the best kind of training. Beginnings of such instruction for girls have appeared in the training forewomen are obliged to give green girls, and more orderly courses are already developing. The social secretary now employed in so many large stores to look after the women workers has in some cases added the instruction of new employes to her duties. Courses in salesmanship, elementary studies, technical and domestic training, are at present being given as a part of the work of certain department stores. Filene's in Boston and the Wanamaker stores in Philadelphia and New York are doing work of this character for their employes.

III. The short-time trade or factory school offers all-day courses from a few months to a year in length to those girls who even though they must go to work early can arrange to give a short period to preparation for some industrial pursuit. The compulsory school years are over and the work papers obtained, but the student may or may not have finished the elementary school work. In a city like New York with so large a foreign element half the students, at least, will not have completed the eight grades of school when they go to work. In Boston a larger proportion have been graduated. The trade-school problem has been partially met in a few of the cities of the United States. New York organized trade instruction for girls in 1902 and Boston followed in 1904. Milwaukee, Cleveland, Rochester and Albany have begun or are about to begin similar work, but as yet their schools have not been established long enough to show definite results.

In Europe this class of school, reproducing actual trade conditions and fitted for the poorest girls, is rare. In Belgium there are a few which are called apprenticeship schools. The one in Maldaghem is extremely interesting. The town is small and very mediæval. The school is housed in a new, simple building. The entrance is on the side, and a narrow long hallway, in which the students put their sabots two by two on both sides, stretches the length of the building. A steep little staircase leads to the upper floor where the business offices and workrooms are to be found. Orders are carried out as in any factory, the work being fine handwork, the operation of Corneli and single embroidery machines, beading, and crocheting on net and mousseline. Robe garments of embroidered net, scarfs, curtains and lace veils of fine character are produced, some of which come to the American market. The students are paid nothing while learning, but after their training is finished can continue to work in the school and receive a regular wage. The same town has another school for teaching the making of fine varieties of Brussels lace, the product of which is for the regular market. The building is an old type of peasant home with stone floors. These Belgian apprenticeship schools are under government inspection.

The type of apprenticeship school begun in the United States is quite different. The Manhattan Trade School of New York was the pioneer; the Boston Trade School was organized later on similar lines. A careful study of trade conditions in each city preceded the organization of instruction. Continual close touch with actual conditions is held by both schools to be necessary in order to keep up to business requirements. They have thus fitted well into the business life of their particular cities. The schools differ from each other in the trades they offer just as the two cities differ. They both believe that trade conditions must be exactly reproduced in instruction; consequently they are organized as small factories. To aid the trade work and to develop a high-class worker, art and academic work adapted to the specific needs of each of the trades represented in the schools are given. Wholesale and custom work are taken in all departments. Systems of business shops headed by trade workers who can teach as well as conduct workrooms give the students real business organization under which to work. The results in both schools show that such practical instruction enables the workers to enter better positions, to gain higher wages and to continue to rise to more influential positions. Crude, thoughtless girls have been developed into thoughtful, reliable workers, and capable girls have been given the opportunity of rapid rise to positions suited to them.

In both schools stress is laid upon health work. By careful physical examinations, specific treatment, talks on hygiene, lessons on foods, and experience in simple lunchroom cookery, the health of students is brought to a higher level and they know how to keep it there. This of itself makes better workers, able to stand the strain of business life. Established health will also react favorably on their homes and families if they marry.

Training for domestic service is not usually appreciated or desired by the American girl of the large cities, for the industrial trades offer her better opportunities. Even Germany finds difficulty in attracting to her schools for training servants the class for whom the schools were intended. An excellently planned school for this purpose was opened some time since in

Berne, Switzerland. The servant's course, six months in residence, includes the following work: cooking; care of kitchen, care of the cellar and keeping stores; gardening, including planting, cultivating, and gathering vegetables; laundry work; mending; and care of rooms. Rooms with board are rented in the school building to give practical experience to the student.

# EMPLOYMENT BUREAUS FOR WOMEN

M. EDITH CAMPBELL

Director Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund, Cincinnati

No other agency stands so little for efficient service as the employment bureau. Scorned by the scientific because of its unscientific methods; condemned by the honest and conscientious because of its unjust earnings and unscrupulous policies; despised by the employer because of its failure intelligently to meet his needs; ignored by the seeker for work because of its deceptive guarantees, the employment bureau is far from commanding the respect of the industrial world. Consequently, employer and employe usually dispense with its services, and the woman who is busy molding for herself a new industrial career gives little thought to so ineffective a method for determining the direction of that career.

There is, however, in this very tantalizing condition of the employment agency that which stimulates as well as irritates. For the existence of an agency which might be a real power, rather than a mere semblance of one, creates a desire to convert the useless into the useful. The awakening of such a desire has been demonstrated by the establishment within the last few years of a number of bureaus<sup>[41]</sup> which are attempting to render the real service of which an employment bureau is capable. Moreover, several excellent studies on the subject have been published,<sup>[42]</sup> setting forth the inadequacy of present agencies and looking toward the development of some plan by which such agencies could be helpful in solving the problem of the unemployed.

In one of these studies Mr. Devine states that the lack of employment is due to one of three causes:

1. Unemployableness because of inefficiency.
2. Lack of work.

3. Maladjustment—“The inability of people who want work to get quickly into contact with opportunities.”

He further states that the employment bureau can offer no remedy for the first condition, for in that case only education and training will be effective; neither can it remedy the difficulty due to excess of supply over demand for labor. It can, however, if properly managed, help correct the maladjustment.

All the studies above mentioned agree with the opinion of a number of writers<sup>[43]</sup> dealing in detail with the question of unemployment, that the existing agencies have not met this question of maladjustment. Many commercial agencies resort to “dishonorable practices and fraudulent methods.” The hunter for a job “becomes, because of his ignorance and necessities, a great temptation to an honest agent and a great opportunity to an unscrupulous one.” Only a small proportion of these agencies have been found efficient, honorable, or even systematic. The work of charitable employment bureaus—those conducted under the auspices or management of philanthropic organizations—has been found extremely “fragmentary, uncoördinated and meagre,” while their connection with charitable institutions has been of doubtful advantage. Trade unions also have been unable to deal effectively with their unemployed, or to attempt the formation of a systematic bureau.

Seemingly one of the simplest methods for employer and employe to find each other is the want column in the daily newspaper. But this method has proved too simple to be of more than nominal service. In the first place, careful investigation has conclusively shown that a large number of advertisements are either “fakes” or misrepresentations. The effect upon a girl of looking up several advertisements is marked. Her wearisome efforts and wanderings are usually rewarded either by finding the place taken or misrepresented, or by meeting with inexcusable carelessness and indifference on the part of the advertiser. Hence she is convinced that there are no real or serious wants for “Help—Female.” A condition of which much complaint is made is the insertion of an

advertisement and then a failure to give instructions to those with whom applicants will first come into contact. Consequently, when a girl appears to inquire for the work she is often told by an uninterested stenographer that no help is wanted. In such a case recently it was only by accidentally meeting the employer on the elevator that the writer discovered that there was an open position. Another employer had advertised in the morning paper, but had left his office before nine o'clock. His secretary could give no idea of the time of his return, or of the work desired. A number of applicants, she said, had already been there, but would have to come again. This waste of time, energy and carfare could be easily prevented by a bit of foresight and consideration. The employer may reply that the irresponsible girl fails him just as often. But surely the method of unfairness on both sides will never straighten out the tangle, and the employer by nature of his position and superior breadth of view, is the one to set the example of fairness.

The free state employment bureaus which have been established in several states are described, in the inquiries above referred to, as involved in politics and hence rendering a service perfunctory and inefficient. Miss Abbott calls attention to the fact that in these bureaus "no man is working on the general problem of unemployment and bringing the entire prestige of the state and its financial expenditures to bear on its solution." Also she notes that the combination of inspection of private bureaus with the duties of the superintendent of the state employment office prevents both good inspection and good administration.

These statements concerning employment and employment agencies in general have been repeated here because they bear upon the specific problem of the woman worker whose adjustment to present industrial conditions is so difficult. The difficulties of this problem may be illustrated by a brief history of the effort to meet it that is being made in Cincinnati.

In the year 1907, Mr. J. G. Schmidlapp, of Cincinnati, in memory of his daughter Charlotte, placed in the hands of The Union Savings Bank & Trust Company securities amounting to something over \$250,000, saying that he wished the income

to be used for the benefit of wage-earning girls, to increase their efficiency and power of self-support. It had seemed an easy matter "to help girls" before money for that purpose was available, but with abundant funds in hand, to decide just what to do proved a hard problem. Letters poured in from young women all over the country, until the board of trustees finally decided to restrict the use of the fund to individual young women needing financial assistance to complete their education. Even after the beneficiaries were limited to Hamilton County, the task of selecting them from the applicants was no easy one.

Accordingly the trustees were asked what they intended to do about the girls to whom assistance must be refused. When they replied that for these girls the fund was not responsible, the following facts were brought to their attention: First, we cannot intelligently assist in educating young women without a more accurate knowledge of just what lines of work will be open to them when their education is completed. Second, the number of girls who come to the office of the Schmidlapp Fund for advice, for information concerning work and for employment itself, almost equals the number who wish financial assistance. Third, the applicant who applies to be made more fit in her present industrial work cannot be assisted because there is no adequate provision in Cincinnati for industrial training for girls. Fourth, it is not at all improbable that the Schmidlapp Fund will train a young woman for a certain line of employment, only to find out later that the same employment brings to the beneficiary neither health, reasonable remuneration, nor mental development. Such a mistake will be due to lack of knowledge. Fifth, a wise expenditure for training individual girls cannot be made, and a positive waste in expenditure cannot be prevented without more definite knowledge concerning the self-supporting life of young women. The board of trustees acknowledged the seeming consistency of these statements and gave consent to a further development of these ideas.

Within a radius of a mile of the Schmidlapp Fund's office are at least a dozen centers, to some of which for more than twenty years young women have been going to look for work.

One would naturally turn to these bureaus for a few simple facts regarding the industrial life of young women in Cincinnati. Perhaps they could advise the Schmidlapp Fund as to the first step to take toward educating self-supporting young women. Perhaps they could give some information concerning the occupations in which women were engaged, not only as to numbers employed but also as to remuneration, chances for advancement, effect on health, and general advantages. Because of their unusual opportunity for coming into contact with practical shop life, they might be able to state in what way girls could be trained for any special occupation. They might be able to tell why a girl had changed her occupation a half dozen times within two years, whether it was her inefficiency or the irregular, seasonal character of the work. Such information would be a guide as to whether it was best to hold the girl to ordinary school life for a longer period, or to try to overcome her inefficiency by a different course of education. These bureaus had placed hundreds of girls, and had had constant intercourse with many more. Yet not a single bureau, even the one on which the state expended \$2,500 annually, could give any definite or helpful information. There proved to be a total lack of records, of systematic knowledge concerning the applicant and the job, and even of intelligent interest in the girl's industrial career. Here was a rich opportunity wholly lost. The Schmidlapp Fund found the most reliable way to gain the desired information to be through a bureau of its own. By this time, Mr. Schmidlapp had become so keenly interested that he decided to finance such a bureau without encroaching upon the Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund, which could still be used for individual girls. The bank, which Mr. Schmidlapp had made trustee of the fund and of which he had been the first president, offered to house the bureau and to allow the work to enjoy its prestige. Consequently there now appears on the door of the trust department the following sign:

The Schmidlapp Bureau for Women and Girls  
Free Employment Department  
Vocation Department  
The Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund

We are beginning to attempt to do the things which ought to have been done for us twenty years ago. In the words of the annual report:

This Bureau will be based on the work of the Vocation Bureau in Boston, the Alliance Employment Bureau in New York, and on the work of Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, of Scotland. It will have a close affiliation with all the social centers in Cincinnati, will be confined to work for women and girls, and its general scope and usefulness cannot be better formulated than in Mrs. Gordon's Handbook of Employment and in a report of the Alliance Employment Bureau:

1st. By well-planned education and congenial employment to bring as favorable influences as possible to bear upon upgrowing girls. If the first few working years of the girl can be spent industrially and to a good purpose, the parents and public may have confidence in the future of the women.

2d. To form a center of industrial information and a connecting link between school training and trade requirements, thus aiding in the development of industrial education.

3d. To make a constructive study of the facts involved in the problem of employment.

4th. To aid by counsel and information as well as by employment the girl who must be a wage earner.

Even the short experience of less than a year has demonstrated the value of such a center in Cincinnati. The carelessness, the ignorance, and the short-sightedness of parents have been brought to view over and over again in the case of girls who have been taken from school and placed in unskilled occupations where there is no chance for advancement or growth. This is sometimes due to necessity and dire poverty; but more often parents feel that a year or two more in the public school will not increase the girl's wage-earning ability, or else they cannot discover what work the child is best fitted for, and do not know in what occupations

she can at least attain some growth and promotion. This persistent withdrawal from school of girls at the age of fourteen is a cause for serious concern. We shall be guilty of criminal neglect if we longer refuse to face the situation. The already overworked teachers cannot supply the necessary guidance in other than a general way. It must be supplied by an outside agency, and as Miss Van Kleeck of the Committee on Women's Work so keenly points out, no agency for the purpose can be so helpful and efficient as one built on the needs of the individual girl.

Such a bureau will, in the first place, correct the evils and deficiencies of the present agencies. In the second place it will provide the only wise and strong foundation on which to build our educational and vocational structures for women.

To render the first service, an efficient employment bureau for women will of necessity attempt to do constructive work based on a knowledge of the evils and deficiencies which have been mentioned.

1st. Instead of no records, or inadequate ones, full and complete industrial records will be kept of both employer and employe. The one will show the conditions under which the girl does her work, and will give a careful description of the work to be done. The other will state the girl's home environment, her education or training, and her industrial history both before and after application. Both of these records will be verified by personal visits to the place of work and the home of the applicant.

2d. Instead of the selfish attitude of the commercial agency based on greed, and the perfunctory attitude of the state agency controlled by politics, there will be an attitude of fairness toward both employer and girl, based upon the sole desire to supply the need of the just employer with the ability of the responsible worker.

3d. Instead of indifference toward the relation of employer and employe, there will be an attempt, with a good chance for success, we believe, to lessen unfairness on both sides. Often a mere word of explanation, which can be given most effectively by a third party, brings consideration in place of

irresponsibility and injustice. Employers who complain constantly of the impossibility of securing steady workers, would be amazed at the reasons why the girls leave, as brought out in a recent inquiry based on work certificates issued to girls in 1907. Often through the unintelligent and short-sighted policy of a foreman—or, I regret to say, more often a forewoman—the employer loses a worker who proved, in another establishment, to be invaluable.

It may be of interest to note that the work we are trying thus to do in Cincinnati chanced to come to the notice of Governor Harmon and C. H. Wirmel, the commissioner of labor of Ohio. Both have evinced the greatest interest in the experiments and have asked for suggestions as to how the work of the state bureau in Cincinnati can be made more effective. Mr. Wirmel will attempt to use our system of records and in other ways to test the practicability of our methods. While, as Mr. Devine points out, a state or federal bureau can never do aggressive work, because the citizen can protest against “discrimination,” public bureaus can give most valuable coöperation in the matter of records.

A number of such adjustments would go a long way toward righting the general maladjustment which so evidently exists between the supply and the demand for labor.

The second justification for the existence of these employment bureaus is unquestionably to assist in the development of industrial education—a problem which is now presenting itself in a formidable manner. That we are still far from adjusting education to woman’s life is lamentably apparent. The public schools seem averse to training her for a trade lest they unadvisedly throw her into the employer’s hands. The plea is still loudly heard that the girl must be trained for home life and for home life alone. If a girl goes into a trade, the school will not assume the responsibility of placing her under the deadening influences she is sure to encounter there. Hence she enters her trade untrained, with every possibility that trade experience will make her unfit for the home—not because of the nature of the occupation, but because of her own lack of intelligence concerning the occupation. While the trade itself may not be essentially

deadening, to permit a girl to be a purely mechanical worker in the trade, without an informing mind and a cultivated imagination, as Miss Addams has expressed it, leads inevitably to mental and moral stupefaction.

Not long since, a man of deep mental and spiritual insight said to the writer that he considered all legislation for making women's industrial life easier a mistake, because intolerable conditions in the factory and workshop will ultimately force women back into the home. Just where "back into the home" is, no one seems to know! With the industrial processes in which woman has worked from time immemorial taken from the home, the exhortation to stay at home and follow the example of her industrious grandmother seems a bit hard to follow. This fear, however, on the part of educators, this restiveness on the part especially of men concerning women and the trades, should not be altogether ignored, though part of it is due to plain cowardice in refusing to face things as they are. The few courageous leaders who are trying to work out an adequate system of vocational training for women feel that they need definite knowledge of the effect of industrial work upon her.<sup>[44]</sup> This can be supplied only by learning the specific needs and characteristics of the girl, the actual happenings in her working life, and the wants and demands of the employer, who, whether we like it or not, is bound to determine finally all plans for training the wage-earning girl. We can lessen his injustice and his lordship over conditions by refusing him skilled workers unless he agrees to reasonable terms; but we can never lessen his authority as to the actual work to be done and the method the worker is to pursue. Much patient study is needed. The immediate task is to bring together the employer and the educator, who for too long have walked apart when their path, which led to the making of the worker, should have been a common one.

The need for a mediary to bring about this coöperation is clearly felt at the present time. After a recent interview dealing wholly with educational questions, Mr. Hamerschlag, Director of the Carnegie Technical Schools, said to the writer: "Do you suppose your fund would consider establishing some center or bureau that would be able to furnish really definite information

concerning the occupations of girls? Don't spend your time over present education—spend it in finding out what we should do! If some one could tell us as much about trades for women as the Anti-Tuberculosis League can tell us about that disease, we might accomplish better results. We simply do not know the effect of our present legislation upon women, or whether this or that trade means health, mental development, and reasonable pay.”

The employment bureau must become, it seems to me, this mediary; it must give this help to the educator, to the employer, and above all, to the girl. It will undoubtedly demonstrate that many occupations in which women are now engaged are eminently unsuitable, failing entirely to reach the standard set by Miss Marshall that they shall “develop that kind of efficiency which will be of value to the woman as a home maker, and which will not be detrimental physically or morally.”<sup>[45]</sup> By careful study authoritative knowledge must be gained of the girl's experience, and of the possibility of readjustment of methods by the employer. The few of us who have attempted such intensive work have uniformly found the employer willing to discuss such readjustment with us, because he realizes that we are honestly trying to furnish him with efficient workers and that we realize the difficulty of dealing with the individual. The industrial record of a girl covering a period of three or four years may show that she was a shiftless, inert, indifferent worker, and hence drifted from job to job. Here the distinct vocational function of the bureau must be brought into play, the girl's school record studied, and her temperament noted. She may be a “misfit” or she may need a stimulation which no amount of trade training will give, possibly a stimulation of the imagination by literature or history. If this girl could be released a few hours a week, or better, two days a week, from her employment, without the loss of pay which she cannot afford, she might be made into a valuable worker. Many employers are not averse to considering such an experiment. The records may show, however, not a shiftless worker, but one who has been laid off because of irregular work. This girl must have training for a skilled trade which is successful enough to give full

employment to efficient workers. It is apparent that the contact of the bureau with the school must be exceedingly close. Perhaps here the bureau can help prevent the waste which is now so evident in the issuing of work certificates; the waste of opportunity for information concerning the girl and her work.

We are as yet too young in the field to state positively the outcome of the experiment. It is not an easy experiment and there are many possibilities of failure. But in any case it is better to fail trying than to be idly distrustful of the possibility of good coming out of the present conditions under which woman is living. The ignorant, the foolish and the cowardly are in despair because she is becoming base and sordid through the fate laid upon her by industrial evolution. They refuse to see that if she were assisted to a sane adaptation of her life to this fate, she would become only a finer and truer type of womanhood. And perhaps, heretical though it be to say so, it may be discovered that a woman who has missed opportunity for development through wifehood and motherhood, has often been able to reach the full fruition of her womanhood through wisely chosen work. To direct girls judiciously into vocations which may be theirs not for three or five years, but for life, and which may enable them, even without marriage, to fulfil the promise which their girlhood gave of a wise, tender, courageous womanhood, is in itself no mean task. As a precedent condition, the employment-vocation bureau, must help us to discover what is the best work for women to do, and under what conditions they can do it. It will thus aid them to perform that work intelligently, efficiently, and enthusiastically. Then, and then only, will come the just remuneration, the living wage for which women at present struggle in vain.

## FOOTNOTES:

[41] The Alliance Employment Bureau, New York City; the Coöperative Employment Bureau for Women and Girls, Cleveland; Council of Jewish Women Employment Bureau, Pittsburg; Schmidlapp Bureau for Women and Girls, Cincinnati.

[42] *A Handbook of Employments*, by Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, Aberdeen: The Rosemount Press; *Report on the Desirability of*

*Establishing an Employment Bureau in the City of New York*, by Edward T. Devine, Russell Sage Foundation; *The Chicago Employment Agent and the Immigrant Worker*, by Grace Abbott, University of Chicago Press; *Annual Reports of the Alliance Employment Bureau, Reports on Investigations*, Mary A. Van Kleeck.

[43] An excellent selected bibliography on employment bureaus and unemployment is contained in the report of Mr. Devine above referred to.

[44] Besides private trade schools, interesting experiments have been made in continuation and coöperative training in Boston, Chicago and Cincinnati. In Cincinnati, the coöperative plan inaugurated by Dean Schneider in the university has been remarkably successful.

[45] Florence M. Marshall: *Industrial Training for Women*, Bulletin No. 4 National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, p. 17.

# THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASPECT OF THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

ERNST FREUND

University of Chicago

## I

A brief survey of the American legislation for the protection of women in industry will facilitate the discussion of the constitutional principles by which the action of legislatures is controlled. The following types of statutes should be distinguished:

1. Those which provide that no person shall be precluded, debarred or disqualified from any lawful occupation, profession or employment on account of sex. Illinois and Washington so provide by statute (making exceptions for military employment and public office), while California enacts the same principle in the form of an article of her constitution. A statute of this kind can at most have the effect of removing some supposed bar existing by virtue of law or custom. The statute of Illinois was in fact the consequence of a decision of the supreme court of that state which denied a woman a license to practise law, and against which the Supreme Court of the United States had been appealed to in vain.<sup>[46]</sup> The incorporation of the principle into the constitution will, on the other hand, control future as well as past legislation, and may prove an embarrassment in the way of carrying out other protective policies. The wording of the provisions does not seem to affect any possible disqualifications by reason of marriage and coverture.

2. Those which bar women from certain employments altogether. It is noteworthy that only five days after removing the disabilities of sex with reference to employment in general,

Illinois prohibited the labor of women in coal mines, and the same prohibition is now found in the principal mining states (Indiana, New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming). The other employment from which women are sometimes debarred (in about a dozen states) is the dispensing of intoxicating liquors. So under the liquor-tax law of New York (§31) no woman not a member of the keeper's family may sell or serve liquor to be consumed on the premises. In California, under the constitutional provision above quoted, an ordinance making it a misdemeanor for a female to wait on any person in any dance cellar or barroom was held invalid,<sup>[47]</sup> but later on an ordinance prohibiting the sale of liquor in dance cellars or other places of amusement where females attend as waitresses was sustained,<sup>[48]</sup> as was also the refusal of licenses to those employing females,<sup>[49]</sup> upon the ground that the clause of the constitution did not prevent the prescribing of conditions upon which the business of retailing liquor shall be permitted to be carried on. The court evidently felt that the object to be gained justified a narrow construction of the constitution.

3. Statutes which prohibit the employment of women in cleaning machinery while in motion, or in work between moving parts of machinery. Such legislation, according to the digest of labor laws prepared by the United States Commissioner of Labor in 1907, is found in Missouri and West Virginia.

4. Statutes which compel the provision of sanitary and other conveniences for females in industrial or mercantile establishments. Beside certain obvious requirements in the interest of decency, particular mention should be made of the legislation found in the great majority of states, under which seats must be provided for female employes and their use permitted when the women are not engaged in active duty.

5. Statutes which prohibit night work in various kinds of industrial establishments. They are to be found in about half a dozen states (Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska). A corresponding provision of the law of New York was declared unconstitutional.<sup>[50]</sup> The only authority cited was the case of *Lochner v. New York*;<sup>[51]</sup> and it should be noticed

that at the date of the decision (June, 1907), the supreme court of the United States had not yet promulgated its very liberal views as to the power to control women's work which subsequently appeared in the case of *Muller v. Oregon*.<sup>[52]</sup> The New York Court treated the prohibition also as a sanitary measure exclusively, and did not advert to possible moral considerations. The decision stands, however, unrevoked, and the law of New York must be treated as annulled.

6. Statutes which in other respects limit the hours of labor of female employes. The establishments to which the laws apply vary, as they do in the case of night work, manufacturing establishments being the most common. The number of states having such laws has rapidly increased in recent years, there being now over twenty in all parts of the country, not counting those which apply only to females under age, or those which forbid only the compelling of work for longer hours. The number of hours is usually ten per day, often with a reduction for the total of the week, so as to make a shorter day on one day of the week; but sometimes also providing only a maximum number for the entire week.

## II

When we compare these statutes enacted on behalf of women workers with the general body of labor legislation, we note the almost total absence of any interference with purely economic arrangements: there is nothing analogous to store-order or weekly-payment acts applying to women in particular, nor any attempt to control the rate of wages. The most controversial field of labor legislation from the constitutional point of view has thus been avoided.

Health, safety and morals have always been undisputed titles of the police power, where it is a question of protecting the public at large. The control of the internal arrangements of the workshop in the interest of the employes, who, in theory, entered into it voluntarily, was the great extension of the power of the law achieved by the English factory acts. It is a strange anachronism when we find American courts in the end of the nineteenth century questioning the legitimacy of restrictive

legislation intended only for the benefit of the employed, who may be willing to assume the risk,<sup>[53]</sup> but it is true that it was not until after the middle of the nineteenth century that the English law sanctioned sanitary requirements on behalf of adult employes, and the singling out of adult women for the purpose of such protection met with opposition.<sup>[54]</sup> At present the validity of the sanitary and safety provisions of factory acts is, in principle, unquestioned, and opponents of such acts have to scrutinize them for constitutional defects in non-essential features. Where such provisions apply to women in particular it is generally because the danger or evil arises out of conditions peculiar to the sex.

The limitation of hours of labor is at present the most conspicuous phase of restrictive labor legislation. As applied to men, it has in general been confined to special occupations. In some cases the reason why they were singled out is not apparent. This is true of the laws of some southern states with regard to the employes of cotton or woolen mills, which have not been passed upon by the courts of last resort; in other cases, the inducing motive was the consideration of public safety, as in the limitation of hours of trainmen; in the remaining cases—those of miners and bakers—the legislation sought to justify itself as a measure for the protection of the health of the employes.

It is well known that there is a conflict of judicial opinion regarding the validity of this legislation, strongly emphasized by the vacillating attitude of the Supreme Court of the United States, which sustained an eight-hour day for miners and annulled a ten-hour day for bakers.<sup>[55]</sup> The inconsistency of these two rulings is particularly striking, since it is generally believed that the occupation of bakers is exceptionally unsanitary, and was singled out as such under the delegated powers of regulation committed to the federal council by the German trade code, while the mining of coal under modern conditions is regarded as remarkably immune from occupational disease. In Colorado the eight-hour day for miners was declared unconstitutional.<sup>[56]</sup>

The difficulty which American courts have experienced with regard to the treatment of hours of labor is easily understood. They assume the existence of a constitutional principle which protects what is called the freedom of contract. This means that the state must leave the economic side of the labor contract to the free bargaining of the parties concerned; it means from the point of view of the employer that his business is not to be regulated by law in order to secure satisfactory terms to the employe, as the railroad business is regulated to secure fair terms to the shipper or the traveling public; from the point of view of the employe it means that he is free to make the most of his earning capacity, and to work as long as he pleases, or rather, conceding the limited sphere of the police power, as long as is consistent with proper standards of health and safety. The movement for the eight-hour day has, generally speaking, been frankly an economic movement, designed to advance the workman in the social scale, to give him time for recreation, culture, the enjoyment of his home, everything, in short, that is supposed to go with rational leisure, and it has generally been accepted as a principle of American constitutional law, that this consummation was not to be brought about by legislative compulsion. The state was to further the movement only in so far as it had the right to dictate the conditions of employment on work done for the public.

Notwithstanding the recognition of this constitutional limitation, there have at all times been large sections of organized labor who would have been glad to enlist the power of the law in the struggle for the shorter workday, and who would welcome any reduction on constitutionally valid grounds as a step in that direction. Hence the appeal for the eight-hour day on public works; and hence the appeal to the police power of the state for the purpose of shortening hours of labor.

There has always been greater difficulty in furnishing legal protection against the risk of disease in industrial employment than against the risk of accident. The common-law liability of the employer for illness contracted by the employe in consequence of defective arrangements may be regarded as a

negligible factor, owing to the difficulty of legally proving the cause of disease and to the operation of the doctrine of assumption of risk. It is only since 1906 that a statutory liability for disease has, within a very narrow range, been established in England, and such a thing is not even agitated in this country. For protection against occupational disease and its consequences our laws rely upon preventive regulation entirely. No system of protective devices, however, can banish altogether the baneful effect of certain occupations upon the general health and strength of the worker, and it is against these inevitable risks that reliance must be placed upon diminishing the amount of exposure, *i. e.*, reducing the hours of labor. This reduction is, of course, also the only remedy against the specific evil effects upon the human system of overexertion and fatigue.

A demand which has generally been understood to serve economic or social purposes may thus assume the character of a sanitary requirement, and the confusion of purposes is aggravated by the fact that of all sanitary risks that of a mere prolongation of effort under undesirable conditions is the least tangible, as well as the most variable according to individual constitutions, and that the legal maximum of duration of work must be more or less haphazard and arbitrary. The resulting difficulty in the application of constitutional principles is obvious. If the courts are expected to protect the freedom of contract, as the legislature is expected to protect the public welfare, can the mere enactment of a statute be accepted as conclusive as to the requirements of the public health and safety? Up to the present time the courts have not succeeded in evolving any definite theory with reference to this problem; it is a matter of speculation whether in a given case they will acquiesce in the legislative judgment or override it.

Toward legislation limiting the hours of labor of women the attitude of the courts has on the whole been favorable. Ten-hour laws have been sustained in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Washington and Oregon, and the Oregon decision has been affirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States. Against these decisions must be set that of the supreme court of Illinois, rendered in 1895, declaring an eight-hour day for

women to be unconstitutional. A ten-hour law, modeled upon that of Oregon, was enacted in Illinois in 1909, and a case involving its constitutionality is now awaiting the decision of the supreme court of the state.<sup>[57]</sup> The decision in the earlier Illinois case has been much criticized, and the opinion contains statements which at the present day would find the approval of few courts. Stripped of superfluous dicta, and reduced to its vital points, the decision stands for two things: that the adult woman is entitled to the same measure of constitutional right as the adult man, and that the court did not believe that an eight-hour day was a sanitary requirement even for women. "There is no reasonable ground," the court said, "at least none which has been made manifest to us in the arguments of counsel, for fixing on eight hours in one day as the limit within which woman can work without injury to her physique, and beyond which, if she work, injury will necessarily follow."

This skepticism should not cause great surprise or indignation. Notwithstanding the rapid change of opinion within the last two decades in favor of restricting the hours of labor of women, an eight-hour maximum day for women workers is even now unknown in America or in Europe, and in Germany it took eighteen years, from 1892 to 1910, to reduce the workday of female factory hands from eleven to ten hours. It is easy to understand that a compulsory eight-hour day in 1893 or 1895 should have appeared to the court as an unreasonable and even arbitrary interference with private rights. To say the least the case for such a measure had not yet been made out.

The limitation of the hours of women workers had become a part of English factory legislation as early as 1844. A factory report of the previous year had pointed out that women were physically incapable of enduring a continuance of work for the same length of time as men, and that deterioration of their health was attended with far more injurious consequences to society.<sup>[58]</sup> The need of hygienic protection had thus been brought to the attention of the legislature. At the same time the economic aspect of the measure appears to have been the more prominent. The men desired shorter hours for themselves, but thought an appeal to parliament hopeless; thus women and

children were put forward in the hope, which events justified, that the legal reduction of their worktime would accomplish without legislation the same purpose for men.<sup>[59]</sup> The agitation was in fact conducted as one for shorter hours all around, although the bills as drawn did not include adult men. There appears on the other hand to have been some apprehension on the part of women that the men sought to impose restrictions upon them to make them less desirable employes and thus crowd them out of work, and for a long time the equal treatment of adult women and men was demanded by the leaders of the women themselves.

Factory legislation, as first conceived, was to apply only to those who were not free agents, namely to children. True, the married woman was not legally a free agent, but she was struggling for emancipation, which eventually came, and the female sex as such labored under no disabilities. Prominent economists urged that the state had no business to dictate to the adult woman the terms of her employment. But the exclusion of woman from underground mines paved the way for her subjection to state control, and the act of 1844 put her in the same class with children and young persons. The separate and distinct treatment of women thus became an established feature of English factory legislation.

In America the sanitary or hygienic argument in the movement for limitation of hours of female labor in factories was prominent from the beginning. The legislation in Massachusetts enacted in 1874 had been preceded by official investigations and reports concerning the detrimental effect of long hours upon the constitution of women. If woman was to be accorded the fulness of individual liberty and equality with man,—and barring the denial of the active political franchise, the tendency as manifested in married women's legislation and in admission to business and professional pursuits, was in that direction—a peculiar danger in her case from overwork and a special need of protection had to be made out.

In the earlier judicial decisions sustaining the ten-hour laws for women the existence of this special danger and need was rather assumed than supported by evidence. The argument for

the Oregon law before the Supreme Court of the United States for the first time laid all stress and emphasis upon the documentary testimony which had been accumulated in scientific treatises and official publications, showing the evil effects of overexertion and overfatigue upon women employed in the monotonous routine of mechanical labor. In marshaling medical, social and economic, instead of legal authorities, Mr. Brandeis, the counsel for the state of Oregon, clearly recognized that if the principle of freedom of contract is to be accepted as part of the constitution, the validity of the limitation of hours of labor becomes a question of fact, which must be answered upon the basis of observation and experience. The same line of argument was presented still more elaborately (and again by Mr. Brandeis) in the Illinois case.

Attention was called to the extreme monotony of labor attending the minute subdivision of manufacturing processes, to the increasing strain of factory work due to the speeding of machinery, and to the general baneful effects, moral as well as physical, of overexertion and overfatigue. It is impossible to glance over the array of extracts from authoritative sources gathered from different countries without realizing that an entirely new light is thrown upon the subject of long hours in industry, with primary and specific reference to the work of women. A case for the exercise of the police power, even upon its most conservative basis, is made out such as had never before been presented when the validity of labor legislation was at issue. A showing of facts such as this might well induce a court to sanction state interference with the freedom of contract, while insisting to the fullest extent upon the same measure of constitutional right for women and men.

It is a remarkable fact that American constitutional law is still unsettled as to the constitutional equality of women with men, so far as liability to restrictive legislation is concerned. The few judicial utterances on the subject are conflicting. Illinois in the first case of *Ritchie v. The People*<sup>[60]</sup> made no distinction between men and women with reference to personal rights and the freedom of contract. New York is quite explicit: "Under our laws men and women now stand alike in

their constitutional rights, and there is no warrant for making any discrimination between them with respect to the liberty of person, or of contract.”<sup>[61]</sup> On the other hand the supreme court of Nebraska, in sustaining the ten-hour law, frankly speaks of women as wards of the state, and the passage in question is quoted with apparent approval by the supreme court of Oregon; and the Supreme Court of the United States, instead of planting its decision squarely upon the facts presented in the brief for the state of Oregon, mingles considerations drawn from physical conditions with others resting upon the general status of the female sex in such a way as to give an apparent preponderance to the latter. The court, speaking through Mr. Justice Brewer, said:

Still, again, history discloses the fact that woman has always been dependent upon man. He established his control at the outset by superior physical strength, and this control in various forms, with diminishing intensity, has continued to the present. As minors, though not to the same extent, she has been looked upon in the courts as needing especial care that her rights may be preserved. Education was long denied her, and while now the doors of the school room are opened and her opportunities for acquiring knowledge are great, yet even with that and the consequent increase of capacity for business affairs, it is still true that in the struggle for subsistence she is not an equal competitor with her brother. Though limitations upon personal and contractual rights may be removed by legislation, there is that in her disposition and habits of life which will operate against a full assertion of those rights. She will still be where some legislation to protect her seems necessary to secure a real equality of right. Doubtless there are individual exceptions, and there are many respects in which she has an advantage over him; but looking at it from the viewpoint of the effort to maintain an independent position in life, she is not upon an equality. Differentiated by these matters from the other sex, she is properly placed in a class by herself, and legislation designed for her protection may be sustained,

even when like legislation is not necessary for men and could not be sustained. It is impossible to close one's eyes to the fact that she still looks to her brother and depends upon him. Even though all restrictions on political, personal and contractual rights were taken away, and she stood, so far as statutes are concerned, upon an absolutely equal plane with him, it would still be true that she is so constituted that she will rest upon and look to him for protection; that her physical structure and a proper discharge of her maternal functions—having in view not merely her own health, but the well-being of the race—justify legislation to protect her from the greed as well as the passion of man. The limitations which this statute places upon her contractual powers, upon her right to agree with her employer as to the time she shall labor, are not imposed solely for her benefit, but also largely for the benefit of all. Many words cannot make this plainer. The two sexes differ in structure of body, in the functions to be performed by each, in the amount of physical strength, in the capacity for long-continued labor, particularly when done standing, the influence of vigorous health upon the future well-being of the race, the self-reliance which enables one to assert full rights, and in the capacity to maintain the struggle for subsistence. This difference justifies a difference in legislation and upholds that which is designed to compensate for some of the burdens which rest upon her.

We have not referred in this discussion to the denial of the elective franchise in the state of Oregon, for while it may disclose a lack of political equality in all things with her brother, that is not of itself decisive. The reason runs deeper, and rests in the inherent difference between the two sexes, and in the different functions in life which they perform.<sup>[62]</sup>

It is to be noted that the Supreme Court refuses to regard the non-possession of active political rights as a controlling element. Under a system which sets constitutional limitations against the popular will as expressed through the ordinary

elective franchise, the treatment of the latter as relatively indifferent has a certain plausibility which would be much more doubtful in England or Germany. If the vote cannot secure shorter hours, it may be argued that the absence of the vote cannot be a valid reason for allowing the exercise of the power. If, on the other hand, shorter hours are demanded in the interest of the public, the bestowal of the franchise should not forfeit the benefit of the measure.

From a practical point of view, however, political power is an important, if not in the long run decisive, factor in the economic struggle, and as long as it is withheld from women they have a claim to special protection from the state, which they may put forward as a requirement of justice, without conceding that their status is naturally one of dependence and inferiority.

There is another argument in favor of a larger state interference with the freedom of contract in the case of women than in that of men, which has received little attention, but seems to deserve consideration.

The whole doctrine of freedom of contract is based upon a theory of constitutional equality which is frequently belied by the facts. What saves the theory from being altogether a fiction, is the possibility of contracting on something like equal terms through the power of collective bargaining. The doctrine of freedom of contract stands and falls with the efficacy of the organization of labor. If for any reason, such organization is impossible or ineffective, the right of the state to exert its power in favor of tolerable economic conditions cannot in reason be disputed, even though considerations of expediency or wisdom may make its exercise undesirable.

In the past, women workers have been greatly inferior to men in the power of effective organization. It remains to be seen whether this inferiority will be permanent. Considering the fact that most women enter industrial work as a temporary occupation which they expect to give up for matrimony, and that the care of the household and family is still regarded as their normal and proper function, it is not surprising that there should be much less opportunity and inducement for

organization among women than among men. And if this should prove to be a necessary limitation, it would constitute a justification for the exercise of state control, which in the case of men may be found to be absent or to be confined to particular employments.

When we examine the labor laws of Massachusetts and other states, in which women are so commonly classed with young persons we might be tempted to conclude, that as on the one hand the state claims absolute control over children, and on the other hand is careful to respect the constitutional rights of adult men, there is manifested a consciousness of a power, not absolute, but transcending the normal measure, equally exercisable over those beyond the age of childhood and below full maturity, and over women. Upon closer scrutiny it will however appear that there are extremely few cases in which special legislation for women is of a purely economic character. The provision of the Massachusetts law<sup>[63]</sup> forbidding deductions from the wages of women (and minors) in case of the breakdown of machinery if they are refused the privilege of leaving the mill while the damage is being repaired, is one of the rare instances in point. Generally the common protection accorded to women and young persons is quite capable of being explained upon the basis of physical differences between adult men and adult women, and it is not therefore necessary to have recourse to the greater justification of special economic protection. The case may be somewhat different in English and German legislation.

From a constitutional point of view it makes a considerable difference whether the exercise of special power over the individual is based upon his supposed dependency and inferiority of right, or is due to special conditions in no way derogatory to his civil status. It is one thing to quarantine a smallpox patient, another thing to detain an alien at an immigrant station. When measures shall be proposed for the control of women in industry upon a principle different from any applied to men, it will be time to inquire whether she is to be measured by different and inferior political standards. The laws that have been so far enacted for women involve, with rare exceptions, no such discrimination.

The specific evil effects of long hours of standing upon female organs have long been recognized; so there is assumed to be a difference in nervous structure, and a greater susceptibility, in consequence of this, to the exhaustion of prolonged work. The indirect danger of diminished strength and vitality of possible offspring involves a supreme interest of the community at large, for which there is no parallel in the case of men, and which must satisfy the demands of the strictest constitutional constructionist.

The prohibition of night work in factories has in the case of younger women, at least, the justification of moral protection; [64] and while, upon an assumed constitutional equality of both sexes, such total prohibition is less easily explained as regards women of mature age, it is probably possible to establish a case of social or physical desirability of the restriction in their favor.

It might be said that the prohibition of women's work on specially dangerous machinery presents a case where the tutelary care of the state is simply pushed one step farther than in the case of men; but even here a specific danger is traceable; for it appears that the first provision of that kind in England was due to the suggestions of factory inspectors who pointed out to the parliamentary committee that the customary dress of girls and women made them especially liable to be caught by machinery. [65]

There are undoubtedly other matters in which protective legislation for women might be extended for reasons not involving any deficiency of constitutional status. Without indulging in speculation regarding social needs or moral dangers, we may point to the provisions of the German trade code, which recognize the special needs of working women. The right given to women who manage their household, to ask for an extra half hour at noon, if the period of noon rest is less than an hour and a half, is probably, like all other privileges made dependent upon special request, of little practical value. The rule that women must not be employed after five o'clock in the afternoon on Saturdays and the eve of holidays, is, however, mandatory, and is likewise clearly dictated by a

regard for household duties. Above all there is the prohibition of employment before and after confinement, altogether for eight weeks, the return to work requiring proof that at least six weeks have elapsed since confinement. In accordance with the recommendations of the Berlin Conference of 1890, England in 1891 likewise placed a restriction upon the employment of women for four weeks after childbirth, but the enforcement of the law seems to suffer from administrative difficulties.<sup>[66]</sup>

The present scarcity of similar legislation in this country seems to be due, not so much to constitutional doubts or difficulties, as to the fact that there does not appear to have been the same demand, or perhaps, owing to the less common employment of married women, the same occasion for such a restriction. Should the necessity for such legislation arise there ought to be no fear that the constitutions stand in the way of appropriate and adequate protection. Our present statutes by no means exhaust the permissible field of state interference.

### III

If the validity of some particular form of regulation for a particular purpose be conceded, another difficulty arises in determining the proper range and scope of the proposed law. The equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the fourteenth amendment does not demand a mechanical equality of treatment of all persons irrespective of the conditions of their occupation or employment; but this equality is inconsistent with arbitrary or partial discrimination. Ever since the Supreme Court of the United States declared the Illinois anti-trust law unconstitutional, because it made an exception from its prohibitions with reference to agricultural products or live stock in the hands of the producer or raiser,<sup>[67]</sup> there has been a feeling of uncertainty as to the extent of permissible classification. The tendency of the federal Supreme Court has been on the whole to concede to state legislatures a considerable latitude in the selection of objects of police restraint; but the risk of contest on this ground is a factor to be reckoned with in framing any restrictive legislation. Some of the states, as Illinois, are inclined to apply the principle rather

strictly against the singling out by statute of certain groups, when other groups might be liable to similar dangers or evils.

The categories which we find mentioned in the American statutes restricting the hours of labor of women, are factories (by this or some other equivalent designation), mechanical establishments (not clearly differentiated from factories), mercantile establishments, laundries, hotels and restaurants. In most of the states having laws on the subject only some of these are covered. No law has as yet undertaken to regulate with particular reference to women either industrial home work or domestic or semi-professional service. Only one state (Oregon) includes the important transportation and transmission employments, especially the telephone and telegraph service, in which so many women are engaged, while Montana confines its restriction to the public telephone service. Up to the present time no law relating to women's work has been declared unconstitutional by reason of the specification of particular employments; the law sustained by the Supreme Court of the United States applied to manufacturing and mechanical establishments and laundries. It seems reasonable enough to differentiate these employments from those in which there is an element of personal service, such as waiting on customers or rendering direct assistance to the employer, and which are therefore free from the monotonous routine of purely mechanical work. It might be difficult on the other hand to justify the omission of such work as dishwashing or scrubbing in restaurants or hotels. Again, where the restriction applies to employment in mechanical, but not in mercantile establishments, a question might be raised concerning the clerical positions of both classes which are filled by women, and which are subject to different treatment, while not differing in the character of the work done. The difficulty can perhaps be avoided by construing the statute as applying only to mechanical employments in mechanical establishments.

Where, as in Missouri, the law is limited to cities above a certain size, it may be argued plausibly that the loss of time in going to and from work in large cities is apt to be considerable

and may be taken into account in determining the territorial application of the law.

Another difficulty is presented by the demands created by conditions of emergency or an exceptional pressure of business. In condemning the New York ten-hour law for bakers, the Supreme Court of the United States referred disapprovingly to the absence of an emergency clause. On the other hand the constitutionality of the fifty-four-hour law for women of the state of Michigan is said to have been attacked on the ground that it makes an exception for employment in preserving perishable goods in fruit and vegetable canning establishments. Massachusetts allows a limited amount of excess work in seasonal industries, and the same is true under the German law.

The following comment by the New York commissioner of labor<sup>[68]</sup> on the New York law regulating the hours of women is instructive in this respect:

In its original bill form this act made an exception, adopted from the English law, in favor of factories manufacturing perishable and seasonal articles or the products of such articles, and allowed them to employ females over 18 for sixty-six hours a week in not to exceed six weeks a year. Similar exceptions are contained in the laws of almost all the nations of Europe and are permitted by the recent international labor treaty signed at Berne. They are based upon necessity and equity and are consonant with health, for the reason that in such industries limited overtime during rush periods or seasons would be counterbalanced by reduced hours in slack periods or seasons. But the provision aroused such a violent public protest that it was temporarily abandoned. That was the cause of great regret to me, for I believe that the health provisions of our factory laws should be limited to the reasonable requirements of health, and that particular industries should not be unnecessarily and unreasonably embarrassed for the sole purpose of keeping a regulation general and uniform. In those industries where the supply of the raw material,

the fitness of the material or the ability to work is determined by the weather, it is impossible to divide the week, the month and the year into working days or weeks of approximately equal duration, as our law presupposes; and it is not a necessary or even a reasonable health regulation that forbids time lost by such cause to be in any degree made up when the weather permits. Reasonable variations from the more regular limitations imposed upon those industries in which work is or can be made regular should be allowed for those in which it cannot. I do not want to be understood as condoning the excessive hours per day and per week that are now occasionally worked in those factories to which such an exception would apply. On the contrary they should be sharply restricted according to health requirements. But I believe that if those factories were allowed such variations from the general rule as would not be injurious to health, it would render the law more easily and generally enforceable as to them and would in fact reduce their hours of labor, and it would avoid the danger of an adverse decision from the courts as to the constitutionality of the provisions limiting the hours of women's labor.

It is not easy to see why any emergency provision should be regarded as in itself violating the principle of equality, but there may be some danger in not treating alike different emergencies which are entitled to equal consideration.

The absence of an emergency clause may expose the law to the charge of creating unnecessary hardships and thereby creating an unreasonable interference with liberty. If however in this as in other matters perfect justice and adaptation of means to the end might be thought to require a more minute differentiation than our statutes provide, it should be borne in mind that one very legitimate element in considering the reasonableness of a statute is the possibility or facility of its administration. A certain degree of mechanical uniformity of rules is essential to the successful operation of any act. Experience has demonstrated that it is extremely difficult to control compliance with legal limitations of hours of labor, if

the permitted number of hours may be arranged at any time within a range of fourteen or fifteen hours, or if the employer is permitted to employ two shifts of working women, or if he is allowed to distribute 54 or 60 hours through the week as he pleases. On the other hand Dr. Jacobi quotes the labor commissioner of New York as saying: “Except for the administrative reason that it makes it easier to enforce the prohibition against overtime, there is no present necessity in this state for the prohibition of night work by adult women. On the other hand, if enforced, it would deprive some mature working women, employed by night only at skilled trades, for short hours and for high wages, of all means of support. And the prohibition, in its application to factories only, seems rather one-sided when we consider that probably the hardest occupations of women, those of hotel laundresses and cleaners, are not limited as to hours in any way.”<sup>[69]</sup> The relevancy of administrative considerations has received very little judicial discussion in connection with the problem of discrimination, and deserves serious consideration. While important rights should not be allowed to be sacrificed to mere official convenience, effectiveness and even the cost of administrative supervision should be regarded as legitimate factors in determining the reasonableness of restrictive measures.

The whole problem of discrimination depends so much upon the varying conditions of different industries that an intelligent judgment of what is legitimate and what is arbitrary is possible only upon the basis of a close study of facts. There ought to be some guaranty that legislation in this respect shall proceed upon a careful and impartial survey of all relevant conditions, and in the notorious absence of such guaranties, the courts may well demand to be convinced that discriminations are not arbitrary, and that the denial of exemptions is necessary from an administrative point of view. It is a further question whether it is possible for the legislature to do full justice to the varying needs of industries by making direct provision for all cases, or whether powers of dispensation or permit must not be vested in administrative authorities. Such powers should not go beyond the province of what constitutes, properly speaking,

administration. As soon as they assume the character of subsidiary regulations, there arises a constitutional difficulty in the principle that legislative powers must not be delegated. A statute of California which left it to the judgment of the labor commissioner to determine whether the inhalation of noxious gases could be prevented by the use of some mechanical contrivance, and if so, to direct its installation, was on that ground declared unconstitutional.<sup>[70]</sup> There are also, however, decisions sustaining the delegation to administrative authorities of the power to specify standards in pursuance of a general policy indicated by the legislature.<sup>[71]</sup> At present it is not clear to what extent the delegation of powers of regulation can be safely carried, nor is it probably in accordance with prevailing sentiment that it should extend to provisions that can be dealt with intelligently and effectually by legislation.

#### IV

Attention has been called to the conflicting views of the courts of New York and Illinois, and the federal Supreme Court, with reference to the constitutional rights of women. Similar differences may appear with regard to drawing the line between legitimate and arbitrary discrimination. It is important to observe that the more liberal view in favor of the legislative power held by the Supreme Court of the United States is not binding on the states. It is different where the state courts take the more liberal view. When the Supreme Court decided that a ten-hour law for bakers violated the fourteenth amendment, the New York law fell, and similar legislation in all other states was invalidated or made impossible. If the Supreme Court should decide, as it probably would, that the prohibition of night work of women does not violate the fourteenth amendment, the court of appeals of New York, while it might revise and overrule its own decision to the effect that such prohibition is invalid, would not be bound to do so, but would have the right to insist that the constitution of New York protects individual right against legislative power more effectually than does the federal constitution. And so it is well understood that the supreme court of Illinois, in passing upon the validity of the ten-hour law of that state, copied from the

law of Oregon which the Supreme Court of the United States sustained, is not bound, though it may be properly influenced, by that decision; the federal authority is persuasive, but not controlling. This results from the fact that the fourteenth amendment was enacted as a protection against the abuse of legislative power, and is not concerned with legislative inaction or impotence, induced by the construction which the state courts put upon the state constitution.

In such cases the people of the state have it in their hands to remove the opposition of their judiciary, by amending their state constitution so as to permit the desired legislation. This was done in New York with reference to legislative control of labor performed in connection with state and municipal works, and in Colorado, with regard to hours of labor in specified occupations and other branches of industry which the legislature might deem injurious to health. So the new constitution of Michigan provides (art. V, § 29) that the legislature shall have power to enact laws relative to the hours and conditions under which women and children may be employed. If such constitutional amendment is adequately framed and the new legislation conforms to its provisions—in Colorado the supreme court held that an eight-hour law for women enacted after the amendment fell short of satisfying the requirements of the amended constitution<sup>[72]</sup>—there is nothing but the federal constitution that can be superior to the new law. If the federal Supreme Court has held that such a law does not violate the federal constitution, the construction must be binding upon the state court. True, if the state court should presume to place upon the federal constitution a construction more unfavorable to legislative power than the federal Supreme Court, there would be no possibility, under the federal statutes, of reviewing or reversing that decision, but it is almost inconceivable that a state supreme court should take such a position and override the most authentic and authoritative interpretation of the highest law of the land, provided by that law. As a matter of fact, such a course has never been taken, and need not be apprehended.

It is one of the dominant features of our constitutional system that the nation, except for the regulation of interstate

and foreign commerce, has debarred itself from the active and positive care of social and economic interests. The other great federated commonwealths of the world have more liberal provisions in this respect. Germany has assigned to the imperial power the whole subject of trade and industry; the Swiss constitution of 1874 mentions as subjects of federal legislation hours of labor and the care of health in factories; in Canada the Dominion is given residuary powers which cover the bulk of industrial legislation, and Australia by a wise provision allows any two or more of the states to refer to the federal parliament any matters to be regulated for the referring states jointly. The United States has by its constitution undertaken to safeguard individual right as an immunity from governmental oppression, but not as an immunity from private exploitation which falls short of reduction to practical servitude. Congress cannot enact protective measures for women in industry applicable to the nation at large. Its position is in this respect the same as with regard to child labor. It has been suggested that the United States might and should debar products manufactured by child labor from interstate or foreign commerce, and if this were practicable, women's work might be controlled in the same way. Such a legislative contrivance would violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the constitution, and on that account would meet with strong and legitimate opposition.

It is undoubtedly an anomaly, that our arbitrary and artificial state lines should stand in the way of such uniformity of industrial control as competitive industrial conditions may demand. A certain measure of unity may perhaps be achieved by the hitherto untried method of legislative agreements between several states, subject to the consent of Congress. But under the limitations of state constitutions, such unity would be a precarious thing, and its possibility has hardly been discussed.

Considering the action taken by the International Conference on Labor Regulation at Berne in 1906 in regard to the night work of women, the question suggests itself whether the treaty-making power might not be used for the purpose of securing national protection of women in industry. The Berne

convention provides that the industrial work of women at night shall be prohibited, with a specification of the number of hours, and subject to certain exceptions particularly set forth. Suppose the United States had been a party to this convention, what would have been the effect? Under the federal constitution, the treaties are the highest law of the land, and treaties of the United States sometimes deal with subjects otherwise withdrawn from federal jurisdiction and belonging to the states, so especially with the right of aliens to hold land. But these treaty provisions are directly operative without further legislation. This does not appear to be true of the Berne Convention. For although the convention regarding night-work uses the word "shall be prohibited" (*sera interdit*) while the phosphorus convention says the parties "bind themselves to prohibit" (*s'engagent à interdire*), yet even the night-work convention leaves it to the signatory states to define what shall be regarded as industrial enterprises, and therefore is not operative without further legislation. For the United States the convention would therefore have been ineffective without the concurrent action of each state. Even however if a convention should create immediately operative restraints, they would probably be ineffective in practice without appropriate administrative arrangements, and these, under the constitution, can be provided only by the states. On the whole, the treaty-making power can hardly be relied upon to break down the barriers created by state autonomy.

Fortunately, however, the work of agitation and public education knows no state lines, and the national influences which are thus constantly operative cannot fail to produce a certain uniformity of legislation which will increase as the wisdom of restrictive or regulative measures approves itself by their success. In the work of public enlightenment, the federal government can and does bear its share, since the expenditure of national funds is not bound by the same limitations as the enactment of laws intended to bind private action, and since the constitution, through the provision for the census, lends a direct sanction to inquiries into social and economic conditions. For the present, these non-compulsory agencies

must be relied upon as the main forces in the work of unification.

## FOOTNOTES:

[46] *Cf. in re Bradwell*, 55 Ill. 535, *Bradwell v. Illinois*, 16 Wallace, 130, 1873.

[47] *In re Maguire*, 57 Cal. 604.

[48] *Ex parte Hayes*, 98 Cal. 556.

[49] *Foster v. Police Commissioners*, 102 Cal. 483.

[50] *People v. Williams*, 189 N. Y. 131.

[51] 198 U. S. 45.

[52] 208 U. S. 412.

[53] *In re Morgan*, 26 Col. 415; *in re Jacobs*, 98 N. Y. 98.

[54] Hutchins and Harrison, *History of Factory Legislation*, p. 187.

[55] *Holden v. Hardy*, 169 U. S. 366, *Lochner v. New York*, 198 U. S. 45.

[56] *In re Morgan*, 26 Col. 415.

[57] Since this article was written the Illinois supreme court has declared the ten-hour law constitutional.—Editor.

[58] Hutchins and Harrison, *History of Factory Legislation*, p. 84.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 186.

[60] 155 Ill. 98.

[61] *People v. Williams*, 189 N. Y. 131, 134.

[62] *Muller v. Oregon*, 208 U. S. 412, 421-423.

[63] R. L., 106, § 69.

[64] “The moral dangers of night work are so obvious that they need only be mentioned: the danger of the streets at night, going to and from work, association with all kinds of men employes at late night hours; the difficulty for women who are away from their families, of living at respectable places and entering at night hours; the peril of the midnight recess in establishments that run all night long.” Josephine C. Goldmark, *Annals American Academy of Political and Social Science*, v. 28, p. 64.

[65] Hutchins and Harrison, p. 85.

[66] Hutchins and Harrison, pp. 209-211.

[67] *Connolly v. Union Sewer Pipe Co.*, 184 U. S. 540.

[68] *Report 1907*, p. 49.

[69] *Charities and the Commons*, v. 17, p. 839.

[70] *Schaezlein v. Cabaniss*, 135 Cal. 466.

[71] *Buttfield v. Stranahan*, 192 U. S. 470, standards of quality of tea; *Isenhour v. State*, 157 Ind. 517, minimum standards of food and drug preparations, defining specific adulterations; *Arms v. Ayer*, 192 Ill. 601, determining number and location of fire escapes.

[72] *Burcher v. People*, 41 Colo. 495. The reasoning of the decision is in some respects obscure, and the case cannot be regarded as typical.

# THE ILLINOIS TEN-HOUR DECISION<sup>[73]</sup>

JOSEPHINE GOLDMARK

National Consumers' League

It was a unique episode in the history of American labor legislation, when in February, 1910, two distinguished lawyers joined the state officials of Illinois in a defense of the ten-hour law before the state supreme court. Both gentlemen—Mr. W. C. Calhoun, the then newly appointed ambassador to China, and Mr. Louis D. Brandeis of Boston, who had won prestige in successfully defending a similar law before the United States Supreme Court two years earlier—gave their services, a free gift to the wage-earning women of Illinois, and to those of such other states as may establish by law the ten-hour day in industry, in consequence of the favorable Illinois decision.

The statute in behalf of which these two public-spirited lawyers appeared, at great personal sacrifice, was enacted by the legislature of Illinois in 1910, and restricts to ten hours the working day of women employed in factories, mechanical establishments and laundries.

Similar legislation has been in force in England since 1847, in Switzerland since 1877, in Germany since the early nineties, in France since the beginning of the present century. In our own country, Massachusetts enacted a ten-hour law as early as 1876, and the supreme courts of four states—Massachusetts, Nebraska, Washington and Oregon—as well as the Supreme Court of the United States itself, have sustained the constitutionality of such laws.

Why then should a measure, so long tested by human experience and so obviously necessary in Illinois, the third manufacturing state in the Union, require so earnest and determined a defense? The answer to this query is found in the favorable decision of the Illinois Supreme Court, handed down

in April, 1910. It was the necessity of putting the case so strongly before the court that it might reverse its earlier decision of 1895. Fifteen years ago, the Supreme Court of Illinois in what is known as the case of *Ritchie v. The People*, held that no restriction whatever could be placed upon the working hours of adult women employed in manufacture. The earlier statute had established the eight-hour day for women employed in manufacture. It was held unconstitutional and void, as a violation of individual freedom of contract. The present statute establishes for the same classes of workers the ten-hour day. The same principle is involved in both laws, namely, that the working hours of adult women may be restricted by the legislature.

In its recent decision, holding that the ten-hour statute is a valid exercise of the police power of the state and is not in violation of the constitution of the state of Illinois, the supreme court lays stress upon two points: first, that the present statute is a health measure and is so described in its title and in its text, while neither the title nor the text of the former eight-hour law, annulled in 1895, specifically stated its relation to the subject of health; second, that the present statute permits ten hours' work in twenty-four, while the former one permitted but eight hours. These two points call for scrutiny and consideration. In future every ten-hour bill for women should be entitled a health measure, as in fact it is. This precaution costs neither time, money nor effort. Yet it may save the law when on trial before a court of last resort upon the charge of unconstitutionality.

The second point is more difficult. If in general the principle is accepted that statutes restricting the working hours of adult women must be obviously and convincingly health measures, then the enactment of future eight-hour bills and nine-hour bills might well be accompanied by the preparation of briefs showing the necessity for the statutory shortening of the working day as overwhelmingly as the Brandeis brief filed in the Illinois case proved the point in the present instance. The specific statement in the present decision that what judges know as men, they cannot profess to ignore as judges, emphasizes the need of presenting to them the underlying

social and medical facts upon which legislation restricting women's working hours is fundamentally based.

The effectiveness of this procedure is shown by the experience of the past two years. In January, 1908, Mr. Brandeis filed with the Supreme Court of the United States, in defense of the Oregon ten-hour law, a brief of one hundred and twelve pages, showing the action and opinion of European nations and some American states governing the working hours of women in the interest of the public health. His oral plea on that occasion followed the same lines. The decision of the court, written by the late Justice Brewer, was unanimous, sustaining the statute and specifically stating that the court took "judicial cognizance" of the "facts of common knowledge" brought before them. In the recent Illinois case, Mr. Brandeis's brief contained more than six hundred pages of similar information gathered during the past year by the writer under an appropriation from the Russell Sage Foundation.

These two decisions pave the way for an immediate nationwide campaign for the ten-hour day for women employed in factories, mechanical establishments and laundries in all those industrial states which have not yet enacted such laws. A similar campaign is sorely needed in many states in order to extend to women in stores, offices, telegraph and telephone services, trade and transportation, the benefits already enjoyed by their sisters employed in manufacture.

The National Consumers' League has already enlisted for this campaign, placing well to the fore in its program for the decennial period 1910-1920 the enactment of such laws.

### **FOOTNOTES:**

[73] [By special request of the editor, Miss Goldmark has prepared this brief comment on the Illinois decision, pointing out its practical lessons without discussing the legal points involved. As is well known to students of protective legislation, only the remarkable work of Miss Goldmark in collecting and marshaling the mass of evidence scattered in all sorts of documents both in

this country and abroad made possible the briefs that resulted in  
the sustaining of both the Oregon and the Illinois law.—EDITOR.]

**A SELECTED LIST OF BOOKS AND  
PAMPHLETS IN THE ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE ON WOMEN IN  
INDUSTRY<sup>[74]</sup>**

COMPILED FOR THE WOMEN'S TRADE UNION  
LEAGUE BY

CAROLA WOERISHOFFER

EDITED BY

HELEN MAROT

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ABBOTT, EDITH. Women in industry; a study of American economic history. N.Y.: Appleton. 1909.

[The history of women in industry in the United States. Also the cotton, shoe, printing, clothing and cigarmaking trades in their relation to women.— Contains a bibliography.]

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BAYLES, G. J. Woman and the law. N.Y. Century. 1901.

[Statements and summaries of different state laws relating to the employment of women.]

BLACK, CLEMENTINA. Sweated industry and the minimum wage. London: Duckworth. 1907.

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[Purpose of the work is to prove that hardships result to women from trade unions and factory acts.]

BRANDEIS, L. D. Women in industry; discussion of the U. S. Supreme Court in the case of Curt Muller v. state of Oregon, upholding the constitutionality of the Oregon ten-hour law for women and brief for the state of Oregon. N. Y.: National consumers' league.

BRANDEIS, L. D. & GOLDMARK, JOSEPHINE. Brief and argument for appellants in the supreme court of the state of Illinois. N. Y.: National consumers' league.

[Legislation restricting the hours of labor for women, American legislation, foreign legislation, dangers of long hours, causes and effects of fatigue, effect of hours on health, safety, morals and general welfare, benefit of short hours, remedies, regulations and restrictions.]

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BUTLER, E. B. Women and the trades; Pittsburg 1907-08. N.Y.: Charities publication committee. 1909.

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[A record taken from life in New York.]

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[Women wage-earners in London.]

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[Report on a strike of women telephone operators.]

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[Diary of an investigator; women's wages, women and the factory acts, regulation of hours of labor, the sweating system.]

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WILLET, M. H. Employment of women in the clothing trade. N. Y.: Columbia university. 1902.

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Women's trade union league (National). Convention handbook 1909. Chicago: National women's trade union league. 1909.

[Brief description of 32 trades in which women work.]

—— (same). Proceedings, second biennial convention. Chicago: National women's trade union league. 1909.

—— (Boston). History of trade unionism among women in Boston. Boston: Women's trade union league. 1906.

[Deals with unions in the following trades: printing, bookbinding, laundry, cigar, tobacco stripping, garment, music and telegraphy.]

—— (Chicago). Leaflets. A series for trade union propaganda.

—— (N. Y.) Report of interstate conference 1908. N. Y.: 1908.

[Report on organization in 43 women's unions.]

The annual reports of the state bureaus of labor, and state factory inspection departments; the bulletins of the U. S. dept. of labor; the economic journals and monthly periodicals contain some of the most important contributions to the literature of women in industry.

### **FOOTNOTES:**

[74] This list makes no attempt at completeness, the aim being to include only the most useful works in the field covered not included in the indices of periodicals.

## Transcriber's Notes

Minor errors in punctuation have been corrected.

Page [25](#): “infinitesimal fragment” changed to “infinitesimal fragment”

Page [82](#): “duties and opportunitis” changed to “duties and opportunities”

Page [98](#): “Interborough Associatiod” changed to “Interborough Association”

Page [105](#): “analagous work” changed to “analogous work”

Page [136](#): “hospital dietetician” changed to “hospital dietitian”

Page [139](#): “dieteticians in hospitals” changed to “dietitians in hospitals”

Page [193](#): “trade union legue” changed to “trade union league”

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