

Efficiency Test

of Domestic Standards for

Every Housekeeper

Put Yourself in Place of Your Cook and Get Her Point of View, Says Mrs. Thetta Quay Franks

WANTED: A human being, not a drudge; an intelligent mind, not a faulty machine; a woman trained in her work and not a hit-or-miss menial." Some day this advertisement may appear under the caption, "Domestic Help Wanted," and arouse no other comment than that bearing upon its fruitful and satisfying results. At least, that is the hope of Mrs. Thetta Quay Franks of Llewellyn Park, N. J., a woman who is devoting her time to the problem that comes nearest the heart and hearth of every housekeeper—the most economical and efficient method of carrying on the business of a household.

Mrs. Franks speaks with the knowledge of experience, and is now publishing a book, "The Margin of Happiness—Practical Studies in Household Efficiency," in which she discusses the problems confronting every woman who is or expects to be the head of a household. Almost every one appreciates that the work of the home has up to the present time been lacking in proper organization and division of labor, and, according to Mrs. Franks, there are at the present moment 60,000 fewer employes than places to welcome them. Having gone deep into the reasons for the existing state of affairs, Mrs. Franks declares that she has found the answer to the agonizing "Why?" that is on the lips of every woman who has been confronted with this widespread evil. With the light of discovery in her eye and a practical plan for improving the situation, Mrs. Franks utters the words of Charles Reade with new meaning, "Put yourself in his place."

"The present state of domestic employment is largely due to a lack of imagination," said Mrs. Franks to a representative of THE NEW YORK TIMES. "The moment we look at the lives and surroundings of this class of workers from their point of view we can realize the unsatisfactory character of present conditions. That is the reason why the 'Test of Domestic Standards,' which suggested this interview, is helpful. [The questions embodied in this test are published in another column.] It asks every woman direct, personal questions, 'Do your employes have a rest room? Have they comfortable beds? Have they a bathroom or the use of one? Are they provided with newspapers and magazines after the family have read them?' And so on through a list of questions covering the duties, comfort, hours of labor and recreation, salary, and possible rewards of this class of workers. To many of these questions most women will reply, 'I never thought about it!'

"What is the reason for this?" was the question put to Mrs. Franks. "Surely American women are not lacking in intelligence and kindness of heart?"

"Assuredly not," said Mrs. Franks. "The present state of affairs is largely due to our not putting ourselves in the household employes' place. The same thing applies to women's mental attitude toward housekeeping. A report on the high cost of living in New York says of housewives: 'The extravagance and waste in these households, due to ignorance and carelessness, is a large and unnecessary drain upon the food supply of this city.'

"The entire mental attitude of women toward their place in the sun must change. They must look upon themselves frankly from the point of view of the men they marry and the human beings whom they employ, and ask themselves: 'Am I as faithful toward my husband's business interests in the home as he is to mine in the office or factory or studio or

wherever the money-making demand may lead him? Am I doing by those in my employ as I would be done by?' There is much virtue in a direct, personal question."

"Do you think that all the responsibility for the present unsatisfactory condition of household employment rests with the employers? Are not the workers largely to blame for their status in the minds of the people? They are sometimes exasperatingly stupid and careless and lack appreciation of any kindness shown them. Don't you think they also are at fault?"

"I think democracy is to blame," said Mrs. Franks. "Our household employes come from foreign lands, where their place in the social order is fixed and their ambition is satisfied with excelling in the sphere of usefulness to which they were born. But the moment they arrive in the United States they meet with the new idea that all men are created equal. They confuse freedom with license and independence with discourtesy."

"And do you think it possible to metamorphose the ordinary American servant into such a person of intelligent courtesy?"

"I should like to do away with the 'ordinary American servant' entirely, and substitute in her place a trained, intelligent, courteous, self-respecting 'household employe,'" was the reply. "To do so means a revolution in the methods of the education of women. Is it not absurd for a nation to spend annually \$400,000,000 in educating its women and yet to fail to fit them for the very calling upon which rest the health, strength, comfort, and happiness of the nation? Seventy per cent. of our girls marry—more than nine-tenths practice domestic science, and although 72,000 girls are receiving instruction in home economics in the schools of New York, only one lesson a week, of eighty minutes' time, is given to these vitally important studies."

"Every girl in every school (whether the girl be rich or poor, the school private or public) should receive a thorough training, beginning at 10 years of age, in these useful arts and sciences, which seem to be inevitably a part of her life work. Modern housekeeping demands a knowledge of a balanced ration and food values, with a new vocabulary including 'vitamins,' 'calories,' and other words full of meaning. It requires an understanding of the budget, economical buying, the organization of the work of a household, an intelligent, business method of accounting. All this is expert knowledge, and it is not inherent in us; it must be acquired."

"Such a standard is far removed from present practices. The gentle rillery of the comic sections of the newspapers and magazines is illuminating. A modern version of the story of 'the pies that mother used to make' reads: 'John,' said the young wife, 'I think I hear burglars in the pantry, and they may eat my pies.' 'What does it matter,' replied the young husband wearily, 'so long as they do not die in the house?'

Mrs. Franks was reminded that the education she suggested could not be of much help to the distracted housewife of the present day, and asked if she had any immediate solution of the problem.

"Ah, if these were only the days of miracles, and such knowledge might descend upon the head of every woman like a flame of sacred fire!" said Mrs. Franks, "but it can only be done by work—classes for housewives—classes for household employes. And such classes will only succeed if they are formed in the spirit of comradeship, with pride in

A TEST OF DOMESTIC STANDARDS.

The following test of domestic standards is based upon the questionnaire of the Montclair Homemakers' Association, issued in March, 1915, and the Test of Household Efficiency issued by Mrs. Thetta Quay Franks, in May, 1916, amplified by a committee representing the New Jersey State Homemakers' Association in co-operation with Mrs. Franks. The questions may be applied to every type of household, whether it has one or many employes.

- 1.—How many persons do you employ in your household? Are they employed by the month, week, day or hour? What is their nationality? What is your experience in employing persons of different nationalities?
- 2.—How long, on the average, do you keep an employe? For what reasons do you make changes?
- 3.—How many persons are there in your family? How many adults? Ages of children? To what extent do your employes assist with the care of children? Do you require courtesy from your employes to your children? Do you require courtesy from your children to your employes?
- 4.—Do you have a fixed wage or a graduated scale? If the latter, upon what does the increase depend, greater efficiency or length of service?
- 5.—What do you consider a fair wage for
 - (A)—A general houseworker with plain cooking and laundry?
 - (B)—A good cook and general houseworker without laundry?
 - (C)—A general houseworker and laundress without knowledge of cooking?
 - (D)—If you have two or more employes, in what capacity are they employed, and what do you consider a fair wage for each?
- 6.—What arrangements do you make with your employes with regard to days out, evenings out, evenings off duty? What financial arrangements do you make with regard to vacations?
- 7.—What formal service do you require in the dining room? Do you require a uniform? Do you supply it in part or complete?
- 8.—Do you assist in any household work? Do you personally order household supplies? Do you provide a daily menu for your family?
- 9.—Do you serve different food to your employes than to your family? Have you an economical, nutritious daily menu for your employes?
- 10.—Have you a practical knowledge of the intelligent planning of the work of a household, so that labor may be justly divided and each employe given a reasonable time of rest? How many hours of actual work do you require per day? Do you pay for overtime or extra service?
- 11.—Have you a daily schedule of work for each employe? Will you kindly give it in detail?
- 12.—Have you a personal knowledge of the time and labor required for a complete schedule of the tasks in your household? Do you tell each worker what to do, how to do it, and then hold him or her responsible for results? Do you give to each one a written statement of what is required?
- 13.—Is your house planned throughout for your own specific use and that of your employes, on sanitary, economic principles? Are the heating and ventilating systems adequate and hygienic? Is the light, both natural and artificial, up to the maximum of quality and quantity, and down to the minimum of cost?
- 14.—Have you an accurate knowledge of every labor-saving device applicable to your household? Have you supplied those which you approve and can afford? Do your employes appreciate this effort to lighten their labor? Do you find that labor-saving devices reduce the number of employes required?
- 15.—Do your employes have a rest room downstairs, or do they entertain their friends in the kitchen? Do they have a bathroom or the use of one? Have they comfortable beds? Have they comfortable chairs in bedrooms, rest room, and kitchen? Are they provided with newspapers and magazines after the family have read them? To what extent are employes given the use of the telephone?
- 16.—Have you a specified rest period for your employes? Are they subject to call?
- 17.—Have you a complete personal grocery list, stating the brands or varieties which you have assured yourself, to the best of your ability, to be unadulterated and healthful? Do you "take stock" of the groceries in your house at the beginning of each week or month? Do you buy in quantities and as economically as possible? Do you think that this plan saves time, money, and the nervous strain of the daily ordering of supplies? Is this considered a distinct benefit by your employes?
- 18.—Have you any personal experience in employing outside, specialized labor in the management of your household? How do you find that the expense and convenience of this method, in whole or in part, compares with the usual method of having employes in the house? Do you believe that outside labor is the future solution of the domestic service problem? Do you believe that the eight-hour day, with the employes taking their meals outside the house, is practicable in the household?
- 19.—Have you compared all your methods of housekeeping, in detail, with those of at least a dozen other women whose similar incomes might make their experience of value to you? Are you willing to be told that your methods might be improved, by such practical housekeepers, by an employe, by an expert? What are the most helpful books that you have read on this subject?
- 20.—Is the relationship between you and your employes merely one of so much money for so much work, or is it based partially upon personal interest and attachment? Do you think that this relationship, in general, might be placed upon a more sympathetic basis with benefit to employer and employe?

If you think of any points of interest or helpfulness to add to these questions, will you kindly do so?

Copyrighted, February, 1917, by Thetta Quay Franks and the New Jersey State Homemakers' Association.

a worthy profession—that of the homemaker—which shall be a great bond of sympathy uniting all women in a community of interest. We must remove the stigma from household employment. It must take its place beside other professions requiring mental training.

"Thirty years ago professional nursing was unknown. The care of the sick was left to the untrained, elderly women who were looked upon much as cooks are regarded today—as inferiors who did the disagreeable tasks of the sick room and kept tiresome vigils, but of whom little trained intelligence was expected. With a growing knowledge of microbes, antiseptics, disinfectants, the speed demanded in the operating room, requiring an intimate knowledge of numerous instruments upon the part of an assistant and their rapid supply to the operator, the world learned that nurses required training, and their occupation was elevated to a profession. Nothing could have been more impressive than the thousands of professional nurses marching up Fifth Avenue in the preparedness parade in New York. They marched proudly in their white uniforms—their position in the public mind, as women who represented a useful profession respected by all, was assured."

"When women know more about the effect of food upon the human body, and realize the vital need of our nation for

more intelligent eating habits, housewifery and the delicate art of choosing as well as cooking the daily food will take its true place in the public estimation. How many women know the actual state of the health of our nation? In every civilized country in the world the death rate is falling because of improved sanitation and modern control of contagious diseases; but in our country, and ours alone, the death rate of persons of 45 years of age and over, due to organic diseases, has increased 41 per cent. in twenty years. This appalling fact is largely attributed to our eating too much meat, and so overloading the organs of elimination. We are literally selling our national birthright of health for a mess of pottage. To combat these tendencies and to bring a knowledge of their seriousness to the attention of the people, there has been formed the Life Extension Institute, with the Hon. William Howard Taft as President of the Board of Directors, and a long list of men of the highest scientific attainments as consultants. But men of science can never remedy the faults of our national eating habits. This reform can only be accomplished by women in the home.

"Twenty millions of women in twenty millions of American homes should be made to realize the great need for their intelligent co-operation, and aroused to action."