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OVER

RUSSELL SAGE
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SALESWOMEN IN MERCANTILE STORES

BALTIMORE, 1909

BY

ELIZABETH BEARDSLEY BUTLER

AUTHOR OF "WOMEN AND THE TRADES"

NEW YORK
CHARITIES PUBLICATION
COMMITTEE . . . . MCMXII

PRESS OF WM. F. FELL CO.
PHILADELPHIA

PREFACE

IN the latter part of 1908 the Consumers' League of Maryland, desiring to prepare a "white list" of stores, asked the Russell Sage Foundation to send Miss Elizabeth B. Butler, who had recently investigated for the Pittsburgh Survey the conditions under which Pittsburgh women worked,* to make a similar study in mercantile stores in Baltimore. The Foundation readily acceded to this request, believing that it offered an opportunity to obtain important information that would be of general value. The investigation was begun in January, 1909, on a co-operative basis. The Consumers' League of Maryland paid Miss Butler's salary and expenses for the months during which she was engaged in the examination of stores in Baltimore, while the Foundation assumed the responsibility for her report and for its publication.

While this report deals only with one set of industrial conditions in a single city, it seems wise to publish it. It tells facts which are accessible to only a few people and presents the particular situation in Baltimore comprehensively. It is

*See Butler, Elizabeth B: Women and the Trades. (The Pittsburgh Survey.) Russell Sage Foundation Publication. New York, Charities Publication Committee, 1909.

hoped that the volume will enable the public as well as employers in Baltimore to understand local working conditions better and lead them to give more thoughtful attention to questions affecting employes and store management; it will be suggestive to other cities, and is an example of fair and careful work which should be imitated elsewhere. Sweeping conclusions must not, however, be rashly drawn from so limited a study. For a wider view the interesting volume entitled Wage-Earning Women in Stores and Factories recently issued by the United States Department of Commerce and Labor should be consulted. This gives in more condensed form facts gathered in various cities.

During the months that were spent in this investigation, Miss Butler got a clear and comprehensive view of Baltimore stores, of their plans and methods of operation and of the people who formed their working forces. She was quiet and thoughtful and thorough, sympathetic and ready to enjoy all sorts of people and so made friends in all ranks. All who have worked with her feel that the cutting short of her career by tuberculosis has taken from them a valued friend and from society a valuable worker.

JOHN M. GLENN
General Director, Russell Sage Foundation

INTRODUCTION

MERCANTILE establishments employ a large proportion of the women wage-earners of this country. Although the types of saleswomen vary from district to district, from city to city, yet the requirements for salesmanship in all cities are fundamentally the same. Whether they chance to be in small houses or in large, saleswomen are in great measure in a class by themselves. Reaction against the idea of the department store, demand for the finer sort of merchandise, and appeal to an exclusive trade, have brought into being many specialty shops, but their greater specialization in merchandise does not as a rule mean that a more thorough knowledge or a more professional attitude is required of their employes. The saleswoman in a small specialty house or in a neighborhood store is a cog in a small wheel, just as the saleswoman in a department store is a cog in a large wheel. In both cases, the duties of her occupation are for the most part the same.

This occupation, simple as it appears, involves prompt personal adjustments and quick understanding. It is upon the intelligence of the saleswoman, and upon her attitude to the customer,

quite as much as upon the quality of the goods, that the number and value of sales depend. The mercantile house, however thorough in organization and however responsive to public demand, must in the last analysis rely upon its sales force for success, and the personal efficiency of the latter must keep pace with the impersonal efficiency of store organization. To secure and keep at its maximum this personal efficiency is one problem of the store superintendent. It involves not only the selection of new employes, but the conservation of the health and interest of old employes, and in consequence is intimately connected with the interior arrangements of the store, the hours and seasons of work, the range of wages, and the opportunity for advancement. All these conditions directly or indirectly influence the attitude which saleswomen take toward their occupation, and the attitude with which they meet their customers. Ultimately, then, upon the sum of these working conditions must in large measure depend the success of the industry. These conditions are, therefore, not only of immediate personal importance to the workingwomen employed but of commercial importance to their employers. Progressive employers now recognize this community of interest and in consequence give practical consideration to industrial conditions.

Moreover, to society as a whole these conditions are matters of deep concern. Individuals and organizations, through personal efforts and reports,

have already called attention to certain phases of the mercantile industry, such as the hours of work, the need of seats for women employes, and the importance of more businesslike dealings with employes. Yet valuable as these efforts have been, the public has no thorough knowledge of the subject. Any study based upon an inquiry into but one side of a question must be partial in its findings and will fail to be convincing. A knowledge of the problems of employers as well as of employes and the joint relation of both groups to the public is necessary. With this in view, the attempt has been made to present the employment situation of the retail mercantile industry of Baltimore as a whole.

Baltimore appeared to be an especially good field for such a study. The stores there have not yet reached a point where organization is so complete and extensive as in those of Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York. They are in an earlier stage of growth and consequently more adapted to industrial research. Their external construction and internal organization are less difficult to understand and describe; processes and tendencies of development that are farther advanced in larger cities can be more clearly seen, and the study of conditions in this smaller community will be more suggestive for the guidance of other cities of equal population.

The field was marked off at the outset to include only larger stores approaching the department

store type. The small stores present a different problem. The study, therefore, arbitrarily comprises only mercantile establishments in which seven or more saleswomen are employed. The 34 establishments in Baltimore which had attained this size at the time the study was undertaken in 1909 form the basis of this report.

A series of eleven cards,* each covering a single subject of inquiry, such as the physical conditions in the stores, the number of employes, their hours of work and their weekly wages, was filled out by each of the establishments under consideration. By separating the different subjects of inquiry and assigning them to separate cards, it became possible readily to make cross-classification in filing; that is, the cards could be arranged either according to mercantile houses, or according to subjects, and the facts with regard to either obtained at once.

In undertaking this study, I had the aid both of the heads of the establishments concerned and of their employes. Knowledge of the physical conditions was obtained mainly by personal observation. Sometimes I was conducted through a store by the courtesy of a firm, and at other times I entered it as an ordinary customer. The number and occupations of employes were supplied by officers of the stores visited. Information as to weekly wages, details of welfare work, and general facts in regard to the nationality of em-

* For facsimiles of these cards see Appendix A, p. 175.

ployes, were also obtained partly from statements made by officials. In all cases the purpose of this study was explained to officials and the opportunity given them to state the policy of the store in regard to the rate of advance in wages, regularity of employment, the terms on which manufacturing hands are employed, and kindred matters. These statements were not regarded as final unless confirmed by further testimony, but they frequently served as valuable indications of the lines along which more knowledge was essential, and in a number of instances were fully corroborated.

In the matter of weekly wages, welfare work, and nationality, as well as hours of work and irregular wages, statements were obtained also through intelligent employes who had been for some time in the service of their firms. Here, again, testimony of individuals was not accepted as final without corroboration from co-workers; the agreement of a number of individuals unknown to each other was, however, accepted as final. I found here as elsewhere that women workers habitually understated their disadvantages or omitted altogether matters of fundamental importance. It was not suggested to employes that they were being treated badly; on the contrary, it was explained to them just as it had been to their employers, that the purpose of the study was to find out the best things that were being done in the way of store planning and arrangement, the best systems in regard to wages

and hours, in order that a practical standard for the industry might be determined. Where the point under consideration involved a major policy of the store, testimony was sought both from officials and from employes in different departments as well as from others indirectly connected with the business, until the facts elicited seemed to be established beyond question.

The advantage of an accurate presentation of the conditions in the industry was so apparent both to the employers and to the employes interviewed, and the desire of both to co-operate in the determining of a practicable mercantile standard was so evident, that I offer this study with confidence in the accuracy of the information upon which the statements are based, and in the belief that the description of the conditions given is representative.

ELIZABETH B. BUTLER

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CHAPTER I

STORE CONSTRUCTION

BETWEEN a plan of construction essential to a high standard of health and one necessitated by stringent economy, the transition states in the evolution of a department store are many and varied. It seldom happens that merchants can afford to build largely enough at first to allow for ample growth; the store must prove its power to survive. The capacity of an outgrown building is therefore often stretched to its extreme limit, annexes of doubtful fitness are forced into service, and inconvenience reaches the point of discomfort before expensive alterations or new buildings are undertaken.

CHARACTER OF BUILDINGS. The Baltimore stores may be regarded as a series of cross-sections showing the evolutionary stages of a final building plan for mercantile houses. A third of the stores are single buildings, some of them constructed for the purpose for which they are used. Others, originally constructed as flat dwellings with stores on the ground floor, are now remodeled within to admit of continuous stairways and of storage rooms for stock. A few stores whose main buildings

were once adequate have contented themselves with a single annex; one or two have a series of such additions; and one store has apparently reached its maturity in an annex twice the height and depth of the original building. The remaining stores, probably constituting the final third of the whole number, can be classified neither into main buildings nor into annexes. They form rather an invertebrate series of small buildings, strung together by connecting doors and flights of steps, and with more or less unevenly matched ceilings.*

SLOPE OF THE LAND. The rolling, uneven land upon which the city has been built, is in part responsible for the difficulty of using in combination buildings once intended to be separate. From Howard Street to Eutaw Street in the vicinity of Lexington Street there is a steep grade ascending to the west. On the west side of Howard Street the entrances to the main floors of stores are on the level of the street. Consequently, large portions of these main floors towards the rear are below ground, require artificial light, and are difficult to ventilate. In other cases, where side entrances have been provided, the main floor must be reached by either an incline or a flight of steps. Such difficulties in construction, due primarily to the slope of the land, are found not only

* The character of buildings of the 34 Baltimore stores upon which this study is based was as follows: single building, 13; main building and annex, 7; main building and series of annexes, 2; small buildings connected, 11; small buildings connected with larger annex, 1.

on Howard and Lexington Streets, but on Eutaw Street and on parts of Gay Street.

SHOW WINDOWS. Although two-thirds of the stores in Baltimore are not over four stories in height,* the number of departments is often as large as the number in stores several times their size; show windows for the display of merchandise are therefore important. The essentials of a show window are depth and sufficient length of frontage to allow for display of new seasonal materials without neglect of those always carried in stock. The crowding of buildings, however, along the shopping streets, the shallowness of some of the building lots, and the increase in quantities of merchandise within doors, have resulted in en-

* Three of the 34 stores had 2 floors, 15 had 3 floors, 7 had 4 floors, 3 had 5 floors, 5 had 6 floors, and 1 store had 7 floors. (When a store combines several buildings, for purposes of tabulation the building containing the greatest number of floors gives tabular reckoning of number of floors for the store.) The following table shows how the various floors are utilized:

Purpose for Which Used	*Number of Stores Using*						
	Basement	*First Floor*	*Second Floor*	*Third Floor*	*Fourth Floor*	*Fifth Floor*	*Sixth Floor*
Salesroom floors	17	34	30	19	7	1	..
Millinery work rooms	..	..	10	5	2	1	..
Alteration rooms	..	..	6	7	8	1	1

Five stores used the 2nd or 3rd floor for drapery rooms, and 4 stores used the 4th, 5th, or 6th floor for kitchens.

croachments on show-window space so that the depth in some cases is not more than two feet. A characteristic, therefore, of the show windows of Baltimore is their shallowness; although a four-foot depth is not unknown, there are no deep vistas in the displays of merchandise. This show-window space, which meagre as it is serves for effective advertisement, is separated from the interior of the store by a wooden or plate glass partition that acts as a blind wall against the admission of light or air. When the first floor ceiling is low, and sometimes when it is not low, the partition is carried to the ceiling, in order to give the show window height as well as depth. In 12 cases there are transoms above the show windows, below the ceiling of the first floor, used in part for additional light, in part for direct ventilation in warm weather. In four of these stores the transoms are one foot only in height; in seven they are two feet in height, and one store has transoms four feet high.* Twenty-two of the 34 stores have no transoms above the show windows.† The rule of building a blind partition between show window and interior is broken in only two cases, these two being stores of very narrow frontage with little daylight exposure. Here the lower halves of the partitions are made of plate glass mirrors, and the upper halves of transparent window glass.

The shallowness of show windows implies a like

* Where the height varies at different parts of the building, for purposes of tabulation only the maximum height is indicated.

† For number of stores having transoms above doors, see p. 11.

shallowness in vestibule or entry space. In fact, there are few vestibules in Baltimore shops worthy of the name. A three-foot wide entry-way with a single set of swinging doors opening directly into the store is the commonest form of entrance. Two stores have double sets of swinging doors at the entrance, but the greatest vestibule depth in either of these stores is five feet. Two stores have revolving doors.

VESTIBULE AND HEATING PLAN. As an architectural feature, the vestibule may be of value; but as contributing to the comfort of employes, and as part of the heating plan, it is a matter of cardinal importance. Dampness, fogs, and draughts of cold air rush in through the constantly opening and closing front doors. The many show tables and small counters about the entrance require the presence there of more employes than in any other section of equal floor space in the store, and these employes while dressed for indoors are exposed to the changes of outdoor weather. The percentage of illness among them is consequently high. Yet where vestibules are extremely shallow, there seems to be no remedy less drastic than to rebuild them.

It should be pointed out parenthetically that the general narrowness of entrances is not only a present inconvenience but a probable danger in case of fire. The number of exits, too, is markedly small. Sometimes one or two single doors serve for a large store, thus making it impossible for custo-

mers and employes to leave the building rapidly. Revolving doors lessen the quantity of cold air admitted, but they require an attendant to see that they run evenly, and in case of a panic would seriously retard the egress of a crowd. For safety, swinging doors are probably preferable.

The most satisfactory way of dealing with the question of cold air, and at the same time with that of heating the first floor, is to make the vestibule serve as the main feature of the heating plan. For this to be effective, a minimum depth of 12 feet is required. Vestibules 15 to 20 feet in depth are found in the large stores of some other cities. This by no means implies an equal show-window depth. On the contrary, the vestibule space may be arranged to jut into the store interior nearly to the outer edge of the counter placed at the show-window partition. Vestibules under this system are built with a set of swinging doors at either end, and contain registers or radiators running the length of the two sides. Where radiators are used, the cold air coming in through the outer set of swinging doors is warmed before it reaches the inner set, and is drawn into the large first floor area, thus heating the air near the vestibule and, by circulation, the whole of the first floor. When a large amount of heated air is forced into the entrance, and at the same time sheltered by the outer set of doors from contact with the cold outside, it is frequently possible to warm the first floor from this source exclusively,

and, as some of the first floor heat is bound to rise, to reduce the pressure in radiators for the upper floors.

Once within the store, we are confronted by questions of counter and shelf arrangement, flooring, lighting, and the system of ventilation. The plan of counter and shelf arrangement is especially important on the first floor because of the great number of employes, and the number of small departments and small articles for quick sale.

SPACE BEHIND COUNTER. The first floor is usually a rectangle bisected by one main aisle, and intersected lengthwise and crosswise by other aisles which lie between series of parallel counters. Frequently counters between parallel aisles are used for two different departments, the stock case in the middle being partitioned so as to serve both departments without confusion. It is built so that between it and the inner edge of each counter is a space sufficient to allow saleswomen to pass back and forth. As the stock of a department increases, the management must contrive to store it conveniently without encroaching upon the space of other departments. If the articles are small and intended for quick sale,—belts and collars, for instance,—the counter with its seats for customers may be removed, and a glass show case be placed in its stead with shelves for additional display. This cannot be done, however, when the articles are such that customers need

time for choice. A low counter and aisle seats are then essential.

Sometimes the difficulty is met by the substitution of a three- or four-panel stock case (the latter doubling the width of the shelves), for the case of two panels, although this lessens the space available for saleswomen between counter and case of stock. In certain departments, as for instance in the white goods or dress goods departments, the rolls of cloth instead of being placed in the shelves lengthwise, are sometimes laid crosswise and thus project at an angle. This plan, as well as the introduction of the wider stock case, seriously interferes with the comfort and convenience of the saleswomen. It is difficult for them to pass each other, and in this narrowed space the strain of lifting heavy boxes or rolls of goods is increased. A width of two feet is necessary, and when this is decreased by too much stock on the shelves or by too large a stock case between adjacent counters, the comfort, and in consequence the efficiency, of the saleswoman is correspondingly diminished.

Ten stores have a minimum counter space of two feet throughout. The others seem as a rule to have been guided by the need for room rather than by consideration for efficiency, 14 stores having a minimum counter space of from one foot, four inches to one foot, six inches, and 10 having a minimum space of one foot.

AISLE COUNTERS. Aisle counters—show tables

or squares—constitute one way of expanding a department. Aisle counters are rarely used as independent departments. They serve rather to display special bargains, to attract the eye of people who might otherwise pass too casually through the shop, or to emphasize a sale. Occasionally, show tables are used simply for additional display and all the selling is done at the main counter, but far more frequently these tables have their attendant saleswomen. When the aisle counter forms a square, and contains a cash register, the saleswoman stands securely enclosed against the passing throng of customers. Her stock is close at hand and manageable. Yet the square with its manifest convenience implies wide aisles and spacious building and in consequence has gained comparatively slow headway. In the 29 stores that make use of aisle counters there are but 65 saleswomen at work in enclosed squares, as against 440 saleswomen at show tables where the stock is kept in order with difficulty and where the saleswoman herself is hurried and jostled by contact with the crowd.*

FLOORING. The kind of flooring which may best be used in stores is still a moot point. Perhaps one might better say has begun to be a moot point, for consideration of the subject is recent,

* Three hundred and thirty-eight saleswomen worked at show tables on the first floor, 79 on the second floor, and 23 on the third floor. The 65 who occupied enclosed squares were all on the first floor. Five stores use show tables without assigning special saleswomen to them.

and experiments in substitutes for wood are in their infancy. Wood has so far proven the best material for comfort and durability, but it collects dust and is kept clean with difficulty, and neither oiling nor waxing has been found satisfactory. Stone flooring, though readily cleaned and durable, is hard to stand upon. The various compositions on the market lay claim to durability, cleanliness, and elasticity, but whether they have been sufficiently tested for the justness of these claims to be established is doubtful. Should composition flooring prove practicable, it would, were the composition continued in a curve to the lower part of the wall surface, offer the great advantage of doing away with the dust angle at the meeting of floor and wall.

VENTILATION. The ventilation of department stores, especially of the basements and first floors, is admittedly difficult. We are dealing here neither with small interiors readily freshened by the opening of a window, nor with groups of people so small that they may be held responsible for maintaining the air at a quality pleasant to themselves. We have, on the contrary, cross-currents of air through stairways and elevator shafts, sometimes through transom openings, and people who shun the rigor of direct cold air and insist upon closing the windows to which they have access. In employes and customers, we have a body of people equal in total number to that in a crowded lecture hall. In other words, we are

dealing with a large and fully occupied interior which cannot safely depend for its ventilation upon the chance impulse of a few people who in all probability dislike a draught.

Moreover, direct ventilation through windows or transoms is subject to interference from conflicting winds; and even were this not so, the percentage of space which can be spared above the show windows is usually too small to admit sufficient air to freshen that within. Transoms above show windows were found in 12 stores.* These transoms, in four cases one foot in height, and in seven cases two feet in height, are as a matter of fact almost invariably kept closed except on warm days. The same thing is true of transoms built above the entrance doors, which were found in 27 out of the 34 stores.†

Natural ventilation for a large and crowded interior is inadequate in either summer or winter. For sufficiently diluting the impure air and for withdrawing a portion of that used, some system of artificial or forced ventilation is requisite.‡ The question is how to supply the necessary

* See page 4.

† Of these 27 stores, 14 had a transom above only one door, and only 2 stores had more than 4 transoms. Seven stores had no transoms above the doors. In 9 of the 27 stores the transoms were only 1 foot in height, in 13 they were 2 feet, and in 5 stores they were 3 feet high.

‡ Snow, William S., S. B., and Nolan, Thomas, A. M., M. S.: Ventilation of Buildings. New York, Van Nostrand Co. According to this book, the amount of carbon dioxide in the air of a well ventilated room, should not exceed six or seven parts in 10,000. By calculating the rate at which carbon dioxide is exhaled, we may make an approximate estimate as to the per capita allowance of fresh air per

quantity of air continuously and at even temperature to an interior which, unlike a theater or lecture hall, is not shut off by foyers and closed doors from disturbing currents without.* This is less a ventilating problem per se than one of construction.

For first floors and basements, at least, the plenum or blower system is the only one which seems to supply a sufficient quantity of fresh air irrespective of outside temperature. If this system is to be effective, however, first floors and basements must be constructed with as great freedom from interior air currents as is compatible with the business of the store, and each floor treated as nearly as possible like a separate compartment. With a double set of doors in the vestibule and a heating system such as has been suggested, there would be some interference with forced ventilation, but not nearly so much as under the present plan of single swinging doors and no vestibule.

Within the store, difficulty lies in the construction of elevators, shafts, and stairways. The older Baltimore stores customarily have their elevators enclosed in cage-like wire shafts. Already

hour necessary to keep the proportion of carbon dioxide below 7 in 10,000. For rooms continuously occupied, with daylight exposure, 2000 cubic feet per hour per person is generally considered sufficient; where artificial light is used, the air supply needs to be considerably larger.

* As department stores are generally built today, the unenclosed stairways and elevator shafts, the opening doors through which streams of people pass out and in, would render ineffective any system of forced ventilation that might be installed.

A Balcony Diminishes Air Space

Wares Supplant Air and Daylight

in some cities this is contrary to the requirements of the fire insurance underwriters.* Elevator shafts, both for greater safety in case of fire, and to secure effective ventilation in the store, should have the walls built of some solid fireproof material, such as terra cotta or brick, with face and doors of wire-glass. In some of the newer store buildings in Philadelphia and New York, we find the beginnings of enclosed stairways. The new Wanamaker store in New York has stairways that are, in effect, solid stone fire-escapes, with wire-glass doors opening on the several floors. Such a plan seems not impracticable for smaller stores. Stairways are used but little as compared with the elevators, and were they provided with wire-glass doors at each landing, the opportunity afforded for the display of merchandise and the suggestion of new purchases would be almost as great as is now the case when stairways are unenclosed.

Where the blower system is in use, the necessary size of the fresh air inlet, capacity of the blower, and velocity † of the entering air, can be determined only from the cubic area of the floor and the average number of occupants. It is perhaps superfluous to say that low ceilings interfere with

* The present building law requires fireproof shafts. The law, however, was not made retroactive.

† The velocity of the air may be increased without causing a disagreeable draft if the inlet is some distance from the floor. The outlet is placed nearly under the inlet and close to the floor, the capacity of the exhaust fan being always slightly less than that of the blower.

ventilation and that a good average height is fourteen feet.

Upper floors may be ventilated by blowers, each floor having its individual blower and exhaust system connected with separate flues, or, since the window space is frequently greater than that on the first floor, by direct radiation. The number of people will usually be very much less on upper floors than on ground floors, and fresh air inlets are placed at the floor level next to radiators which continuously draw in outside air and pass it, warmed, to the interior of the room. This continuous current of fresh air ceases when the steam is turned off, but if the interior is small, direct ventilation assisted by electric fans may be sufficient in warm weather.

For the preservation of fabrics and for the health of individuals, it has been found desirable to remove dust from incoming air by causing the latter to pass through areas of cheesecloth the mesh of which is large enough not to become readily clogged.

What has been said of ventilation for ground floors and for upper floors, is applicable with even greater emphasis to basements. With the increase in land values, building is extended far below street level in order to make square feet of level space count for the most. We are thus confronted with the problem of making rooms below ground equally habitable and healthful with those above. With a fourteen-foot ceiling

and a good system of ventilation this is possible, for below ground we have not the constantly opening and closing vestibule doors to interfere with the exhaust. Enclosed elevator shafts and enclosed stairways make of the basement floor an air chamber which may readily be filled with a fresh air supply, and from which the impure air may easily be withdrawn. Basements in Baltimore stores, however, are far from having even rudimentary attempts at ventilation. Seventeen stores use their basements for salesrooms and one for office work.* In all these basements the lighting is artificial, arc lights being used in four cases, a combination of electric and arc lights in two, and small electric lights with transparent glass globes in the rest. Ceilings are uniformly low, the five highest being from 10 to 12 feet. Seven stores have basement ceilings from eight to ten feet in height, and six stores have basement ceilings seven to eight feet in height.

Except in one case, no provision is made for a supply of fresh air. In several instances the air filters in at the street level along part of one side through tiny openings, six inches to a foot high. In others small windows two feet or so square open on a cellar-way, but for the most part the basements are closed, the space even about such open-

* Of these basements, 6 have small windows (2 x 2) at the side, and 3 have openings 6 inches to 1 foot in height at the street level, while 9 basements are entirely underground. Two basements have 2 elevator shafts, 13 have 1 shaft, and 3 have none. One has 3 staircases, 3 have 2 staircases, and 14 have only 1.

ings being filled with stock so that the cellar-way as a source of air supply is practically valueless. Eight basements are entirely underground. Although through elevator shafts and stairways, and in one case by electric fans, there is some slight interior circulation of air, there is no adequate means of purifying the air.*

LIGHTING. The lighting of mercantile houses depends in part on average height of ceilings and in part on arrangement of show windows. A store may have windows on four sides, especially on upper floors, and yet because of low ceilings so much of the light may be intercepted that the interior is dark. Again, high ceilings and light-colored walls may reflect light which comes from but a few windows on one side, so that the interior has a bright appearance. It must be recognized, however, that as neighboring buildings increase in height and as the ground area of the store itself increases, even high ceilings and light walls cannot serve to distribute an adequate

* The operation of the ventilating system in one mercantile house is an instance of ineffective economy. Because of the open stairways, blowers and exhaust fans cannot work perfectly, but aside from this, the basement is so small that it might be well ventilated were the system applied as installed. The management, however, although it incurred the original expense of installing the ventilating system, has paused at the further expense of keeping the apparatus in operation. The blowers are used intermittently. No air test is made to determine how frequently they should be used, and no floorman is allowed to start the motors without the permission of the manager. As a device for showing roughly the velocity of air through basement inlets, some stores in other cities have placed directly in front of the inlets small flags which flutter out in the current of fresh air and in so doing create confidence in the quality of air supplied.

A Well Lighted Store Building

Mingling of Gas and Electric Light

amount of daylight. Some form of artificial illumination must be adopted. Were it possible for the store management to plan largely enough in the first instance so that the lighting scheme should be an integral part of the building plan, the lighting of the first floor might be arranged to avoid the mingling of natural and artificial lights now almost universal. This mingling of lights tends to interfere with intelligent choice of material and is found to have an injurious effect upon the eyesight.

Nineteen of the 34 Baltimore stores are so small that the daylight admitted through rear and side windows or through transoms, skylights, or ground glass squares, gives sufficient illumination for the first floor, but nearly half are obliged to use in addition either arc or electric lights.* Moreover, where artificial light is used, not only the brilliancy of the illumination but its diffusion is of importance; for concentrated brilliancy of a light-source, although effective for the purpose of displaying stock, like mixed lights strains and ultimately injures the eyes. Arc lights in smooth ground glass globes, electric lights enclosed in clear glass, give a brilliant but not a diffused illumination. It would seem that, measured by efficiency, they have already been superseded by prismatic globes and reflectors which utilize a major portion of the rays and at the same time by

* Seven stores use arc lights in the daytime and eight stores use electric lights in clear glass bulbs.

diffusing the light diminish its intensity. Yet these have not been adopted in the Baltimore stores.

The upper floors of Baltimore mercantile houses usually have sufficient daylight exposure to make artificial illumination unnecessary. In five cases, however, arc lights are used in the daytime. To the upper floors of these five stores and to all basement salesrooms what has been said with reference to the artificial lighting of first floors is equally applicable.

CHAPTER II

SEATS FOR SALESWOMEN

WELL planned store construction is fundamental to comfort as to health, and within the large lines laid down for floor arrangement, lighting, heating, and ventilating, come minor conveniences almost if not quite as important. Seats behind counters, the number and location of toilet rooms, the provision of cloak rooms, the location and equipment of lunch rooms,—all these figure in determining the desirability of a place of employment.

Seats for use in spare moments are essential to the health of workingwomen. The physical strain caused by long hours in a standing position admits of no question, and the cost of such physical strain to the individual has become a matter of social concern. Although in some factories it may be necessary for operatives to stand, the occupation of selling goods is clearly one in which standing is not continuously necessary. In mercantile houses there are hours daily when saleswomen may be seated without neglect of duty, and in recognition of this, the laws of 37 states make specific requirement that seats for sales-

women shall be provided.* Opportunity for such rest as is possible under the conditions of the work is made imperative in Maryland by legislation.

Since 1896 the state law has required seats to be provided for saleswomen. The law reads:†

All proprietors or owners of any retail, jobbing or wholesale dry goods store, notions, millinery or any other business where any female help are employed for the purpose of serving the public in the capacity of clerks or salesladies, shall provide a chair or stool for each one of such female help or clerks, in order that during such period as they are not actively engaged in making sales or taking stock they may have an opportunity for rest. Any such owner or proprietor who shall neglect to obey the provisions of this section, shall be considered to have committed a misdemeanor, and shall, upon conviction thereof, be fined in an amount not less than ten dollars, and not exceeding one hundred dollars for the first offense; and in the event said owner or proprietor shall continue to disobey the provisions of this section, he shall be subjected to a fine at the rate of one dollar a day, daily, for every chair he fails to so furnish his said employes.

In 1897, the chief of the State Bureau of Statistics took up the question of enforcement and ordered an inspection of the stores. The findings showed that seats were provided at the ratio of one to each saleswoman as required by law, but that it was exceedingly difficult to discover whether or not employes were allowed to use

*See Swett, Maud: Summary of Labor Laws in Force, 1909: Woman's Work. Published 1910, by the American Association for Labor Legislation, Metropolitan Tower, New York.

† Acts of 1896, Chapter 147. This law is published by the State Board of Health in its handbook, "Laws of Maryland relating to Public Health," issued in 1899.

them. The chief was advised by the city solicitor that the law was unenforceable. The question was then dropped and no later inspections were made.

In 1904, the law was amended.* As it stands, it is among the most specific and inclusive laws on the subject enacted in America. It reads as follows:

All proprietors or owners of any retail, jobbing, or wholesale dry goods store, notion, millinery or any other business where any female sales people or other female help are employed for the purpose of serving the public, shall provide *a chair or stool for each one of such female help*,† in order that when they are not actively engaged in making sales or taking stock or in performing such other duties as they may have been engaged to perform, they shall have an opportunity to rest, and they shall not be forbidden to avail themselves of such opportunity. Any such owner or proprietor who shall neglect or refuse to obey the provisions of this section shall be considered to have committed a misdemeanor, and shall upon conviction thereof, be fined in an amount not less than ten dollars nor more than one hundred dollars for the first offense; and in the event that such proprietor or owner shall continue to disobey the provisions of this section, he shall be subject to a fine at the rate of one dollar a day, daily, for every chair or stool he fails to so furnish his said employes. It shall be the duty of the board or department of health or health commissioner or commissioners of the cities and towns in the state to cause this section to be enforced, and whenever any of its provisions are violated, to cause all violators thereof to be prosecuted, and for that purpose the health commissioner or commissioners and the officer or officers of the board of health of every city and

*Code of Public General Laws, 1904. Article 27, section 239.

† The italics are the writer's.

town in the state, or the inspectors thereof, or any other person designated by such board of health commissioner or commissioners are authorized and empowered to visit and inspect at all reasonable hours and as often as shall be practicable and necessary all mercantile establishments in the city or town in which the office of the said board or department of health or health commissioner or commissioners is situated, and it shall be unlawful for any person to interfere with or obstruct any such inspecting official while in performance of his or her duties or to refuse to properly and truthfully answer questions made pertinent by this section when asked by such inspecting official.

This law, which has been on the statute books for five years, is not included among the labor laws of Maryland, as issued by the Bureau of Statistics and Information of Maryland, nor is it included among publications by the State Board of Health of laws relating to public health passed since the issuance of their handbook of 1899. It appears to be known to but few of the establishments which it chiefly concerns, and seems to have been from the beginning a dead letter.

To determine the extent to which the need for seats for saleswomen is recognized, an enumeration in the 34 Baltimore stores under consideration was made in January, 1909. Bearing in mind the fact that the law of the state requires one seat for each saleswoman, a summary of the number of seats and the number of saleswomen in the several stores may be of interest.

SEATS—BUT NOT FOR SALESWOMEN

ONE SEAT TO A COUNTER

A seat, as understood in this chapter,* is any chair or swinging seat, or any stool, twelve inches or more in height and six inches or more in diameter. Seats as enumerated in the table conform to this definition. In only three or four cases has it been found necessary to rule out stools because of inadequate size. In five cases where seats are few, boxes are allowed, although in one store all boxes are taken away when Saturday night comes so that there may be every incentive to a busy evening. The total number of saleswomen in each store and the total number of seats set aside for their use are given in Table 1 (page 24). Each store is designated by numeral.

Such wide range in the ratio of seats to saleswomen is worthy of remark. Store Number 4 is complying with the law; stores Number 32 and 33 while not observing the letter of the law, yet are conspicuous for the degree of their compliance. The other 31 stores seem either unaware of the state law or frankly non-compliant.

* For the purposes of this enumeration it was found necessary to define a seat. Chairs, stools, swinging seats, boxes, two-steps to reach the upper shelves, all go by the generic name of "seats," but as a means of physical rest they are not equally useful. To be sure, a saleswoman may in an unwatched moment seat herself on a drawer pulled out from a stock case, but under such circumstances she can scarcely rest well. Neither may the edge of a stock-case shelf nor the four-inch step of the department ladder be considered a proper seat. Boxes also, varying as they do in height and material, often encrusted with dirt and impeding free movement, are doubtful expedients. It has seemed best for these reasons to rule out boxes, two-steps and the stock-case shelf from the definition of seats. It has also seemed best to rule out stools less than 12 inches high and less than six inches in diameter, for the reason that stools of smaller dimensions would serve rather to produce discomfort than otherwise.

TABLE 1.—NUMBER OF SEATS AND NUMBER OF SALESWOMEN IN 34 BALTIMORE STORES, AND RATIO OF SEATS TO SALESWOMEN

Store number	*Number of Seats*	*Number of Saleswomen and Heads of Stock**	*Ratio*
1	11	162	1 to 15
2	4	86	1 to 21
3	26	114	1 to 4½
4	10	9	1 to 1
5	35	171	1 to 5
6	0	7	0
7	7	20	1 to 3
8	4	11	1 to 3
9	4	137	1 to 34
10	0	10	0
11	7	90	1 to 13
12	17	147	1 to 8½
13	6	20	1 to 3
14	3	10	1 to 3
15	68	325	1 to 4¾
16	10	70	1 to 7
17	27	188	1 to 7
18	8	56	1 to 7
19	3	13	1 to 4
20	7	18	1 to 2½
21	4	121	1 to 30
22	0	15	0
23	22	152	1 to 7
24	0	16	0
25	7	142	1 to 20
26	12	39	1 to 3
27	8	42	1 to 5
28	5	25	1 to 5
29	10	68	1 to 6½
30	37	318	1 to 8½
31	7	32	1 to 4½
32	7	15	1 to 2
33	8	15	1 to 2
34	5	40	1 to 8
Total	389	2704	

Since the state law is not widely known and apparently has never been enforced, it would not

* Other occupational groups omitted.

be surprising, were this law the only enactment on the subject, if different stores showed considerable differences of policy; but there is also a law upon the subject, affecting Baltimore only, which is well known. The diversity of ratios in the provision of seats is still more striking when looked at with reference to this law. There can be no reason for ignorance in regard to its provisions, since it is published among the labor laws of Maryland, as issued by the Bureau of Statistics and Information. The text of the law, which follows, is vague and unsatisfactory in wording, a defect which characterizes the law in many of the states which have legislation on the subject.* The law† is as follows:

> Every employer of females in any mercantile or manufacturing establishment in the City of Baltimore must provide and maintain suitable seats for the use of such employes. A person is deemed not to maintain suitable seats for use of female employes unless he permits the use thereof by such employes to such extent as may be reasonable for the preservation of health and proper rest; and the question of what is thus reasonable is one for determination by the jury or the court acting as a jury in any prosecution hereunder. Any violation of the preceding section by any employer shall be deemed a misdemeanor, and shall be punishable by a fine of one hundred and fifty dollars, to be collected as other fines are collected.

Some stores have worked out individual standards, but the officials charged with enforcement

* See footnote, page 20.

† Charter of Baltimore city, sections 505 and 506.

of the law seem to have established no general standard which they might apply to all stores under their supervision. No seats at all, one seat to 51 saleswomen, or one seat to two cannot be equally "suitable" and equally within the law. Nor would the omission of seats in a basement salesroom and the permission in the upper floors to use aisle seats designed for customers seem to show that the establishment was complying with even the loosest letter of the law. Moreover, the stores that set a standard for themselves, a standard which they regard as merely reasonable, might with justice complain that their neighbors are allowed great laxity in the matter. It is some expense to the management to provide seats; it requires some oversight to see that they are suitably arranged. The store that incurs this expense and takes this oversight may justly claim that its own observance of the law is gratuitous, since its neighbor pays no penalty for habitual violation.

Clearly, the state officials have not arrived at a definition of what "suitable" means. It may be of interest if we apply to Table 1 the standard suggested by the laws of South Carolina and New York. These states require one seat to every three saleswomen, which allows saleswomen who work near together to take turns resting, and seems to be the smallest number that would ensure to each saleswoman occasional rest. Four Baltimore stores have a higher proportion of

seats than one to three saleswomen. Five stores have exactly this proportion. Four have a proportion of one to four, or four and a fraction; three, one to five. Eighteen have a proportion lower than one to six. In other words, according to the standard of two states of what is "suitable," 25 out of the 34 Baltimore retail stores examined do not maintain suitable seats for the saleswomen whom they employ; and, as has been shown, 33 out of the 34 fail to comply with the standards set by the law of their own state.

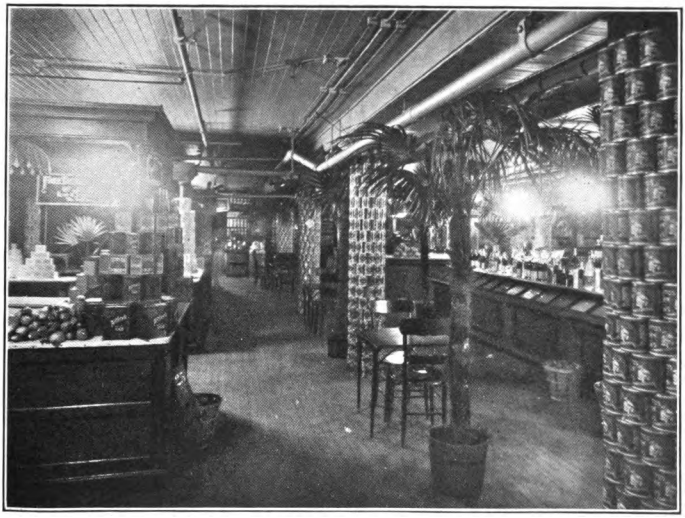
It must also be remembered that even where the ratio of one seat to three saleswomen is rigidly carried out, the separation of saleswomen into groups by counter divisions may still leave some without access to seats. The individual saleswoman at an aisle counter may be entirely without a seat and yet be counted as part of a group of three at a main counter nearby. At a twenty-foot counter where only two women work, the absence of seats may be explained by the provision of a seat for a group around the counter. This provision can scarcely by any test of health or of utility be held "reasonable." No less important than the number of seats is their arrangement by counters. There must be at least one seat to a counter, whether that counter is served by one woman or by three women, and if there are more than three the number of seats must be increased proportionately.

It speaks well for the standards of some of the

Baltimore merchants that nine retail stores have seats regularly arranged. This means that the aisle counter as well as the main counter is supplied with a seat, and that there is one seat to each counter division. As a rule, the stores are not deep enough to have extremely long counters. Three saleswomen to a counter might be considered a general average, and the arrangement of one seat to a counter would therefore, according to the standard of two states, be suitable. Seven hundred and forty saleswomen and heads of stock are employed in the nine stores which follow this policy.

The stores in which seats are irregularly arranged are more numerous. They employ double the number of women,—1964 saleswomen and heads of stock. The typical cases given in Table 2, showing by floors the proportion between number of seats and number of saleswomen in four stores, illustrate irregular arrangement.

It happens frequently that whereas seats may be provided with some attempt at regularity on the first floor, the basement may be entirely without them, and saleswomen forced to find what rest they can leaning against tables and stoves. More often, however, the first floor employes are the ones to suffer. The crowding of counters makes it difficult to find room for seats. Saleswomen pass back and forth hastily to take quick sales; chairs or stools are troublesome, and for the time being apparently superfluous. Were



A Basement Salesroom

Portion of a First Floor Salesroom

all the stores built with as wide spacing between counter and case of stock as are some of the best, lack of room could not be urged as a reason for failure to provide seats. Not infrequently, however, it is this lack of room which acts as a hindrance. Then, too, a saleswoman standing "at attention" is sometimes thought to attract customers more readily than one seated, and as the first floor is preëminently one of quick sales and often of chance buying, first floor saleswomen are usually expected to stand.

TABLE 2.—NUMBER OF SEATS AND NUMBER OF SALESWOMEN IN FOUR BALTIMORE STORES.—BY FLOORS

Store Number	*Floor*	*Number of Seats*	*Number of Saleswomen*	
1	Basement	4	22	
	1st	2	85	
	2nd	5	30	(no boxes
	3rd	..	15	allowed)
	4th	..	10	
11	Basement (not used for salesrooms)			
	1st	7	75	
	2nd	..	15	
18	Basement (not used for salesrooms)			
	1st	7	42	
	2nd	1	13	
29	Basement	2	22	
	1st	15	206	
	2nd	11	60	
	3rd	4	25	
	4th	1	..	
	5th	2	10	

Moreover, the policy differs in different stores, and between permissive use of seats and a rigid rule that all saleswomen must stand, there are various tacit regulations. In some places, an unphrased instinct seems to warn saleswomen

always to be standing when their department heads pass by. In other cases, rules are explicit. The sight of a frail little white-faced girl leaning against the counter occasioned from a customer the remonstrance, "Why don't you sit down?" "If we sat down, we'd get the grand bounce," was the reply,—a threat sufficient to keep any tired child "at attention." This rule, couched more or less explicitly, obtains in eight stores, where altogether 690 girls are employed. Sometimes relaxed for upper floor saleswomen, it is nevertheless to a degree effective throughout these establishments and on the first floor holds full sway. Elsewhere, however, the provision of seats seems to include permission to use them, for in a majority of the stores where they are supplied, saleswomen may be seen fearlessly seated without danger of reprimand, the best indication that the provision in the law concerning use is observed.

CHAPTER III

ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMFORT OF EMPLOYES

THE employment of several hundred people in a single plant is both a responsibility and an opportunity for the management. A building that houses so many people for eight or nine hours daily is obliged to extend its functions, so that it may serve both the immediate needs of the business and the physical well-being of the employes. Provisions for comfort, which require little thought in a small establishment, become matters of careful planning as the number of employes grows. While half a dozen saleswomen might use part of a stock room for a place in which to hang their wraps and eat their lunches, 50 saleswomen would be much inconvenienced in the same surroundings, and 250 saleswomen would create an entirely new set of demands.

An employer assumes a certain amount of responsibility during working hours for the health of the people whose time he controls. He must meet such needs as are fundamental. He must build with due regard for sanitary requirements, for adequate toilet facilities. If he is an employer

of women as well as of men, he must provide separate employes' rooms and make some differences in equipment. The factory girl or the saleswoman, if she is to give continuous and efficient service, must at times have access to a couch or rest room where she may recuperate. An hour's quiet will often enable her to resume work. If she is unable to secure this rest, the day is lost to her with consequent loss of wages, and her employer is inconvenienced because he cannot, on short notice, find anyone to take her place. A couch in a quiet room, if the store is small, or a rest room, if the store is large, are insurance measures against needless illness and needless loss of time. The necessity for such provision, like the necessity for adequate toilet facilities, is fundamental in a mercantile establishment.

The concept of what is a fundamental requirement for health, however, has been extended to include not only the obvious but the less easily measured things. An hour's rest may mean relief from illness. But what if the illness and the need for rest could alike be avoided? The emphasis of preventive, rather than of curative measures, may be applied to industrial as to personal hygiene. The saleswoman's illness may be caused by her continual standing. Adequate provision and regular arrangement of seats, as discussed in the last chapter, would prevent a large part of such illness. On the other hand, her illness may be

caused by the eating of unsuitable food in a noisy, overcrowded restaurant. Her afternoon may thus be lost or she may do her work ineffectively. In such a case, are the preventive measures of wholesome food at cost in a quiet, comfortable room on the premises impossible? The gain to the employer in the increased alertness of sales people would be immediate and concrete; the gain in health to the latter no less real.

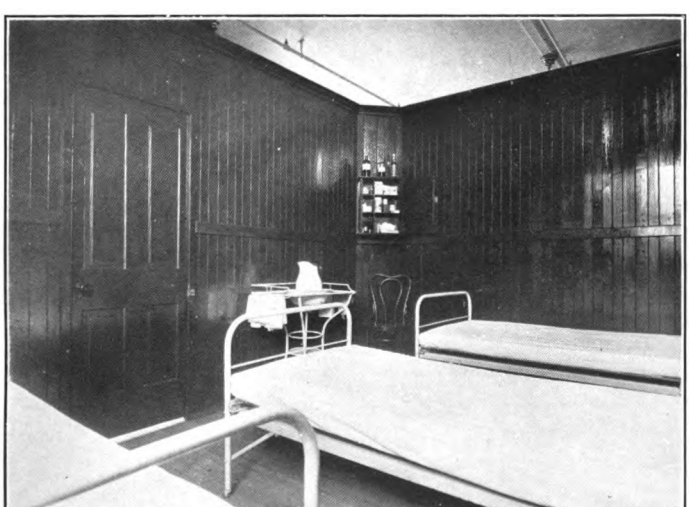
Were wages in mercantile establishments those of skilled rather than of unskilled labor, lunch rooms in a neighborhood where good restaurants abound might be considered unnecessary. It is perhaps inevitable, however, that some employes will always be unskilled. For what they can afford to spend on lunches, they can obtain little nourishing food, partly because the imagination of restaurant dietitians is limited, and partly because food sold at a low price where running expenses are high, and profits are essential, tends always to be in reality "cheap." In consequence, since they cannot get nourishing food, they get stimulating food. The managers of lunch places, we hope, may at length be influenced by public demand for more wholesome food, but meanwhile their menus are beyond question unsuited to the needs of workingwomen whose wages are small. If, then, the lunch period is too short and the distance too great for employes to go home at noon—and this is the case almost universally in large cities—the need for a lunch room becomes

urgent. If we extend the idea of the employer's responsibility for the health of employes during working hours to the midday pause, it would seem that a lunch room, and in some cases perhaps a lunch service, as part of a mercantile establishment, might be included in the concept of what is fundamental.

Should we add to the consideration of physical health the question of mental well-being, and indeed the two cannot be dissociated, we should find procedure less direct and possible results less tangible. Here lies the opportunity—we cannot yet say the responsibility—of the managers of stores. We may admit, however, that employment should not lower the personal standards of employes. While opinions may differ widely as to how standards should be maintained, all will agree that at least one essential thing is opportunity for personal cleanliness and for the cleanliness of wraps and hats worn to and from the store. As already suggested, makeshift substitutes for a cloak room become inadequate as the number of employes grows.

Where recreation and club rooms are part of the equipment of the store, and what is called "welfare work" is one of its activities, the opportunity and the difficulty of dealing with the mental and emotional well-being of employes are manifest; but, experimental as these departures are, they are unquestionably full of worth to those who genuinely participate.

Rest and Toilet Room Combined



Hospital Facilities

Mail

TOILET FACILITIES. From the point of view of the necessity of some equipment for the comfort of employes, and of the desirability of additional equipment in the interest of health and possibly of mental well-being, the provisions for employes in Baltimore stores will be briefly described. No attempt has been made fully to inspect the toilet rooms for women employes, it having been assumed that in a mercantile house unsanitary conditions would not long escape the notice of officials and customers, and that conditions disadvantageous to its business would be promptly remedied. The Bureau of Health likewise has the power to see that toilet facilities are adequate for the number that they serve. These sanitary requirements are so elementary, so far from being distinctive of this or of any industry, that it was felt that this study should concern itself rather with aspects of the situation more characteristic of mercantile establishments.

However, not only the condition and adequacy of toilet facilities, but their location, is of importance. Where one toilet room serves for several floors, the chances are increased that it will be crowded and inadequate. Indeed, it might be urged not unjustly, according to the standards laid down by the Massachusetts School Commissioners * that there should be a toilet for each floor on which 25 persons are employed, and

* Boston Schoolhouse Department. Annual Report, February 1, 1909, to February 1, 1910, pp. 76 and 77.

if this number is exceeded an additional toilet should be provided. This is an average standard.* Since few stores employ less than 25 persons on a floor, this standard would be generally applicable. On the whole, however, the number of employes and the number of floors used for salesrooms or for office work, have outgrown the provisions originally made, and the necessity of making further provisions has been neglected. One store has a toilet room on each floor for its total of 561 women employes. Six stores, each having four or more floors for salesrooms and an average of 283 women employes, have but three toilet rooms each for women. Four stores, with an average of 149 women employes, have two toilet rooms each for women, and the remaining stores have one apiece. In many cases, this one room must be used by both customers and employes, although it is scarcely sufficient even for the people on one floor. One of the largest stores has a single toilet room on the third floor of the annex; this must serve for all the customers and for 282 women employes on the six floors of the annex and the four floors of the main building; it ventilates into a salesroom. A five-story building nearby has one toilet room in the third story for its 223 women employes,

* C. B. J. Snyder, Superintendent of School Buildings for New York City, writes under date of February 27, 1911: "Our standard for toilet fixtures is as follows: Girls—30 to each water closet. Boys —30 to each urinal, 60 to each water closet. One wash basin in each toilet."

and except in this room, no washing facilities are available.

The inconvenience of these arrangements is heightened by the custom obtaining in a few stores of setting a limit of five or ten or twelve minutes to the time that an employe may be absent from the floor. The five-minute rule, enforced in a six-story building, is in practice prohibitory. A ten- or twelve-minute rule, where rooms are crowded, is likely to be prohibitory. In some cases, an actual prohibition is in force at certain hours of the day; one store, for instance, which closes at six, forbids any employe to leave the floor after 4:30 in the afternoon.

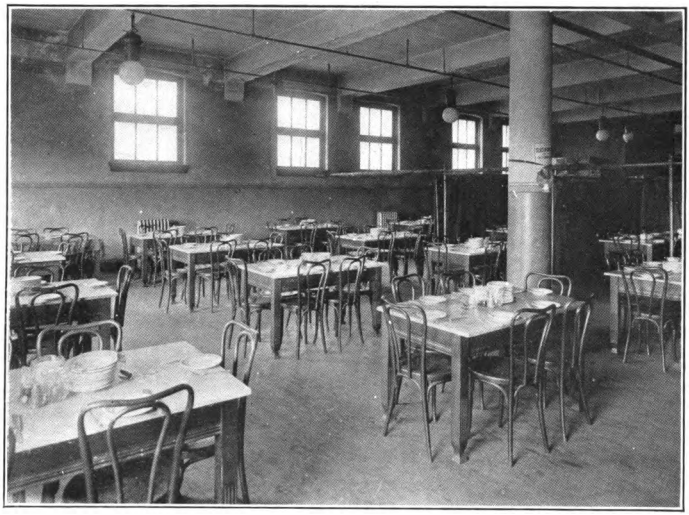
Ten stores, among which are some of the large ones, have no regulations as to the time when employes may have access to toilet rooms; they exercise such supervision as may be necessary to see that this freedom is not abused, but they make no rules. The other 24 stores, employing 3243 women, have a system of more or less rigid surveillance. Six require any employe who goes off the floor to leave word with the head of the department who may be a woman or may be a man. Four require employes to leave word with the floor-walker, and 14 require employes to obtain a pass from the floor-walker. Needless to say, many of the girls prefer to stay at their posts indefinitely rather than ask the floor-walker of their aisle for a pass. His injunction to "hurry back" or to "be quick" adds not a little to the

unpleasantness of a rule which wears heavily upon even the less sensitive girls. When this rule is linked with a time limit and with inconvenient location of toilet rooms, conditions are prejudicial to health no less than if sanitation were actually defective.

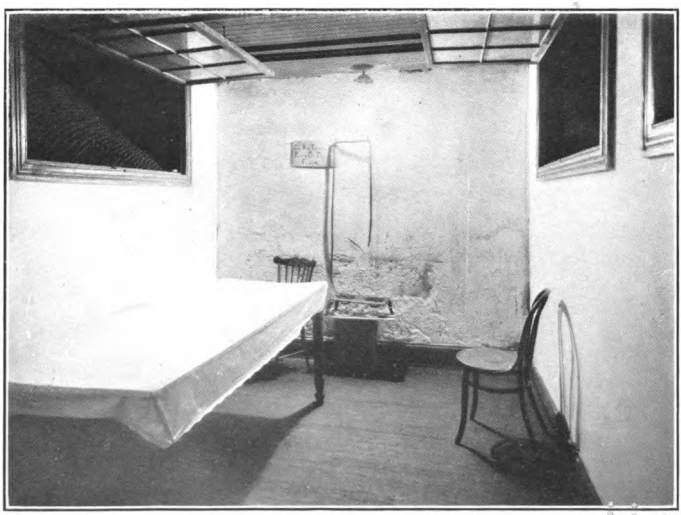
REST ROOMS. Where women are employed, rest rooms of some sort, no less than adequate toilet rooms, are, as has been said, essential for health. An elaborate hospital room, except in the larger stores, is seldom necessary. Quiet, however, is essential. If the purpose of the room is to serve for rest and recuperation, this purpose is defeated if the clatter of dishes or the thud of packing cases sounds distinctly through the thin wooden boards of a semi-partition. It is defeated when the couch is placed in a public part of the store, instead of in a room either for the private use of employes or for cases of illness only. Privacy and quiet are more essential than medicines and attendants.

Twenty-five of the Baltimore stores, employing 2025 women,—nearly one-half of the total number,—have neither rest rooms nor couch which employes may use when ill. This means that these 25 stores lose time and their employes lose wages unnecessarily through illness. Both time and wages might be saved were the rooms already set apart for employes turned to further use.

A small store on Gay Street, for instance, which employs only 18 women, has its lunch room par-



A Well Planned Lunch Room



A Bad Lunch Room

titioned off on the second floor. The boards are thick and the partition reaches to the ceiling. A couch in the lunch room is sufficient for the needs of the employes. The cost of buying it was small and the cost of maintenance is zero. In two other stores, a couch has been placed in the lunch room. In three stores a separate room near the lunch room, with a couch and chairs, has been set aside for employes.

Three stores, employing 1467 women, have hospital rooms. The equipment consists of two or three hospital beds, a chair or two painted white, and a white enamelled washstand. A maid is in attendance. In one case, the maid has duties on another floor and comes only upon call; in another case, the maid is in charge jointly of the hospital room and of the customers' lavatories; in the third case, the hospital room is next to the kitchen and is in charge of the lunch-room manager. The two rooms first mentioned are not separate rooms, but semi-partitioned, one from a waiting room and the other from a salesroom. Although a semi-partition is not usually satisfactory, neither of these rooms is noisy.

Some of the stores which have these excellent provisions for cases of illness are no larger than others which make no provision at all. Whether a store is large or small, the need for such provision exists and is changed not in kind, but only in degree, by the presence of a large number of employes.

LUNCH ROOMS. Lunch rooms, although possibly essential in a different way from rest rooms, have proven more popular in Baltimore stores.* This, notwithstanding the relatively short distances from shopping to residence districts. All but four of the stores have lunch rooms. That is, all but four have a room with some chairs in it set apart for women employes to use at lunch time. The location of the room, the kind of equipment, and the facilities for cooking food, vary greatly.

If a lunch room is for the health of those who use it, the reason for some of these rooms is not apparent. They offer no quiet place in which food may be eaten comfortably at noon, but seem rather to give valueless space for the accommodation of employes who cannot well go home. One room, for instance, in a store where 56 women are employed, is in the basement, entirely enclosed except for two twelve-inch windows opening into a stock room. A single gas jet, without globe or tip, burns continually. The room contains a little gas stove, and if the rubber tubing is attached to the gas burner, the room remains in darkness; one cannot have light and cook at the same time. The oilcloth of the long table is brown and worn. There are no chairs and no dishes, but there is a

* In 4 stores, employing 1810 women, lunch service is furnished by the store; in 4 others, employing 793 women, lunch service is by colored servants, independent of the store. Seventeen stores, employing 1524 women, furnish lunch rooms and gas stoves; and 5 provide lunch rooms but no facilities for cooking.

bench on either side of the table, one with supports of its own and the other merely a board laid across the broken seats of two chairs. So far as known the floor has never been cleaned. Mice and rats are reported to be the chief occupants of the room, for nine-tenths of the girls prefer when they can to spend carfare to go home, rather than eat in the store.

Another store, where 14 girls are employed, is about to equip a lunch room, although the manager states that all the girls now go home at noon. As a matter of fact, seven of them find it impossible to go home and equally impossible to buy food in the neighborhood. Their custom is to eat in the cellar, where a small table and a few chairs have been placed for their convenience in the proximity of the furnace. The cellar is not totally dark, although the gas jet flickers uncomfortably.

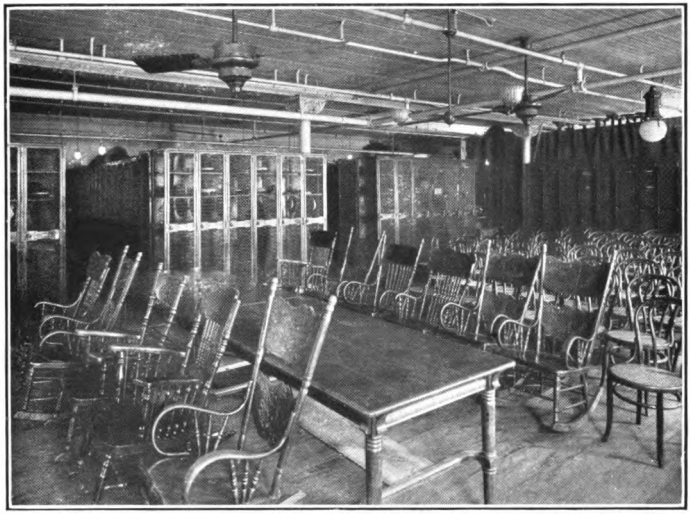
These lunch rooms are by no means the only instances of their kind. They imply not the assumption, but the shifting of responsibility. A further step toward a lunch room which serves its essential purpose is found in several stores where the room is equipped with cooking utensils and dishes as well as with tables and chairs. The girls can cook their own food if they wish to do so. Sometimes, when a woman is employed to clean the room, she cooks for the girls whatever they leave with her, and if she is enterprising she may even start a lunch counter on a small scale. Her menu, however, is usually limited, consisting

mainly of coffee and tea, soup and pie. Although the store in these cases does not exercise any oversight over the quality of food, it does make possible a degree of comfort by providing chairs and tables covered with clean white oilcloth, and by setting aside a room with daylight exposure.

Two stores furnish tea and coffee at their own expense. Four other stores,* employing 1810 women, provide a varied lunch for their employes at cost. The menus include soups and hot dishes, salads, fruits and desserts, as well as tea and coffee, the prices being low enough so that a good lunch may be obtained for eight or ten cents. The lunch rooms are light, well aired, well kept, and attractively furnished. The prices charged are within the reach of all employes, and the food is of good quality.

CLOAK ROOMS. Twenty-seven of the Baltimore stores, that is, all except seven, provide cloak rooms. According as the store is a large or a small one, lockers or shelves for wraps are placed in a room by themselves or are given part of the wall space in the lunch room. More stores furnish only hooks or wooden partitions than provide wire lockers, but these latter have made some headway and are in general use in the largest houses.

* The time assigned for lunch is usually from 11 a. m. until 3 p. m. One store, recognizing that the late hour often means much unnecessary weariness, allows fifteen minutes between 11 and 12 to each employe whose luncheon hour comes later than 1:30 p. m.; this makes it possible for such employes to take some light nourishment at the end of the morning and so to wait without fatigue until their assigned hour.



Locker and Recreation Room Combined

A Screened Rest Room

Seven stores, all of them fairly large, still have wooden lockers which suggest difficulties in the way of cleaning.

In the greater number of cases where lockers have been provided the management expects one to serve for two and sometimes for more than two persons. This is to be regretted, for although usually of the most modern kind, the lockers are too small to hold comfortably the wraps of more than one person. The care taken of these lockers and cloak rooms by the store may be regarded as in a measure indicating its standard. In six cases the lockers or partitions are dusted and washed out each night, in eight cases they are cleaned weekly, and in 11 cases they are cleaned "when necessary." Two cloak rooms, it is asserted, are never cleaned.

Beyond this point—beyond provision necessary for the health and the self-respect of employes—the Baltimore stores in general have not attempted to go. Three stores have recreation rooms furnished with tables and rockers, a few newspapers and magazines. One store has a branch station of the public library. These represent beginnings, however, rather than systematized welfare work, and should be estimated not so much as actual achievements,—concretely valuable as they are,—but as the tentative expression of a democratic ideal.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATION OF WORKING FORCE

THE comparative smallness of Baltimore stores precludes an organization as elaborate as that developed in the stores of Philadelphia, Chicago, or New York. Stores in those cities have reached a stage of growth at which the duties of officials and employes have become for the time being fixed. Responsibilities are more sharply defined than in the stores of a city of the size and industrial conservatism of Baltimore. Here, on the other hand, while the organization is not consciously planned for flexibility, it is actually flexible. Between store and store, even between similar positions in the same store, the real duties of officials may differ widely. Any definition of occupations, therefore, and their relation to each other must be limited by recognition of constant exceptions. This variation may be measured in part by the degree of expansion a store possesses, the increase in the number of its departments, the multiplication of its interests; but in part also it depends upon the interaction of personalities.

Baltimore, in its store ownership, presents no

striking examples of "absentee capitalism." For the most part, the members of the firm share in the management of the business, either as general managers or specifically in charge of certain store activities. In some cases they act as buyers either in an advisory capacity or with full responsibility. They continue and initiate policies; they supervise details, going so far in some cases as to engage employes. In other cases they may leave all these details to the superintendent and his subordinates.

SUPERINTENDENTS AND BUYERS

The superintendent is the responsible head of the store. Theoretically he has full and equal supervision over the sales and clerical force, and over the workrooms; actually he delegates some or all of this detailed supervision to assistants. The assistant superintendent, the floor managers, the buyers, while directly responsible to the superintendent, have authority to decide upon many minor and some major points of detail. Under the assistant superintendent are the head cashier and her force of assistant cashiers, the auditing department and its chief, and the office force. Under floor managers are cash and errand girls, bundle boys, and such other employes as may be about the floor. Some floor managers are buyers as well; some supervise other parts of the business of the store. The typical floor manager, however, is neither buyer nor store official, but a

functionary charged merely with overseeing a given aisle or aisles, directing customers, signing exchanges, straightening out difficulties, and curbing the spirits of his small irresponsible subordinates when their duties weigh too lightly upon them.

The buyer seems generally to have direct management of the department for which he buys, with authority over its sales force. His chief duties are to buy goods and plan sales, but frequently he effects economies in running expenses by laying off employes during a dull season, by reducing the number of employes, or by adjusting wages. He assigns their lunch hour to the different sales people, and has authority occasionally to allow them extension of time at request, to order night work during stock taking, to arrange night work at Christmas so that sales people shall have alternate evenings on duty (provided the department is above the first floor), and during overtime seasons other than Christmas to pay for the overtime. Responsibility for the success of his department is placed upon him, and his ability is proved and the department justified by a good net profit. To this end, expenses must not exceed a certain fixed percentage of total sales. Within these limits and within limits fixed by definite policies of the store, he is free to decide upon his own policies with regard to his immediate subordinates. He knows more fully than do any of his superiors what strain the department can stand, and what concessions to the force would

secure more efficient service. His decisions are not, in theory at least, a court of last appeal, but practically a complaint is seldom carried to higher authority, and were this done, the higher authority would rarely reverse a buyer's decision.

The assistant buyer or head of stock is second to the buyer. She is, as a rule, the senior saleswoman in her department. Her duty is to keep track of the stock,—not mathematically, but with insight and a descriptive sense. She must know in general how much remains of different kinds of stock, at what time new stock is needed, what articles have failed to sell, and what articles have unexpectedly met with wide popularity. From her closer touch with customers, she must be able to advise the buyer as to the purchase of new goods. At times she may be expected to buy, under direction, from city salesmen. She is seldom without influence, and may have real responsibility if her department is important, or, if not, she may be the mere shadow of authority.

Departments in fact are not often built according to a clearly defined type, with sales force responsible to assistant buyer, assistant buyer responsible to buyer, each in the same degree. Nor are the mutual relations of these people to the whole establishment sharply defined and invariable. A buyer may have one department or several. His several departments may be important or unimportant, his rank varying accordingly. One buyer, for example, may have sole responsibility

for the cloak and suit department; he may give his chief attention to buying in Paris or in New York, and his secondary attention to arranging sales. In this case, the assistant buyer probably takes charge of many details, and is both head of stock and managing head of the sales people. She is not expected to sell goods to an amount proportionate to her salary, but is paid in part for her supervisory work.

On the other hand, a buyer may have charge of three relatively small departments, such as neckwear, hosiery, and notions. While some buying may be done out of town, as an actual fact the greater part of it is not. Presumably the buyer is on hand most of the time, and expects nothing of his three assistant buyers or heads of stock but information about sales and occasional suggestions as to choice of goods. Yet if the three departments combined under one head were more important than three separate ones, if the articles were more expensive and of slower sale, the position of assistant buyer might be more important here than that of buyer in a smaller department ranked by itself. For instance, suppose a buyer to have charge of millinery, dress goods, and ladies' waists in a store where each of these departments was a feature of the business. The advice of the assistant buyer from being casual would become essential, and her decisions in minor matters of policy would tend to be final. This would be true only where articles were chosen to meet the

ideas of discriminating customers. Should articles, on the contrary, be stereotyped, made for a narrow range of tastes, the position of assistant buyer would immediately drop in importance. Where few experiments were made, there would be no need of her opinion. She would be, in reality, head of stock and nothing more. In such a case, "We call them assistant buyers," said the manager of one store, "to jolly them along and make them feel good, but you might just as well put them down as sales people. Of course, I wouldn't buy an article if they absolutely didn't like it and were sure it wouldn't sell, but their advice doesn't count for much as a rule, and a good deal of the time we forget to ask them."

Where a workroom is connected with a department, the buyer is head of the workroom also. The workroom manager is subordinate to the buyer and may refer to him matters of expense, such as increase of wages, duration of lunch and supper periods, and overtime pay. On the other hand, the workroom manager may himself decide such points. The alteration room, for instance, is a part of the cloak and suit department; as such, it is under the buyer of that department. The fitters who, like the sales people, are on the floor, are more directly under the buyer's supervision than the alteration hands who do not leave the workroom. These latter are under supervision of the workroom manager who is in consultation with the buyer.

The same thing is true of the millinery workroom. The buyer of the millinery department is joint head of the selling force and of the milliners, with the assistant buyer and the head milliner as intermediary heads. Of course, two or more of these positions are frequently held by one person. The head milliner may be buyer for the department, or may serve as assistant buyer in a store where the millinery buyer is also buyer for other departments. Again, the sales force may be so small that there is no assistant buyer, in which case the head milliner is expected to know the stock and occasionally to offer suggestions.

The drapery workroom is connected with the upholstery department. The number of operatives is usually small, and the work simple, consisting, as a rule, in stitching lawn shades, window hangings and portières, and making slip covers, which can be done under the supervision of the cutter. The buyer or assistant buyer of the department has direct oversight of the workroom. Workrooms of other kinds, such as those for fur repairing or dressmaking, are organized on the same general plan. When there is a lunch room, it is a separate department, the head of which is responsible to the superintendent.

OTHER OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

In stores of this general type, the order of advancement is from cash girl to wrapper, then to stock girl, and finally to saleswoman. The duties

THE SALES FORCE ON DUTY

CASH REGISTERS REDUCE MESSENGER SERVICE

of cash girls depend to some extent upon the cash system and upon the interior arrangements of the store. Where a tube or cable system is in use, and where there are a number of aisle counters,* small girls or boys are employed to carry parcels and change from aisle to tube or cable terminus. This system, of course, need not be employed where aisle counters are arranged as enclosed squares. Aisle counters fixed in place become stations for the automatic carrier, and cash girls are, therefore, no longer needed to carry change. They carry parcels, however, from the aisle to the main counter, where wrappers are stationed at desks above the stock cases, or to the wrapping desk if that is in another part of the store. Sometimes boys are used altogether for parcel carrying and girls act simply as floor messengers.

How far the service of cash girls is necessary, is a moot point. Undoubtedly the tendency is to decrease their number and to install mechanical substitutes for their work both as messengers and as carriers of parcels and change. A complete system of store telephones means practically the elimination of messenger service. Enclosed squares, each with its own cashier, as a substitute for show tables mean practically the elimination of carrier service. In fact, the enclosed square is the crux of the whole matter. It means a limited autonomy instead of political dependence. A show table is transient, unstable, sub-

* See Chapter I, Store Construction, p. 9.

ject to frequent change, but the enclosed square presents the dignity of permanence and plan. If the tube or cable system is in use, communication can be extended to the square. Otherwise the square may be equipped with cash registers, and the local cashiers may act jointly as cashiers and wrappers. This is done successfully in several Baltimore stores at the present time. On the whole, it seems reasonable to conclude that a decrease in the number of cash children is to be expected, and that their employment in any large number in a store is an indication of an antiquated, rather than of an up-to-date, business policy.

The first promotion is to the position of wrapper. This does not always mean simply wrapping parcels. It may mean inspecting parcels and change and sales slips, as a check on clerical errors. In two stores the wrapper girls act as cashiers, and in six stores boys are employed for wrapping.

Ordinarily the next advancement is to the position of stock girl. The stock girl is the "general utility" hand. She brings upon order what is needed from the stock rooms, takes care of stock on the shelves, and helps to put away goods that have been left on the counter. She is a sort of apprentice, familiarizing herself with the stock and workings of a department, at the same time being on call for odds and ends of service. Through the aid of stock girls, the amount of work done by sales people is increased 50 per cent.

Without them, all the odd jobs, the carrying and care of stock, would devolve upon the sales people. They complain of this most frequently in departments selling small articles like combs or jewelry, or articles like china and tinware, which require frequent dusting. When they are obliged to dust several dozen shelves of chinaware every day, they find it difficult to keep a fresh appearance, and are forced to take refuge either in dark, unattractive shirtwaists or to submit to heavy laundry bills. Clearly, sales people are at a disadvantage when they must take entire care of their department. Nevertheless, 20 stores, two-thirds of the whole number in Baltimore, have no stock girls among their employes.

These beginning positions—on the delivery wagons, at cash, stock, or wrapper work—are the positions in which children generally are employed. There are 1008 such situations in the 34 Baltimore stores visited. If we assume, and the assumption is fully warranted, that nearly all these positions are filled by children fourteen to sixteen years of age, these figures indicate the proportion of minors in mercantile employments, although some additional minors are employed for selling. In three stores, few if any children under sixteen are employed; the policy of at least two of these stores is definitely to exclude them. Assuming that this policy is successfully carried out and that the 252 children's positions in these three stores are filled by em-

ployes over sixteen, we have left 756 such positions in the remaining 31 stores, filled in general by minors between fourteen and sixteen years of age. In other words our study indicates that 10 per cent of the total employes in mercantile houses in Baltimore are under sixteen.

From being wrapper or stock girl, the next advancement is to saleswoman in full, first at an aisle counter, perhaps, and later at a main counter. Cashiers in some stores rank below saleswomen, and in other stores above them. Manifestly, where the cashier is also wrapper, responsible for the cash sales of her department only, her training and intelligence need not be so high as if she were one of the half dozen cashiers who handle cash coming through tubes from the entire store. In the former case she is in line for advancement to the selling force; in the latter, is a bit superior to the saleswomen. Where there are floor cashiers at desks stationed at intervals, they are ranked with cashiers at pneumatic tubes; but in general cashiers scattered among different departments rank below, while those grouped in a single room rank above, the saleswomen.

Just as some of the lower positions are occasionally dispensed with, so in a few stores the higher positions are eliminated so that there are no grades between proprietors and selling force. Some stores have no workrooms. Others have no buyers or assistant buyers outside of the members of the firm. One or two of the large stores

A Group of Saleswomen

A Cash Girl

have no intermediary between saleswomen and buyer, and of their several buyers have but one or two with any considerable authority. In general, this latter type of organization is characteristic of the smaller stores. The senior members of the firm do most of the buying and all the traveling for the house. The junior members act as superintendents, floor managers, and general supervisors of all departments. They may allow some senior saleswoman to select from goods offered by city salesmen, and on the strength of this she may call herself a buyer, although the proprietors themselves would not so designate any of their employes. They recognize only saleswomen and pay wages accordingly. The saleswomen act both as wrappers and as stock girls. A single cashier may serve mainly as bookkeeper if counters are equipped with cash registers so that saleswomen can keep track of their own sales. If there are no cash registers, the cable system is generally supplemented by two or three cash girls. In such an establishment, the porter is generally the whole delivery department.

A third type is the store which is one of a chain in different cities. Five Baltimore stores are in this class. The main difference between this type and others is that there are no members of the firm to direct the policy of the store. The superintendent or manager has, therefore, a greater degree of responsibility. In reality, of course, the policy of the store must in a measure be coördinated with

the policy of the stores in other cities with which it is connected, a compromise being made between local requirements and conditions elsewhere.

Notwithstanding these differences in type, however, there is a basic similarity in organization between store and store. A cashier may operate a cash register in an enclosed square or attend to pneumatic tubes in the basement, but she is still indubitably a cashier. A buyer may travel much or little, may have charge of one or of several departments, but he is still a buyer. A cash girl may carry parcels and change, or parcels only, or she may serve merely as a floor messenger, but she is still a cash girl. Her relative position and duties remain unchanged.

With the fact in mind, that in general the occupations in a department store may be defined and enumerated, a census has been made of the number of employes in specified positions in the 34 retail stores mentioned. Official figures have been obtained in each case. We have avoided averages, obtaining instead the figures for typical seasons of the year,—the month of December, when the sales force is at its height; the weeks of April, when the workroom force is at its height; the summer months, when many employes are away; the spring and fall seasons, when the sales force is normal.* Unless otherwise stated, the figures in the tables for employes in various occupations are understood to be normal.

* See footnote, p. 84.

Table 3 shows the numbers and percentages of men and women in different occupational groups. The percentages of women in each group are graphically presented in Diagram A, page 59.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF MALES AND FEMALES EMPLOYED IN 34 BALTIMORE STORES AND NUMBER OF STORES EMPLOYING EACH SEX.—BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP.

Occupational Group	*No. of Males*	*Per Cent of Total No. of Males*	*No. of Stores Employing Males*	*No. of Females*	*Per Cent of Total No. of Females*	*No. of Stores Employing Females*
Laundry workers	..	..	..	2	.04	1
Forewomen*	..	..	..	9	.19	6
Heads of stock	13	.63	4	238	5.29	20
Waitresses	..	..	..	22	.49	2
Drapery operators	..	..	..	24	.53	6
Kitchen hands	..	..	..	41	.91	10
Dressmakers	..	..	..	64	1.42	1
Alteration hands	23	1.12	2	431	9.59	21
Floorwalkers	85	4.12	19	..	..	..
Unclassified employment	211	10.23	15	..	..	..
Drivers	135	6.54	16	..	..	..
Porters	164	7.95	31	..	..	..
Buyers	171	8.29	25	75	1.67	17
Stock girls	..	..	..	111	2.47	14
Cash boys and girls	173	8.39	16	115	2.56	11
Milliners	..	..	..	172	3.82	20
Wrappers	98	4.75	6	207	4.60	15
Clerks and clerical help	269	13.04	25	240	5.33	10
Cashiers	..	..	..	284	6.31	27
Delivery	326	15.80	17	..	..	..
Selling Force	395	19.14	17	2466	54.78	34
Total	2063	100.00		4501	100.00	
Per cent of total employes	31.43			68.57		

* Chief saleswomen in five- and ten-cent stores, who also are in a sense heads of stock, are called "forewomen." The term is not used in department stores.

It is significant that relatively to the number of salesmen, the male heads of stock are so few. This may readily be understood, however, from the fact that as a rule few salesmen are employed in a department, and in consequence they are directly under the buyer. The group of unclassified male employes is made up of various elements. It includes bakers, ice cream makers, drapery cutters, and unspecified office employes, as well as engineers and electricians.

The total number of women in Baltimore retail stores is more than twice the number of men. This would seem to indicate that retail selling is preëminently an occupation for women. The United States Census of 1900* reports for the mercantile industry as a whole that 23.3 per cent of the persons in this occupation were women, but the census returns include not only large wholesale houses with their contingent of traveling salesmen, but very small retail houses in which the proprietor supervises the details of the business. Yet even taking this into consideration, Baltimore, according to the United States Census returns, from among ten selected cities, has the highest percentage of saleswomen—38.1 per cent. In the 34 retail stores upon which this study is based, the women employes form 68.57 per cent

* Special Reports of the Census Office. Statistics of Women at Work, 1900. Saleswomen, pp. 91–97. It is to be understood that the figures and percentages given for salesmen and saleswomen by the United States Census returns presumably include other employes in stores as well as those whose duties are confined solely to selling.

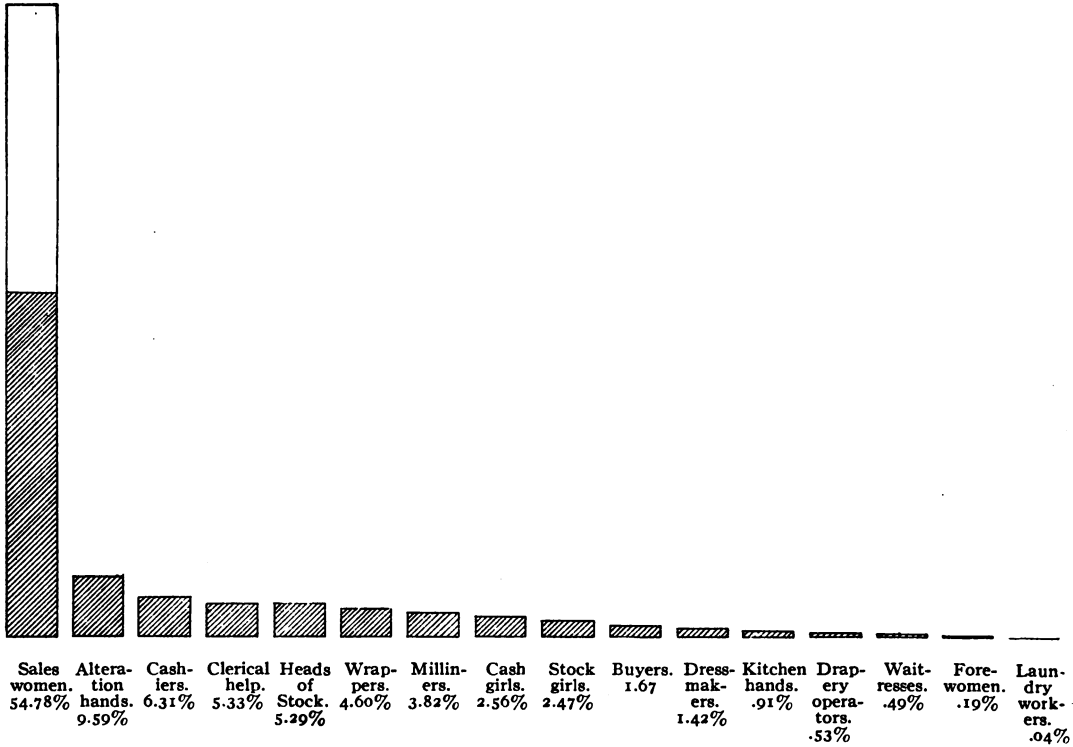


DIAGRAM A.—PERCENTAGES OF WOMEN IN DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN 34 BALTIMORE STORES

of the total employes, a difference of 30.47 per cent in favor of the retail mercantile industry as distinguished from the mercantile industry as a whole. This preponderance of saleswomen in the retail mercantile industry, while possibly existing in Baltimore to a greater extent than in other eastern cities, as indicated by the United States Census returns, no doubt obtains in retail establishments in general.

The occupation engaging the largest actual number and the highest percentage of women employes is selling. The diagram illustrates the comparative percentages of women in different occupational groups. It will be noted that 54.78 per cent of the women employes are saleswomen, and that alteration hands, 9.59 per cent, form the next largest group.

If we regard buyers as the skilled employes in mercantile houses, it is significant to compare the percentages of men buyers among total men employes with the percentage of women buyers among total women employes. In the former case, the percentage is 8.29 per cent; in the latter case, 1.67 per cent. In other words, 8¼ per cent of the men in mercantile houses, and but 1½ per cent of the women, may be regarded as skilled.

CHAPTER V

HOURS OF WORK

INFLUENCE OF MARKETS

CUSTOM and the neighboring market determine the length of the saleswoman's working day. Custom has made Monday preëminent as shopping day in Baltimore; and the opening of the markets on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, has made these last two days, and to a certain extent Tuesday also, days of heavy trade. In another city we should expect that stores would be reasonably full of customers any time between 10:30 in the morning and 4 in the afternoon, whether our visit occurred on Tuesday, Wednesday, or on any other day of the week. Not so in Baltimore. Could we gather statistics of the number of people on Lexington Street during successive days, we should find astonishing irregularity. Monday morning would show a constantly increasing volume of pedestrian travel, reaching its maximum at noon and holding it until possibly 4 o'clock. Although most of the market stalls would be empty, such inducements as trading stamp bargains would be sufficient to crowd the narrow part of Lexington

Street to the curb. Yet the waning of traffic toward evening would not, except in two or three of the stores, be followed the next day by a like increase in volume. The opening of the market secures trade to these stores on Tuesday, but for the most part the phonographs of the moving picture shows grind out "Dixie" to an empty and unresponsive street. Not until Friday does activity reawaken; during the preceding interval you may wander at your leisure through nearly vacant aisles and take your time to compare the advantages offered by different stores; you will not be jostled nor disturbed. The market stalls are closed. The street has sunk into its midweek lethargy.

Friday brings the opening of the market and new life to Lexington Street. The volume of trade increases steadily through Friday afternoon, drops again Saturday morning, when customers are busy at home or buying supplies for Sunday, and by the middle of Saturday afternoon it passes the highest point reached on Monday. This Saturday afternoon trade is the product of several factors. The markets are open. The prospect of a long day brings from out of town a host of purchasers who combine shopping and marketing and "a good time" without leaving the line of travel from Eutaw Street to Charles. The same motives, with perhaps some change of emphasis, bring townspeople out in force. Drifting from square to square, looking in at shop windows,

stopping to compare, to price, to buy, the crowd moves leisurely, undeterminedly, played upon by impulse and suggestion. Those who have needs are fewer toward the end of the afternoon. Those bent on pleasure gain additions to their number. Yet the hope that some individuals may be turned from pleasure seeking to serious buying causes the stores to keep open through the evening until an hour when the crowds have melted away.

As a whole, then, the stores do the larger part of their business Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays. In this fact lies the explanation of the difference on the one hand, between the length of the workday Monday and that of the day in the middle of the week; and on the other, between the length of the workday in the middle of the week and on Saturday. The midweek working day ranges in different stores from eight and a half to eleven hours. On Monday the range is from eight and a half to twelve and a quarter hours; on Saturday from a five- to a fourteen-hour day.*

The variation of the working day both between stores and between districts is considerable. South Broadway, for instance, exists for its Saturday evening and Monday evening trade. Although the Monday evening trade is less in amount than formerly, all the stores continue

* The five-hour limit occurs in two stores which observe the Jewish Sabbath.

to keep open on both Mondays and Saturdays. The long working hours and the late home-coming of the men and women of the neighborhood, the consequent late buying at Fells Point Market, as well as the street life of the Slavic people here, all combine to prolong Saturday evening in the stores and to delay the closing hour until 11:30 or 12 o'clock. In this district, Saturday evening buying is done in earnest. You do not hear of "hexers" and "killers"* out for a good time; instead you see serious shoppers getting Sunday finery and household supplies. The crowd that drifts through the aisles is not altogether purposeful, of course, but on the whole the people come to buy. Undoubtedly, for many of them Saturday evening is the only time when shopping is possible. One store opens at 7:45 every morning to catch the trifling purchases of people on their way to work, and one store is open each evening except Friday. This latter store is closed for the Jewish Sabbath from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday, all the sales people being on duty every day and Saturday evening. Only half the force, however, is at work during the four other evenings, each sales person being allowed two nights a week from 6:00 p. m.

Economically, the people of Fells Point are homogeneous. The exodus of workingmen and girls in early morning is followed by their return,

* These terms are used locally of shoppers who examine goods and ask questions with no intention of buying.

late and tired, after night has fallen. The week's buying, the week's shopping, the week's pleasure, are gathered into the hours of one evening. This is by no means true to the same extent of the district about lower Light and Charles Streets in South Baltimore. The neighborhood, the needs, and the customs of the people are heterogeneous. Dullness of trade during the day is traceable equally to the fact that many people are at work, and to the fact that those at home know that they can do their shopping later. The total volume of business is thinly spread out over a number of hours, and the evening is scarcely distinguishable in activity from the day.

One store, which appeals to neighborhood people of higher social grade, closes at 6 o'clock on all evenings except Monday and Saturday, but keeps open until 9:30 on Monday, and 11:30 on Saturday evenings; it opens at 7:30 in the mornings for the benefit of people on their way to work. "Yes, we are busy in the evening," the girls say, "but then no more so than we are during the day. Of course there are some who couldn't come any other time, but a good many come just because they know they can. This store used to be open every evening, too, like the store down the street, but we get along with two evenings now, and it seems like we could get along with one, for all the trade we have." The store "down the street" is a little farther away from the better residences of the neighborhood. Its stock is designed to

attract the working class, and its hours are lengthened accordingly. Open every evening in the week until 9 o'clock, and on Saturdays until 11:30, it allows its sales people choice of one afternoon and one evening, or two evenings a week, free. For the rest of the time, all are on duty. Trade is noticeably heavier in the evenings, although here, instead of being gathered into one gala night, it is spread out over the whole week according to the needs or convenience of customers. The smaller stores of the district, like this larger store, are open always at night.

The custom of Monday shopping has fallen into disfavor on Gay Street. Only one store, a little out of the district, still keeps up its Monday and Wednesday evening opening; the others are closed at 6:00 or 6:30 p. m., except on Saturday, when the heaviest business of the week is done. Serving not only the country shoppers who live at the end of the Gay Street line, in for the day, but also the men and women who leave the neighborhood to go to their work in the city, and countless housewives who never leave the district at all, the stores regard their Saturday nights as essential. The trade after working hours, if not secured on a week day must be gained at the end of the week when the district has a mind to buy.

The lunch and supper periods tend to be more flexible than is possible in the large down-town stores. This is true not only of Gay Street, but of the other minor shopping districts as well.

An hour and a quarter is allowed in two stores, and saleswomen may often obtain time off in the middle of the day. Although this does not compensate for their later night hours, it gives them a feeling of greater freedom than they could have under the necessarily more rigid requirements of larger establishments.

The opening hour of the stores about Lexington Market is 8:00, 8:15, or 8:30 a. m. during the middle of the week, but here and there a shrewd proprietor shows his faith in Monday morning trade by opening at 7:45. The "lunch hour," which is really an hour from Tuesday through Saturday, becomes half an hour on Mondays in 18 of the 22 stores in this neighborhood. Possibly the dullness of the morrow may be thought to compensate for the uninterrupted activity of the first working day of the week. Five stores shorten the lunch hour again on Friday or Saturday, but for the most part the volume of trade is so small both Friday and Saturday mornings that a lunch period of the usual length may be allowed. Six o'clock is the closing time from Monday through Friday for all the stores about Lexington Market.

On Saturday, however, it appears that there is a line of cleavage as to hours among the stores of the Lexington Market section. On one side are the stores which seek only what is called the better class of trade; on the other side are those which bid not for one class of trade but for several, and those again which make their chief appeal to the

poorer and less discriminating bargain seekers, who outnumber customers in the other groups. Stores of the former type, while affected as all of Lexington Street is by the influx of trade on market days, and by the custom of Monday shopping, are affected to a lesser degree than their neighbors. Many of their customers, in fact, prefer to avoid the crowded Monday, and to come instead on Tuesdays when quiet reigns and Lexington Street is passable. These same customers shop on Saturdays, it is true, but they take no pleasure in the leisurely confusion of Saturday mid-afternoon or the frivolity of Saturday night, and with the rise of gayety about the market they shun the district until Sunday has passed over it once more.

Stores that serve this type of patron, then, have no incentive to remain open Saturday evening. They emphasize their distinctiveness by closing their doors and lighting their show windows when the rest of the street is still in full blaze of activity. In addition to these, three other stores, which really belong to the second group, close early, also out of concession to their location. Two of them, however, make final protest by remaining open until 6:30, before they too succumb to the example of their neighbors on Charles Street. The part of Lexington Street where they chance to be is out of the way for evening shoppers.

The third and larger group of stores is divided into several sub-groups. The smallest of these attempts to hold its own against competitors by

keeping open until ten. The four stores in this sub-group have a trade not wholly of either class of customers. Without exception the saleswomen say that they do nothing Saturday evenings, and that the people who do come into the stores are only "hexers." In many cases, officials in the stores confirm this statement, but they do not wish to risk losing the fringe of their trade which would fall to competitors were they to close. Seven stores close at 10:30. Two keep open until 11 o'clock. To these latter, and to some of the others, Saturday evening sales are undoubtedly important, yet so nearly uniform is the testimony of store employes with regard to the dullness of trade, that it may be questioned whether, if in addition to the expense of lighting and heating the store in the evening there were the expense of paying for the services of employes after 6:00 p. m., the evening opening would be financially justified. The demand of customers for such opening may be regarded as too slight to be an adequate motive. Lexington Market is not a neighborhood center like Fells Point or Lafayette Market, or even Cross Market in South Baltimore; it may be assumed that the greater number of people who buy there could buy in the morning or afternoon were it necessary. Moreover, the trade that comes to the stores from the market comes for the most part during the afternoon. Yet, although but few store officials fail to recognize this, although many express their desire for

shorter hours on Saturday, inertia and mutual distrust serve to continue the long working day at the end of the week.

These general irregularities of the time schedule on successive days have increased the total hours of employes per week considerably beyond the total obtainable by multiplying by six the midweek working day. One store with a nine-hour midweek working day, has a working week of fifty-nine hours and a half; another with a nine-hour midweek day, has a working week of sixty-five hours. One with an eight and a half-hour day has a working week of fifty-nine hours, and another with a nine-hour day has a week of fifty-eight and a quarter hours. One store which is open to customers fifty-seven hours and a half, yet reduces the hours of its sales people to fifty-five per week by allowing half its force to come half an hour late in the morning and to leave at the regular closing time, the following day coming at the regular opening time and leaving half an hour before closing. This alternation of early and late days reduces the working time of each sales person half an hour daily and two hours and a half per week. Elsewhere, however, the hours during which the store is open mean, as a rule, the hours during which the selling force and other employes are at work.

It has seemed reasonable for statistical purposes to compare the theoretic working week obtainable by multiplying the midweek working day by six,

with the actual working hours of the sales people in the store. We have not attempted to take any one schedule of hours per week as a standard. Fifty-one hours per week is the least demanded by any store, and measured by this standard the divergence of the rest would seem in notable contrast. It seems fairer to compare actual working hours of a store only with its own theoretic working week as a basis for estimating the extra hours. We have regarded as extra, the hours that the sales force is on duty over and above the hours of the theoretic working week, based on the midweek working day of a given store. In other words, we have not estimated all hours beyond fifty per week as extra, but have used whatever may be the midweek working day of a given store, —eight and a half hours, eight and three-quarters, nine, or in some cases more,—and on this basis have calculated as extra the additional hours in this particular store.* The accompanying tables and diagrams illustrate the theoretic and actual working hours per week in each store in the several shopping districts of the city, the stores being designated in the table by numerals.

It will be noticed in Table 4 that in only three stores are there no extra hours. In these three

* In a few cases, where stores are open every evening or several evenings in the week, the same sales people being on duty each day and for some of the evenings in addition, it has seemed reasonable to estimate the theoretic working week from the opening hour in the morning until 6:00 p. m., regarding all time after 6:00 p. m. as extra.

the actual and the theoretic working weeks coincide. For the rest, the divergence is from one-

TABLE 4.—THEORETIC (SIX TIMES MIDWEEK WORKING DAY) AND ACTUAL NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK SALESWOMEN WORK IN 34 BALTIMORE STORES. ACTUAL AND PERCENTAGE INCREASE

Store	*Theoretic*	*Actual*	*Increase*	
Number	*Hours*	*Hours*	*Hours*	*Per cent*
1	54.0	59.5	5.5	10.2
2	52.5	52.5	..	..
3	52.5	56.5	4.0	7.6
4	51.0	51.0	..	..
5	52.5	56.75	4.25	8.0
6	54.0	57.5	3.5	6.4
7	51.0	59.0	8.0	15.6
8	54.0	58.0	4.0	7.4
9	52.5	56.0	3.5	6.6
10	54.0	65.0	11.0	20.3
11	52.5	53.5	1.0	1.9
12	52.5	53.0	.5	.9
13	52.5	57.0	4.5	8.5
14	49.5	55.75	6.25	12.6
15	54.0	55.0	1.0	1.8
16	51.0	54.5	3.5	6.8
17	51.0	51.5	.5	.9
18	55.5	59.25	3.75	6.7
19	54.0	58.25	4.25	7.8
20	51.0	55.25	4.25	8.3
21	54.0	59.0	5.0	9.2
22	49.5	52.25	2.75	5.5
23	51.0	55.25	4.25	8.3
24	54.0	64.5	10.5	19.4
25	51.0	51.0	..	..
26	51.0	52.0	1.0	1.9
27	51.0	55.0	4.0	7.8
28	52.5	53.25	.75	1.4
29	54.0	61.0	7.0	12.9
30	54.0	58.0	4.0	7.4
31	54.0	58.75	4.75	8.7
32	57.0	59.75	2.75	4.8
33	58.5	64.5	6.0	10.2
34	57.0	64.0	7.0	12.2

half hour to eleven hours. The longest theoretic working week is fifty-eight and a half hours, the

actual working week in this case being sixty-four and a half hours. From four and a half to five hours' excess seems to be the difference in the majority of cases.

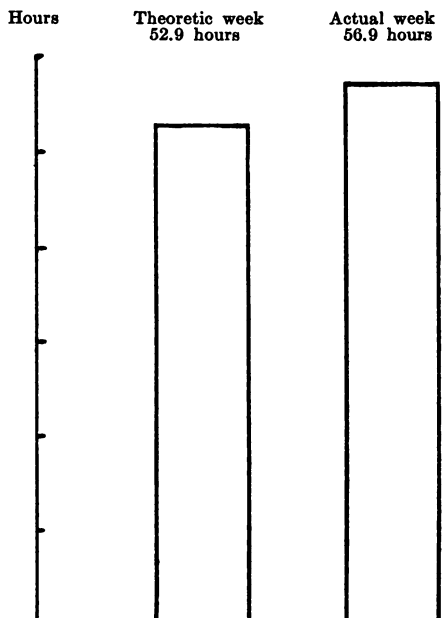


DIAGRAM B.—THE AVERAGE THEORETIC WEEK AND THE AVERAGE ACTUAL WEEK COMPUTED FROM THE FIGURES OF 34 BALTIMORE STORES

Turning from Diagram B, which groups together all the stores, we have grouped stores by shopping districts in the following series of tables:

TABLE 5.—THEORETIC AND ACTUAL NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK SALESWOMEN WORK IN 21 STORES. LEXINGTON MARKET SHOPPING DISTRICT

Store Number	*Theoretic Hours*	*Actual Hours*
1	54.0	59.5
2	52.5	52.5
3	52.5	56.5
4	51.0	51.0
5	52.5	56.75
8	54.0	58.0
9	52.5	56.0
11	52.5	53.5
12	52.5	53.0
13	52.5	57.0
15	54.0	55.0
16	51.0	54.5
17	51.0	51.5
18	55.5	59.25
20	51.0	55.25
23	51.0	55.25
25	51.0	51.0
27	51.0	55.0
28	52.0	53.25
30	54.0	58.0
31	54.0	58.75

TABLE 6.—THEORETIC AND ACTUAL NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK SALESWOMEN WORK IN 13 STORES OUTSIDE OF LEXINGTON MARKET DISTRICT

Store Number	*Theoretic Hours*	*Actual Hours*
Gay Street District		
7	51.0	59.0
19	54.0	58.25
21	54.0	59.0
22	49.5	52.25
32	57.0	59.75
Fells Point District		
6	54.0	57.5
14	49.5	55.75
29	54.0	61.0
33	58.5	64.5
Pennsylvania Ave., West Baltimore St., South Light St., and South Charles Street District		
10	54.0	65.0
24	54.0	64.5
26	51.0	52.0
34	57.0	64.0

The variation within the district is not so marked as the variation between two separate districts,

TABLE 7.—NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK SALESWOMEN WORK DURING THE MAJOR PART OF THE YEAR AND DURING THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS; ACTUAL AND PERCENTAGE INCREASE

Store Number	*Hours Major Part of Year*	*Hours the Week Before Christmas*	*Increase*	
			Hours	*Per cent*
1	59.5	78.5	19.0	31.9
2	52.5	61.5	9.0	17.1
3	56.5	78.0	21.5	38.0
4	51.0	51.0	..	..
5	56.75	73.5	16.75	29.5
6	57.5	65.5	8.0	13.9
7	59.0	70.0	11.0	18.6
8	58.0	75.5	17.5	30.1
9	56.0	65.0	9.0	16.0
10	65.0	74.0	9.0	13.8
11	53.5	77.0	23.5	43.9
12	53.0	55.5	2.5	4.7
13	57.0	73.0	16.0	28.0
14	55.75	61.25	5.5	9.8
15	55.0	73.0	18.0	32.7
16	54.5	69.5	15.0	27.5
17	51.5	59.5	8.0	15.5
18	59.25	81.0	21.75	36.7
19	58.25	74.5	16.25	27.8
20	55.25	77.75	22.5	40.7
21	59.0	78.75	19.75	33.4
22	52.25	67.5	15.25	29.1
23	55.25	72.75	17.5	31.6
24	64.5	81.0	16.5	25.5
25	51.0	51.0	..	..
26	52.0	56.5	4.5	8.6
27	55.0	61.0	6.0	10.9
28	53.25	63.75	10.5	19.7
29	61.0	68.5	17.5	28.6
30	58.0	77.0	19.0	32.7
31	58.75	79.5	20.75	35.3
32	59.75	77.0	17.25	28.8
33	64.5	82.5	18.0	27.9
34	64.0	81.0	17.0	26.5

such as, for instance, Lexington Market and Cross Street Market. On the whole, the lines of the

actual working week bear out what has been said of the varying importance of Saturday night opening in different sections of the city.

Table 7 illustrates the difference in the working week during the major part of the year and the

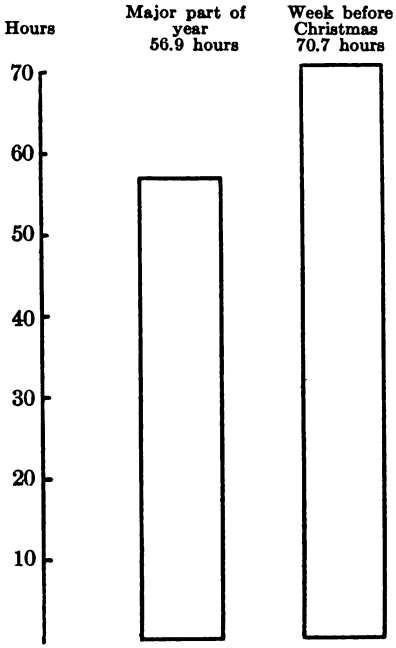


DIAGRAM C.—THE AVERAGE ACTUAL WORKING WEEK DURING THE MAJOR PART OF THE YEAR AND THE AVERAGE WEEK JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS COMPUTED FROM THE FIGURES OF 34 BALTIMORE STORES

working week immediately preceding Christmas. Two stores make no change in hours. In the

other 32, Christmas week contains from three to twenty hours more than the working week before the holiday trade began. This is shown graphically in Diagram C.

The sales force in Baltimore stores is not kept at work after the store has closed, to put stock in order and to arrange holiday goods. This is done, for the most part, in the daytime. Two stores keep their employes for two nights in November until 9:00 p. m., and one store is open in October and November until 9:30 for selling, but with these exceptions, not until December does this holiday work really begin. The dates of Christmas opening vary, the preference being for December 15, 16 stores, employing 4303 people, opening on that date. Eleven stores, employing 1682 people, open on December 10. Two stores choose December 1. One store is open for only four nights a week, and one for one night, while one keeps only the employes in its holiday departments for the four last nights before Christmas, to "fix stock."

The time schedule of the week immediately preceding Christmas is not only lengthened by night work, but in 10 cases by reduction of lunch and supper periods. The hour allowed at other times is reduced during that week to one-half hour (to three-quarters of an hour in two cases), or else no time is assigned, employes being expected, they say, to "come back in twenty minutes if we are busy."

Nineteen stores keep all their sales people on duty during the entire time of the Christmas opening. Others, whose trade in cloaks and suits and millinery is not much stimulated by approaching holidays allow second floor sales people two nights a week. If the store is one which is open two or three weeks before Christmas, instead of one week, this privilege is sometimes withdrawn after the first week and the second floor employes fare like the rest. In four cases only are all the sales people allowed some free nights each week during the entire time.

Expressed in lines and figures, the Christmas "opening" means that in 30 stores the working week is more than 60 hours long, and in 21 more than 70 hours long. Three stores reach the 80-hour mark, and indeed of these three it is said that their hours are unlimited, the time of closing being fixed solely by the volume of the crowd.

It would seem not unreasonable to measure these hours by the standard of ten hours per day, sixty hours per week, for working women as the maximum period of time within which health may be conserved, which has been enacted into law in many states.* Not to enter here into a discussion of the merits of the laws which give fifty-eight, fifty-five, and forty-eight hours as the weekly maximum of time for the work of women,

* See footnote, p. 20. See also, Appendix C, p. 200, for statement in regard to the benefits of the eight-hour day in the store of Hale Brothers, San Francisco.

we may take the sixty-hour limit as a present practicable standard. There can be no question that a week whose working hours exceed this maximum means a week of overwork with consequent evil physical effects,—effects often imperceptible enough at the outset but gathering momentum with each succeeding period of overstrain. Conceivably this overwork might be avoided either by instituting Christmas shifts,—employing a different sales force for evening work,—or by the agreement of merchants to close the stores at the usual time during evenings in December.

Beginning with the first of January, 14 of the Lexington Market stores close a half hour earlier on Mondays through Fridays. Four of them extend this rule to Saturday night as well, and shut their doors half an hour before the usual closing time. A Light Street store closes at 6:30 during the middle of the week, keeping open only on Monday and Saturday nights. This schedule, which shortens by several hours the total of the working week, is in force until the first of March, when the former arrangement of hours is resumed.

The mid-winter stock taking, which occurs during January or February, is not the occasion for night work in Baltimore stores that it often is in the stores of other cities. One house begins its winter and summer stock taking by a special sale, in preparation for which the store is closed to customers from one o'clock of the afternoon

before. Eighteen stores take stock without any night work at all. Trade is dull, few customers interrupt after the paroxysm of Christmas buying has subsided, and the morning hours, which are seldom very busy even at other seasons, give sufficient time for taking stock. In the other stores, one night or two nights at most is all that is required. Frequently this night work, where it occurs, is at the option of the department and could be avoided by more careful management of time during the day. Where the night work is ordered by the store, it lasts as a rule not later than 9:00 p. m. In two cases, it is over by 7:30 p. m.

A marked shortening of the time schedule appears in all but five stores during July and August. Instead of 6:00 p. m., 5 o'clock becomes the standard time* for cessation of business; and even the schedule of Saturday, which has remained unmoved in the midst of so many other changes, cannot altogether and invariably withstand the summer heat. It is true that in 18 stores the Saturday closing hour is what it was in mid-winter or spring or fall. Those stores that closed at 11:30 p. m. in January, continue to close at 11:30 in July, and most of those that closed at 11, remain steadfast to the same principle. A few, however, recognize the existence of summer heat by closing at 10 o'clock instead of at 10:30, and nine stores shut their doors at one in the afternoon.

* Twenty-five of the 34 stores, employing 5979 people, close at 5:00 p. m. daily through July and August.

TABLE 8.—SEASONAL VARIATION IN WORKING HOURS PER WEEK FOR SALESWOMEN IN 34 BALTIMORE STORES

Store Number	*Major Part of Year*	*January and February*	*July and August*
1	59.5	57.0	54.5
2	52.5	52.5	43.25
3	56.5	54.0	51.5
4	51.0	51.0	42.0
5	56.75	55.25	52.75
6	57.5	57.5	57.5
7	59.0	59.0	55.0
8	58.0	55.5	51.5
9	56.0	53.5	48.0
10	65.0	65.0	65.0
11	53.5	53.5	47.0
12	53.0	50.5	44.0
13	57.0	54.5	52.0
14	55.75	55.75	50.0
15	55.0	55.0	45.5
16	54.5	49.5	49.5
17	51.5	48.5	42.5
18	59.25	56.75	54.25
19	58.25	58.25	53.25
20	55.25	55.25	50.25
21	59.0	59.0	54.0
22	52.25	52.25	47.25
23	55.25	52.75	52.75
24	64.5	60.5	60.5
25	51.0	51.0	42.0
26	52.0	52.0	52.0
27	55.0	51.0	43.0
28	53.25	53.25	42.75
29	61.0	61.0	57.0
30	58.0	55.0	45.5
31	58.75	58.75	56.25
32	59.75	59.75	53.25
33	64.5	64.5	61.5
34	64.0	64.0	64.0

Table 8 shows the comparison of actual working weeks in different stores during July, January, and months midway in the year. The continued schedule of sixty-five hours a week which occurs in one case is no less remarkable than the drop from fifty-eight to forty-five and a half hours

which occurs in another by shortening the working day one hour and closing altogether for Saturday afternoon and evening. Opinions vary as to the amount of business transacted during the summer months. Quite possibly, however, where Saturday has been found dull in mid-winter, it is no less dull at a season when the heat forbids one even to think of staying indoors. The six stores about Lexington Market which continue their Saturday night opening unchanged, cannot plead either an extensive neighborhood trade or the fear of competitors as a reason for their policy.

Sunday work, an evil sometimes attendant upon the pre-Christmas season, is of rare occurrence. In three stores, sales people worked one Sunday before Christmas, 1908, arranging stock. In another store, which observes the Jewish Sabbath, the milliners were busy the Sunday before Easter, and the Jewish employes are sometimes asked to work on Sunday when new stock comes in.

The holidays given with pay among the entire 34 stores are easily chronicled. There are four of them: New Years' Day, July Fourth, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas. Twelve stores add the two chief Jewish holidays,—The Day of Atonement and the Jewish New Year; and in one store all the Jewish holidays are observed. Four stores close in the afternoon of Washington's Birthday. The other holidays, which after all come not so frequently as to be valueless, are customarily disregarded by the mercantile houses.

CHAPTER VI

SEASONS OF WORK AND CASUAL LABOR

SEASONAL variation in the number of employes in Baltimore stores corresponds to variation in volume of business. The preceding chapter on hours of work has indicated in a measure this variation, and in the chapter on organization of work people the normal numbers employed were given. It remains to state more specifically the variation according to different seasons, and to distinguish between periods of casual or intermittent employment and periods of temporary employment.

Table 9, on the next page, shows the total numbers of male and female employes at different seasons of the year together with the per cent of variation from normal for each group, and for the body of employes considered as a whole.

It will be noted that the largest fluctuations are due to increase rather than to decrease in the total number of employes; that is, to the intermittent employment of casual laborers in large numbers rather than to the cutting down of the force in dull seasons.

TABLE 9.—NUMBERS OF MALE AND FEMALE EMPLOYES IN 34 BALTIMORE STORES AT DIFFERENT SEASONS, AND PER CENT VARIATION FROM NORMAL

Grade *	*Total Employes*	*Per cent Variation*	*Male*	*Per cent Variation*	*Female*	*Per cent Variation*
Maximum	7783	18.58	2245	8.83	5538	23.04
Normal	6564	..	2063	..	4501	..
Minimum	5921	9.8	2011	2.53	3910	13.13

Table 10 shows the variation in number of employes in one of the Baltimore stores. The December weeks first appear as a time for large increase in numbers. Twenty-six of the 34 stores employ casuals during this time, the period of employment varying from two to four, sometimes to six, weeks. Three weeks, however, from December 1 to 24, is the average period of employment.

Although between all groups there is some fluctuation, it is striking that the variations among female employes toward maximum numbers should be over 14 per cent, and toward minimum should be over 10 per cent greater than the correspond-

* Minimum figures given in the tables represent the number of employes actually on the payrolls when trade is dullest, that is, early in the year and in summer. The normal figures represent the spring and fall payrolls during the months when neither sales force nor manufacturing force has been temporarily increased. The maximum figures, while nearly corresponding to the number of people employed during the month of December, must be regarded rather as the sum of all possible positions to be filled during a year. The maximum includes both the total selling force at its height in December and the total workroom force at its height in April.

ing variations among male employes (see Table 9). The variations among female employes were in the

TABLE 10.—VARIATION IN NUMBER OF EMPLOYES IN ONE BALTIMORE STORE.—BY SEX AND OCCUPATION

A. NUMBER OF EMPLOYES

	Maximum	*Normal*	*Minimum*
Total	245	175	151
Men	47	35	30
Women	198	140	121

B. OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYES

Men	*Maximum*	*Normal*	*Minimum*
Cash boys	8	6	5
Delivery boys	9	5	4
Drivers	5	3	3
Porters	5	3	2
Clerks	..	..	..
Salesmen	..	..	..
Heads of stock	..	..	..
Floorwalkers	4	3	2
Buyers	6	6	6
Other	10	9	8
Total	47	35	30

Women	*Maximum*	*Normal*	*Minimum*
Cash girls	..	..	..
Stock girls	5	3	3
Wrappers	10	6	5
Saleswomen	105	76	69
Heads of stock	16	14	14
Buyers	6	6	6
Cashiers	8	4	4
Milliners	16	10	5
Alteration hands	22	14	10
Other	10	7	5
Total	198	140	121

NOTE.—It will be noticed that the only occupational group in which the numbers are constant is the group of buyers, the numbers of whom among both men and women are unchanged from minimum to maximum. This is a further indication that as the industry stands at present, buyers alone may be regarded as the skilled employes. (See p. 60.) The fluctuations among the other groups, which occur among both men and women employes, although among women employes to a greater degree, indicate that these other occupational groups tend to be made up in large part of relatively unskilled hands.

one case more than 4 per cent, and in the other more than 3 per cent greater than the variations among total employes, indicating that the tendency toward employment as casual laborers is much greater in this industry among women than among men. The largest increases among women employes occur usually in the selling force, the variation from normal to maximum being 34.51 per cent for the month of December (see Table 11), a percentage greater by 16 per cent than the variation to maximum from normal for all employes, and greater by about 11 per cent than the variation to maximum from normal for all women employes (see Table 9). These casual saleswomen are drawn in part from millinery houses, in part from among home-staying women otherwise not employed, and in part from sundry of the needle trades.

The number of salesmen shows no increase at Christmas and but slight decrease during the summer months. The principal increase is among drivers and delivery boys, the number of drivers varying from 135 to 183 during December and the number of delivery boys from 326 to 411. This employment of extra delivery boys is the nearest approach to casual labor among male employes in Baltimore mercantile houses.

Table 11 shows the actual numbers of saleswomen employed at different seasons of the year, and per cent variation in the numbers of those employed by the week:

TABLE 11.—VARIATION IN NUMBER OF SALESWOMEN EMPLOYED BY THE WEEK IN 34 BALTIMORE STORES, AND PER CENT VARIATION FROM NORMAL

Grade	*Number*	*Period*	*Per cent Variation from Normal*
Maximum	3317	1 mo.	34.51
Normal	2466	9 mos.	..
Minimum	2208	2 mos.	10.47

It would seem from comparison of per cent variations in this table with per cent variations for all female employes and for all employes (Table 9, p. 84), and from comparison of per cent variation to maximum from normal in this table with per cent variation to minimum from normal, that the employment of casual labor in mercantile houses is found for the most part among saleswomen. In other words, there would seem to be evidence, as noted in a previous chapter, that the occupation of saleswoman is regarded in the main as unskilled, that positions may be readily and indifferently filled by a new group of individuals, and that the number of positions may be considerably lessened or very greatly enlarged, according to seasonal necessities, without apparent harm to the industry.

This variation in the numbers of saleswomen illustrates the employment of casual labor in its most striking form. The diagram on page 88 may serve as a further illustration of the difference between the terms on which men and women are employed in mercantile houses.

It will be noted, for instance, that whereas at the time of greatest variation, the fall in the number of male employes (2245 to 2011) is less than 12 per cent, the fall in the number of female em-

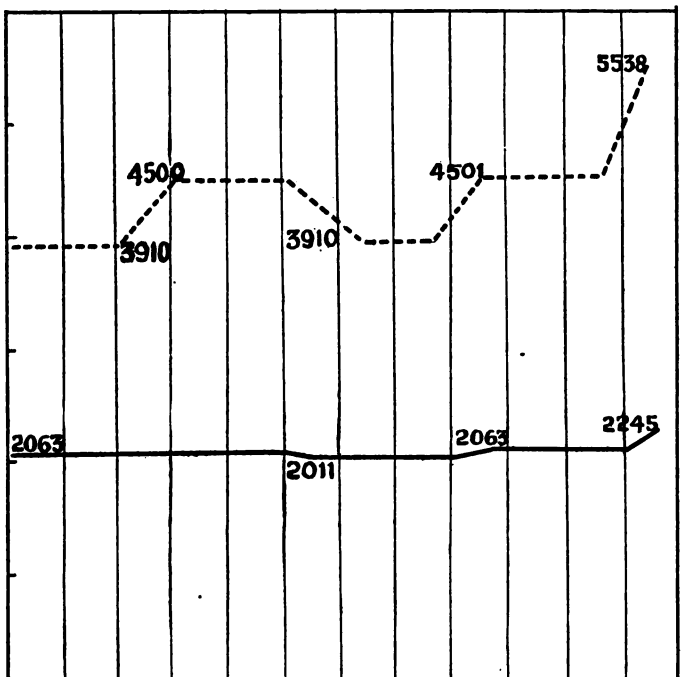


DIAGRAM D.—SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN THE NUMBERS OF MEN AND WOMEN EMPLOYES. WOMEN, DOTTED LINE; MEN, SOLID LINE

ployes (5538 to 3910) is about 36 per cent; and that whereas there are but two points of change in the number of male employes, the second point being almost negligible, the number of female employes

frequently changes according to volume of business at different seasons of the year.

A further point of difference between the terms on which men and women are employed is the employment of extra hands. The figures and percentages given in preceding tables refer solely to employes engaged by the week. It is customary, however, in many stores, to engage, in addition to the weekly employes, extras, salesmen and saleswomen, to come in on days when trade is heaviest,—Mondays and market days.* They usually are given aisle counter work, as this means quicker sales and requires less skill in selling than does the work at the main counter. A few stores pay 50 cents † on weekdays for this work and 75 cents Saturdays, but the usual sum paid is $1.00 a day for three days out of the week. Extra salesmen are employed only in two small stores and in one large store which has an important trade in men's clothing. Extra saleswomen, on the other hand, are employed in 22 stores, large and small. Table 12, on the next page, shows the numbers of extra hands and per cent variation in numbers employed at different seasons.

The generalization that women rather than men are employed as casual laborers, is clearly true of both weekly employes and extra hands. Whereas there is slight temporary seasonal in-

* Ten stores employ extras on Saturdays only, 5 stores on Mondays and Saturdays, and a few stores on three days in the week.

† See cases of Mrs. Tessie Schlueter and of Helen Johnson, pages 149 and 151.

crease in the number of men employed, the seasonal increase in the number of women employed (casual laborers) is nearly 46 per cent. Both men and women, among extra hands as among weekly employes, are affected also by temporary seasonal unemployment. It is of interest that the percentage of extra hands employed for special days

TABLE 12.—VARIATION IN NUMBER OF EXTRA HANDS EMPLOYED IN 25 BALTIMORE STORES, AND PER CENT VARIATION FROM NORMAL

Grade	*Extra Men*	*Per cent Variation*	*Extra Women*	*Per cent Variation*	*Total*	*Per cent Variation*
Maximum.....	19	.0	197	45.93	216	40.26
Normal.....	19	..	135	..	154	..
Minimum.....	11	42.11	117	13.34	128	16.89

affected by seasonal unemployment is considerably greater, both for the individual groups and for the totals, than the percentage of weekly hands affected by seasonal unemployment.

Easter is not parallel to Christmas in volume of trade, but it brings a large increase to five- and ten-cent stores and specialty houses. These latter allow no holiday to pass without mark of recognition, whether it be hatchet-shaped candy boxes on February 22 or fuzzy rabbits and egg favors on the approach of spring. Each holiday in turn is also celebrated with a fresh influx of colored post cards, which climb lattice-like to the

tops of show windows, displaying their atrocious crudities to full advantage. Along Gay Street, buying is so much increased at the Easter season that several stores employ a few extra hands at night. For the most part, however, while some employes are transferred to holiday departments, and some stand their ground by revolving racks of gaudy cards, the extra work, like a bargain sale or any other dispensation of Providence, is shouldered solidly by the regular force.

Seasons in suit and millinery departments, on the contrary, need special preparation. Buying is relatively light except in mid-fall and spring. The selling of ready-made garments requires more skill and experience than the selling of goods in other departments. It follows, then, that casuals cannot be employed to advantage, and that to ensure a sufficient force in busy seasons, more people must be employed in off seasons than are actually necessary to handle the trade. This applies, however, only to the fringe of the busy season. Custom orders a long vacation for cloak and suit saleswomen during the summer.

Yet this long vacation is more than exceeded by the dull season of the alteration hands. While selling cloaks and suits requires some skill, it would seem that the making of cloaks and suits does not. You hear from the manager of a store that "Our people do fine work; we make it worth their while to stay with us." But one finds on further inquiry that the number of these people

who do fine work is capable of instant expansion from 40 to 110, and of equally sudden shrinkage when the rush of orders has been partly allayed. In another case, the number of women working at machines with piles of delicate gowns on chairs beside them has increased in a week from 24 to 80 and next week will have diminished at least to 65. At the height of the season, for a week or two, the total number of alteration hands increases 30.4 per cent, from 431 to 562. In January, all but a few in each store will be discharged, and by mid-June the workrooms will be almost empty. A third of the stores discharge all their manufacturing hands at the close of the season. The remaining ones lay them off for periods ranging from three weeks to two months.

The surprising thing about this situation, however, is, not that work should be dull for twenty weeks out of the year,—that is characteristic of the garment trades,—but that sudden and irregular increases of work can be met by correspondingly sudden increases in the number of—presumably—competent workers. Alterations are not usually so simple that they can be made by unskilled hands. They require as a rule a person with experience in dressmaking or tailoring, and often with experience in handling a power machine. When suits of good material are altered, careless work may spoil or seriously damage the suit and cause financial loss to the firm. It would seem, then, that the alteration hands in mercantile houses must be

in a measure competent; and as the busy season in retail dressmaking establishments is the same as the busy season in the retail stores, it must be assumed that those who are employed in the workrooms of the latter places are the left-overs who remain after the demands of the dressmaking establishments have been met. As there are apparently enough alteration hands to supply the needs of both the stores and the dressmaking establishments, one is forced to conclude that the number of semi-skilled dressmakers and seamstresses in Baltimore is greater than the market has power to absorb; that disinclination to enter an occupation which they consider socially beneath them prevents many needlewomen from seeking steady but less attractive employment early in their industrial life; and that physical unfitness produced by years of sedentary work tends to make them unable to keep long-term positions during the season, or by fitting together a series of short-term positions to be in any real sense self-supporting. It follows that many of these seamstresses, when unable to obtain engagements for private sewing, spend their time at home in semi-dependence upon their families. A sixteen weeks' season in an alteration room would tax their endurance, but they welcome the opportunity to do one week's work when the season is at the full.

In this connection, mention should be made of the extra alteration hands, employed by certain

stores on Saturdays to finish garments on the premises so that their customers may wear them Sunday morning. These employes, while not quite in the same class with casual sales people, yet indicate by their willingness to serve at irregular times the extent to which the market in this occupation is over-supplied. The Saturday night work required of these extra hands is perhaps more exacting than that of any other group of employes. In districts where prompt Sunday morning deliveries are a matter of pride with the mercantile houses, the alteration hands must often stay later than the sales force to finish suits that have been ordered just as the store was about to close.

Some stores, of course, employ neither extra nor casual alteration hands. Yet except in the case of a few which have worked out and put into practice the plan of a stable and continuous labor force, mercantile houses as a whole draw on the contingent of underemployed seamstresses for help at short notice during the busy season.

The situation in millinery workrooms is somewhat different. Seasons are shorter, being twenty-four weeks out of the year, and at the same time employes have some opportunity to extend their season by work with retail and wholesale houses. From mid-August until mid-November, from mid-March until mid-June, the retail workrooms offer continuous employment to their dozen or two skilled milliners and to their scores of semi-skilled, inartistic assistants. They rely upon the head

milliner, and perhaps upon her chief helpers, to keep the product up to the mark. It is these responsible ones who are charged with planning the work and with giving to the hands under them ideas of taste and style. Milliners who are "born, not made," direct; milliners who are "made" by two seasons' apprenticeship, execute. The former have often fairly continuous employment. To them, as to cloak and suit saleswomen or to skilled dressmakers, comes a period without work in mid-summer and early in the year, but by many of the retail houses they are retained for ten months out of the twelve.

Yet where these are counted by tens, the unskilled who go by the same trade name are counted by hundreds. The high salaries paid to those who are capable of designing draw to the trade troops of young apprentices who may indeed learn to make hats with their hands, but never with their brains, and who at the end of their probation find themselves in an inferior position for less than half the year, with perhaps a few private commissions from long-suffering friends. In some stores, milliners of this class are retained during the major part of the winter by transfer from workroom to selling force. This can best be done in December when the workroom is dull and the demands on saleswomen are heavy. It can scarcely be done effectively in January, for all departments are dull after Christmas, and the retention of the milliners for two months before the season begins

must depend in large part upon the policy of the millinery buyer. If hats are bought ready-trimmed from wholesale houses, and workroom hands used solely or mainly for order work, they would have almost no occupation between seasons. On the other hand, if ready-to-wear hats are trimmed in quantity in the workroom, the hands may be employed for much of the time between seasons without loss.

On the whole, the policy of the stores seems to be to allow the less skilled milliners to go at the close of the season. While a few stores shorten the period of unemployment by transferring their hands, most of them are apparently content to gather in hands at need and to shut down the workrooms when trade becomes dull. To this gathering-in process, the wholesale houses are perforce allies. Retail millinery establishments customarily send to wholesale houses at the beginning of the season for trimmers or makers, with the result that wholesale houses during the first few weeks must often make place for more trimmers than they can conveniently use, and must serve as clearing-houses for people who want positions for the season and for merchants who need hands with some experience. It is thought, also, that a few weeks with a wholesale house makes the milliner more valuable for retail work. The retail establishment can thus secure its quota of employes when the season begins, and if the demand for the Easter trade requires it, increase this quota for a week or

even for a few days in March. The total increase in mid-season in the number of milliners in mercantile houses is from 172 to 211, 22.7 per cent.

VACATIONS AND ARBITRARY DISCHARGE

Unemployment among workroom hands is evident from the seasonal nature of their work. Unemployment among sales people is less evident and less easily measured. Whereas workroom hands are paid so much per day for a stated number of hours, paid as a rule for their overtime, exempted both from Christmas exactions and from Christmas gifts, and discharged when their season ends, sales people have both a more flexible working day and, presumably, continuous employment.

Although unquestionably January and February, July and August, are dull months in the stores, even then some unexpected event may cause a revival of business, and the normal number of employes may be needed. This is especially likely to happen in the spring, and in general the stores make no attempt to lower expenses then by laying off regular employes. Seven Baltimore stores, however, employing altogether 940 women, use this method of decreasing the payroll. In these seven stores, a spring "vacation" is required. Sometimes each employe has work only three days a week for two weeks after Christmas; sometimes each is required to take a week in January without pay, and she may take this week as she likes, either all at once or in sections; sometimes two weeks is

required of all sales people; and sometimes the laying off process is carried even farther by temporary dismissal of half the hands in the aisle with the assurance that they will be sent for as soon as the store is busy again. Where a distinction is made between departments, the saleswomen on the second floor—cloak and suit saleswomen—are more likely than others to have a spring vacation, but for the most part this policy of intermittent employment, when in force, is carried out impartially, on first and second floors alike.

The real import of the summer vacation is more elusive. Most people wish a summer vacation, both because the weather is hot and because they are tired. They wish it so much, they feel some change so essential, that rather than go without it they will take the vacation at their own expense. In this, as a rule, their families second them. While some may feel that they cannot afford to take even a short time without pay, it may be assumed that the majority, in Baltimore at least, can and do afford it. This reacts in two ways to the advantage of employers. It diminishes the payroll during the summer, and increases the physical buoyancy of the selling force in the fall.

If vacations are desirable from the standpoint both of employes and of employers, and if they are readily taken without pay, the employer might hold it unnecessary to pay for the employes' time during such a period. He might regard such vacation, even without pay, as in the nature of a

gift,—a reward for long-term service or an insurance against ill health among those who would not themselves take the time off in summer. This would imply a relatively stable force of employes. Without such a stable force, there are many stores to which this idea of giving a vacation does not appeal. Their employes wish a vacation and take one; should they not, and should their efficiency be decreased in consequence, others are at hand to take their places.

The store which gives two weeks' vacation with pay, and the two stores which give one week's vacation with pay to their entire selling force, view the matter differently. They recognize stability and health among their people as commercial assets, chargeable to the business, not to the employes. With them should be classed also 10 stores which give a week's vacation with pay to all who have been in their employment a year. The two stores which give vacations with pay only to employes who have been with the house two years must do this as reward for long-term service rather than as an insurance against ill health. Altogether, 16 stores give vacations with pay to at least some of their employes.

Where vacations with pay are given only for long-term service, or where they are not given at all, as in 18 stores, the attitude of the management is not always clear. In such cases, are all employes required to take vacations at their own expense in summer, or are they not? When a vacation is so

evidently desirable to all concerned, from whom do the suggestion and the pressure come, or is the arrangement of the incidence and length of the vacation period a matter of mutual agreement? Although most of the employes may be able to afford a vacation, it is hardly to be assumed that they all are able to afford it. The policy of the management with regard to employes who cannot afford to take time away from work would be interesting to know.

On these points testimony differs. Eight stores employing 885 women, require all employes to take from two to four or more weeks in summer without pay. No exceptions are made. This is frankly a matter of selling cost and weekly profits; the payroll must be reduced to a point proportionate to the volume of business. In the ten other stores which give no vacations with pay, on the contrary, and in the three stores which give vacations only after long-term service, vacations are professedly not required. The policy of the firms is to leave employes free to take time off, but not to insist upon it. Just at this point it sometimes happens that the policy of a department buyer may differ from the policy of his firm. The buyer feels responsible for the proportion which outgo bears to income in his department, and he individually may use the summer custom of vacations to force down expenditure for wages. For this reason, it occurs not infrequently that millinery saleswomen, for example, may have no

option as to their vacations, while their neighbors who sell ready-made waists may have full privilege to go or to stay as they choose. The management in both cases may be equally sincere. The management, however, assumes that employes wish vacations, and cannot inquire particularly as to the degree of volition in each case.

Such an instance as the following illustrates the situation. The policy of a certain store is not to insist that employes take vacations. The head of the auditing department early in June asked his girls to arrange with him so that each one should have two weeks off. One girl who felt that she could not afford to take the time and who had the courage to say so, asked to be allowed to stay. She was told that the department could not afford to keep her all summer, and that if she wanted to stay, she would have to carry her case to the superintendent. She was much afraid of the superintendent, and was also a very young girl. She accepted the refusal as final, and took her vacation with the rest.

Now in such a case, does the store require a vacation, or does it not? The sincerity of the management of this particular store admits of no question, but this "sincerity" as interpreted by the heads of departments, whose object is to keep their expenses under a certain sum, produces no different effect on employes than would an arbitrary two weeks' dismissal. The girls wish a vacation; they would be ashamed to have their

co-workers know that they had not taken a vacation; they feel that they are obliged to take one. It would seem that in most stores, quite apart from active pressure by the management, and sometimes directly contrary to its expressed policy, vacations are required.

Arbitrary discharge of unneeded employes in dull seasons occurs in five Baltimore stores. This plan can, of course, be put into practice only on the assumption that the work of salesmen and saleswomen is casual in the extreme, and that the number of positions can be shrunk or expanded indefinitely as business warrants. Employes are then discharged immediately as the volume of trade falls and are given no hope of later re-employment. They are free to seek new positions or to remain at home. For instance, a girl was employed at $7.50 a week, as a piano player in the music department of a certain store. She was discharged the first of December and her place filled by a young girl at $3.00 a week. The young girl was continued in the place until the end of January, when her work having proved unsatisfactory and no experienced person at a lower salary being obtainable, the former piano player, who had been out of work in the interval, was re-engaged. In another case, an experienced saleswoman who had been employed at $6.00 a week in the neckwear department, was dismissed in December, her place being filled by an untrained girl at $2.50. After Christmas, the latter also was

dismissed, and the place given at $4.00 a week to a third girl who had had some experience in this work at another store. These instances, however, illustrate the general policy of a few stores only. Arbitrary discharge in dull seasons is the extreme indication of casual employment. Intermittent employment in summer is several paces away from it, and at the other pole is the policy of giving vacations with pay which implies stable labor force.

CHAPTER VII

WAGES OF WOMEN EMPLOYES

WAGES in the mercantile industry are never complicated by piece-rates. Fluctuation in earnings according to volume of business is frequent in factory trades but wages in mercantile houses are paid by time. The rate of wages,—for wrappers, for stock girls, for alteration hands, for first floor saleswomen, for saleswomen of cloaks and suits,—is unaffected by seasonal variation, and tends in each occupational group toward a fixed point, not in one store only, but in all stores which approximate one grade.

Under such circumstances, then, a study of wages must aim to discover not simply the earnings of different individuals, but the conditions of the market, the rate of wages for given occupations. The wage figures which are the basis of this chapter have been obtained in part through examination of payrolls, in part through statements of officials, confirmed or modified by the testimony of employes. No payrolls have been tabulated. We have, however, succeeded in learning the prevailing rate for each occupational group in each store, and the maximum and mini-

mum points within which the rate for a particular group may vary. Building on this, through careful comparison of testimony, we have calculated the number of persons in stated wage groups both in individual stores and in the industry as a whole.

Wages of "apprentice hands," in the workrooms or on the floors, of course rank lowest. Cash girls earn from $1.50 to $3.00, 50 per cent of them being paid a flat rate of $2.00 per week. Indeed, of the 11 stores which employ cash girls, five have one rate of pay for all employes in this group, and advance wages only when employes are given a different occupation. The maximum increase for cash girls in the six stores which advance wages within this occupational group is 50 cents a week.

Five stores pay a flat rate to stock girls also, the lowest being $2.00 and the highest (given to one person only) $3.50. As none of these five stores employ cash girls, the rate paid to stock girls may be regarded as an initial flat rate for inexperienced employes. Nine stores raise the wages of their stock girls within this group, the range of wages being much greater than in the case of cash girls. The reason for this is, of course, that stock work varies considerably in importance. In some cases, it is the merest running of errands and carrying of boxes,—the serving as hands and feet for people who are too busy to leave their departments. In other cases, it means memorizing the stock, taking care of it, keeping it in order, the importance of this work varying with depart-

ment and class of goods. In two stores of the nine, an advance of 50 cents is given to stock girls; in six stores they may be advanced $1.00 more per week, and in one store the possible increase is $2.50 per week. This latter store employs stock girls in its cloak and suit department, where stock boys are more usually employed, and pays the higher wage for heavier work and also for occasional assistance in selling. The total range of wages for stock girls is from $2.00 to $4.50 per week, the largest number in any one wage group being paid $2.50, and a majority from $2.50 to $3.00.

Wrapper girls are employed in 15 stores. In this occupation the flat rate is less frequent. Five stores pay a flat rate to wrappers, but in three of them only one wrapper girl is employed. Another store pays wrapper girls $2.75, three others pay $2.50, and another $3.00 per week. Ten stores increase the wages of wrappers. Although the total range of wages—from $2.00 to $5.00—is greater than in either of the preceding occupations, the maximum range of wages in any one establishment is less than in the case of stock girls. Six stores give an increase of 50 cents per week to wrapper girls, two stores an increase of $1.00, and two other stores an increase of $2.00. The largest number of wrapper girls in any one wage group is paid $2.50 per week, the majority earning from $2.50 to $3.00.

Sometimes, where no girls are employed ex-

clusively for wrapping parcels, the cashiers act as wrappers. This joint duty usually implies not the payment of higher wages, but of wages considerably lower than those in stores where the duties of cashiers are wholly clerical. The cashier-wrapper is really an apprentice who operates a cash register and has no clerical work at all. Of the 284 cashiers, 112 operate cash registers at wages ranging from $2.00 to $4.50 per week, the majority earning $3.00. Where the low line cable system or the pneumatic tube system is used, the rate of wages is higher. Two stores have a beginning wage of $3.00 for such cashiers, but the majority start at $4.00, with possible advances to $6.00, $7.00, and $9.00 for head cashiers. The same is true of the small group of cashiers who act as bookkeepers in the offices. The majority of cashiers, if we consider them one group, are earning from $3.00 to $3.50 a week, the largest number in any one wage group earning $3.50. This indicates that although the number of cashiers operating cable and tube systems is slightly greater than the number operating cash registers, the proportion of relatively well-paid hands in the former case is not heavy enough materially to raise the percentage in the higher wage groups.

In the workrooms, especially among alteration and drapery hands, wages are stereotyped. The market price for running a sewing machine, under direction, is $1.00 a day. Beginners are paid $4.00 and sometimes $5.00 a week. When an

operator reaches $6.00 she is not likely to be advanced further. Seven stores, however, out of the 21 which employ alteration hands, pay $7.00 a week to some workroom hands, and six stores pay a few $8.00 but the $6.00 rate holds for 65 per cent of the hands.

The wages of milliners are more varied. Some are paid nothing at all. These are apprentices in their first season, learning their trade and thinking themselves fortunate to have a seat at the table where "creations" are in process of production. Some—by way of encouragement—are paid $1.00 to $1.50 a week. A few are paid $2.50 and $3.00; many are paid $4.00; but the largest number are in the $5.00 wage group. A few may be found earning $6.00, $7.00, $8.00 and $9.00. The wages of head milliners range, according to district and capacity, from $10 a week to $25. Of the 172 milliners employed in retail department stores, not more than eight earn this highest rate.

The wages of saleswomen, however, best indicate what opportunity the mercantile industry offers. Saleswomen are not only far in the majority as to numbers, but as the occupational group most characteristic of the industry they are at the goal toward which tend cash girls and wrapper girls, stock girls and wrapper-cashiers. They represent the merchant to his customers. They may render ineffective a good stock and an otherwise well-planned store by spoiling sales, or on the other hand, by studying their customers they may

increase trade even when hampered by relatively ill-selected stock. On the first floor, many of them are little more than apprentices. They may be put at selling hairpins or down in the basement selling nails, but meanwhile they are learning the ways of the store and incidentals about sales checks and indexes and weekly totals. In three stores, beginners are paid $2.00 a week. Ordinarily, however, $2.50, $3.00, or $3.50, is the beginning wage, and in 10 stores no saleswoman is paid less than $4.00. Four dollars or $5.00, on the other hand, is the maximum for some stores. If a girl reaches this point, and wishes to earn more, she must go elsewhere. Six dollars or $7.00 is usually the highest wage paid to saleswomen in quick-selling departments, but cloak and suit saleswomen, and sometimes saleswomen in laces, earn considerably more.

Approximately 150 cloak and suit saleswomen are employed in Baltimore retail stores. They have what might be regarded as a separate trade, a trade for which experience in other parts of the store is insufficient. The stock girl in a cloak and suit house is, in a sense, an apprentice for selling goods of this sort and is in line for promotion. She sees how garments are put on, she hears how they are described and commented upon, and she observes that greater assertion and self-confidence are required here than in many other departments. Such preliminary experience is almost essential, for the harm that may be done by an inexperienced

hand is usually too great to be risked. These cloak and suit saleswomen, 6 per cent of the whole number of saleswomen, are paid as a minimum what would be the maximum in other departments. Starting at $6.00 or $7.00, they are advanced to $8.00, $10, $14, and in a few cases $18 per week. The majority earn $10 or $11.

For the entire group of saleswomen, the range of wages is from $2.00 a week to $18. The largest number in any one wage group earn $6.00 a week. A majority earn $5.00 to $6.00 a week, and there are twice as many earning less than $5.00 as there are earning more than $6.00.

Among heads of stock or assistant buyers, who are saleswomen, too, the range of wages is almost as great. The minimum is $3.50. In the $5.00 and $6.00 wage groups numbers are larger, and in the $7.00 wage group is the greatest number of individuals. Beyond this point, the number in each wage group drops steadily and abruptly. Three heads of stock earn $18 a week and one earns $25, which may be taken as the limit to advancement for the selling force in Baltimore stores.

No summary has been made of the wages of buyers. Here we are confronted so constantly with the need for definition, for classification into sub-groups, of buyers with and without sole responsibility; buyers in charge of one important department and buyers in charge of three important departments; or on the other hand, buyers whose departments are unimportant; that it

would be unfair to group together the wages paid as if the occupations were similar. Some women who call themselves buyers earn $8.00 a week; some who are called buyers and who do actually buy,—buttons and hairpins, perhaps, from city salesmen,—are paid $10 and $12. Others, who buy extensively in this country and abroad, may be paid $100. So far as a general statement can be made, however, where occupations are so varied, the range of wages for women buyers is from $15 to $35 a week, the majority being paid $20.

SYSTEM OF PAYMENT

These statements about wages assume a common system of payment. Such a system, the paying of a stated and unmodified weekly sum, does as a matter of fact obtain in 30 stores. They have fixed maximums and minimums for occupations and departments. They estimate that the total wages paid to the selling force in a department should not exceed 5 per cent of the total sales; and additions to the force or increases in wages are planned accordingly. Exceptions of course are made. Some stores, far from holding to the principle that a department earns a certain percentage of what it sells, carry on a sort of guerilla warfare against the payroll, displacing old employes by new and low-paid employes, and so far as they can, holding all departments to a common minimum. On the other hand, some stores make a point of advancing employes for length of service

even though the economics of the department does not warrant it. On the whole, however, the fixed maximum and minimum rate holds true.

Four stores have a different system, either throughout the store or in a few departments only. They pay a commission or percentage in addition to weekly wages. In one case, one-half of 1 per cent on their sales is paid to all senior saleswomen; in another case, one-half of 1 per cent is paid on sales in the tinware department only. A third store pays one-half of 1 per cent to all who have $100 or more on their books at the end of the week,—"And all the time I was there, I only got a hundred dollars on my book just once, in Christmas week," said a first floor girl. In one store, however, the percentage affects not one department or one group only, but the entire selling force. All employes after six months with the house are put on a percentage basis. They earn, in addition to their weekly wages, 1 per cent on their sales. Wages are adjusted, however, so that saleswomen do not total more than the prevailing rate of wages, and they frequently earn less. The range of base wages is from $3.00 to $5.00, a majority earning $3.50, and increases being infrequent. Such increases as are gained must be by the percentage. Length of service makes no difference. For instance, one girl who has been fourteen years with this store and is head of stock in notions, leather goods and toilet articles, is paid $5.50 a week. The commission acts as a spur to

the sales force, but it does not raise wages beyond the prevailing rate. For this reason, this store and the others which pay a percentage, have been considered together with those which do not pay a percentage, in discussion of rates of wages.

WAGES AND THE COST OF LIVING

Of 4048 women in different wage groups, it is of interest that 2184, or 54 per cent, are earning $5.00 or less, and that 3266, or 81 per cent, are earning $6.00 or less. There are 658 women in the $7.00 to $11 group, and 124 women are earning $11 to $25.* The wages charted (see next page) show still more clearly the point beyond which most of the employes do not go.

The longest lines, which represent the larger groups of women, appear opposite the lower wage groups. After the $6.00–$7.00 wage group, the lines are abruptly shortened, with almost continuous decreases to the minimum point.

The significance of this wage grouping can be apparent only when considered with reference to the cost of living in Baltimore. The term "cost of living" is vague; usage has extended its meaning to cover everything from the "subsistence level" to the amount necessary for maintaining a relatively high standard of life. As used in this connection, it means the sum necessary in Balti-

* These percentages are calculated from the wages of 4048 women, including cash girls, stock and wrapper girls, cashiers, sales girls, heads of stock, milliners, alteration hands, and drapery operators. No buyers, unspecified clerical help, kitchen or laundry hands are included.

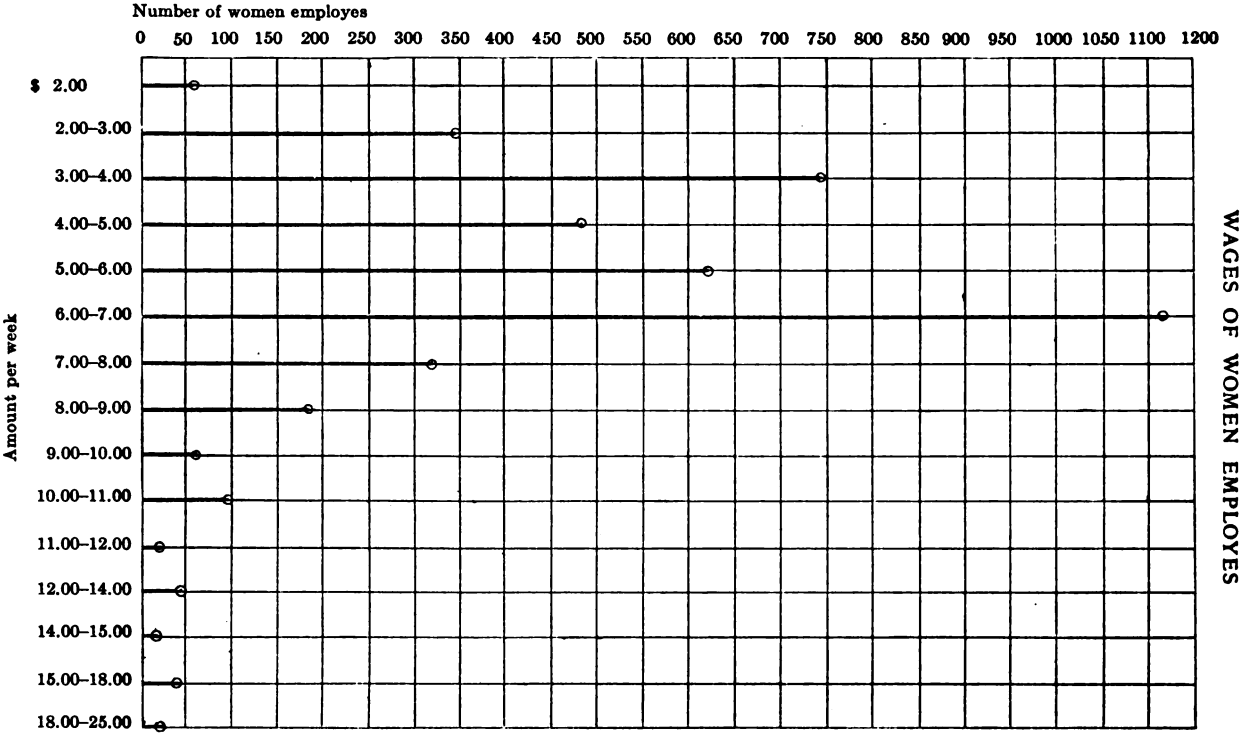


DIAGRAM E.—RANGE OF WAGES OF WOMEN EMPLOYES IN 34 BALTIMORE STORES. NUMBER OF WOMEN EMPLOYES BY WEEKLY WAGE GROUPS

more to provide for an individual, lodging and sufficient food, clothing, carfare to and from work, and a small margin for sundries such as medicine, dentistry, or on the other hand, healthful recreation. This definition, too, leaves room for variance of opinion. Just what food is sufficient, just how much and what kind of clothing is needed, are matters upon which no two individuals will agree. Some will think that carfare is an unnecessary expense and that in a small city people should walk to their work. Others will consider any allowance for recreation an extravagance.

The cost of board at its minimum must, in general, be taken to represent the cost of obtaining lodging and sufficient food; as to details the consensus of opinion of those who have lived near the margin can be the only criterion. A tentative schedule for Baltimore might be as follows: Board and lodging, $3.00; clothing, $2.00; washing, $.50; carfare, $.60; lunches, $.60. Total, $6.70. Boarding homes for working women are few. It is not customary for women to take unfurnished rooms and prepare their own meals. Instead, they take a room and their meals with some family, and the rate in families seldom falls below $3.00 a week.

Two dollars a week for clothing is $100 a year. This may seem large, but we cannot estimate as though the sum were in hand and the possessor a competent seamstress. Were these two things assured, were our workingwoman compact of fore-

thought, self-restraint, good management and efficiency, she might even manage to have her allowance for clothing yield her a surplus. But she is mediocre human material for the most part, neither very clever nor very competent nor foresighted for the next season's wants. Without a first nugget, the saving of small sums is difficult. From week to week, board and lodging, carfare and sundries, eat into the tiny capital and prevent continuous accumulation of a portion of it. The need of today looms larger than that of six months from now, and $2.00 a week, if it covers this week's and this season's needs, is doing well. This implies the buying of ready-made clothing, the buying of some things by instalments,—an expensive way, but apparently inevitable at times when no capital is at hand. The ordinary working girl, as has been said, is not a seamstress any more than she is a capable executive. She neither knows how to sew nor wants to spend time sewing. Her leisure is precious, her weariness extreme, and it is easier to buy things. What she could save in money (not to estimate what she would lose in buoyancy) if she made her own clothing, therefore, cannot modify her present budget. The facts must be recognized that she does not, as a rule, make her clothing, nor does she spend her annual allowance for clothing as a lump sum.

That some money should be spent for sundries is no less essential than that some money should be spent for food. This item, however, marks the

difference between this budget and a budget based actually upon the cost of living at the subsistence level. In the latter case, beyond food and lodging and carfare there could be no leeway. There could be no doctor's bills, no medicine, there could be no postage stamps and no carfare except to and from work; above all, there could be no recreation. Life would be without social content. This is the program for home workers in sweated industries. Can it conceivably or desirably be the program for a young girl at the beginning of her life? We should welcome a generation of such vigor and admirable self-control that expenditure for illness would be unnecessary, but that generation has not yet been born in this age of the world. We would not, however, seek so to limit the lives of the workers as to eliminate recreation. Were we to attempt it, we should be attacking both health and efficiency. The desire for recreation is as fundamental as the necessity of work and the desire for food. A budget which in any measure provides for a sane and useful existence must admit some expenditures other than those essential for the mechanical maintenance of physical life.

Admitting these premises, we may assume that $6.70* represents the minimum cost of living for

* It may be said that when a woman lives with her family, the cost of her maintenance is less than this amount. It may apparently be less, because the relation between cost of living and expenditure is obscured, but the amount necessary for the maintenance of the individual remains the same. Although the workingwoman may be personally comfortable, the reason for this is not that under the circumstances her wages are adequate, but that what she would other-

a workingwoman in Baltimore. We know that some workingwomen live on less; we know too that more could live on less if they had more skill in doing things for themselves or clearer ideas of economy. Yet we cannot assume the possession of such skill and such economy, and without them this estimate approximates the minimum cost of living. Referring to page 113, we find that 81 per cent of the women employes in Baltimore stores are earning less than this minimum living cost, that 19 per cent are earning more. For an industry so important among those that employ women, an industry so popular among women workers that it sometimes creates a shortage in factory districts, opportunity for advancement seems meager. It may be suggested that this 81 per cent are apprentices and the 19 per cent represent those who have learned their trade. Yet, judging from trades in which there is a regular apprenticeship system, this seems improbable.* If appren-

wise lack is supplied through the family income. Whether a workingwoman is partly supported or is wholly self-supporting, whether her income is wholly derived from her industrial occupation or in part from other sources, the basic amount necessary for her maintenance remains unchanged.

* Some unions allow one apprentice to 10 journeymen. Others may allow one to eight, or one to five. In millinery establishments, the usual proportion is one to 12. There can be no question in these cases of the preponderance of trained and experienced hands. In fact, as skilled workers are chosen from the apprentice class, it would seem axiomatic that in order to allow for progress from one group to the other the number of apprentices must be limited to the number of probable vacancies in the group of skilled workers; in other words, supply must be adjusted to demand. This would imply that the number of apprentices could be but a fractional part of the number of skilled workers.

tices should considerably outnumber the skilled workers, the technical relation between the two groups would be disturbed, progress from one group to the other largely blocked, and the apprentices become a subsidiary industrial class.

The 81 per cent must, therefore, be a group of unskilled workers. Yet because they are unskilled workers, it is not apparent why they are paid less than the cost of living, nor why 54 per cent are paid less than the cost of board and clothes. A primary economic law requires that the minimum wage of labor must approximate the minimum cost of living. The laborer must, in other words, receive in wages an amount sufficient to enable him to be self-sustaining, even as the other factors in production are self-sustaining. Should any portion of the labor group not receive such a wage, it must gain its marginal sustenance from one of the other groups which figure in production, or from some other portion of the labor group; that is, it must become parasitic.

That 81 per cent of the women employes in Baltimore stores should not be self-sustaining, indicates, from the economic standpoint, an abnormal condition. This condition is characteristic of industries which employ women. Various explanations have been offered by economic writers as to why the wages of unskilled women are fixed not by their cost of living, but by social and personal conditions. Habitual assistance offered by parents to their daughters formerly

made the money earned by daughters supplementary and tended to fix the market rates for women's labor. As effects frequently persist after causes have ceased, market rates continue to be fixed although the assistance offered by parents is today often an illusion. Women's wages tend to remain low, also, because of the potential interruption of women's work by marriage. Since women as a rule cease to work for wages before the age of twenty-five, they have little time in which to acquire skill in order to advance in their trades, and because of this probable shortness of their industrial life are less valuable than men of the same grade of skill. Conversely, since they have no expectation of continuing at work, they take little interest in developing efficiency. They regard their work as a temporary makeshift, and remain irresponsible and "unprofessional."

These conditions which everywhere affect women's wages are operative in the Baltimore mercantile industry to an unusual degree. Baltimore is not yet consciously a city of workingwomen. Women work, it is true, in factories, stores, offices, to a number proportionately as great as in other eastern cities,* but Baltimore has never agreed

* Statistics of Women at work. Special Reports of the Census Office. Department of Commerce and Labor. Bureau of the Census. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1907. P. 146.

Of 45 eastern cities, in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia, Lowell, Massachusetts, has the highest percentage of workingwomen, 45.1; Erie, Pennsylvania, the lowest percentage, 20.1. Baltimore has a percentage of 30.6. As 25 of the 45 cities have less than 30 per cent of

that this is desirable. "We regret the necessity which compels some women to work," the traditions of the city seem to declare; "properly speaking, the cost of their maintenance should be borne by their families. But if they must work, their wages are of service by adding somewhat to the family income." In other words, the concession that some women must work has been made, not to women as individuals, but to women in their family relations.

This point of view seems to have had secondary social and economic effects. Women who sought positions hesitated to admit financial need, preferring the lighter ignominy of working for pin money. Native-born women where possible avoided factories and sought "white-handed" occupations—offices, if they had time for some training, stores if they had not.* In stores, untrained women can earn "pin money" without total loss of social position. A girl who has not strength to run a machine yet may stand behind a counter, and a gentlewoman who shrinks from rougher employments may find some departments of store work not uncongenial. This social advantage which the mercantile industry has over many other occupations open to women, and the especial cogency of this argument in Baltimore, has led to an oversupply of saleswomen. Inevitably,

their women working, Baltimore is relatively on the upper part of the scale. It is equal in percentage with Paterson, New Jersey.

* This tendency is true of other cities also, but of Baltimore to an extreme degree.

oversupply in any labor group lowers the market rate of wages. It is, then, to this social cause, operating with and in consequence of the personal cause, and because in Baltimore tradition operates with especial force, that we may attribute the high percentage—high even for the mercantile industry—of women whose wages are lower than the local cost of living.

CHAPTER VIII

MODIFICATIONS OF WEEKLY WAGES

THE stated sums paid weekly to employes for service in mercantile houses may be increased by extra compensation or diminished either by extra demands or by fines. Night work, whether regular or occasional, does in reality imply a modification of wages, because it necessitates the purchase or provision of an extra meal away from home. A girl may carry her lunch, but she cannot well carry a palatable supper, too. She is obliged either to buy something to add to it or to buy the entire meal, which means, on Saturday nights, an extra expense to be met regularly from the "sundries" allowance of her budget.

NIGHT WORK AND OVERTIME

To work nights, to take stock, to arrange show tables, to sell for the Christmas trade, or to keep up with orders in the workrooms, is an additional expense. Some stores recognize this, and in a variety of ways. They may supply supper money, or furnish supper, or they may pay for the night work at a rate proportionate to the day rate of pay. It is not clear whether they regard these

forms of extra compensation as payment for overtime, or as a way of canceling the extra expense to which their employes are put by staying at night, or as a customary form of generosity to which it is well for the best stores to adhere. Where supper is furnished, this does seem to imply that although employes may not be paid for their night work, they at least shall not lose financially by it. The same idea may lead to the supplying of supper money, although the specific sums differ considerably according to store and occupation. Where a rate proportionate to the day rate of pay is given, this carries out solely the idea of pay for overtime, and it is only in cases where in addition to the proportionate rate, supper is supplied or supper money is furnished, that the idea of extra compensation without additional expense finds expression.

Generally a difference is made between the workroom and selling force as to form of overtime pay. A difference is made also as to form of overtime pay to the selling force according to the season in which the overtime occurs. Overtime to take stock is customary in 16 stores, all of which recognize this service by some form of extra compensation. Six stores furnish supper to their employes and five give supper money; four of the latter allow 25 cents for supper, one allows 35 cents to its sales people and 50 cents to its fitters. Evidently in these cases, not to dwell on the slight industrial superiority implied by the larger allow-

ance to one group of employes, this extra pay is given not so much to compensate for the extra hours spent in the service of the store, as to cancel the extra expense so placed on these employes. Four stores, at stock-taking overtime, pay 10 cents, and one 15 cents, an hour, and disregard the extra expense of supper. As the supper hour is presumably from 6:00 to 7:00 p. m. (although ordinarily on a week night the employes would go home at 6 o'clock), overtime and overtime pay do not begin until 7 o'clock. As it happens, stock in these four stores is relatively small, and employes in order to shorten the evening, as a rule, go without supper until later, working continuously at the stock until 8:00 or 8:30 p. m., when the enumeration is finished. Ten cents an hour in these stores does not represent either supper expense or pro rata payment. It is higher than the day rate of a majority of the employes, lower than the day rate of others. Apparently the amount is fixed arbitrarily, without conscious estimate of the compensation due employes for their actual expenditure of time and money.

Overtime to arrange stock on counters and show tables is of rarer occurrence. The two stores which find it necessary supply supper, but give no extra pay for the extra hours of work.

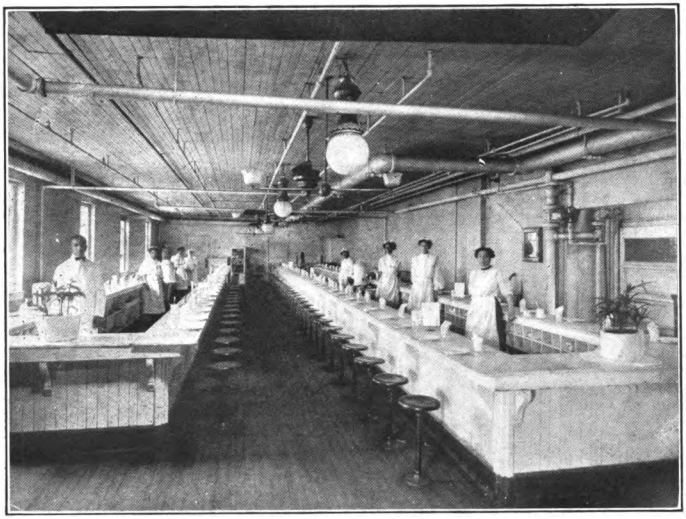
Thirty-one stores keep open at night prior to Christmas. Yet general and continuous as this overtime is, it receives less financial recognition than the overtime at any other season. One store

supplies supper to its employes. Supper money is not furnished by any of the stores, nor is pro rata pay given. This night work, which means an extra expense for food as well as heavy expenditure of strength, is given gratuitously by the employes.

In the workrooms, on the contrary, employes are as a rule on a different footing. Nine stores have no workrooms, and four which have workrooms permit no overtime. Twenty-one stores, however, do have workrooms which are busy at night during several weeks at least in the spring and fall seasons. Of these 21 stores, 15 give overtime pay in some form. One pays 10 cents an hour, one 12½ cents, and one 15 cents an hour, the custom in the latter instance being to disregard the supper hour and impress this time free of charge into the service. Two stores pay their hands 50 cents * for the night's work, irrespective of the time at which the night's work closes. Nine stores pay for the night work at a rate proportionate to the day rate of pay, and two of these latter give supper money in addition.

When so much commendation is due these firms, —and especially those which give supper money in addition to the pro rata pay,—it is perhaps overcritical to point out that time given by employes in excess of the regular number of hours contracted for, is customarily in many places, and

* One of these stores pays its alteration hands 50 cents and its milliners $1.00 for the night's work. The difference in rates is due to the buyer of the latter department.



Waiting to Serve Lunch

At the Six O'clock Closing Hour

usually, it is thought, with justice, paid for at a rate half again or twice as high as the rate paid for hours regularly arranged by contract. The regular working day may be supposed to represent the maximum number of hours that employes can work effectively. Whether or not employes can give continuously a full day's work of the number of hours now customary, without losing grade, is a point which cannot be touched upon here. It is fairly certain, however,—and the custom testifies, as it were, to the certainty,—that they cannot give more than this customary number of hours without rapidly losing grade. Overtime means a drain on strength disproportionate to the mere length of hours past the contracted time. At the point of excess, every additional unit of work counts not for one but for two or three additional units of consumed vitality. The regular day's rate is based upon the assumption that each hour's work is like each other hour's work in its effect on the vitality of the worker,—an assumption which at the point of excess, the point of overtime, does not hold good,—and in order roughly to compensate for the additional and excessive drain on strength made by extra hours of work, the pay for these extra hours must be higher in proportion. From this point of view, pro rata pay for overtime is not pro rata pay for expenditure of strength. Pay at the rate of "a time and a half" or "double time" more nearly expresses the principle upon which overtime pay is ordinarily based.

It is worthy of remark that this principle has found no recognition among Baltimore stores. It is especially significant, however, that the principle of pro rata pay has not gained ground in all the workrooms (six do not pay in any form for overtime work) and that it has not been extended at all to the overtime work of the selling force. The fact that money compensation for overtime is given to the selling force only at the season of stocktaking, and then only in a few instances, and that no compensation at all is given for overtime work at Christmas, is yet another indication of the social and personal conditions affecting the rate of wages paid to women employes and modifying the operation of the economic laws generally affecting the rate of wages paid to men.

EXTRA PAY

The total value of weekly wages may be modified not only by overtime service, but by the custom of giving Christmas money or a yearly bonus, by assigning premiums for the sale of certain stock, by allowing employes a percentage discount on their purchases in the store, or by supplying all or any portion of their lunch to the employes without charge. Christmas money is not generally thought of as payment for service rendered. More generally it is regarded as a voluntary expression of good will which takes no cognizance of either individual differences in efficiency or

wages. It is in no sense to be regarded as payment for the night work of the weeks preceding. Five Baltimore firms customarily give Christmas money. The largest employs 70 hands, and the smallest 26. One firm which gives each sales person $5.00 at Christmas requires no night work. Another which keeps its store open three nights a week the year round, and nightly for three weeks before Christmas, gives each sales person $2.00 at Christmas. Three other firms, one of which keeps its store open nightly four weeks before Christmas, gives each sales person who has been for a year in the employ of the firm $2.50 at Christmas. Clearly, since the amount varies without reference to individual earnings or extent of night work, Christmas money cannot be regarded as payment for overtime. It is more in the nature of a bonus for the extra sales of the season.

A bonus, not at Christmas, but early in the spring, is given by two stores. The principle on which this bonus is calculated is not clear to the employes who are, in fact, unable to form any idea as to the relation between sales and the amount which they may expect to receive. After the books are audited for the year, the bonus is arranged for and paid in February or March to all sales people who have been with the house two years. The same sum, which varies from year to year, is given to each sales person. In 1909, the bonus in one store was $12, in the other $33.45.

Premiums, or "P. M.'s," on the contrary, while they may not "move" the stock of a department, yet undoubtedly hasten the sale of the stock to which they apply. A "P. M." placed on an article means that the sales person who succeeds in selling the article is paid a premium of 5, 10, or 25 cents, as the case may be. The sales person is thus given a tangible reason for making an effort to effect a sale. Stock that has lain on the shelves too long, that sales people have not been interested to sell, that for some reason the public has not wanted, by carrying a premium with it spurs the energies of a hitherto indifferent selling force. Such stock is not necessarily undesirable. It may simply lack some qualities that appeal to the public and may not have found its right customer. The price set upon it may have been too high for the quality of the article. The style of it may be unusual and hence unattractive to the majority, or, more frequently, the article may be out of style and old.

Some Baltimore merchants assert that not a store in the city would hesitate on occasion to set premiums for the sale of certain stock. Many merchants, however, feel that as a general thing the principle is bad; that it may lead to unwise efforts to sell things that customers really do not want, and by forcing a sale may cause dissatisfaction and result in the loss of the customer. It may be said of 22 stores that they prefer in general to trust to the efforts of sales people and to the oversight of buyers rather than to methods of this

sort. Twelve stores, however, make premiums a part of their policy. Two of these 12 use them infrequently, but the rest use them habitually in all departments. For example, a cent a yard premium may be put on wash goods that have not sold; a premium of 25 cents may be put on a baby's coat once white but now of a less definite shade and out of style; a premium of 50 cents to $1.00 may be put on furs which by much handling have lost their glory. The amount of the premium, as well as the specific use of it, depends in general upon the department buyer's opinion as to the probable difficulty of effecting a sale.

A discount allowed on purchases made in the store is an important extension of the purchasing power of wages. Where the store is well-stocked and the goods are of a kind that employes want, the advantage to them when buying ready-made clothing is evident. As a rule, employes are quick to recognize this. Of the 28 stores which give a discount, it is reported that in 18 employes habitually buy from the store. Where the grade of the goods is very much above the financial capacity of the saleswomen, or where on the other hand it is below their ideas of taste, use of the discount becomes occasional or infrequent. The amount of discount, too, varies somewhat. Ten per cent is customary; it obtains in most departments of 25 stores. One store gives a 6 per cent discount, and two stores give an irregular and unassigned discount in some few departments only.

Another addition to the real wages of employes is the free provision of all or any portion of the lunch. The lunch service of the different stores has been already discussed, but a word of recapitulation here may not be out of place. A free lunch is not provided by any of the stores, but in two stores tea and coffee with milk and sugar are served free. In four stores lunch is served at cost —a real extension of the purchasing power of wages, since for the same expenditure the same quality of food could not be obtained in restaurants outside.

FINES

The amount of wages is not only increased by such means as the foregoing, but decreased* in some stores by fines. Twelve of the 34 stores make a practice of fining employes for lateness and two of these 12 impose additional fines for errors in index sheets or for a wrong address on a package. The customary fine for lateness is 1 cent a minute. In two stores, this is varied to half a cent a minute and in one store to 2 cents a minute. Two stores fine the dilatory employe a quarter of a day's pay, and one store charges 10 cents for each half hour's lateness. Usually these

* It should not be overlooked that the wages of most saleswomen besides being occasionally diminished through their misconduct, as explained in the text, are also liable to diminution through illness. There are few women employes who do not miss a day from work and lose a day's wages from time to time on account of ill health. Two Baltimore stores, however, do not deduct for time lost through illness, unless illness extends over a week. In the other stores an employe customarily loses pay for the time of absence.

deductions are made for each day's delinquency and the employe has no chance to make reparation. One store, however, has worked out a scheme by which five minutes' lateness in the morning may be canceled by fine minutes' overtime at noon and the deductions calculated each week may be counterbalanced by the extra time to the credit of the delinquent.

The charge for an error in the index is as a rule 10 cents, and the same charge is made in one store for a wrong address. In another store where a fine is imposed for a wrong address, 25 cents is the charge.

These fines, which bear no measurable relation to wages or to the inconvenience caused by carelessness, are indicative often of other points in the policy of a store toward its employes. One cent a minute does not compensate for the annoyance caused by lateness. Any failure in punctuality is a demoralizing interference with the morning's work, and the fine, whatever the amount of it, is frankly disciplinary. It is a threat directed against all lateness alike, but aimed at lateness that is avoidable. The question is whether avoidable lateness when punished by a fine is actually diminished. We do not find that delinquents spend much serious thought on small penalties to which under certain circumstances they are liable. If they were irresponsible before, they seem still to be irresponsible and to accept the fine as they would any other disagreeable fact. If, on the

other hand, they know that they have made an effort to be punctual or to be accurate, they accept the fine with fatalistic resignation but with a brooding and growing resentment against what they consider injustice.

It may be questioned whether a store can afford discipline which arouses this mood in its employes. The sense of injustice is slow to be dissipated and difficult to turn into channels of effective work; to satisfy their resentment girls whose small wages have been reduced by fines are sometimes tempted to make up their loss in ways they would not dream of in calmer moments. This is an injury to the girl and the sum exacted is of doubtful value to the store. Stores of higher grade make no use of habitual monetary fines. They prefer when a fine is imposed at all, to have it the exceptional method of dealing with the exceptional case, and to keep records of tardiness as a check to the over-careless. If an employe is habitually late, she is valueless, whether fined or not. If her lateness is occasional, she may quite as readily be induced to improve through the influence of her superiors as through the imposition of an impersonal, and as she feels, unjust fine.

CHAPTER IX

BENEFICIARY SOCIETIES

THE idea of association is still largely undeveloped among mercantile employes. The social and educational possibilities of the industrial group have scarcely begun to be utilized either by firms or by employes, although in some places the beginnings of club work serve for social expression, and in others, the beneficiary society has an educational purpose.

Neither mode of expression has made much headway among Baltimore stores. Club work is found in one store only, and this club work, which is confined to boys, is largely due to the interest of a single official. Beneficiary societies, on the other hand, exist in five stores. They owe their inception for the most part to the suggestion of the firm and sometimes to direct financial aid. In two cases, no contribution was made by the employer, but in one case the association was not only started but endowed by a member of the firm. In two other cases a lump sum was contributed by the firm to start the association. The firm in two cases acts as collector, deducting dues either weekly or monthly from pay envelopes.

Owing to the difference in organization of these beneficial associations, they cannot well be described collectively. They vary from what might be termed a form of private poor relief to the impersonal and fully organized body planned on democratic principles. For instance, one association exists for the benefit of women employes who have been ten years with the house. The association is endowed, but in order that it may have legal standing, nominal dues, fixed at 25 cents per annum, are paid by members. Neither sick benefits nor death benefits are specified. No financial statement is issued. A board of directors from among the members is elected by them, the tacit understanding being that the manager of the firm is to be on this board. The manager in fact has practically absolute control. The other members of the board are women who leave care of details in the manager's hands. He controls the finances of the association, both as to management and expenditure, and while nominally consulting with the elected directors before making grants from the beneficial fund, his judgment and inclination are responsible for the decisions of the board. When cases of illness are reported, it lies with the manager whether any sick benefit shall be paid, and if a sick benefit is paid, what the amount shall be. He takes into consideration the circumstances of the family and the kind of service given by the employe, in making his decision. If the family seems able to bear the

expense of the employe's illness, no sick benefit is paid. The same is true of death benefits. In neither case is there evidence of careful investigation. It would seem that chance impressions and a few queries decide the manager to give or withhold financial aid.

Somewhat more fully organized although still on a private basis is the beneficial association of another store. The firm in this case made no initial contribution and exercises no control. All the officers are elected from among the employes, but the same committee of administration, made up of the people first interested in the association, is continued year after year in office. A verbal financial statement is issued yearly, but there appear to be neither by-laws nor formal organizations. The dues are 5 cents a week, and a sick benefit of $3.00 a week may be paid for four weeks out of the fiscal year. There is no death benefit.

One firm contributed $200 to start a beneficial association. The firm acts as collector of dues but leaves the entire management of funds to the officers of the association, all of whom are elected from the employes. Three classes of members are designated according to salary. Class A is composed of members who draw a salary of $12 a week or over; the assessment is 15 cents per week. Class B members, who draw from $6.50 up to $12 a week, pay an assessment of 10 cents, and Class C members, who draw a salary of less than $6.50 per week, pay an assessment of 5 cents per week.

The sick and death benefits are graded according to the amount of dues, sick benefits being $7.50 to Class A members, $5.00 to Class B members, and $2.50 to Class C members. No benefits are allowed for less than a week's illness. They are not continued longer than thirteen weeks in any one year unless the minimum sum in bank amounts to $800, in which case benefits for an additional thirteen weeks are paid at one-half the usual rate. Death benefits are $150 to members of Class A, $100 to members of Class B, and $50 to members of Class C. If the cash on hand at any time falls below $200, the treasurer, by order of the board of managers, must levy an assessment upon each member, not exceeding 38 cents on Class A, 25 cents on Class B, and 13 cents on Class C. Funds are administered by relief and visiting committees, appointed by the board of managers and acting with the secretary-treasurer. A constitution and by-laws have been adopted for this association, and a financial statement is issued yearly.

This form of organization is typical, although somewhat more democratic than that in the two other beneficiary societies. In them as in the one described, three grades of membership are designated according to salary, assessments, and benefits, varying with the grade. The sick benefit is for eight weeks in any one year.* Administration is by committees either elected from the em-

* One association pays a death benefit of $50 to all classes of members.

ployes, or appointed by an elected board of directors whose rulings are subject to approval of the membership. The policy of the association is for the most part determined by employes, although in both these latter cases the firms exercise some slight and indirect control. The financial secretary of the association is in one case the confidential secretary of the proprietor. In the other case the assistant treasurer of the firm is treasurer of the association. Secretary and treasurer are bonded and paid a salary amounting to 4 per cent of the receipts.

To provide against fraud, these associations require that notification of illness shall be made to the secretary in writing, usually within a week of the disabling cause. No member may draw sick benefits within two weeks (thirty days in one case) of joining the association. No benefits may be issued except on attestation of the illness by a physician's certificate, and on report of the visiting committee.

Membership is voluntary in all five cases. The proportion of members to total employes varies from a handful in one case to 80 per cent in another. Membership is forfeited when a member leaves the employ of the firm. Whether or not employes comprehend the principle of insurance is doubtful, but beyond question this rule keeps many out of the association. Even 5 cents from $4.00 a week is not to be staked on a chance. "Suppose I did join," many a girl has said, "and then suppose I

didn't get sick this year, and suppose next year I got another job, there'd all my money be gone for nothing." The fact that the amount paid into the association is actually small and that she has received value in the form of insurance if not in money, does not, in her mind, counterbalance the fact that she has paid her premiums without tangible return. Not understanding the nature of insurance, she does not realize that she has been secured against the danger of being ill and without money. She does not want to pay out money for premiums unless she "is shown" that it will be of benefit to *her*.

Furthermore, should she in reality value the insurance, she might hesitate to join the association on the ground that, forfeiting membership if she left the store, she would be unprotected for the period of time which must elapse, according to rules, before she could apply for membership in the association of the store to which she had gone. If this second store had no association, she would be entirely unprotected, although the fiscal year of her insurance in the other place might not have been completed.

Although in some larger organizations the rule that membership is forfeited if the employe leaves the firm, may have originated in the desire to prevent change in personnel, it is extremely doubtful whether this desire has caused the rule in the beneficiary associations under consideration. Saleswomen are easily replaced. Further,

if saleswomen have opportunity to better themselves markedly as to tangible weekly salary, few are restrained from seizing such opportunity by reflection that the act means forfeiture of money paid into an insurance society. More probably the rule is in part an unconscious inheritance from the by-laws of larger organizations, and in part is due to an attempt to minimize bookkeeping. Yet it would seem that if membership could be continued at the option of the member, at least during the fiscal year in which she leaves the employ of the store, the probable increase in membership, by making the association sounder financially, would fully compensate for the increased bookkeeping.

This suggestion leads to another point in connection with beneficiary societies; namely, their educational value. Where the control of the organization is in the hands of one person, or even in the hands of a self-perpetuating committee, it is without educational value. When the most important part of the association's activities—the investment and disbursement of funds—is in the hands of an official of the store, even if that official be elected by the employes to carry on these activities and if all policies of the association are decided by vote of the employes, the educational value of the association is unduly limited. Only when management and control are altogether in the hands of employes, as they are in one of the societies under consideration, does the association

become educational as well as beneficiary. Under such circumstances, membership in the society is a training in democratic organization. It should be a training in self-reliance and in wise judgment in choice of officers; and responsibility of trust funds should be a training to the finance committee and the board of managers in the care of money. If this educational function be recognized, there should not, it would seem, be any hesitation in permitting members to retain their membership even though they have left the store. The additional bookkeeping involved is in itself an opportunity rather than a drawback. Increase in membership is likely to mean an increase in ability at the service of the association, and expenditure of time by members in such service represents a kind of altruism which the association should develop.

CHAPTER X

SALESWOMEN THEMSELVES

WAGES and hours of work, the planning and building of stores, are only one side of mercantile employment. The other side, the side with which after all we have been concerned from the beginning, is the meaning of wages and hours of work in terms of the lives of women workers. Who are the women employes? What nationalities do they represent? Where do they live? What positions do their families hold? What has been their previous training, their industrial history? What degree of economic self-dependence have they reached not as a group, but as individuals each of whom must meet and solve the problem of her own life?

For the answer to these questions no classified data are available. Such light as can be gained from store officials is mainly negative and of the most general sort, but from the girls themselves can be gathered bit by bit an interpretation of their problem as they see it.

The nationality groups are few. Native-born American girls are found in all the stores, and in 22 they are in the majority. Two stores employ only

American girls. This preponderance is due to the fact that many customers prefer to be served by Americans, and in part to the fact that native-born girls of Anglo-Saxon stock prefer when possible to choose an occupation socially superior to factory work. Eight firms do not employ Jewish girls. In 26 stores, however, Jewish girls are employed and in seven of these they are in the majority. Girls of German extraction are found in 27 stores, and predominate in five. The reason for this latter condition lies not in a policy of the stores but in the character of the neighborhood, which is largely German.

Slavic girls have hardly entered the industry. Most stores would not think of employing them, although in other cities where the Slavic immigration is old enough for some of its children to have won an American school education, many employers find it practicable to engage bright Polish and Croatian girls as saleswomen. In Baltimore, they are employed in three stores only; not more than 45 at most are employed, and 35 of these are alteration hands.

When the question, Where do they live? is asked of an employer, the answer is not readily forthcoming. This question, clearly, has not assumed economic significance in Baltimore. It is taken for granted that saleswomen live at home; or if not at home, with relatives; or if not with relatives, with friends; but for the most part at home, and therefore this question is not worth

asking an applicant for employment. Comparatively few employers do ask it. They feel that they are dealing with a population largely stationary, not with a changing, shifting population, not with a multitude of young untrained workers drifting in from smaller towns. Some few feel vaguely that perhaps the population of the city is not so entirely stationary as it was, and for this reason they seek to know that the girls have homes. Others seek to engage only employes obliged to work for their own or their families' support, because they find that such employes make the best material. Some hazard the guess that perhaps a few of their employes are boarding, but that most of them live at home.

It is the girls who know. They are able to corroborate or to refute the guesses that have been made about their way of living. Often their testimony bears out what has been said by their employers. In the following pages will be found the substance of interviews had with a few of the girls and women. These are given, not because the stories and circumstances described in them are typical of all saleswomen in the Baltimore stores, but because each represents a different kind of situation and illustrates a point bearing on the general tenor of the discussion. They throw light on the homes and living requirements of the women —an important part of the problem which could not appear in a study made solely in the stores.

Fourteen stores have no employes who are

living away from home, but they are small and most of them are away from the main shopping district; five are on Gay Street, three on South Broadway, one on Pennsylvania Avenue, one on West Baltimore Street, and four on Lexington Street. Twenty stores have employes who are living away from home. Some have only one or two such "detached" saleswomen, but in other cases a third of the girls are separated from their families. The total number in these 34 Baltimore stores, who are known to be living away from home, is 767, 17 per cent of all the women employes.

Maggie Fordham, for instance, was born in Virginia and "given the education of a lady," but when she was still in her teens her parents died. Her brother was married and in financial difficulties. There were no relatives. The girl had a friend who had come to Baltimore some years before and was then buyer in one of the large stores. "And I don't know how it was," said she, "but I just naturally seemed to take to business, and so I wrote to my friend and told her that I was coming and she should get me a job. And it happened right good for me, for there was a vacancy in her department—the muslin underwear—and she put me in for selling right away."

The first week she had $150 worth of sales on her book. She was paid $5.00 a week, and as she had some clothes, always walked to work, and went out little, because she did not find the girls

like those with whom she had been brought up, she got along well. After awhile her salary was raised to $7.00 and she was put in as head of stock. "We might make you a buyer, Miss Maggie," they said, "but first we know, you'd be getting married, and then where would we be?" "And I just laughed at them," she said, "because I hadn't any thoughts of getting married, then; but it wasn't long after that I met my husband, and then of course I left the store just like they said I would."

Her husband was a railroad man. After they had been married eight years, he was killed on the tracks. His life insurance was just enough to leave her out of debt, and she had three little children to support. What should she do? Her brother and his wife had moved to Baltimore and they offered her a home with them. They gave her one room and she started in to earn something. She could not bear to return to any of the uptown stores, because, though she might have received more money, she would have seen her children only when they were asleep. She therefore took a position in a little store nearby. She could thus have lunch and supper with her children. She found the night work the most difficult. From March until July and then again from September until January the store kept open every night until 9:00 p. m., and if there were customers, until 10 or 11 o'clock. She had to be there five nights out of the week. One winter two of her children died of

membranous croup. "And all the time I had to be at the store and leave my brother's wife to take care of them, for if it is only $4.50 a week, I can't afford to lose any of it. There's no one bringing any money in here except my brother and me."

The economic position of the widow is often more difficult than that of the unmarried woman away from home. The latter can sometimes hold out for a few years and manage by strict economy to support herself, but when the widow has children to care for and when no one of the family group is earning enough to support the others, the struggle is severe. Not infrequently the family tie is of slight help.

Other saleswomen with or without their families, are more nearly self-dependent. A large group is made up of women whose family connections and family history are good, who are, some of them at least, in reality gentlewomen. These women usually have education and breeding sufficient to place them on terms of friendliness with their customers. They are employed in stores which have won a more or less aristocratic clientele. They sell dress goods, silks, laces,—stuffs which they can present attractively by reason of their own judgment and good taste. They receive from their customers and their employers genuine respect and recognition.

Such is Miss Eleanor Burns, for fifteen years saleswoman of silks in one of the stores in the Lexington Market district. She presides with

dignity over her department, and so well does she know the store that she has permission to go with customers from department to department and sell to them goods on other floors. She has grown gray-haired in the service but she has kept the color in her cheeks and her native charm. Her family has lived in Maryland for generations, not in Baltimore but in the farm-country beyond, and she like her sisters grew up without a thought of financial responsibility. The blow came with the failure of her father's health and the dwindling of his business interests. Two of her sisters were married. Her brother was ready and able to carry on the home but the two girls at home would have to help. What could they do? Not teach, for they had not the training. They shrank from office work. The store seemed at least possible. Into that channel they turned their energies and the social charm which in their personal life outside had for years stood them in good stead. Together they make $25 a week, enough to maintain themselves and to be of material assistance in the continuance of the home.

In contrast to such successful employes, Tessie Schlueter is an example of the saleswoman who is intermittently employed. Tessie is the daintiest of German women. Her dreamy face, her sensitive mouth, her delicate, blue-veined hands, would indicate a different sort of history, yet Tessie began at the age of eleven as a servant. Her parents were always poor, and she was the oldest of twelve

children, consequently she had to go to work young. "Even when I was a bit of a girl," she will tell you, "I worked in the cannery. Oh, mother worked there, and I sat on the bench with her and stemmed fruit and peeled vegetables—I wasn't more than five or six years old then—and together we used to get a lot done." Tessie went to school irregularly, but she studied a little at a nearby mission. She had to help support the younger children. After she had been at service a few years, she entered a store and became a saleswoman; in addition to selling she scrubbed and cleaned the store, and arranged stock late at night after the customers had gone. For this service she was paid $3.00 a week, and after she had been there five years she became head saleswoman in the millinery department and received $4.00. This sum was the most she ever got. She was married at nineteen and is now thirty. Her husband is a box maker, but work is slack and for two years he has been much out of work. Even when he is employed his wage averages only about $6.00 a week. There are three children to support and the rent is $6.00 a month. For the last three years Mrs. Schlueter has been working on Monday and Saturday. She wishes she could be employed every day. "I'd manage about the children and I could do the washing at night. You see I only get 50 cents a day for work at the store from 8 in the morning until 10 or 11 at night; they don't pay you much when you come in that way; they

know that you have to take what they give you. Since Christmas, I haven't even had the Monday and Saturday work. They laid me off along with some others, because they said they weren't doing any business, but they'll take me on again as soon as work picks up, because I've been there so long and I'm used to the store. But if only it could be for the whole week instead of for just two days!"

The situation of the extra hand who is not married but is beginning her industrial life is illustrated by the case of Helen Johnson. Helen is a tall, overgrown girl of fifteen, blond and raw-boned, awkward and very child-like. She was born in Detroit but came here with her family when she was seven years old, and has lived ever since in the tangle of streets that complicates South Baltimore. Her father pays the rent, but he never sees the family,—he does not wish to. They have to earn whatever money they need for clothes and food and other things. Helen went to school up to the sixth grade, but after that she took a position wrapping bottles in the factory where her older sister works. Her sister has made as much as $8.00 a week, but her mother did not wish Helen to stay in the factory, so she got a position in a five- and ten-cent store for Monday and Saturday work. The Monday work is from 8:00 to 5:30 and it pays her 50 cents; the Saturday work from 8:00 to 10:30, pays 75 cents. She was laid off two weeks after Christmas.

The obligation to be self-supporting is no less binding because she lives in the house with her family than it would be had she come to the city alone. Her rent is paid, which should reduce the estimate for board and lodging, made on page 115, to $1.50 a week; that is, the estimated cost of her maintenance would be $5.00. For her mother, sister and herself, the estimated cost of maintenance would be $15 a week, but counting what Helen makes and what her sister makes in the very best weeks, the total income is $9.25. This means that the standard of the family in food, in clothing, in sundry necessities, is sinking below the point at which physical health can be maintained. Helen wants to work six days in the week; her employer has an option on her time which effectually prevents her earning anything on off days, and she is paid for two days' work.

Nora Baldwin is another of the younger girls, a round-cheeked, blackhaired, Irish-American child of fourteen. She looks at you out of her black eyes gravely, and although she smiles now and then, she takes life too seriously to laugh, for she is chief breadwinner of a family of eight. Her father used to keep a dairy, but a year ago he died. There are six children younger than Nora. One brother carries boxes in a factory; the mother sometimes gets a day's washing to do, and some of the children are in school, although there are still two or three babies at home.

The family lives on a winding alley 14 feet wide

with perhaps two feet of irregular brick and cobblestone pavement on each side. The lower part of the street is lined with stables and low shacks; toward the upper end are numerous disorderly resorts. For four tortuous, winding squares there is not a street light save the lamps on intersecting streets. And Nora gravely assumes responsibility for her place of residence. "Yes, I know it isn't a good street," she remarked, "but then we live near the corner, and I always go round the other way after dark. You see the rent is cheaper than we could get anywhere else, and we never allow the children to play on the street, and so long as they are little, it doesn't matter, but when they are older, we must move somewhere else, of course. I'm getting $3.00 now. That's an advance of 50 cents in six months. One saleslady in my department's getting $5.00, but all the rest are getting more, and before the children are grown I ought to be getting more, too, and then perhaps if my brother should earn a little more—you see he's younger than I am so he can't earn quite so much —why we'll be able to move to a better place."

Fifteen-year-old Jennie Cohen works at a notion counter. Her determined little brain is working with spools of thread and buttons as stepping stones toward a career. She began at twelve as a salesgirl, and after a year and a half earned $4.00 a week. Then her father became ill and could not work, and at the same time she, with half the girls in her department, was laid off

because of slackness. When she was sent for she was in a hospital with typhoid fever and it was eight months before she could return to work. "And after I went back they wouldn't give me but $3.00, although I had had two years' experience. They're awfully strict here and there isn't any chance for you, anyway. Miss Hattie over there is head of stock for perfumery and belts and she's been here fourteen years, but she only gets $5.50.

"My sister's a bookkeeper and she gets $10 a week, but I'm studying stenography. I go to night school three times a week and take a lesson before going home,—then I have the evening to study in. The school finds you a position when you finish. It's harder for me than for some of the others because I only went to the sixth grade in day school, so I have lots of English to study. We have all wanted my brother to go to City College, that was why I left to go to work, and if I can get a job as a stenographer I'll be sure to earn more than I do here, anyway."

Saleswomen who count their chances, and use what means lie at their disposal to push ahead, were occasionally met with. May Williamson has become a cloak and suit saleswoman at $15 a week. After she left public school, in the fourth grade, her first venture was in one of the smaller stores on South Broadway, but shortly afterwards she left the square about Fell's Market to take a position at $4.00 a week in a store uptown. A bright spot

among her varied memories of this place is the night when the girls presented a petition and won. The Saturday closing hour was 11:30 p. m., but the girls got up a petition to close at 10:30, and one of the foremen promised to take it to the manager; the floormen were as much interested as the girls, and whenever a girl was too scared to sign her name, they put it down anyway. Most of the girls did sign, however, and the manager consented. Not long after this episode, May married, but within a few months she left her husband and went to work again. She had found that her best course would be to learn some other branch of the trade, and in consequence she deliberately reduced herself from a first floor saleswoman to stock girl in the cloak and suit department of a small Lexington Street store. "There," she said, "I learned how to talk up to people, and not to get scared when they ask you if it's all wool, and to tell them *positively* that it *is* the style, and to have an air, you know, when you show things. First, I used just to hand out the suits and watch the other salesladies, but before long I was selling, too, for I was tall enough to be on the floor. I spoiled a foulard dress once," she added reminiscently; "the customer was stout, and I didn't know enough to see that the dress wasn't her size, so I tried to put it on her. It was a hot day and the dress got rather split. I was fortunate to be paid at all while I was learning, but after I learned, it was easy to get a better job somewhere else.

You can always make more if you leave and go to another firm. Your own firm won't raise you because they think they've got you. I've changed several times and I've always made it count for me."

Acquiescence, however, is more usual. A saleswoman hears a rumor that a store next to hers or in another street pays better than the one where she is employed, but she seldom puts these rumors to the test. She reflects on the difficulties of securing employment and she stays. Her judgment about stores other than her own is usually worthless. She has no standard in judging conditions even in her own store. She has the vaguest impressions about any other, and a single incident repeated to her through a series of friends is enough to convince her that "over there they treat you mean and you haven't got any chance at all."

Minnie Schaefer is a girl who has stayed. She is nineteen years old and has a frank, strong face which wins your confidence. Her father earns $18 a week on the street cleaning force, but out of his pay he provides his horse and wagon and all his equipment. Her mother and her older sister, who is an invalid, are at home. Minnie has been at work three years. She went through public school and then stayed home a while before going to work as wrapper in a Lexington Street store at $2.50 a week. She was raised to $3.00 before long, but "the girls were tough," she said,

"and when the manager came around he used to shout at us like we were dogs; you'd have thought we weren't white people even, and I was afraid to move." Six months later she became a cashier in another store at $2.50 a week. Since then she has been raised twice, her last raise being to $3.50. "We haven't so much time off as the sales people," she said, "yet Mr. X seems to try to take duties from the sales people and give them to us, and although he keeps us at cashiering, he won't raise us. Last summer he took on some little girls at $2.00 a week, but they weren't any good and he had to discharge them, so he keeps employing older girls and paying them the wages for little girls. Over there is a girl twenty years old and she's only getting $3.00 a week. You may think because I live at home that I don't need so much, but they need what I can give them since Margaret isn't earning anything, and there's mighty little left after clothes and carfare are paid for. Just carfare and lunches cost 75 cents to $1.00 a week, and clothes cost pretty near $2.00. I have to spend so much for shoes, and the dust wears out your waists very fast; sometimes your waists get so dusty from the stock that you have to have a fresh one every day. I give in at home all that I have left. It's no more than 50 cents to a $1.00 some weeks, and that isn't enough to pay for your food. You have to think of this when you're trying to live on what you make. If I thought I could do any better, I'd throw up my job to-

morrow, but cashiers don't get much and I've never had the chance to learn to sell."

These are some of the girls, each one typical of many more whose lives and ways of thinking have run in the same channels. Unlike many of their co-workers, they are girls of some intelligence, some thoughtfulness, some ability to observe accurately and clearly, although not always of strong judgment. They are superior in personal qualities to the irresponsible and inefficient among their fellow employes. They understand their problem sufficiently well to state it. That, possessing these personal qualities, they should still find it so insoluble implies for saleswomen as a whole a far less degree of economic self-dependence than they have been given credit for by the community.

CHAPTER XI

TRAINING IN SALESMANSHIP*

HOW saleswomen are to become self-dependent is a social problem of grave import. Preceding chapters have shown that a majority of the women employes are in fact earning less than the cost of their maintenance, and that possible marriage, inability to bargain, and assistance received from their families, in part explain this condition. In part, however, the reason is to be found in the inefficiency of the saleswomen themselves.

The occupation of selling is supposed to require neither training nor experience. It seems an easy way to fill in the years which succeed public school and to be the simplest avenue of employment open to unskilled workers. The learning of details is left to chance. Saleswomen who have been long with the house show the newcomer where stock is kept, and if kindly disposed, give her suggestions as to the peculiarities of buyers.

*Since this study was written supplementary information has been obtained upon some of the subjects discussed in this chapter,—especially with reference to classes in salesmanship for women in mercantile establishments and educational institutions. Various features of the work of salesmanship classes are dealt with in footnotes in this chapter and in Appendices B and C.—EDITOR.

Some one tells her the custom as regards sales checks and other records, and with this preliminary information she is prepared to represent her employer to his clientele. Her time is occupied by her duties as 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 is 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 is in reality a "counter-server."

This does not refer to saleswomen notably careless and inattentive. Floor walkers and department managers try to eliminate such employes, and to arouse a feeling of loyalty and conscientious service. Persistent carelessness results in dismissal. Inadequate service is a more difficult matter with which to deal. If a girl is evidently 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 information about the stock; that, in other words, she might be an expert instead of a mere counter attendant.

But how is this expert knowledge to be obtained? How is the saleswoman to learn to recognize types of personalities, to grasp what

points make the strongest appeal to each type of buyer; 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 to interest, and finally fix the decision to buy? The use of her own personality as a business asset must also be learned.

Nothing in the past experience of most saleswomen can give them a clue as to the "how." Few have bought extensively, and few have had an environment which would make them judges of quality. Since the saleswoman cannot rely upon her own judgment for ability to give expert advice, who is there to teach her? Her co-workers are not competent, floor managers are not competent, the department buyers are too busy. As to means of understanding her customer, she is still more hopelessly without source of instruction. She continues to do her best, but her best is ineffective.

Not only saleswomen but customers and merchants suffer from this state of things. Customers are frequently repelled by the seeming stupidity of sales people, and merchants are constantly annoyed by the inefficiency of their force. A beginning toward stemming this tide of unsatisfactory service, however, has already been made throughout the country by stores of more advanced management. Some efforts are tentative and irregular, but others are on a more permanent basis. Instruction is given, among other

subjects, in certain English branches, in cash systems, in the knowledge of textiles, and in the art of selling special merchandise, as well as in efficiency and conduct.* This instruction is in the form of regular class work conducted by lecturers or teachers engaged for the purpose, or in that of talks given by the store superintendent, the department manager, or the social secretary.† Much of the instruction is designed primarily to inform the younger members of the force about the policies, systems, or merchandise of the particular stores, but there is a tendency to make it of broader range and to correlate the work with the development of the pupils whose schooling has, in most cases, been inadequate and whose personal equipment is meager. But well organized as the work

* The Wanamaker stores in Philadelphia for seventeen years and in New York for two years have conducted regular graded classes for the younger members of the force. These are compulsory and are held twice a week from 8:30 to 10 a. m. for girls and junior boys, and in the evening from 6:30 to 9:30 for senior boys. An adapted course of study in English branches, commercial geography, ethics, and knowledge of business forms, is pursued with regular text books under the guidance of experienced public school teachers. The school began in Philadelphia with a class in arithmetic designed to supplement the ignorance of the boys in addition, subtraction, and the writing of figures, and has now developed in that city into what is called the John Wanamaker Mercantile Institute. An evolution of this body is the American University of Applied Commerce and Trade, recently organized in the Philadelphia store and chartered by the state of Pennsylvania.

† Hutzler Brothers and Company of Baltimore have recently engaged a teacher to conduct salesmanship classes in their store. These classes meet twice a day, in the early morning and in the less busy hours of the afternoon; they consist of 15 girls at a session and the period of instruction varies for the different departments. The aim of this work is to develop efficiency in selling; and through better service to customers, a resulting benefit to the sales people in larger sales and therefore more salary.

may be in some establishments, as a rule it lacks an educational basis and well thought out methods. What saleswomen need is training for their particular occupation based upon the principles of applied psychology. Valuable as is instruction in the elementary English branches for the young, and important as are the superintendent's talks on conduct and loyalty for the establishment of right feeling toward the work in all the employes, these efforts represent only the germ of vocational training.

The problem of better equipment for saleswomen is receiving the attention, however, not only of the merchants who require better store organization and more efficient public service, but of students of social betterment and of philanthropists who wish to see working women in a position of greater industrial security, and here and there of schoolmen who wish to adapt public education to the industrial needs of the people.* These are encouraging signs, but the movement lacks the general support of public interest and of

* Salesmanship training for boys has long been taught in the continuation schools in Munich, and similar classes for girls are said to be under advisement. In this country the subject is already receiving attention from school officials. The Superintendent of Schools in Cincinnati has sent a woman who has had much experience in the stores in that city to be trained in the Salesmanship School of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in Boston. Pupils in the day classes to be opened in the public schools in Cincinnati will be actually employed for half a day in the department stores there. Providence, Rhode Island, is also contemplating the introduction of part time salesmanship classes into the public schools. The merchants of the large department stores there are heartily in favor of the attendance of their employes at such classes.

many of the merchants. Whether the three classes referred to will be able to agree upon a system of instruction that shall be mutually satisfactory and be based upon broad, practical, and permanent lines, is yet to be seen. Under what auspices, public or private, joint or separate, the work shall be carried on, is still unsettled. Nor will anyone assert that experiments now being made are final. But it is hoped that the present pioneer work may be a preparation for more comprehensive organization later and that the experience of today will prove to be the foundation of a permanent system for the future. In view of these statements it may be of interest here to give in some detail the history of the salesmanship classes in Boston.

The Boston experiment was begun in the fall of 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 practice selling in the food salesroom and in the handwork shop of the Union, but after their three months' course those who found store positions had to begin as stock or cash girls. In January, 1906, when the second class was started, the co-operation of one store was secured. The Union class was allowed to sell in this store on Mondays for the experience gained and for a small

* The Women's Educational and Industrial Union is situated at 264 Boylston Street. It is an exchange depot for women's work and in addition conducts a bureau of research and other activities in the interests of working women.

compensation, and the firm expressed a willingness to consider promising pupils as candidates for positions in their store. As the school still had nothing definite to offer its pupils, it failed to attract the type of girl most wanted by the stores.

More co-operation with the stores was necessary. The plan of the course was explained to several merchants and the co-operation of five leading stores* was obtained to the extent that the superintendents formed an advisory committee, meeting once a month for conference with the president of the Union and the director of the class.

The following early account of the school written by the director gives some significant facts: "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 $1.00 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." † On this basis a class of 16

* Jordan Marsh Company, Gilchrist Company, Wm. Filene's Sons Company, James A. Houston Company, and R. H. White Company. These merchants now contribute toward the financial support of the school.

† Federation Bulletin, Women's Educational and Industrial Union. Boston, February, 1908. Training for Saleswomen, by Lucinda W. Prince.

pupils was 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 a. m. and from 4:30 to 5:30 p. m. 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 $3.00 a week.

When the class opened in February, 1907, there were nearly 100 applicants, from which the school selected 21, 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 advancing steadily, and has been directed on lines suggested by the German continuation schools. Mrs. Prince thus describes the more recent changes: "At first, the stores paid the girls $3.00 a week for half time, but since 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.

"Those chosen are usually saleswomen from bargain counters or girls 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 $5.00 to $8.00, but at the end of a course a graduate is guaranteed $6.00 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 a. m.; 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 p. m. My plan with the class is to take one big subject every day; all lectures are revised orally and the girls write all significant points in note books."*

A significant fact about the work of the school is that it rests upon the principles of sound pedagogy. It includes instruction not only in the theory and practice of selling but also in subjects which broaden the mind and develop the character. Thirty students, all that can be accommodated, now attend the school, and its graduates number 300. The increasing recognition of merchants, even of those who at first were most skeptical, of the value of the training, has created a demand upon the school for teachers and welfare workers not only from the stores in Boston but from those in other cities. With this demand in view, and

* For a comprehensive description of the work of the school and for a statement of the educational principles upon which it is based, see Appendix B, page 187; What the Schools Can Do to Train Girls for Work in Department Stores, by Lucinda W. Prince. From Bulletin 13, Proceedings of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, New York, 1911.

realizing that teachers* are the crying need of the work at present, the Union has undertaken a normal course of instruction.† The course includes practical experience in selling, the details of store organization, and knowledge of commercial values of stock and mercantile procedures. Lectures on economics will be given in connection with Simmons College.

The experiment in New York, which has undergone many changes, cannot be said to have weathered its vicissitudes or to have reached a satisfactory stage. Industrial and social conditions are so complex in this city that a new educational idea requires a good deal of trying out before it can be put on a permanent basis. The beginning of the experiment in the fall of 1908 was due chiefly to the efforts of Mrs. Anna Garlin Spencer, who persuaded the Board of Education to introduce

* At the request of five of the leading department stores of Providence, Rhode Island, Mrs. Prince, in the early months of 1910, trained a teacher for a school of salesmanship in that city. So successful was the work and so enthusiastic was the recognition of it at the public graduation exercises, at which the mayor of the city was present, that the way was paved for consideration of the introduction of vocational and industrial part-time training for girls into the city school system. The teacher of these classes in the salesmanship school has since been called to conduct similar ones in the store of Marshall Field, Chicago, Illinois.

† The class this year has contained one Smith, one Radcliffe, and two Wellesley graduates. While the Director considers an educational background essential to a teacher's real success in this work she has been willing at the request of the merchants to train women employes to do special work in three department stores in Boston; and when she was on a visit to California in 1909, at the request of Mr. O. W. Hale, she gave a month to preparing one of his employes for teaching and to the organizing of salesmanship classes in his San Francisco stores. For an account of the work still being carried on there, see Appendix C, p. 200.

a class in salesmanship into one of the public night high schools, and to Miss Diana Hirschler, formerly welfare secretary in Wm. Filene's Sons Company of Boston, who conducted the class.

The course was intended primarily for saleswomen already occupying positions. Two-hour sessions were held, at first on four evenings a week and later on two evenings, during the school terms from October to April. The work consisted of oral and written lessons in elementary English and arithmetic, and of talks on fabrics, store organization, the art of salesmanship, and related subjects given by the director of the class and by some of the superintendents and merchants of the New York stores.

It was perhaps expecting a good deal that girls tired by work should attend classes on subjects that had occupied their minds through the day. That a number did attend shows the appeal such instruction made to them. At the end of the term, however, the course was discontinued, and at this time no public classes for girls are being conducted in New York, though several correspondence schools * exist for the purpose of teaching certain branches of the mercantile business. Some of the larger stores give special instruction of one kind or another to their employes. These classes are under the auspices of the merchants and for the benefit of their own employes who alone attend them. They vary in the character of the in-

* One of these is conducted by Miss Hirschler.

struction given and in the relation of the teacher to the store. Sometimes the welfare secretary or the store superintendent is the teacher; sometimes an outsider is engaged by the firm to give a course on a special subject. If the latter is the case, the expenses of the class are met by the employer.

While it is to be regretted that no public classes are open in New York to the general body of saleswomen, and while vocational training in salesmanship must still be considered in an empirical stage, the movement that is taking place here and there throughout the country, the interest of the Boston merchants in the work of the salesmanship school in that city, the demand for teachers able to conduct these classes together with the attention of educators interested in the industrial equipment of the young wage-earner, seem to indicate the possible transition of retail selling for women from an unskilled occupation to a trade. Moreover, the time is approaching when the development of the sales force must keep pace with the specialization of the industry, and the efficient service which workers trained to alert thinking and accurate judgment are able to give may in time compel such recognition that instruction of this kind shall no longer be left to the faith and courage of private enterprise but be incorporated into the public school system of large cities.

Should such training become general the effect

on saleswomen* would be twofold: personal and economic. The younger employes in mercantile houses, although of working age, have not reached physical or mental maturity. At present, few have even gone through school; they have felt that further study would not bring them better pay. As a rule, their entrance, untaught, into an unskilled occupation does not stimulate mental development. They grow unconsciously into routine ways, acquiring perhaps some shrewd judgment as to "what you have to do to get on." On the whole, however, their work tends to stultify rather than to develop them. This is not the fault of the work. It is the result of the employe's failure to understand the significance of it; for the ability to sell goods, through correlation with ability in other directions, may become really developmental. This idea was well expressed by Mr. Edwards,† secretary of the Committee on Industrial Development of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, in an address given last autumn before the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education. "The work of selling may be mechanical, lacking in life and snap, and too often is. But the possibilities for really constructive work by a well intentioned, ambitious, and properly

* For the girls' estimate of the value of such training see letters from former pupils in the Union School, Boston, in Appendix B.

† Edwards, D. F.: The Department Stores. Proceedings National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education. Bulletin 13, New York, 1910. Mr. Edwards was formerly social and educational director of the store of Wm. Filene's Sons Company, Boston.

trained sales person are very great. Good salesmanship is by no means a simple, rudimentary thing which anyone can perform. It is a compound of some science and more art. The science can be taught in the form of certain rules and principles. The art can be developed through experience wisely supervised and interpreted."

That this adapted industrial instruction will have a beneficial effect upon the economic status of saleswomen is also undoubtedly true. The selling cost of a department is calculated at a percentage of the total sales, usually at 5 per cent. The amount represented by this percentage is apportioned in wages. If, while the volume of business remains stationary the number of employes must be increased, this means a net loss to all, whereas were the number decreased by the ability of those in charge of the department, this change would mean a net gain to all. It is often true that low as an employe's wages are, she is not worth to her employer the amount she is paid.

"Whatever may be said to the contrary, wages usually conform pretty closely to the efficiency of the work done. With competition and the tendencies of the business forcing the big retailer to offer the public the best possible service, it is reasonable to assume that he will pay larger wages to more efficient employes who can render that service." In conclusion, Mr. Edwards states as his conviction that, "Any agency that aims to train systematically and on a considerable scale

for the work of department stores will in the end exert an appreciable influence upon wage standards."

The lack of economic value of the large body of retail saleswomen in the competitive market, as has been said, has acted with personal and social causes to keep the rate of their wages low. Were they given greater economic value by trade training, one prime cause for the present level of their wages would be removed. Nor is this all that would be accomplished. While the unskilled worker makes no effort to change her position, accepting what she deems injustices because she cannot make better terms for herself, the trained worker, because she has confidence in herself, refuses to submit to oppressive exactions and seeks newer and even wider fields of responsibility. The example of her self-reliance is of benefit to her comrades, and her loyalty, because it is not the loyalty of fear but of decision, is of benefit to the firm to which she gives it; while her consciousness of efficiency is a source of courage and of joy to herself.

APPENDIX A

CARDS USED IN THE INVESTIGATION

Mercantile Houses Name

I.—DESCRIPTION

a. Name

b. Location

c. No. of Floors

1. Which used for Salesrooms

2. Which used for supplemental workrooms

(a) Millinery workroom Location

(b) Alteration room

(c) Drapery workroom

(d) Kitchen

(e) Laundry

(f) Others—Specify

Mercantile Houses Name

II.—PHYSICAL CONDITIONS IN STORES

a. Store plan

1st Floor

Basement

Upper Floors

b. Counter space

Aisle counters

Enclosed Unenclosed

Mercantile Houses **Name**

II.—PHYSICAL CONDITIONS IN STORES—(Continued)

c. Seats. Basement No. Arrangement

1st Fl. No. Arrangement

Upper fls.

d. Toilet rooms. No. Location

Rules

e. Cloak room. Size Location

Care

f. Rest room. Size Location

Equipment

g. Lunch room. Size Seating capacity Location

Equipment

Lunch service

Mercantile Houses — Name

III.—NO. OF EMPLOYES

a.	Total		
	1. Max. Dai.	Sat.	Period
	2. Min. Dai.	Sat.	Period
	3. Norm. Dai.	Sat.	Period
b.	Men		
	1. Max. Dai.	Sat.	Period
	2. Min. Dai.	Sat.	Period
	3. Norm. Dai.	Sat.	Period
c.	Women		
	1. Max. Dai.	Sat.	Period
	2. Min. Dai.	Sat.	Period
	3. Norm. Dai.	Sat.	Period

Mercantile Houses — Name

IV.—OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYES

a. Men

1. Cash | 2. Delivery, Max. | Norm.

3. Porters | 4. Drivers, Max. | Norm.

5. Clerks | 6. Salesmen | 7. Heads of Stock

8. Floorwalkers | 9. Buyers | 10. Other

b. Women

1. Cash | 2. Stock | 3. Wrapper

4. Saleswomen, Max. | Min. | Norm.

5. Heads of stock | 6. Buyers | 7. Cashiers

8. Milliners | When Employed | 9. Alteration hands | When emp.

10. Drapery operators | When emp.

11. Kitchen helpers | 12. Laundry workers

13. Other

Mercantile Houses — Name

V.—HOURS OF WORK

a. Daily — Saturdays

Oct. 1st to Dec. 15th — Depts.

Dec. 15th to Dec. 25th — Depts.

Shifts

Jan. and Feb. stock-taking — Duration — Depts.

b. Lunch period — Dec. 15th to 25th

Supper period — Dec. 15th to 25th

c. Sunday work

d. Holidays

e. Vacations

With pay — Duration — Depts.

Mercantile Houses **Name**

V.—HOURS OF WORK—(Continued)

f. Irregularity of employment

Mercantile Houses

Name

VI.—WAGES OF WOMEN EMPLOYES

a. Weekly

	1. Cash girl	max.	min.	maj.
	2. Stock girl	max.	min.	maj.
	3. Wrapper	max.	min.	maj.
	4. Sales girl	max.	min.	maj.
	5. Head of stock	max.	min.	maj.
	6. Buyer	max.	min.	maj.
	7. Cashier	max.	min.	maj.
	8. Milliner	max.	min.	maj.
	9. Alteration hand	max.	min.	maj.
	10. Drapery operative	max.	min.	maj.
	11. Kitchen hand	max.	min.	maj.
	12. Laundry worker	max.	min.	maj.
	13. Other	max.	min.	maj.

Mercantile Houses Name

VI.—WAGES OF WOMEN EMPLOYES—(Continued)

b. Irregular. 1. Overtime pay. (a) Supper money Amt.

When given

(b) Proportionate rate When given

2. Bonus Amt. Depts.

When given

3. Premium Percentage When given

4. Percentage allowed on purchases Use made of

5. Free or cheap lunch

6. Fines Specified a.

b.

c. Incidence

Disciplinary Incidence

Mercantile Houses — Name

VII. WELFARE AND SELF HELP

a. Welfare Secretary — Duties

Location of Office

b. Trade or house benefit ass'ns.

1. Employer's contribution

2. Dues of Employes

3. Sick benefit

4. Death benefit — 5. How administered

6. Control by firm

7. Control by employes

Mercantile Houses — Name

VIII. GENERAL

a. Nationality of employes 1. American

2. Hebrew 3. Slavonian

4. Teutonic 5. Other

b. Home environment 1. Living with family

(a) Sole bread-winners (b) Other bread-winners

2. Boarding away from home

c. Previous training of saleswomen 1. Public or parochial school

2. Manual training

3. Commercial training

4. Specific training for salesmanship

APPENDIX B

SALESMANSHIP INSTRUCTION IN BOSTON

WHAT THE SCHOOLS CAN DO TO TRAIN GIRLS FOR WORK IN DEPARTMENT STORES*

MRS. LUCINDA W. PRINCE
Director of Union School of Salesmanship
Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Boston, Mass.

In considering what the schools can do to train girls for department stores, it will perhaps be most practical to describe first how one school of salesmanship has been carried on as a continuation school during the last five years. It should be clear from the beginning that the function of the best continuation schools is twofold: to prepare pupils for citizenship in the broadest sense and to increase their skill and adaptability in bread-winning occupations.

This pioneer work has been so evolutionary in character that a brief historical outline is necessary for the understanding of the organization and work of the present class. In the fall of 1905, the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, because of its special interest in industrial training, started a class in salesmanship. In the beginning, the school was conducted without connection with any business house. The first year's experience showed that as the school had nothing

*An address given in Boston, November 17, 1910, before the Fourth Annual Meeting of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education. Printed by permission of the Society.

definite to offer its pupils, it failed to attract the type of girl wanted in the stores. The interest of the stores was next secured by personal investigation, and five Boston firms agreed to allow pupils one day a week in the stores. One dollar was paid for this service. It was soon seen that the store connection was a very vital part of the upbuilding of a school of salesmanship. Many important questions were continually coming up and as these questions were connected with store as well as school, an advisory committee of the superintendents of the five stores was formed to discuss and decide all important changes of policy. This committee agreed to allow the girls half time in the store and half time in the school, giving them three dollars a week for this half time work. This forward step was accepted with faith that the increased efficiency of the trained workers would bring still better conditions. Two years ago this fall, the advisory committee suggested giving the girls full pay and allowing them three hours a day for three months of training if the director would select the girls from the stores interested. This arrangement, making the school a true continuation school, is the present one. At the end of the three months, if the girl's work is satisfactory, she is given the initial wage of six dollars and guaranteed a permanent position.

In general, the aim of the course in salesmanship is to develop those qualities which will enable the pupils to succeed as saleswomen. What those qualities are was determined by personal investigation of the needs of the average untrained sales girls in stores and by conference with superintendents as to qualifications essential to success. As a result, the first general aim resolved itself into a fourfold, more definite aim and

the subjects taught as the natural outcome were selected on the following basis:

(1) To develop a wholesome, attractive personality: hygiene (especially personal hygiene): this includes study of daily menus for saleswomen, ventilation, bathing, sleep, exercise, recreation.

(2) To give familiarity with the general system of stores: sales practice, store directory, business arithmetic, business forms and cash account, lectures.

(3) To increase knowledge of stock: color, design, textiles.

(4) To teach selling as a science: discussion of store experiences, talks on salesmanship such as "Attitude to Firm, Customer and Fellow-Employe," demonstration of selling in the class, salesmanship lectures.

The note-book work required gives material for English, including spelling, punctuation and penmanship. Demonstration of selling in the class is conducted like the teaching lessons in normal schools. Real customers, chosen because they represent different types, buy real articles. The sale is watched by the whole class, notes being taken of strong and weak points. When the sale is finished, the one who has made the sale is allowed to criticize her own work, then the class criticizes, the customer tells why she did or did not buy the article, and the whole is summed up by the director. These demonstrations, the discussions of store experience, observations in other stores, and actual selling with *thought*, awaken the class to the difference between handing goods over the counter and really serving the customer. What Professor Palmer calls an "aptitude for vicariousness" is as essential for the successful saleswoman as for the successful teacher.

As far as possible, the class work is correlated; the drawing is a store plan, a design for a costume; spelling is studied in names and addresses, and in store English (and French); when the girls are sent to the stores for samples, exercises in salesmanship, color, design and textiles are involved. When the subject of the textile study is wool, one of the store lectures at that time is on wool or woolen goods. Practical talks by representatives of the firms interested, experienced sales people, buyers and superintendents are given twice a week to the class on such subjects as, "The Department Store's System and the Saleswoman's Place in It," "How to Show Goods," "Trifles," "Service to Customer." The class also has lectures on Vocational Training, Food, Tuberculosis, The Meaning of Wages, and other subjects of vital interest. Three of the most helpful talks are given by customers. The Art Museum is visited, lectures being given there on textiles, designs and costumes. Spinning and weaving are made clear by a morning at a woolen mill.

Most essential to the success of the school is the co-operation of the stores. Lectures from floor managers, buyers, superintendents, are of the greatest value not only for the business principles which they emphasize but also as evidence to the girls that these men believe in the training. The superintendents also give much time to careful and frequent reports on the pupils' store records. Most important of all is the spirit of the store representatives, which in most cases, has changed in these five years from scepticism to interested support. It will be readily understood that such co-operation can be lastingly and fairly won only by a careful study of the store needs.

It is of interest, perhaps, that many visitors of the school have been business men who have tested its worth from their standpoint. Demands for teachers have come from seven different cities. Schools have been established by the director in San Francisco and Providence and in both cases the business men have taken the initiative and been eager to co-operate with the director in interesting the public school authorities in the plan for a public continuation school for the training of saleswomen. Such a system of public education is the only way to reach all and to give all the same chance.

Now that progressive business men and educators endorse and desire vocational training for boys and girls who leave school at fourteen, teachers must be trained for this work. The Women's Educational and Industrial Union offers a training course for teachers of salesmanship. The theory and practice of teaching are taught at the Union; a course in economics is offered by Simmons College. At one of the meetings of the conference on Vocational Guidance, a speaker emphasized the fact that vocational guidance without placement was a one-legged affair. Teaching salesmanship without store experience is equally one-legged. The teacher of salesmanship must have an academic leg and a business leg, for the one leg, serviceable though it may be, will not carry her far. The store managers think that the woman with years of store experience is the one to teach salesmanship while the school committee believe that a grade teacher is required. Every teacher trained by the Union is required to get actual store experience in order that she may handle salesmanship problems intelligently. Among the higher-salaried

employes of the department stores are many women well versed in the store end of salesmanship who might not *teach* successfully. On the other hand, our normal schools turn out excellent teachers, but they are teachers with no comprehension of the principles and work of a department store. No business man, no sales girl, will have confidence in a teacher who is not thoroughly acquainted with store system, and no person can expect to succeed in educational work who does not understand teaching. The teacher of salesmanship, therefore, must combine business, or more specifically, department store experience, with teaching ability and a vision of the big social significance of the work, never forgetting that the girl must be trained first for life and then for salesmanship, or whatever other vocation she may enter.

In vocational training, there are great opportunities for social education. A striking result of the Munich system of continuation schools is the growth of "esprit de corps" in each vocation. We may certainly look forward to a like result when we have carried vocational training far enough.

The work of the Union School of Salesmanship as it is now organized, takes three hours a day for three months. A wiser and better plan for all such schools would be a compulsory course continued over a longer period of time. From a study of such work for boys in Munich, where it is so wonderfully organized, and also from experience in the Union's work, the director is convinced that six hours' instruction a week for a period of two years would give more lasting results. According to this plan, the first year's work would consist of elementary or preparatory study for a second year

of advanced work. This may seem a great deal to ask of employers of labor, but in Munich the business people and employers in general no longer complain about the compulsory continuation schools, and those few who feel it a burden, think it is one that should be borne.

It has been justly said that as things stand at present, "the years between fourteen and seventeen are the points of educational leakage." We have built up at immense expense an elaborate system of elementary education the work of which is almost wholly confined to children under fourteen. We have also constructed an extensive and costly system of technical education the work of which is for the most part confined to young people over seventeen. Much remains to be done in filling in the gap. Compulsory continuation schools are needed right here, especially for the rank and file, for those who must go to work, who dislike to study, and who in all cases need the discipline of compulsory education continued with work. The very boys and girls who are keenest for all good things are also keenest for things evil. If the public investment for them up to the age of fourteen is to make good, the schools must hold on to them during the next two or three years. Education in its highest sense means "awakening." The vital connection of education and work awakens new interest in both, changing heavy, mechanical motions, joyless, unthinking indifference, to joyful activity of mind, soul and body.

QUERIES TO STORE SUPERINTENDENTS*

Will ..... please answer the following questions in regard to Miss ..... considering her work when she entered the Salesmanship Class in comparison with that she is now doing.

1. Is her personality more interesting and attractive since she entered the school?
2. Does she comprehend and apply the store system and store rules more exactly?
3. Does she make out her sales slips more accurately, distinctly, rapidly?
4. Has she developed power of initiative during the training?
5. Does she keep her stock well,—neatly, attractively and with full lines?
6. Does she know her stock,—what she has and how to talk about it,—advertised goods, lines in competing stores, etc.?
7. Has she an easy manner with all types of customers? If not, what particular type does it seem hard for her to approach?
8. Is she energetic and business-like in her work and attitude?

*Questions sent by the Director of the School of Salesmanship of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Boston, to store superintendents after pupils have attended the school for six weeks. Printed by permission of the School.

9. Is she more willing to work anywhere in the store whenever need arises?
10. Suggestions: Please note here any special points which need emphasis during the final weeks of training.

Signature .....

Date .....

EXAMINATIONS FOR SALESMANSHIP CLASSES*

Examination in Textiles

1. Describe in detail a single raw fibre of each of the four textiles studied. What advantage for manufacture has each?
2. How do woolens and worsteds differ in raw material, treatment, and finished product? Give 2 examples of each.
3. a. Name three *hair-bearing* animals and the textile material made from their hair.
   b. Name three vegetable fibres and one material made from each.
4. Give all the tests you know for a good piece of cotton sheeting, dress linen, broadcloth, taffeta.
5. Which of the four principal textile fibres are raised but little in this country? Why?
6. What is meant by "natural color" in linen and silk? Give two examples of natural colored silk and one of natural colored linen.
7. a. Compare cotton and linen as to durability, cost, beauty.
   b. What is meant by warp, plain weave, sizing, live fleece wool, spun silk?

*Examinations given in December, 1910, to the pupils of the School of Salesmanship, Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Boston.

8. Where is the greatest amount of the raw material of cotton produced?
   Where is the greatest amount of the raw material of wool produced?
   Where is the greatest amount of the raw material of silk produced?
   Where is the greatest amount of the raw material of linen produced?
   Where is wool raised in the United States?
   Where is wool manufactured in the United States?
9. Tell all you can about the "boiling off" process in the manufacture of silk and the "weighting" which usually follows it.
10. Name materials, class of fibre (animal or vegetable), and give talking points of samples in the envelope.

Examination in Salesmanship

1. a. State ten cases in which it is necessary to have the signature of the floor manager.
   b. What is the purpose of the sales slip?
2. Suggest three ways of finding out the price a customer is willing to pay?
3. a. Describe in detail an interesting sale which you have either made or lost lately, and tell why you think it resulted as it did.
   b. Analyze the sale.
4. Name at least three things you can do to save time in making a sale.
5. If you have a customer who has always worn a certain type of suit quite out-of-date, how are you going to sell her an up-to-date suit and make her feel satisfied after she has it at home?
6. Give four reasons why a firm reduces the price of merchandise.
7. Give an outline showing how some article from your own stock is handled from the time it reaches the receiving room until it is delivered to the customer.

8. What do you mean by selling or talking points? Give at least five talking points, and if possible more, of the following:
   a. an article from the stock you are now selling.
   b. an apron used in the demonstration sales.
   c. a bureau scarf from the handwork shop.
9. Name ten principles of good salesmanship which you have learned from the demonstration sales.
10. What do you consider the greatest need in your department and why? What can you do about it?

LETTERS FROM GRADUATES OF SALESMANSHIP CLASSES*

MISS K, GRADUATE OF 1908.—In reply to your request regarding the benefits I derived from the training in the Salesmanship School, I would say that the course instilled in me a deep and genuine interest in my work. It made me realize that it is the duty of every saleswoman by courtesy and tact to please and thoroughly satisfy her customer, thereby doing her part to make a regular customer for the house.

The lectures by the different superintendents on courtesy, care of stock, salesmanship in general, etc., helped and interested me. They gave me confidence in myself, and the goods I was selling, proving to me that honest goods could be sold by honest methods.

The lecturers dwelt on the importance of knowing your stock from the raw material to the finished product, so when asked a question you might be able to answer intelligently and correctly. We were impressed with the fact that it was not how long you talked on the merits of your goods, but

* Letters from three saleswomen who attended the School of Salesmanship, to the Superintendent of the Jordan Marsh Company, Boston, Mass. Printed by kind permission of the Jordan Marsh Company.

it was your ability, your tact in helping your customer to decide on what was suited to her particular needs.

Knowing your stock well, and talking intelligently of your goods, you can meet a customer more than half way, and oftentimes influence her to purchase more than she had originally intended to buy.

Last, but not least, the training filled me with ambition. At the end of the course, I had a fixed purpose in working, that is, a strong determination to do the best that was in me, and by perseverance and hard work advance myself to a better position.

In closing, I would say I am very grateful to you, Mr. H———, for permitting me to attend the Salesmanship School, and in the future, as in the past, I will do my best to be a credit to the school and those interested in me.

MISS C, GRADUATE OF 1908.—When you first suggested my going to the School of Salesmanship, I did not see how a school of this kind would be as beneficial to me as the practical experience in the store.

After three months in the school, I can see that it has given me confidence in myself, created a desire to sell goods, and instructed me how to handle the different types of customers which is the great secret in Salesmanship.

I think the demonstration sales are a great feature of the course. By this method the students have an opportunity of seeing how a sale may be lost and how one may be gained.

MISS D, GRADUATE OF 1910.—In reply to your request asking that I give you some idea of the benefit I received from the course in Salesmanship, I would say that if I should undertake to write all of the benefit I received from the course, it would take you some time to read it. Therefore, I shall try to be as brief as possible and tell you of the special things that I think helped me.

In the first place, I had had only a few weeks' experience in selling when I entered the school. I was timid and back-

ward. I dreaded to wait on the customers because I did not understand them. I did not have any confidence in myself for, like hundreds of others, I lacked training. I thought it would take years for me to learn to sell and talk to customers as I saw others do. After I had been in the school a few weeks, I realized that it was training I lacked. The one special thing that the school did for me was to teach me to read human nature, to study people, to study my customers. Before going to the school, I served all the customers the same, but I soon found that I was in the wrong. The school taught me that there were different types of customers and that there was a way to approach each one and a way to serve each one, to make each feel as if you enjoyed serving him and that it was a great pleasure. I consider this an important thing in selling, and I think there are people that have been selling for years, who have failed to learn it.

Another thing the school impressed on me was attention to small things, that the small things are stepping stones to higher things, that a little tact in serving a customer, being pleasant in some little way, would cause that customer to return to the same place to make her next purchase. Therefore you gain a customer for the store.

I find, after completing the course, I am better fitted in every way for selling and that I learned things in a few weeks that it would have taken me years to learn without training.

I appreciate your sending me to the school and I shall try and show my appreciation by giving to my employer the best service I am able to render.

APPENDIX C

SALESMANSHIP CLASSES IN THE STORE OF HALE BROTHERS, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA*

Realizing that effort to better the relations between employes and employers means progress along right lines, and must have its wholesome effect upon an entire organization, and appreciating that faithful service by employes demands recognition beyond the salaries paid them, we have, for a number of years, stood committed to a welfare policy which includes all employes from cash boys and girls to the oldest members in the business. The work embraces opportunities for mental training, the supplying of wholesome surroundings, pleasant associations, and provision for physical comforts.

We have been conducting our business on the eight-hour day basis since 1902, except for a few days previous to Christmas when we stay open evenings. For some time we were the only store in the United States, so far as we could ascertain, maintaining an eight-hour work day, or a forty-eight-hour week. We cannot find that the eight-hour day has reduced either our sales or our net profits, while on the other hand we do find that the shorter day has resulted in better health for our employes.

Our first elementary class was formed in 1896, with the idea of giving to our cash boys and girls instruc-

*Statement made by a member of the firm.

tion in the common school branches which they had missed by being compelled at an early age to leave school for the purpose of earning their living, and which they would probably never obtain later in life.

Feeling our way gradually in this new phase of business life, and having faith in its ultimate success, the work was increased and enlarged, until at the present time students are given the equivalent of a night grammar school education. All employes under sixteen years of age, and some older ones, are compelled to attend the classes unless they show credentials proving that they have had a satisfactory equivalent of the work we give. Classes are held during the morning hours, under a competent teacher, and in a modern school room. The children are supplied free with books and materials, and are given a regular elementary school course, emphasis being laid upon the studies which will be of the greatest practical benefit in their business career.

Continued employment and promotion in the store depend upon a pupil's standing in these classes, and after graduation from them upon attendance in the public night schools. The most satisfactory evidence we have of the quality of the work done in our course is the announcement made two years ago by the Superintendent of Public Schools of San Francisco, that our graduation diplomas would entitle holders to enter the public night high schools without further examination.

Mothers of our pupils have taken an active interest in the work and have often expressed appreciation that their children could get an education without going to night school when they were tired and should be at

home resting instead of studying. In several instances parents have endeavored to get their boys and girls positions in the store because of the educational features provided.

The Class of Advanced Salesmanship was started in 1909 under the direction of Mrs. Lucinda W. Prince, whose work in Boston under the auspices of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union has brought about an organized effort toward the teaching of expert salesmanship. The class is composed of employes selected from the store force. A four months' course is given, which has for its purpose "the teaching of right thinking toward the work as a profession, the arousing of a feeling of responsibility, the instilling of a regard for a pleasing personality, for systematic work and a close attention to details, as well as thorough instruction in the subjects which increase knowledge of the goods to be sold." The subjects taken up are:

Textiles.—A study of materials, colors and designs, the object being to increase the knowledge of stock and to enable a sales person intelligently to assist a customer select materials, designs, and colors: also to make attractive displays in the departments.

Hygiene.—The development of an attractive, wholesome personality.

Store System.—Studying the system of making sales; also business arithmetic, business forms, and accounts.

One of the most practical methods of instruction is through the Demonstration Sales which are frequently held. Women representing different types of customers make purchases from a member of the class who acts as a sales person, the transaction being watched

by the class, notes being taken of strong or weak points, and the whole ending in a general discussion and summing up by the teacher.

In addition, lectures are given each week by department heads or by some one equipped to supply information of benefit to sales people. The subjects of a few of these lectures may be of interest:

1. Purpose of the course
2. Salesmanship
3. Wool
4. Millinery
5. Artificial Silk
6. Lace
7. Embroidery
8. Cotton
9. Hosiery
10. Gloves
11. Toys
12. All in a Day's Work
13. Silk
14. Measurements
15. Advertising

The work has awakened sales people to a new sense of duty and responsibility, and has brought about a realization of the difference between simply selling goods and making a customer for the store.

In organizing salesmanship classes on a permanent basis, we took first the youngest people in the store, but found after a short experiment that better results were obtained through selecting those who already had had some business experience; for instance, department assistants. These showed a keener insight into the work, and got a firmer grasp on the essentials. Experience has also proved to us the advisability of letting the graduates of the elementary class work as sales people for a time before placing them in the Salesmanship Class. And to make the work of the latter still more effective, graduates of the Salesmanship Class will be required to serve in their respective departments several months before

they receive their diplomas. During this time their work is observed closely, and compared with that of the sales person who has not had such instruction.

The class has, without doubt, had its wholesome effect. It has made the pupils more ambitious, has brought them into closer personal relations with their duties and has shown them methods by which they could rise. Moreover, it has developed their interest along new lines, and in several instances it has resulted in their being changed to other departments which were personally more attractive to them.

Suitable exercises are held at the graduation of the Elementary and Salesmanship Classes, and diplomas and class pins are given to graduates. Pupils who satisfactorily complete the course are given an opportunity to advance in the business. The classes in 1910 were addressed by the governor of California and the mayor of San Francisco, and the diplomas presented by the superintendent of public schools.

The following summary shows the results of the last two years, during which period the educational work was brought to its highest state of efficiency: The elementary class of 1909 graduated 11 persons, of whom nine are still employed in the store; while of the 19 graduates of the elementary class of 1910, 15 remain as employes. The salesmanship class of 1910 graduated 11, of whom 10 remain. That is, of 41 graduates in 1909 and 1910, 34 are still employed in the store. Among the graduates 64 have been advanced in salary and 42 promoted.

As to the effect of this work, there is no doubt in our minds that it has not only increased the productivity of our business but materially benefited the sales people.

The cost of the work has in the past been merged in the general expense account, and the statistics now being kept do not cover a sufficient period to enable us to state the beneficial results accurately in dollars and cents. That the results, however, are beneficial, we do not for an instant question.

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