

What Happens When a Girl Goes Job Hunting in a Strange City?

By CATHARINE BRODY

Can a Girl, If Friendless and Alone, With Money Enough For One Week Only, Find a Job and Live On Her Wages?

KANSAS CITY.

"All rings are not telephone rings"—from the Pilot Light, published by the Kansas City Association of Telephone Employees.

There, gentle subscriber, you have in the "Pilot Light" the telephone service that is why the telephone companies keep advertising advertisements always in type and employment managers always busy. That is really why you get wrong numbers and disconnections, and why you have to fuss and fume at operators who seem to be attending their grandmothers' funerals at the other end. All rings, particularly to a telephone girl, are not telephone rings.

Statistics show, I have been told, that more telephone girls get married every year than any other class of working girls. You have only to look at a group of telephone girls, or to spend a few days in a telephone training school, not to wonder why.

Most perfect working girl.

The telephone girl must be the most perfect of working girls, in sight, hearing, health, height and weight. She must be young and plastic and untroubled by problems of food and lodging, or her subconscious mind, which alone makes telephone work possible, will not function properly.

It sounds like a large order, and being but human and subject to all the ills the flesh is heir to, I had despaired of ever attaining the necessary degree of perfection. But perhaps rings are less than other mere telephone ring in Kansas City. The telephone company there seized upon me without benefit even of a physical examination.

I felt I had earned that job, too. It took four hours of intensive hunting, beginning with the Froemasons' Employment bureau at the Scottish Rite temple, which had been suggested to me by the Y. W. Like most employment bureaus, it had the hushed, still air of a church.

We sat around the room like grave-dumb images—prosperous-looking men and down-at-the-heels men and just plain bums—waiting for our

turn with the grizzled, elderly man who conducted the bureau. There were only three girls in the room. We sat thus for a long time. Occasionally the heavy, hoarse voice of the grizzled man said over the telephone: "No, nothing but domestic work," to some feminine applicant. Obviously, there was no work.

One girl's hard luck.

The girl next to me was hopeless about work and her hard luck. She had been sent to a factory which needed girls that morning and had found the machinery just broken down. Now, she would have to wait till Monday. She was a tall girl, with a courageous, bitter profile, and spoke very well, using good grammar and with an intelligent accent. She advised me, if I had a good home, to go back till the spring, when "things picked up a little." I proved not amenable to reason. She told me then to ask for a restaurant job.

There's more restaurant and cafeteria help needed here than any other kind, so you ought to get along if you like that sort of work. I've worked in so many restaurants that I'm glad to get a change. They'll start you at dishwashing or something like that at about \$10 a week with meals, and that's pretty good, because you can cook on a room at \$2.50 up, and the rest is clear.

When it came my turn with the grizzled man, therefore, I announced that I would be a waitress.

He was more than much amused. He saw me in the light of a little country girl come to conquer the big city with tray and order book and she shook with laughter.

"You can't be a waitress," he pointed out justly. "You're too little. You couldn't lift and hold a tray."

I said I could and would, but I couldn't say I had. He was a firm employment manager, too.

"That's no work for you," he said. "Where'd you get such an idea? I know darn well some girl gave it to you."

One, he said, saved \$800.

What I wanted to do, he said, was go into a "good home" and wash and scrub and cook there. He had sent a girl eighteen months ago into such a good home and the girl had come to see him one day, singing

MISS Brody, an Able and Experienced Reporter, Started Out With \$10 in Her Purse, With a Frock That Cost \$6, and With a Small Handbag as Her Only Luggage—She Visited Cities, With One Exception, Strange to Her—The Comedy and the Tragedy, the Lesson and the Promise to Her Experiences are Vividly and Enlighteningly Told in This Series of Articles

its praises. Not only, he said she said, had she all the clothes she wanted and a good place to sleep and plenty to eat, but she also had \$800 in the bank. I declared immediately I would not object to going into a "good home."

Had I references? Had I experience? Could I cook? No, and again no. Then, said Mr. Fernald, the thing for me to do was to hitch my wagon to the cap and apron of a second girl, so to speak—to let him put me in a "good home" where I would be trained and get a reference, and in that way be ready for a better job which he promised to get me, as second girl. Wisfully, I harked back to the advantages of a certificate. Did I, Mr. Fernald inquired with some heat, know what percentage of men made a success in the business world—5 per cent. And the percentage of women was even lower.

"If you can't go into a home, come around Monday, and I'll put you in a factory," he concluded. Plainly, I hinted that if he would write down for me the name of but one large cafeteria. The man was a peach as well a perfect gentleman. He threw me an agonized glance, but restrained himself, and wrote out for me on his card the name of a cafeteria evidently managed by a brother Mason. I clutched this card and walked

out, and then I performed what I consider more of a test of pure, unadulterated nerve than walking the plank. If you don't believe it, try it. Walk at random into a dozen stores and restaurants that look as if they might be the better for your services, along a crowded business street; face the blank stare of the first employee, ask for the manager and then, within full hearing distance of all the other employees who are listening intently, say that you went work, you must have work right away, any kind of work. Bend and flush before the "No," take it with a smile and shaking knees, followed by the blank stares of everybody concerned. No one is cruel; often people are kind and considerate. But you get the same sensation as if you had scattered a bag of intimate belongings on the street and were picking them up piece by piece under the alien gaze of bystanders.

"Come around again." I didn't plan to do this. I was merely going to hand the card to the manager of the Forum cafe. He was rather confused by my sudden earnest plea. He thought hard and looked at me closely.

"There is nothing—nothing," he said, but added with sympathy that if I didn't get anything I was to come around again—in fact, I was to be sure to come around again—

there might be some extra work—something.

This wasn't so bad. I remembered that seventeen-year-old Beena had told me in Cleveland—that she had asked at every store along a business street before she got her first job. If she could do it, so could I. The call of the job! It had got into my blood now. I wanted a job as a dog who has killed his first sheep wants another.

I asked for work at seven cafeterias, two five and ten cent stores and two drug stores (the soda water counters) for good measure. I had then been in Kansas City about two hours and had no idea of the streets or the shops. Wherever I saw a cafeteria sign, either I walked in, made my little speech—and walked out.

Later, I prefixed a short prayer to the effect that I hoped to God the manager would be a man. At least the men hesitated, seemed to try to imagine and understand my plight, gave it a special thought. But the women—I didn't notice it in the East, but as I got farther West, it became more striking. They are not unkind, they simply turn away, sweetly, but firmly. They are not open to conviction; forever have they made up their unchangeable minds, leaving no room for wonder or punishment or doubt—for imagination. They are like hard, sweet candy.

Some only hard candy.

Sometimes they are just hard candy, unswartened, as in Woolworth's, where the guardian of the gate to the employment office informed me that "they didn't need anyone at all."

"Are you sure," I asked earnestly. She snorted, looked a dagger clean through me and went away from there. I could have forgiven her if she had been standing up all day, but she had a sitting down job.

Of course, I did not get a job in this way. I showed my need of one too much. Anyone experienced in job hunting has found out that the greater the need for a job the more responsibility for one's wellbeing must be taken by the employer, therefore, the less is one's value to him. Few people are so regardless of their interests as to give work to anyone who must have work or actually starve. Their attitude, even as yours and mine, is: I'm awfully sorry, but please don't starve on my doorstep.

The telephone company was a last resort, and I must have learned my lesson in the art of lying to telephone companies well, for I walked out of there with a job. I was to spend two weeks in training school at \$12 per week, working from 8 to 5, with an hour for lunch and a fifteen-min-

ute relief period morning and noon. After training I was to work from 1 in the afternoon to 10 in the evening, with an hour for dinner and a half hour in relief periods, for \$13 a week, every second Sunday off and one weekday off when I worked on Sunday.

Relates come steadily.

The advances were fixed—\$2 the first year, at the rate of 50 cents a week every three months, then \$1 a year until one reached the maximum of \$18 for operators. Supervisors with 88 operators in their charge got from \$18 to \$25 a week. Then, of course, there was the assistant chief and chief operators in their charge, whose jobs and salaries are far beyond the ken of the average operator. After all, all rings are not telephone rings.

It is not until one actually faces, in a state of semiparalysis, a section of switchboard, with its banks and banks of hundreds of little holes, called multiple jacks, that one realizes the wisdom of the company's employment requirements.

Telephonic work is a miraculous example of the working of the subconscious mind. What the company really does in the training period is drill into this submind a series of suggestions and their corresponding actions.

A light flashes on a certain part of the board. To this suggestion the subconscious mind reacts by directing the hands to open the listening key, to insert a back cord in the answering jack or hole, the voice to say with rising inflection: "Number, please?" If one tried intelligently and consciously to think out each call it would be impossible for any human being to handle 700 calls an hour, which is the record of the Kansas City B operators.

Initiative not desired.

Therefore, telephone operators must be very young, if possible, straight from school, so that their suggestibility has not been spoiled. The less business experience they have the better, for the girl who has been earning for some length of time is likely to have acquired an

initiative that will get in the way of her subconscious mind. And yet a girl must have a kernel of practical intelligence which will permit her to make use of her experiences in handling calls to handle other calls better.

The telephone girl must also be almost perfect as far as sight and hearing goes. If she isn't, she will feel it the minute the headpiece receiver hums in her ears, and the hundreds of black holes in her eyes. Add to this the fact that even on the practice board the constant alertness grinds one's nerves away, and the apparent fact that girls with the necessary equipment of plasticity, and aural and ocular perfection, are generally also equipped with pretty faces, and you can almost hear the rings that death knell the company's hopes and nullify some share of the profits.

A fair proportion of the girls in our training class of 22 wore most diamond and platinum rings. Their average age was seventeen to eighteen with, on the average, a year of some clerical work or very light factory work at very light wages behind them, mostly the Loose-Wiles Biscuit company and the Montgomery Ward mail order house. Almost to a girl they lived at home. The exception was a nineteen-year-old grass widow who was returning to the fold of the telephone company with extreme reluctance.

We were just like a class of high school seniors, a little more elaborately dressed, perhaps, better behaved, of course, and more conscientious about our lessons. Each class had a name, "The Joy-Giving Class" (verily). The Sunshine Class, the Boosters. Class yells and songs to match. The day I came the Joy-Giving class was about to be scattered among the various exchanges. We all assembled to start it on the way. Cheer leaders got up on chairs, songs were sung and cheers were hoisted. "Stand on your head, stand on your feet. Our teacher, Miss Blank, can't be beat. Three rousing cheers for the faculty!"

(Continued on sixth page.)

FREDONIA WOMAN WINS FIRST PRIZE IN TITLE-WRITING CONTEST

Picture for Title-Writers to Try Hand at This Week



Guess something terrible has happened to Bobby and Nell. What title would you suggest as the most appropriate for the above picture? We'll wager the title writers will have many good suggestions and that readers of next Sunday's Express will have much amusing reading. Remember, the best title gets \$10 and the five next best \$1 each. Here are the rules:

1. Titles must be written on a postcard and addressed to Title Editor, Sunday Express.
2. They must not exceed twelve words in length.
3. They must reach The Express office by Wednesday midnight.
4. One person may send in as many titles as he or she wishes, but don't crowd too many on one postcard.
5. Answers must not be enclosed in envelopes.
6. No employees of the J. N. Matthews company or members of their families may enter contest.

Last Week's Picture and Winning Title



WHEN HE'D RATHER WIN ONE THAN FIVE HUNDRED
—Mrs. Harry Wheelock, No. 87 Central avenue, Fredonia, N. Y.

WINNERS OF \$1 EACH

HE SHOULD PLAY CHECKERS AND CROWN HIS OPPONENT.
—Mrs. R. Jester, East Aurora, N. Y.

SHE PLAYED HER HEART AND LOST HER HAND.
—Mrs. Rose Schiess, Forks, N. Y.

IT WILL TAKE A DIAMOND TO WIN THAT HAND.
—George H. Camehl, No. 410 Elmwood avenue.

DIAMOND MAY FOLLOW HEARTS IF CLUBS DON'T INTERFERE.
—M. M. Rooney, No. 46 Eugene avenue.

NOT IN THE GAME YET HOLDING THE BEST HAND.
—H. H. No. 703 Lafayette avenue.

Little Chats With Title-Writers

We received several nice letters this week, testifying to the interest taken in the Title Contest. Here's one from F. E. Rolfe of Albion:

"I want to express my real pleasure in following the picture title game. It is, to me, really a treat each Sunday. Of course, I do not expect to be awarded a prize—for I have had mine—and am more than glad that others should have a share in the entertainment and generosity afforded by The Sunday Express. I have been in the newspaper game, from coast to coast and 'criss-cross' country, for more than 40 years and I can appreciate the task you have each week with all those cards. And in this connection, I wish to sincerely congratulate you upon the absolutely fair and impartial manner in which the awards are made. The titles selected fit the picture in every detail, and no one has just cause for complaint. The title, The Dragon, The Prints and The Flour Girl, etc., struck me as being the best of all yet published. It is really clever."

F. B. Holzer of No. 7 Irving place writes:

"Received a little thrill on Sunday when seeing my name among the \$1 prize winners of your interesting title-writing contest. Having received honorable mention a couple of times and the check this morning—for which I do thank you—now I'm out for first prize. Watch me get it. It's surely fun and helps to keep the cobwebs from the brain. Best wishes for Buffalo's best."

H. C. Orton of North Tonawanda writes:

"Last week's titles were exceptionally good. The prize split was the right bunch."

Writes Mrs. A. J. Winter of No. 24 South Putnam street:

"Received your check for \$1 today, for which I wish to thank you. I have for the last

both in reading the winning contributions and in trying to get a winner across myself. I have succeeded, I believe, twice in getting honorable mention. I hope the contest will be continued indefinitely."

Ruth E. Franklin of Fredonia writes:

"Week by week in every way the contests are getting better and better. I always try my hand at them but this is my trump card. Here's the title: 'Love: Ace of Diamonds Captures Queen of Hearts—Knave Blocks the Suit.'"

Other good titles received were:

Losing the Queen Because He Doesn't Hold the Hand—Mrs. O. R. Blair, No. 106 Woodbridge avenue.

The Winning Hand Depends Upon the Widow—Charles Hill, Jr., No. 1247 Jefferson avenue.

When an Odd Couple Gets Even—A. R. White, No. 81 Arnold street.

He Is More Interested in the Hands Held Than in the Game—Will G. Baker, No. 242 Elmwood avenue.

He Needs the Queen of Hearts to Make a Full House—John J. Short, Corning, N. Y.

If He Had the Right Kind of Club He Would Fix the Jack—Mrs. T. Eustice, Lewiston, N. Y.

The Sheik Holding the Hand That Broke Up Many a Game—Thomas S. Torrens, Jr., Castile, N. Y.

No Chance of Winning What the Other Guy Holds the Queen—Alma Watson, Niagara Falls, N. Y.

She Could Vamp a King From a Deck of Cards—Joe Peters, No. 285 Sobieski street.

Mrs. Hortense Ward was the first woman in Texas to be admitted to the bar and also the first woman in the entire South to be admitted to practice before the United States supreme court.

Beauty

A Gleamy Mass of Hair

35c "Danderine" does Wonders for Any Girl's Hair



Girls! Try this! When combing and dressing your hair, just moisten your hair brush with a little "Danderine" and brush it through your hair. The effect is thrilling! You can do your hair up immediately and it will appear twice as thick and heavy—a mass of gleamy hair, sparkling with life and possessing that incomparable softness, freshness and luxuriance.

While beautifying the hair "Danderine" is also toning and stimulating each ring—ring to grow thick, soft and strong. Hair stops falling out and doesn't disappear. Get a bottle of "Danderine" at any drug or toilet counter, and just see how healthy and youthful

