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## HOME AID FOR FATHER

A Man Investigates  
The Domestic  
Service Scheme



"I AM particularly interested in this Government Home Aid scheme of yours," I said closing the office door and approaching the young woman at the executive desk. "I am particularly interested—because, you see, I am a Home Aid myself."

"You're not in our uniform," replied the girl with a flicker of a smile, her eyes slipping down the creases of my trousers. "Look, here is ours." She shook out a housefrock sort of thing that might be very neat when worn. "The final decision is for blue—I think. As an expert don't you agree that blue is just the right, the practical, the universal colour?"

"Mebbe," said I off-handedly. "And I admit that it is important to the women who will be in your scheme—and to those who have to look at them. But what I want to know is how much work you people are going to lift off Dad's shoulders?"

"Well, seriously," said she, "that is where my personal concern with Home Aiding first began. You see I was a Child Welfare officer until last month. Scarcely a week used to pass without some forlorn husband appearing on our doorstep with a string of children wanting someone to look after them since mother had been suddenly taken off to hospital and they had no friends or relatives who could adequately help."

"And what could you do for them?"  
"Very often nothing. But once this scheme is going a Home Aid will be able to run the house until father returns at night and mother comes home from the Home or wherever she happens to be."

### "A Barbarous Practice"

"But candidly, it's when mother is home that the family needs most Aid," said I feelingly. "I mean when she's not really fit and finds housework such a burden to herself that the sight and sound of her becomes a burden to the whole family too. Can you help there?"

"Sure we can—once we have a few Aides to spare from the cases where, for the time being, there is no homemaker at all. Personally I consider that sending a nursing mother back to run unaided the household and a new baby after only a fortnight is a barbarous practice. A woman normally needs help—whole-time or part-time for several weeks after the Event. In my Child Welfare work I used to be quite often in poor and struggling homes—nice people usually, but snowed under with work and worries—and also sometimes in comparatively wealthy homes where a baby had been adopted.

In the latter cases the mother, fit herself, and with help in the house, had time and interest to find the baby's first months and years just fascinating and delightful. In the other sort of home women would say 'I know I'm not bringing these children up right. They're fed and mended sure enough. But I'm such a grizzle all day long and so little interested in their interests. I try to be different. But I don't seem able to!'"

I agreed. There were plenty of women under strain who never broke—but they snapped, snapped continuously. If a man had one of them for mother and another for wife. . . . However, to come down to tin tacks, supposing I wanted to get rid of my wife—not for good, but for her good and the whole household's—for a fortnight's holiday, say, would the Home Aid Service help?

### A Big Difference

"Most certainly it will—when we have enough staff to handle such cases. In fact, once we get past having only enough Aides for desperate cases there is no reason why an Aide should not stay with a household indefinitely—if she wants to and they want her."

"But, good heavens," I cried, "that's just domestic service—or servitude—all over again."

"No. Something a whole world different," she replied just as smartly. "For one thing, Aides go firstly to the homes with need and only after all needy cases are met to the homes that have merely money. For another, they are not 'Fanny do this,' but 'Miss (or Mrs.) Soandso would you mind' with the status of a professional visitor and treatment accordingly. Thirdly, they work a 44-hour week and sleep out, either at their own homes or in an Aides' Hostel, with Public Service privileges and salaries adequate for an independent life."

"Sounds good," said I. "The sort of Home Aid I am works 24 hours round (if the baby wakes), mows the lawn, mends the roof, grows the vegetables, does the children's homework, sees that they wash the dishes both sides, drowns the kittens, and pays his own expenses—and everyone else's. I'd almost have a pop at your Certificate and Diploma and your £4 a week—if only I had the good looks to support the profession. It doesn't sound, anyhow, as though you'll have difficulty in getting recruits."

### "Sure to be Popular"

"We won't. There are so many feminine satisfactions to be got out of Home Aiding that it's sure to be popular once

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