Undated / 1924

My friend, Miss Mary Gilson, is applying for admission to the University of London where, she tells me, she wishes to specialize in economics.

I do not know the particular requirements that the University demands for admission but I do know that Miss Gilson has had a most unusual and valuable experience which, it seems to me, ought to count for much in considering her application.

I first became acquainted with for Miss Gilson and her work when I undertook several years ago to make a study of the advance experiments in improving industrial relations in our American mills and factories. In the course of this work I became particularly interested in the applications [illegible] in several of our factories of the principles of scientific management developed by Frederick W. Taylor. Wherever I learned of any factory that was making a serious and patient effort to apply these principles I visited it. In the course of this work I went to the Cloth Craft Shop in Cleveland, Ohio. And here I found what I believe to be the finest laboratory in scientific management which we have in this country.

Digital image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944. Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Much of the success of the work at the Cloth Craft Shop is due to Miss Gilson who, as the collaborator of Richard Feist the manager of the shop, has for nearly 12 years had charge of the ~~social service department,~~ (the department of industrial relations.)

Miss Gilson went into this work particularly well equipped by experience and by study. She has been one of the few persons in this country who has appreciated both the side of management and of labor and who has believed that it was only by a complete coöperation of management and labor that the problems of production, of continuous employment, of the development of the worker and his advancement from position to position according to his capacity and his will to enlarge that capacity could be solved. She has worked for almost 12 years along these lines in a shop employing about 800 people. I have followed that shop

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for several years and have seen it steadily advance in broadness, in soundness of view, in technique and in friendly coöperation.

Without Mary Gilson the Cloth Craft Shop could not have made the substantial contribution it has to better industrial relations as well as to improved manufacturing processes. With such an experience behind her ~~Miss Gilson~~ could not but be a valuable addition to any student body. Her desire to acquaint herself with the latest and soundest economic theory after such a practical experience is, in my judgment, a strong recommendation. While her experience has been eminently practical she has never neglected theory. There are few if any women interested in industry in this country who have read as widely and as consistently as Miss Gilson. That is, she comes familiar with economic and social ~~practice~~ thinking

Miss Gilson has had exceptional opportunities to meet people interested in industry from various angles because her place of work has been visited by economists, psychologists, industrial research workers, authors, labor leaders and employers from Europe and America. Her consulting work in other plants has also brought her in touch with many viewpoints.

B.

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