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Gertie to Gertie

Only yesterday I fell in with one of that growing crowd of young college women that are going into industry. They call themselves by various names - employment managers, service workers, their position seemingly not being yet very well defined. My friend bore the former name, Employment Manager; but when I tried to pin her down to what she did,--although,obviously,taking care of employment was her main business, she retailed a variety of activities, in and out of the factory, which no one title could possibly cover. What she seemed to do was to get at the man or woman that came for work, to find the screw loose if there was one in his life and help him to tighten it up. And as for the activities within the body industrial which she served, they were multitudinous--and new every morning. She had come into the city to buy trimmings for a Christmas tree. "And what," I asked, "has that to do with employment management or running a factory?"

"All I know," she said, "is that there are five hundred people, and a goodly number of them will not look on a Christmas tree or receive a gift unless we make it possible. Let me tell you the story of Gertie. She is a woman of fifty-five. For thirty-five years she has been in this same factory. She is

quiet, gentle, prompt, and alone in the world. We had our first Christmas tree last year, just after lunch, the day before Christmas, and then everybody was off. Gertie received a present, and I saw her crying over it. Why, what's the matter, Gertie, I said.

"Do you know, this is the first time anybody ever gave me anything for Christmas. For years and years I have gone out on Christmas eve and bought myself something and wrapped it up as I saw other people do, and I put it on my plate and labeled it 'From Gertie to Gertie.' And now somebody has given me something."

"If it was only for Gertie, I should feel and we all feel we must have a Christmas tree."

You see, you cannot get five hundred people together anywhere in the world, I think, whatever the class, and not have among them at least one Gertie, one who, if she is to receive anything, must give it to herself. And that is why I say that not only homes, churches, settlements and schools should have their trees, but factories.

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