Continuation and Trade Schools

Section 4

In a long article in L'Europe Nouvelle, March 30, 18, on Feminine Careers of To-day and To-morrow, it is said that the time has gone by when the State regarded with a jealous or suspicious eye attempts at innovations on the part of private schools for commercial training; that these were recognized as the experiment stations in many cases where the State schools could not make the adventure so quickly or so well, and that it is well known that sevrral of the private schools are liberally subventioned by the State.

Of the commercial schools for women two deserve special mention; one at Paris, L'Ecole du Haut-Enseignment Commercial pour les jeunes femmes, 292 rue st.Martin, subventioned by the minister of Commerce and in operation two years, and the other at Lyon, formed on the model of the Paris one by M.Herriot, whose remarkable work for social betterment I have already signalized elsewhere.

These schools correspond to a new and very precise need: to open a commercial career to educated young women not only in a subordinate capacity(though recognizing that there must be stages in that career) ; to shorten the hard period of apprenticeship in an office and give them the comprehensive and theoretical knowledge that they rearely can get there at all, and to permit them access to the higher offices that are unfortunately only too many on account of the drain of the war. Girls with brevets superieures(about a high school diploma) are eligible, without one there must be a special examination. They are not only taught the general run of the studies in a commercial college, but the principles of commercial law, geography, etc. There is coming into being, indeed there already is, a career for young women in being the right-hand man of a chief of service or director , a woman who is not the steno-typograph, but a special sort of private secretary, able if the man is called away to take his place enough at least to carry on until he comes back, or to save him the lesser matters of his work, for which a large knowledge of the subject is however necessary. The article gives specimens of the questions asked in these examinations, that show how largely the spirit of this instruction is interpreted, and how well equipped in general principles these women will be

Salary begins at 200 to 225 fr, and some have had 300 to 500 fr from the beginning.

The Ecole de Libraire, 117, boulevard saint German, is a similar school for the development of women employees of the book industry in France, and a commercial school of the more accustomed type is the Ecole Commerciale des Jeunes Filles, rue de Naples, administered by the Paris Chamber of Commerce, with a three years course. I have a full list of the establishments of this sort for women in Paris and in the provinces, and it is on file here if you want it. 500,000 young women are at present engaged in commerce, and the French are determined that they shall not be limited to the lower ranges of the career.

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