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MC 0181

[Letter, Ellen Swallow Richards to Henrietta Livermore]

1905 October 4

BOX 1 FOLDER 5

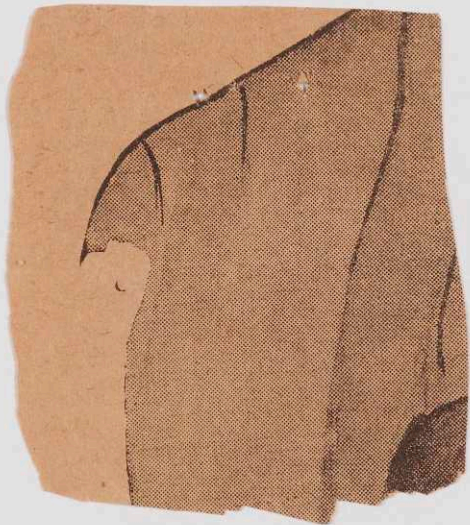
MC-0181, b

Woman who runs a family will find her household accounts more complicated than her personal accounts, but how the family income in general should be apportioned to the various family expenses is shown in a certain Engel law which consist of a table of percentage for various household funds.

According to this law the percentage of income paid out for clothing, rent, fuel and lights remains the same, but the percentage paid for food grows less as the income increases.

To quote from the United States Department of Labor, the average family of five, with an income of \$1200, spends per month for rent \$14.47, fuel \$4.90, light \$1, food \$42.25, clothing \$15.26, and for all other purposes \$22.12. 20

This computation is at least suggestive to the thoughtful housekeeper



MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.

BOSTON, MASS.

October 4 1905.

My dear Mrs Livermore,

Miss Gill is too ill to attend to outside matters and has had your letter forwarded to me . I was the chairman of the Home Economics committee last year and the new one asked, Miss Goodrich, has not yet given her answer so it devolves on me to communicate with you. I have consulted with her and the enclosed suggestions are our joint personal ideas, we cannot vouch for the Branch. Personally, have been led to this appeal from my experience with and sympathy for the young professor, artist, literary and professional man who has a soul above dollars but who finds himself and family caught in the maelstrom and he is obliged to go out from his chosen work and gater sticks to keep the pot boiling. Is this necessary? Are salaries too low or is the style of living too high? we are spending more and more on unessentials. are they unessentials? Must intellectual persons who care for books pictures and music spend as much on gloves and hats as those whose only joy is in fine clothes?

Where is this advance in cost to stop?

I think that the house itself is the first point of attack and have written the third in my series "the Cost of Shelter" in the hope that it might arouse the thinking person to a helpful attitude toward the young men and women of this class rather than spending it all on settlement work.

*Very truly yours,
Ellen H. Richards*

55
Prof. J. J. Jordan

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
BOSTON
October 4 1908

My dear Mr. Livermore,

Miss Gull is too ill to attend to this matter and has had your letter forwarded to me. I see the name of the

late Economics committee that year and the name of the Economics has not given her answer as it devolves on me to

communicate with you. I have consulted with her and the enclosed action see also with the Economics we should have been led to this special from my ex-

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any and professional man who has a soul above dollars but who finds himself and family caught in the maelstrom and he is obliged

to go out from his chosen work and make a fight to keep the boat afloat. Is this necessary? Are salaries too low for the

the style of living too high? We are spending more and more on unessentials, are they unessentials? But intellectual persons

who care for books pictures and music spend as much on this and hats as those whose only joy is in the clothes?

There is this advance in cost of food

I think that the horse itself is the first point of attack and have written the third in my series "The Cost of Shelter" in

the hope that it might excite the thinking person to a helpful attitude toward the young man and woman of this class rather than

spending it all on settlement work.

Very truly yours,
Walter D. Woodburn