of these three items, I could manage very nicely if it weren’t for the hostess who moans, “Oh, you aren’t eating your oysters. If only I’d known. Why didn’t you tell me sooner?”

It is worse to visit a hostess who worries about the dust under the guest room bureau (a fact I couldn’t possibly check upon unless I wriggled around the floor on my stomach). According to her, the silver needs polishing, the curtains came back from the laundry chewed by chipmunks, the most interesting people she invited couldn’t come, and she knows it is going to be so dull. About that time I am convinced I should have found something better to do.

Yet all these types seem harmless compared to the most recent menace: the hostess who invites me to take the television cure. This experience combines the fuzziest features of watching sixth grade amateur theatricals and opening one’s eyes under water. The victim is ushered into a darkened room, often without food or drink, and forced to stare fixedly at a small, lighted screen that shows a series of fliespecks shrouded in mist. Occasionally, the mist clears, and that is even worse.

Meanwhile, the owners of the set pretend to identify each moving fliespeck by name or occupation: wrestler, actor, trained seal, and so on. They interrupt themselves with pretty protests of, “Oh, you should have been here last night. It was so much clearer then,” or with fascinating technical explanations. By midnight, I have acquired a persecution complex and a full-fledged case of pink eye. Understand, I think television is the coming thing. But until television reaches a higher level of perfection—I’m frightfully sorry, darling, but something’s come up unexpectedly, and I won’t be able to make it.

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**The Meaning of Democracy**

Shirley Stillwell

“I

MY DEAR, do you really think this is the gown I should choose? After all, I am expected to maintain a certain standard, and I trust you implicitly. The opening of the opera is one of the most important events of the season.”

“But definitely, madam, this is an exclusive creation for you; it suits your particular style as no other gown could do.”

“Very well, my dear. Now I must decide between the ermine stole and the mink cape. Since my last year’s coat was mink, possibly the ermine would be the better choice. It is a bit more regal, don’t you think?”
"The ermine is very good for you, madam, and for this gown also. Do you wish them sent special delivery?"

At this moment outside Saks Fifth Avenue, the shop where Mrs. Goldplate has just made her selection, Gracie Schultz and Sadie Small are taking advantage of one of their rare free days to window shop and dream. This is the favorite pastime of the two girls who have few other pleasures.

Doing piece work on a power sewing machine six days a week provides little spending money above living expenses, and leaves little time for recreation. Once each six weeks, a free afternoon is the bonus for exceptional production, and for both girls to manage the same afternoon off is nothing short of a miracle.

"Gee, Sadie, sometimes I wonder if our chance to wear a dress like that will ever come. And them diamonds in Tiffany's! When my knight comes riding on his white steed, I'd like to be dressed like that."

"Aw, dearie, that dress ain't practical and them rhinestones in Macy's basement shine just as pretty. Nobody'd know the difference. By the way, have you made the last payment on that fur coat yet?"

"Well, next payday I think I can get it out of hock. Forty-nine ninety-five at a dollar a week is pretty slow, but it will be worth going without lunch. Won't Herman's eyes pop when I spring that coat for the Firemen's Ball?"

"Do you want to borrow my red satin to wear with it? Red will sure set off your complexion and it won't go bad with your new skunk coat either. Them tails on it take my eye."

"Thanks, Sadie, you're a real friend. Oh look at who's getting in that limousine! Know who that elegant female is?"

"Sure enough! I see her picture 'most every week on the society page. 'Mrs. Goldplate Breaks a Bottle of Champagne Over Boat' or 'Mrs. Goldplate At The Opera.' Sure, I'd know her anywhere. Snooty, ain't she?"

"Uh huh, but Sadie, maybe if I had so much dough, I'd be snooty too. I've heard her husband came from Milwaukee and made all that money in a brewery—didn't have a dime when he was a kid. They say his folks still live in the same house he was born in and don't even have a bathroom. I wonder how he ever married into society. Maybe her old man went broke in '29."

"Well, dearie, like I always say, your Herman may be the meat packing king some day—look what a good start he has in Schmaltz's Butcher Shop."

"Yes, you never can tell, Sadie, but I won't forget you. When Herman makes his fortune I'll buy you them diamond earrings and maybe even give you my skunk coat."
Giggles float back on the crisp air as the girls stroll on down the avenue in search of even greater adventure.

II

The Mrs. Goldplatés of our country have nothing on the Gracie Schultzés and the Sadie Smalls. A girl can dream in any land, and probably does, whether or not there is any hope for her dreams to come true. In America even the most insignificant shop girl has the opportunity of becoming a gown designer or anything else equally fabulous.

This is not a fairy tale sort of success. It is not the result of a wishing well or a magic wand. The miracle is not worked by “presto chango,” but by a combination of ability, determination, and the God given freedom to do one’s best.

Horatio Alger is the symbol of American democracy at work, overdrawn to be sure. None the less, this American hero story is as true as the hundreds of biographies of self-made men and women who are nationally famous. What if, in the strict sense of the word, we are not all born equal; very often a smaller gift of talent can prove of greater value if it is augmented by a larger amount of ambition and application.

Maybe Gracie Schultz’s boy friend, Herman, may rise from his humble experience in the meat market to become the meat packing king. Such a success story has happened before and can happen again; it is a common occurrence in America.

Given a chance, Gracie may even become a grande dame and wear her French imports and square cut diamonds like a queen. While buying her skunk coat on payments, she has developed a love for and a deep appreciation of finer things. She has an advantage over Sadie who seems satisfied with her mediocrity.

Her friendship for Sadie is genuine, and her love for Herman sincere. Should Herman remain a butcher’s apprentice, she will manage their income uncomplainingly as she has juggled her own pittance all her life. However, if Herman should possess the elements of financial genius, Gracie could adapt herself to her new opportunities without losing all appreciation for the friends and experiences associated with her past.

In Gracie’s vivid imagination, her chance to enjoy life’s most exciting luxuries will come only if Herman is made of more than common clay. If he can provide the best, she can make the most of it; if not, her lot will be none the worse. A girl can dream and sometimes, it does no harm for her to do a little dreaming for her boy friend.