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**K. Keeter Says:**  
Women are like automobiles. It takes a lot of money to run one. The faster they are the more money it takes and they go faster when warmed up. A little paint does a lot for both. The heavy, slow ones are used for work, not speed. If run too fast they are likely to burn up. They need a guiding hand. Each year the new models are faster and snappier. If too many ornaments are put on they look cheap. Women are much like automobiles.

A widow and her money are soon married.

## THE UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE AS A FIELD FOR LIFE WORK

By Karl Fenning, Asst. Com. of Patents

The Constitution of the United States provides for granting patents and as early as 1790 Congress enacted legislation for the grant of patents for inventions. The United States Patent Office as such was established in 1836 and was included in the Department of the Interior when that Department was established in 1849.

A patent is granted an inventor to give him exclusive rights in the invention he discloses in his application. It is essential, therefore, that the disclosure be sufficient to instruct fully in the performance of the invention. For a great many years college graduates have gone into the Patent Office as examiners. Their function is to examine applications for patent to see what the alleged inventor thinks he has produced that is new and to see that the disclosure is complete. They then investigate the prior art as represented in patents already granted by the United States and various foreign countries and by the descriptions in technical literature. The invention claimed by the applicant to be new is compared with what is found to be old and a patent is finally allowed by the examiner if the application in fact claims a new invention.

A good examiner should have enough curiosity to make him want to know the patents and prior publications relating to the particular devices he examines and also those in related subjects in other divisions of the Patent Office. He should have a good enough memory to be able to remember where to find a description he has seen and enough interest in procedure to enable him to acquire a knowledge of principles and decisions in patent law and a ready wit in applying them to the case in hand.

It will be readily seen that the work is extremely interesting. All sorts of things come to the United States Patent Office from the simple darning needle to the complicated steam engine or printing press; from the simple electric magnet to the most complicated system of automatic telephone or wireless transmission of intelligence; from electro-chemical or metallurgical processes to the refining of petroleum or the production of dyes or other chemicals from coal tar. The examiner gets a view and a knowledge of what is new frequently before it is introduced to the general public or even described to technical scientific societies. By protecting the interests of the public and seeing that improper patents are not granted, he performs a service to the public of the highest order, just as his service to the inventor consists in allowing to the inventor a patent sufficiently broad to give him the exclusive right to his invention. Most of our modern civilization rests on inventions and their development and there is a real joy in being one instrument of their promotion.

The positions in the examining corps of the Patent Office are filled initially from a list made up of those who pass a technical civil service examination, and promotions within the office are made on a strictly merit system. The entrance salary has been fixed by Congress at \$1860, beginning with the 1st of July, 1924, and increases of salary are provided for by promotions from time to time up to \$5000 a year. The positions are under the civil service and are not political. An employee cannot be dismissed except for cause after hearing, and provision is made for retirement with pension in old age.

There are over five hundred members of the examining corps and the appropriation bill for next year makes available sufficient funds to put in the corps about one hundred additional examiners. While the additional examiners are, in terms, temporary employees for about two years, everyone who passes the civil service entrance examination in 1924 is practically assured of transfer to the permanent corps before the two years are up.

The civil service entrance examinations includes such subjects as are pur-

sued by the scientifically inclined graduate of a college or a technical school. In addition to physics, mathematics, and a reading knowledge of scientific French or German, an examination in the reading of mechanical drawings is required as well as a familiarity with the applied sciences in the field of mechanics, mechanical arts, industrial arts and processes and applied chemistry. Optional engineering examinations may be taken. Examinations are held at many places throughout the United States at short intervals. Complete details of the examinations, as well as the time and place, may be obtained from the United States Civil Service Commission, Washington, D. C.

Many new graduates and younger alumni enter the office with the specific idea of training themselves to become patent lawyers. To such persons the universities in Washington offer exceptional opportunities for graduate work in the arts and sciences. Many of the examiners take courses in the law schools connected with the universities in Washington and prepare themselves for the bar. Classes are held in the late afternoon and evening so that it is possible to devote an entire day to the government work before going to classes. It is thus possible for an examiner to be entirely self-supporting during the period devoted to work in the graduate school or in the law school.

There is a considerable esprit de corps among the examiners in the Patent Office which is fostered by the technical Patent Office Society, made up of employees. The fact that the entire examining corps is of necessity made up of those who have had higher educational advantages lends dignity to the position and assures congenial working associates.

The work is largely individual and after a few months much personal responsibility rests with the examiner who gains additional experience through frequent conversations with inventors and their attorneys.

It is hardly necessary to suggest that Washington comes up to the tradition that it is an ideal place in which to live. There are no factories and few slums. There are many parks well cared for and available for picnics and the usual athletic diversions. The Potomac River affords ample opportunity for those interested in recreation or sports on or in the water. The technical, scientific, and literary institutions of the government draw so many conventions and general meetings open to the public that it is commonly said that it is a liberal education to live in Washington.

The many fraternity houses connected with the universities provide surroundings tending to prolong the joys of undergraduate life.

For an educated person interested in mechanics or industry there is probably no more satisfactory branch of the civil service for a life work than the examining corps of the United States Patent Office. For one desiring to prepare for and enter a useful, interesting lucrative profession, there is probably no better preparation than service on the examining corps of the United States Patent Office preparatory to becoming a patent lawyer.

There are about a dozen women now in the examining corps and there is no reason why more college women should not successfully enter the Patent Office as their contribution to public service.

### AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARD

By Mary Sinton Leitch

A cry is in the marsh wind,  
And sadness in the shade  
Of brooding pine, and loneliness within  
the darkling glade;  
A sob is in the washing waves  
And tears are in the dew;  
The mystery of the moonlight fills all  
the soul with rue.

A moan is in the sea-shell,  
And leaf to fallen leaf  
Is whispering that loveliness is brief as  
life is brief:

There's yearning in the creeping mist;  
In clouds lost hopes take shape:  
If earth can sorrow so, then how  
should human hearts escape?

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