

Just Who is the Homemaker?

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Dean of Home Economics

WHO IS the homemaker in these modern days? "The mother," is likely to be the most common answer, and yet homemaking is not the concern of merely one, the mother, nor of two, the mother and father, but of all the individuals of the household. Homemaking in this twentieth century is such a complex problem that it requires the combined intelligence and best effort of every individual member of the family group to secure and maintain the best type of American home life.

Unusual changes have come in home life with the changes in general conditions that have been brought by the passing years. During the Colonial period in America homelife in the south was influenced by the great and cheap labor supply, and in the north by the fact that the individual members of the family divided among themselves the labors necessary to maintain the standard of the home. Families were held together by a unity of economic and social interests.

With the coming of modern industrial life families in the cities moved into more crowded sections. On the farm and in rural communities families were drawn into closer contact with city life through greater accessibility by railroads, electric cars and automobiles. Manufacture of the necessities of life was also transferred to factories and a new economic condition arose which changed the family from group producers within the home to individual workers outside the home. The members of the family went into factories, stores and

Where we love is home—home that our feet may leave but not our hearts.

—O. W. Holmes

business. Earnings were made by individual members of the family with the result that separate and different interests in business and social life were acquired. With this separation of economic and social interest the problem of maintaining the family unity arose within the home.

On the farm the family still retains the group interest but even there, with the use of modern facilities for travel and greater social relationships, the problem of homemaking has changed.

During the time of these developments, the public school system was evolved and the children formerly educated in the home went out to receive a large part of their education in the schools.

Notwithstanding all the changes which have taken place in modern economic and educational conditions the fact remains that the training and development of the child for the first six years of life takes place in the home. In this period habits of thought, speech and action are formed which become an integral part of the life of the individual.

While the complexities of modern life were rapidly changing the home before the war, and the war has but hastened these changes, yet we realize that the fundamental principles upholding the family as a social unit must be retained. We realize more than ever the sustaining influence of

the home on the quality of the citizens of the nation. Therefore it is more than ever necessary that the home be adapted to modern needs and conditions.

In "Teaching Home Economics," by Cooley, Winchell, Spohr and Marshall, the following statement is made:

"A nation is no better than its homes. It has been said, 'Remember that the success of the nation of tomorrow depends upon the characters [it] in the homes of today.' A real peril is before us when the homes of this land are conducted with lack of intelligence concerning the problems involved and with lack of understanding of the relationship of the individual home to the success of the community and to the life of the nation. The homes must be made centers of life and good influence which will help to develop men and women with a right attitude towards the problems of life. The crying need of today and tomorrow is a challenge to men and women who realize that the highest good to be attained in life is through service, and that there must be other interests besides the selfish ones of the individual life."

Two things must be considered in the development of family life. First, the spiritual essence of home life, or "atmosphere," which scarcely can be defined and which rests upon the development of mutual love, consideration and cooperation within the family.

Second, the material side which has to do with the every day routine of family life. In modern family life the tendency is to develop the individual.



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There arises, therefore, an independence of thought and action which may result disastrously or may be made to contribute to successful family life, according to the type and strength of the organization in the household. The very complexity of the business of the household is often the cause of dissension and dissatisfaction.

The problem of modern home making, therefore, requires an intelligent application of all available knowledge relating to the science, art and business of home making.

Who should secure this knowledge and apply it in the home? Lowell said: "The many make the household, but only one the home." Is the wife and mother this one, or is home making in its new development a group problem? It would seem that the reply should be that household organization should be carefully worked out by all members of the family under the leadership of the parents. The household expenditures, for instance, should frequently be better adjusted if

each one realized his or her relationship to the amount of the income and the responsibility for the outgo. For the average family the problems of clothing, food, health, shelter, education, recreation, savings and the promotion of the social and religious life offer a challenge which calls for intelligent consideration and the highest type of service from each member of the family.

In order that these and other home problems may be successfully worked out, not only is it essential that girls should receive training for home making, but also that somewhere along the line boys should receive adequate instruction for home making suited to their particular needs. The men as well as the women should receive instruction and training for home making in high schools, colleges and universities. These courses should meet the specific needs of each group.

In the last hundred years economic and social changes due to modern industrial development have considerably changed the material problems

of home making. It is essential to recognize the foundation principles upon which a home is founded and developed if we are to preserve and maintain these principles in all sincerity and integrity in American life.

Preparation for home making should be a necessary part of educational equipment for men as well as women, and courses providing suitable training should be available in our schools, colleges and universities.

While the burden of responsibility for a successful home may largely rest upon the knowledge, skill and judgment of the wife and mother in the home, yet the husband and father as well as each member of the family must contribute not only to the financial success of the home, but also to the higher spiritual ideals of home life. Since modern conditions tend to draw the family away from the home it is much more necessary that strong home ties shall be developed in order that "the nation of tomorrow may depend upon the characters built in the homes of today."

Are You a Successful Hostess?

By BETH BAILEY

PARDON MY bluntness but what kind of a hostess are you? Do you wear yourself out with pre-occasion sweeping, dusting, cooking, fussing and worrying? Do you sit at the table with your mind and heart in the kitchen? Or do your actions say to your friends—"Because you are our friend, we are always glad to have you come to us as we are. We are glad to share what we have with you."

Too often in attempting to put on "company-style" we pattern after the formal dinner service with its retinue of servants. The truth is that the formal service is of no value to the modern woman, because she has no servants. The woman of today is chef, butler, waitress, all in one. How can she, then, perform all these func-

tions and yet be a perfect hostess?

The secret lies in simplicity. "Entertain simply, but often, so learn to excel." The spirit of the hostess is of far more value in the success of a meal than the number of dishes served. By choosing dishes that can be prepared largely in advance and attractively served at the table, the absence of a maid is not felt.

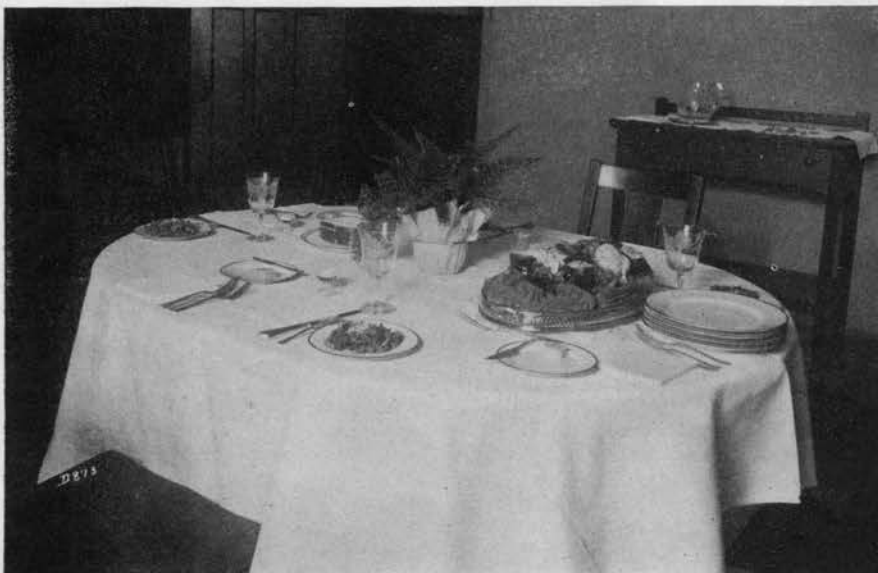
The hostess should meet her guests with a well-groomed composure, not flustered and red from late preparations. From then on, the place of the hostess is with her guests, not in the kitchen. The service table and tea wagon make this possible. Of course it is always necessary to be excused for a few minutes to put the food on the table prior to announcing the meal

but all food should be served from the table by the host or hostess. If it is necessary for the hostess to leave the table, a tray will be a help. During prolonged trips to the kitchen, when sounds of the egg-beater, the running of water, and the clatter of dishes filter into the dining room, comes the prolonged pause in conversation—that awkward silence.

Two women I know illustrate extremes in the scale of success as a hostess. Mrs. W. by every act conveys the impression that she has worked long and hard to prepare a banquet just for you. The occasion is so momentous that this deluded soul never sits down to eat with her family when there is a guest. She passes the bread, brings in the tea, asks if you want this and that, until embarrassed by so much attention you lose all desire to eat. Her conversation consists of talk on food—its preparation, flavor, price, and service. You realize that the routine of the entire household is topsy-turvy because you accepted the invitation to dinner. In her anxiety to please she defeats the real purpose of a hostess, that is, to make her guest comfortable.

In contrast to this, Mrs. T's invitation is often most informal and on the spur of the moment. On entering her home, she meets you graciously and invites you to make yourself at home, to read, or possibly to come into the kitchen to help with the final preparations. The meal is served as simply as it would be served if any guests were not present. A service table holds the desert and any extra silver or dishes that may be needed during the meal. Mrs. T. serves without ostentation, and perhaps allows you to help serve the salad, or pour the coffee. She leads the conversation, and gets everyone into the

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The Meat and Vegetables are Served From a Plank