

HOME ECONOMICS AS APPLIED TO THE CHOICE AND PREPARATION OF FOOD

NATIONAL PROGRESS.

That we live in an age of unprecedented progress and achievement, I do not need to tell you. Marconi, with his wireless telegraph and telephone, is flashing this message from continent to continent; Uncle Sam is carrying it by canal from Atlantic to Pacific; Wright Brothers are speeding with it through the conquered air; Steffansson and Shackleton have brought the polar regions within a possible radius of this truth; John R. Mott has carried it into the realm of the spiritual; Edison shouts it from a thousand housetops by means of his ubiquitous phonograph, and it seems to me that the presence here in Sussex this week of you mothers and daughters of New Brunswick is a proof that this spirit of progress, characteristic of the age, has breathed upon the home makers of the land, and found them not unresponsive.

PROGRESS IN THE HOME.

The fact that you are here — and other facts for which we need not go far afield — is proof, I think, of two statements: (1) that the claims of the home upon the housekeeper have changed; and (2) that she has a saving realization of the change. While none of us wish to disparage or underestimate the method of our foremothers, we are forced to confess that times have changed, and we feel that if these women of two or three generations ago, were alive today, they would be as quick as any of us to sense the need of readjustment in the home.

PRODUCTION FORMERLY CARRIED ON IN HOME.

Perhaps some of us wonder why these changes in home life are inevitable. We have only to think of the marvellous changes wrought by the last few years in the industrial world. Why once — and so recently in our new country as to be within the memory of many living — each home was sufficient unto itself in the production of the necessities of life. Full of the romance of a not too distant past are the tales of apple-paring bees, of home grown and spun and woven woollen cloth, and of the dim religious lights cast by the hand-dipped candles of tallow. Then the violent death of the fatted calf made cheese a possibility, and even the skin of the luckless animal was tanned by the energetic father to be worked up later by his own hands into shoes for his family. Later in the more thickly populated localities certain conditions made it possible for one family or individual to make a better coat or bonnet, or pair of shoes, or piece of linen, than the others — eventually giving rise to the system of handicrafts or trades and apprenticeship. After a time this system of municipal or town supply, of material largely handmade, became antiquated because of improved means of travel, because of invention and of the demand for larger quantity and greater variety of products.