

### ARE WE UP-TO-DATE?—A HEART-TO-HEART TALK

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#### Some Plain Facts Concerning Women of Today and Housekeeping in the Rural Districts—Needs That Can Be Supplied.

If you go into any well-to-do section of the country, you will scarcely stop to ask the question: "Are the farmers up-to-date?" It is so evident. There is the hip-roofed barn, the newest wire fence, the drive house and machinery shed, the concrete silo, the protected milking place, the ice house by the milk stand, the clean cut drive to the house and barn—there is no need to ask if the farmer is up-to-date! But how about the women folk? Have they kept pace with the men?



(Mrs.) J. Muldree

To be really honest, I think we must say not to the same extent. If this is so, there must be a reason, and there must be a remedy. First, then, what has been the reason of the great strides in Agriculture, and why is farming so successful an undertaking? It was not always so successful, and it was not always so popular. There may be many reasons given, but back of them is there not this that is greater than all, and explains the rest, that farming has become a Science?

#### MAN GUIDED BY REASON

Man is a reasoning animal, and cannot work "best legs and arms want play"; he must be guided by a certain amount of reason, and the higher the reason, the more interesting the process. Any mere machine of a man can plow, and sow, and reap, and gather into barns, but what joy and satisfaction to plow, and sow, and reap in a well approved rotation of crops, which has been found the best after years of investigation and careful registering of results. Some men are naturally observant, but some could go on, dot and carry one, like their grandfather and great grandfather did, and never stop to think that there might be a better plan, and so we are glad to have the results that observant men have reached, and we use these results as we have a right to do, "the heirs of all the ages".

We have, then, got into the way of looking upon agriculture as a science, worthy of years of study and every farmer takes one or more agricultural journals, and belongs to Farmers' Institutes, where matters of interest can be studied and discussed.

What about the Home Makers? Do we yet regard home making as a profession, or are we yet up to the level of the men in this respect? It is not so long ago since it was generally accepted as a fact, that any girl could be a housekeeper, particularly if she was not clever enough for anything else. It is not unusual to hear intelligent mothers go through the list of daughters, "Madge likes business, so she is taking a course at the business college; Gwen is training for nursing; Agnes is at college; she is the studious one; Mary, no Mary is not at all clever, she is to be the housekeeper.

We have all heard this before, and alas! may hear it again. Of course there are stupid women at housekeeping, just as there are stupid farmers, stupid doctors, stupid lawyers; but seriously, does good housekeeping require less brain power than any other walk of life? The woman who is at the head of a house is responsible for the well-being and in a great measure for the happiness of the entire household. She must administer to the physical wants, food, clothing, and other things. She must have the oversight of the means of comfort, heating, lighting, and ventilating of the house. She must have a knowledge of the requirements of sanitary conditions. She must be ready to meet all emergencies that arise, do a certain amount of nursing, be ready to entertain

#### What One Woman Says and Does

If brevity is the soul of wit, then Farm and Dairy has it, for it is amazing the number of helpful suggestions, the wee bits of information, the facts, the interesting story, the cosy Home Club chats, the dainty pattern department, the helpful thought placed as a key note on the story page of each issue, and the strength derived from the Upward Lock column, all crammed into the space that is allotted to the Household Department in each issue. Farm and Dairy is indeed a welcome visitor to our home and we often hear the remark among the members of our family: "I get it out of Farm and Dairy."—Etta McC., Peel Co., Ontario.

the unexpected guest, and in general be the guide, philosopher and the friend of all.

Her sphere is limited, her routine exacting, her life often painfully monotonous, and relief hard to secure. She has seldom a holiday, and her pleasure must come largely from the assurance of work well done.

#### OBTAINING REST AND RECREATION

If there is but one person in the house to do the housekeeping, then to make the machinery go smoothly, and to secure some leisure, the rest and recreation must be the result obtained through good machinery and intelligent operation. The housekeeper must be free from the domination of things. She must sometimes blaze a trail in methods in spite of the opposition of friends, and the ridicule of neighbors. What we ask is a more widespread recognition of the dignity of housekeeping. It has not yet been recognized to any extent as a profession. This is partly our own fault.

Pioneers in this work have succeeded in establishing colleges for the training of teachers, and the work has been established in many centres, but they meet with plenty of opposition, mainly from women. We are selfish, and irrational and narrow about it, and the better the housekeeper

the deeper these traits. I heard one of the best housekeepers I ever knew, one day speaking of this, say: "No I don't want my daughter taught to cook in the schools, I can teach her better than any Domestic Science teacher I ever saw." In some respects this was true, but she was wrong, all the same.

#### WHO SHOULD BE THE TEACHER

There are many mothers who are utterly unfit to teach their daughters, and if they could, they have not the time or the patience, or the opportunity. Children learn housekeeping with joy among their associates, where it looks too much like hard work to have to learn it at home. And, then we have decided that it is good for every citizen to have a knowledge of how to read and write, and to make sure that he secure that knowledge, we establish State schools, and make education compulsory; now it is more than likely that the majority of mothers can teach their children to read and to write, and yet they do not resent the fact that some one is engaged by the State to teach this to their children. But when it comes to housekeeping, there is a sort of feeling that this is an encroachment upon their distinct province. Again I say that the thing we want is to place this subject where it belongs, and have it recognized as a profession.

#### SOME THINGS WE MUST DO

We must as a nation of women, learn scientific housekeeping. We must take the best publications on the subject; must band together to discuss related subjects, and become a little broader in our sympathies. The aim of education is to make an efficient citizen. Is a woman efficient who marries a man, and attempts to make a home for him, if she cannot "boil water without burning it"? She may be able to calculate a nice equation in mathematics to seven places of decimals and in her after life not be called upon to do more than reckon up her month's expenses. She may have done honor French in college, and not be able to make the cook understand how to arrange the menu for the week. She may be able to do quadratic equations, but not to make the debit and the credit side of the household equation to balance for one month. She may have carried off honors in chemistry, and not know that if you put the soda in a cake and forget the cream of tartar, the result will be failure, because of no chemical union.

I would be the last one to speak lightly of a good education for girls, but of the two kinds of education, the practical one in Homemaking seems to me to be the stronger. "This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone." The instinct of the true woman points to the home and this is as it should be. It is a rare thing to find an old woman, who has not at some time in her life been responsible for the management of a home.

#### A NEED MADE MANIFEST

If this kind of knowledge is to be the kind in most general use, the need of training for it is manifest, and should become part of our school work. Children can learn to darn in the kindergarten, and imagine that they are having a fine time weaving pretty colors. We have not enough hand work in the schools.

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