The New Domestic System

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ALL STUDENTS of the social sciences now realize that whenever a significant change takes place in the technique of production, the whole manner of our living is vitally affected. All the revolutions in the world’s history have not exerted such an influence on the way men live as has the industrial revolution. It is no exaggeration at all to say that there has been more industrial progress in the last one hundred and fifty years than took place in all the other centuries of recorded time.

We are all so in the custom of thinking of this great revolution as being primarily concerned with the production of goods in the factory and on the farm that we frequently forget what it has done to our household economy. Starting as have been the changes outside of the home, those inside have been equally as revolutionary. In fact, in some respects a good deal more so. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century the home was the center of our industrial life. The modern factory of today is quite unknown.

The typical American of George Washington’s time was still chad in homespun cloth made from wool sheared from his own sheep, spun, dyed and woven in his own home by the women of his own household. Household novels, story-books, and many other articles of household furnishing, were made by the women in their homes. Nor was this all, for practically everything for the table was prepared in the home. The butter and the cheese were made there. Bakers for furnishing the household with cakes, pies, and bread were not to be found. In short, none of the prepared foods that now crowd the grocer’s shelves were then in existence. Even during the nineteenth century the new bride couldn’t rush home from the bridge and prepare a complete supper by opening a can of Campbell’s tomato soup and a tin of sardines. Neither the soup, the sardines, none of the food had been had.

But those days are gone forever. Slowly but surely during the nineteenth century practically everything of a manufacturing nature was taken out of the home. Production was more effectively carried on in the factories and there it went, until today nothing of that nature remains to burden the life of the housewife.

We no longer have to make our own clothes, wash them, or even wear them out. The factory furnishes them ready made for us and the steam laundry does the rest.

It is very illuminating as well as amusing to read some of the articles that were written by the critics of the time as to the effect that this change was going to have upon the women folk of the country. A certain clergyman by the name of Coleman spoke with regret about the household manufacturers because “the healthy exercise of domestic labour has been exchanged for the idleness and frivolities of pride and fashion. In general, the women have become too cheap to be made by the old domestic time-consuming methods. It has been found that it is less expensive to buy nearly everything used in the modern household ready made from the stores than it is to make these goods in the home. The home woman is gradually being crowded out of all industrial activities in our modern society.

Whatever economic justification the home had in the past, outside of the farm, it has very little economic utility in it today. More and more its only function is limited to mere consumption and spending. This means that only those who can afford luxuries can maintain homes.

The Mr. Benner is not in college work at the present, he prefers to be remembered as a teacher, a friend to all students and a consistent defender of young people in general. Just now he is busily engaged in writing a book.

He says: “My purpose in writing this article is to raise the question and not to settle any problem. Moralists rave about flappers, divorce, lack of marriage among university women. Now my thesis is, that we are just as good as any generation has ever been. If there is a change, it is being forced by changing economic conditions.”

The New Domestic System
By CLAude L. Benner, Institute of Economics, Washington, D. C.

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Shrubs as a Garden Background
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green mass of peony foliage after the peonies have ceased blooming. Gladiolus (in variety)—Sword Flower. Kniphofia pitzeria—Red-hot Poker Plant. Liatris (in variety)—Blazing Star. Physostegia virginiana—False Dragon Head.

I know of a small backyard garden which has been enclosed with a lattice fence and a shrubbery. Facing the shrubbery and bordering the oval grass panel, perennials and annuals lend touches of color throughout the garden season. And could you have seen the dear little old white-haired man, sitting fast asleep on the garden bench, with the lavender flowers of the Butterfly Bush covered with golden butterflies and a humming bird flitting among the larkspur and columbine—then truly you would have felt the spell of charm and which has been enclosed with a lattice gives a curdled watery product.

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The small town, of course, is its duplicate. But the large cities are changing rapidly from that agricultural ideal. We can only begin to see some of the results that are flowing from this change. It is of the utmost importance that home economists colleges appreciate this movement. For it is their function to prepare girls to take their places in this domestic system. And there is no efficacy in training them to meet conditions that are rapidly passing away.

The Cooking of Meats
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either colorless or slightly yellow. A condition between these two extremes is indicated by the term medium rare. In this case, sufficient heat has been applied to change the color of the center to a light pink. The gray layer underlying the crust is therefore extended considerably toward the center and the free juice is smaller in quantity and lighter in color than in the rare meat.

The degrees of cooking just indicated are dependent upon the temperatures reached in the interior of the meat during the cooking. To many housewives the roasting of beef seems to be largely a matter of chance. A roast may, when judged from its external appearance, seem to be sufficiently cooked and yet prove to be very much underdone when cut. Even long experience fails to make judgments of the exterior more reliable, so that many cooks would rather prepare all the rest of the dinner than to roast the meat. Therefore to the inexperienced housekeeper a method of judging the condition of the meat regardless of its ex-

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