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# The Why of College Training for Motherhood

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# THE IOWA HOMEMAKER

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## The Why of College Training for Motherhood

By LULU R. LANCASTER, Assistant Professor of Home Management

IN THE course of human events, it is well to stop and take stock of ourselves. The world of affairs rushes by at such a furious pace we sometimes lose sight of our goal.

Our only aim seems to be to keep up with our neighbors or else to get a wee bit ahead of them. We scheme and plan to make our dollars go farther than they will, we cultivate our minds, bedeck our bodies, and what is it all for? It rather looks as though we had selfish ends in view. But have we? Mortal man is essentially selfish, nature has so endowed him. But could not that selfishness be born of a higher motive?

I have faith to believe that every man and woman endowed with average intelligence is given that immortal spark of inspiration which consciously or unconsciously impels him to feel the claim of coming generations. I believe that human nature, dwarfed though it may seem in spots, has within its soul the desire to leave a better world than it has found. It is all too true that our good intentions often get lost because they are crowded out by the exigencies of the moment, or because of no legitimate chance for outlet, but the challenge to progress is still there and rises to stimulate the stout of heart. When thinking folks take stock of themselves they are apt to ask themselves questions, and I believe one of them is this: "What elements of the population are increasing and at what rate?" If we are to face our status quo honestly we must think in terms of the whole of mankind, and not in terms of our own little group. We must remember that every man's contribution reacts not alone in his own small group but reaches out to the length and breadth of the land. So, again the question forces itself to the front: "What elements in the population are increasing?" One thinking soul has said, "It is not the mere number of the annual increase or the rate of increase of birth rate over death rate about which governments should concern themselves, but it is the relative increase of the better and inferior elements of the population which determine whether a nation is progressing or retrograding." If the number of so-called inferior strains are increasing at a rate relatively faster than the sound intelligent stock, then that nation, in spite of numerical increase, is losing ground."

We listened with alarm in our souls when the army Intelligence Tests pointed out the fact that a large majority of our men of the country who were to defend our standards of morality had a mental age of thirteen years.

When we think at all about the burden of needlessly sick and neglected children, both mentally and physically sick, which the people of all countries are carrying, we think with alarm. Looking about for the cause of such conditions our minds clearly see that the world needs better mothers. Better mothers would increase the sane sound element in mankind and decrease the inferior. Better mothers would raise the entire physical, mental and moral standards of mankind. Better mothers would see that the country has better laws. Better mothers would leave the world a more fit place in which to live.

But how shall we get better mothers? Motherhood has been extolled thru the ages as a heaven-born function. Mother love is certainly closely related to something divine, but between the two terms there exists a chasm as deep as the seas, so it seems at times. Mother love means inspiration. Motherhood means knowledge.

Where are the mothers of the nation getting trained? Where are they getting their ideals of motherhood? Is it not true that educated classes, those who would naturally have high ideals instilled into them from youth, are not raising the children who will run the affairs of the next generation? This class of people, it must be admitted, are the ones who are now struggling to obliterate the mistakes of the generation before, but they are not the child bearers. The mothers of the masses are apt to have learned their standards or lack of them from mothers who have followed the line of least resistance, from neighbors in community life who are victims of an uncontrollable environment. The mothers of the large middle class are the ones who are framing the policies of the nation for the years to come. How shall we make better mothers of them?

The day has passed when the girl was trained in her own home for this work. She does not learn to cook or sew in her own home, nor does she learn a way to earn her own living. Painfully, women have proven their right to enter all avenues of business and profession, so that now schools and colleges are competing with each other to attract women into the various vocations. The girl who goes thru high school and on to college is almost overwhelmed with the flattering chances for success in vocations which education offers. Professional opportunities are stressed, the girl hears the lure of law, medicine and even of the ministry. Art is showing her the many resources it has to offer. Business is pointing to the countless number of

women who are making financial successes. How many colleges are placing before the young women the greatest of all professions and vocations—Motherhood? And yet State Colleges and other co-educational institutions have avowedly as a by-product, though all unwittingly, the function of a matrimonial bureau. Quite right is this state of affairs. What better place could young people find mates than in an institution of learning, where high standards are continually placed before them? Our schools are definitely preparing the students to enter all walks of life except that of parenthood. True, a well educated person should be a better parent, but is he? Without doubt he does have a trained mind, but why expect a trained mind to have gathered the material which a parent should be master of in order to raise good citizens? It used to be thought when motherhood came into a person's life that that person was endowed with the necessary equipment to make a good parent. Only the most archaic minds will hold that fact to be true still. Too many shattered lives can testify to the shallowness of that argument. So splendid and important a profession or vocation as parenthood has a right to expect from centers of learning the equipment to place it in its proper setting. The man who runs the nation has a big job and needs preparation for it. All the resources of an extensive education are placed at that individual's disposal, but for help in raising that human being so that he will be fit to run the nation, the parent must depend on native wit.

If we expect a higher type of motherhood we shall have to train mothers. That training will have to come in our schools. The coming mothers should know the underlying principles of nutritional standards which will assure normal, sane and sound infancy. She should know why certain foods should be fed to children and others should not. She should know what to expect in physical growth and development. She should know how to protect her children from sickness and contagion. She should learn what childhood is and how to interpret it. Knowing childhood's mind and how it reacts she can then guide it in its mental habits. Such information would safeguard childhood thru its period of emotional stress. Childhood will grow and develop without adulthood, but thinking men know that such development cannot reach its highest efficiency without a helping hand.

Such information and much more along similar lines should be cataloged along

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## The Why of College Training for Motherhood

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with other subject matter relating to homemaking, to economics, to science, to sociology and so on. We are continually trying to learn how to be better homemakers, but how can the colleges omit the vital part of home-making, that of being a parent and a mother? To raise the standards of the coming generation it is going to be necessary to equip mothers with a knowledge for their job. That knowledge will have to be well organized, and a school that teaches homemaking is not doing its full duty when its courses do not contain actual training in motherhood. Intelligent motherhood can be nothing less than the foremost factor in the nation's progress. We look to the colleges for dissemination of knowledge. We should not look in vain for this help in fitting womenkind for her highest function in life.

## April Showers—

(Continued from page 5)

ty, slender, striped, languid spreads among the leaves. Dutchman's Breeches are displayed in lines uplifted, large and small ones, pink and white on banks beneath the trees. Spotted Lamb's Tongue, proud of her blossoms stands with her family aloof and alone. Brown flowered Ginger, seeming apparently, nothing but leaves, covers its head with its wide umbrellas. Few but flies know how to search for these.

Far and wide with the coming of April showers search the children of men thru the realms of the Goddess of Agriculture for their lost flower kingdom. Men themselves look, in vain, for the gardens of

their childhood, but the vision is lost to him whose spirit sees not, for hands have displaced but can never replace the work of the winds, the wilds and the glaciers.

## "Moronitis"

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courts show that few have normal intelligence. We hang large numbers of moron murderers with the intelligence of 11 year old boys and expect by so doing we shall deter from crime. Over one-half of our paupers are feeble-minded, while upwards of two-thirds of our immoral women are feeble-minded or high-grade morons.

If we could eliminate the sub-normal or half-mind from society, we would do away with most of our crime and poverty. Holland according to Dr. Rutgers, has eliminated a large share of these defective classes thru scientific control of families. Eugenics is cheaper than lawyers, courts and penitentiaries, asylums and poorfarms. The railing around the cliff is better than the ambulance below.

*What should a Eugenic Program include? How shall we save civilization from decay?*

Natural selection or the abandonment of society to blind Providence will not suffice. Primitive peoples escaped the penalty of dysgenic reproduction, because their cripples either died off in infancy or were killed. Among wild animals, weaklings live but a short time, and rarely reproduce themselves. Our humane modern civilization revolts at such cru-

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