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Through Masculine Eyes

Jim Henderson  
Iowa State College

E. L. Anderson  
Iowa State College

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Men are finding it more lucrative to compete with others of their own sex to win a husband than to compete with other women and men in the business world.

All of which proves there is a practical field for the homemaker. What's that? You already knew it? Did I understand you to say that some of you are in school with just such plans? Then ours is not a startling revelation. But it's nothing to be ashamed of, some of the Ags have told me confidentially that they think the Iowa State Home Economics Division is a fine place to shop around a bit for a partner.

"Won't you take a look at Home Economics and write your impression of the course and its student?" No sooner had I launched upon the new quarter when your editor confronted me with this request.

"You're asking me to 'stick out my neck' so early in the quarter?"

"Oh, but these Home Ecs are tolerant," Peggy promised. And I hope so, obviously, because they must necessarily be, in order that I shall not be the target of justifiable feminine wrath when they find their very fine magazine cluttered with the ramblings of a mere so-called Ag Journalist who, incidentally, would feel more at home writing about livestock, soils and sports.

I expect my friend and rival editor, "Sparky" Anderson, considered this same question from the viewpoint of the engineer. Sort of an agricultural student myself, you'll excuse me if I take a peek into Home Economics as a representative of the "east side."

In the matter of home background, many of you Home Ecs and most of us Ags have a good deal in common. Most of us won't return to the farms where we were raised but the training we received out in the country will be invaluable in any field of work. The close correlation between the boys' and girls' 4-H Clubs, the Agriculture and Home Economics curricula is obvious. Home Economics! The very title of your division reminds one of the home and the family, the most potent institutions in American life. Homemaking is a job which challenges more knowledge than any other profession. Obsolete as hoop skirts and mustache cups are the days when training for home economics meant only learning to cook and sew and keep a house clean. That theory even preceded in death the idea that the "three R's" constituted a well-rounded educational program.

Homemaking today means infinitely more than cooking, sewing and house cleaning—though Heaven help us if the jobs are ever turned over to the males. It means the wise administration of a home; a distinct social obligation; a life-time job which calls upon all the resourcefulness and ability which a person can command.

Serving in the capacity of the "hairspring" of the home is not the only way in which a wife can be of immense practical value to her husband in his profession. She is quite often expected to be a leader in community organizations and activities. Her abilities and conduct reflect directly upon her husband, and the success and happiness of both are quite closely tied in with the skill in which the wife executes not only the routine household duties but the more complex outside duties.

Don't conclude from these statements that we men expect the women to carry the burden. Far from it. Marriage is a cooperative affair. It is a balance-wheel in a man's life. The woman's place in the bargain is that of a partner in the business, and usually the "little woman" is quite an important partner in a man's life and work. An inspiration if nothing more.

Here's where the Home Economics education fits into the picture. And especially Home Economics at Iowa State. For they tell me that this division on our campus is "tops" in the United States. The technical angle of the education, as I see it, has a twofold purpose. First, it teaches the Home Economics student the best and most effective homemaking methods, which she will probably some day have the opportunity to put into actual practice. And second, if the college woman is looking forward to a professional career, even if only temporarily, there's no better way of preparing for it.

An education consisting only of technical courses, though, whether in Home Economics, Agriculture or Engineering, would be pretty much out of proportion. A well-rounded education is designed to teach the student how to live a life in this world of ours, not simply how to outstrip his fellow men in his work.

Come to think of it, I don't believe I am sufficiently familiar with Home Economics and home economists, so to speak, to write authoritatively on the subject. Maybe I'd better do some research in the field in case .... ah ... in case I am called upon to write another story on the subject some day.

—by Jim Henderson
Editor of Iowa Agriculturist

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