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Shall I Work, Wed, or Combine Both?

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Which Shall I Do?

□ Work
□ Wed
□ Combine Both

Marriage claimed 23 percent of the 1945-46 home economics graduates, reports Ruth Hackett

AFTER brushing the mortar board tassel out of her eyes and taking a look at the post-graduate world around her, what should the home economics woman do?

One obvious answer is to obtain a position and put to practical use her education and training. Nearly 68 percent of the graduates of the 1945-46 class did that, obtaining positions with schools, hospitals, food service organizations and publicity positions.

Others got married and began to use practically the training they received at school. Over 23 percent of the last graduating class, totalling 311, were married or lived at home after graduating.

In past years these were the two alternatives, marriage or a position. The traditional college graduate felt that it was her duty to work for a while. All through her years in school the goal was working toward a position somewhere, being a career woman.

New Pattern

But with the war, things have changed, and perhaps a new pattern has been set up. Long range results found after these days have passed may show that there is a new possibility for the woman graduate.

That is to combine both marriage and a career. Perhaps the graduate is engaged, or nearly so, and would like to be married, but she feels that she should work first in order to complete the pattern she settled upon while struggling through chemistry and bacteriology toward a diploma. Would it be advisable for her to go ahead and work, at least for only a few years?

How much has the war changed traditional marriage so that combining marriage and a position is workable?

Dr. Reuben Hill, associate professor in economics and sociology, points out that after each war there is a certain changing of values. With a war-span taken out of a man's life, the family he plans may be dependent upon the woman he marries for economic security. In order that they be married sooner, they have to form more of a cooperative partnership than a patriarchy.

It certainly isn't necessary to put a rosy glow around life in Pammel Court—many students have already seen its advantages and been married while still in school. But Pammel Court represents the change in the traditional aspect of marriage. The husband goes to school; the wife works. Marriage has become for them a case of looking across, neither up nor down.

Most all of the recent studies taken by sociologists of the types of marriage reveal that the trend is toward a cooperative form of family management. In Iowa the representative family is based on a semi-patriarchal conception. The legal vestiges of the responsibility of the man for all family decisions still holds true, but usually the money and buying is handled by the woman.

Hand in Hand

After all, it does seem futile to spend 4 years in college studying for a degree that will never be used. If the interest in a vocation is honest and real, professional identification with it should not be lost. It is not necessary to block off marriage and a career as two separate divisions of life. They can go hand in hand.

What are the advantages to the woman in combining these two? There are several. She becomes more of a person. Personality plays an important role in the lives of husbands and wives. Holding a position is a maturing experience which constantly brings new viewpoints into play and widens the outlook on life.

Ideal Age

The ideal age for marriage is 22.4 years for the woman and 25.6 years for the man, according to Henry A. Bowman, in "Marriage for Moderns." After the war years men on campus come closer to that age than to the high school graduate's age. Waiting until he graduates and holds a secure position may be too long.

Of course, one disadvantage of combining marriage and a career is that the woman has a full-time job at home during the family-raising years. She is needed at home for 8 or 9 years and during this time will not be able to advance in the position as much as the unmarried woman would. But it should be possible to follow up research in her field or do part-time work. The actual housekeeping hours have been reduced by appliances and more modern standards of cleanliness. They should not take a whole day every day in the week. Housekeeping is neither a man's nor woman's job, and if the wife is working, it can be shared to advantage.

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