

Adequate Training of Girls

ABSTRACT OF PAPER PRESENTED TO PAN-AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS

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Any just training of the average girl, as of the average boy, must consider what the girl will probably do for the greater part of her life. The system of general education which we require of her is fashioned to give her the tools required for free communication with her fellow beings. It is not vocational.

The average girl marries. According to the last census there are nearly 30,000,000 women over 15 years of age in the United States. 70% of these are or have been married. Of those 25 years old or over - 86.7% marry while ^{of} those 65 or more years old 93.4% marry. That proves the future state of the average girl. It is the state of matrimony.

Of those 30,000,000 women over 15 years old about 7½ millions were engaged in gainful occupations in 1910 - but the average period of working life - of the average girl is low - between three and five years. The girl who works marries. In the vast majority of cases her occupation then becomes the complicated and socially important one of housekeeping and children rearing. This is her business. In the vast majority of cases she must do her work on a small income. The average wage in the Steel Corporation including salaries of general administrative and selling force as well as the large body of skilled operatives was about \$76 - according to its last report. Out of a population of 100,000,000 but 357,598 paid an income tax last year and the tax was assessed on incomes as low as \$2,500 - an amount on which millions of homes must be run.

These figures show how small is the amount on which
millions

of the woman's wages as compared with the man's

The woman as a rule comes to her task without systematic training. Educational systems refuse to regard the care of a family as a vocation. Parents generally consent that when she marries she can pick up what she needs to know. The economic social and educational results are deplorable. Economically she is an unskilled worker spending an income produced by a skilled worker - that is by labor to which the man, her partner in the business of making a home and rearing a family, has been trained. From an ^{on} economic standpoint, this relation is as unfair as it is wasteful. Its results are unsatisfactory to both parties and it hinders if it does not ruin the opportunity to accumulate a reserve fund. Socially it is destructive for it leads to dissatisfaction on both sides and makes it impossible for the family unit to serve the community as it might. The home which is on an unsound economic basis fails usually to discharge the important educational work which our system ^{expects of it.} ~~expects of it.~~ It does not train to thrift, to promptness nor to that sense of economic and social obligations which is essential in any social scheme founded on the family.

Is an ^{adequate} training possible? Present attempts to give it are half hearted and superficial. Question is treated as if it involved only the teaching of mechanical processes - cooking, making a bed etc. Short period given to it and little attempt to adapt instruction to the special condition of different strata.

No training will be satisfactory which does not include a study of the relation of the family to society. None will be satisfactory which does not dwell more on principles than processes. None will be satisfactory which does not relate teaching in school with life

at home through the co-operation of mothers and teachers a system similar to that on which is growing up in industry between the instructors in technical school and the employers of labor, the pupil applying in the shop what he has learned in the class room.

This training should be general and should begin in the kindergarten and continue through the high school. Nothing else will satisfy the demand that our social system makes on the home. Nothing else is going to lift the stigma that now rests on household labor for hire. Labor for which no scientific training is provided is always despised.