

Home making, One of the Highest Professions.

A Thesis

By Mary F. P. Harman.

Agricultural College,  
Manhattan, Kansas.

June 14, 1893.

## Homemaking. One of the Highest Professions.

The home has been the basis of all the genuine, all the lasting improvement in the race.

Hence, judging the future by the past, it is to the home that we turn for the most effective work in the solution of the great problems of the time.

Let those who will lecture upon woman's rights for instance, let argument do what it can, but in no other way will there be made so much real progress toward a millennium of universal brother- and-sisterhood as will be brought about among the silent and powerful influences of cultured homes.

We all know that there are homes and homes, homes crude and discordant where people but eat sleep and toil, and others that are havens of peace and rest to the weary, inspirations to those who go forth into the world of action and thought, homes where ties of affection are made sure and harmony reigns supreme.

We all have our pet theories, perhaps, as to

what it is that makes the difference - birth, intellect, education, wealth.

One thing is certain; in each home that is worthy of the name, all things center about some one person. There is a guardian spirit, a home maker.

Whether the homes of the human race in the years to come will be communistic to a greater or less degree or whether private domiciles will continue to be the rule, we can hardly conceive of a state of things in which the home maker would not be essential to the existence of the home.

Many an admirable rhetorical period has been turned in telling the world of the various avenues of employment that are open to woman. All the arts and trades, all the learned professions have thrown wide their gates and invited woman to enter.

Thoroughly well is she filling her place in the various fields. She is saleswoman, horticulturist, architect, lawyer, minister, physician, teacher; but never while the sun shines will woman find so appropriate, so

truly noble a calling as that which makes her queen of a home.

I am fully aware that this is no new thought. From time immemorial home making has been woman's highest mission, and in this progressive age whose praises we never tire of ringing, it is still true a higher mission than ever before.

How dare she take the responsibility lightly, she who is to preside over the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual welfare of those who make up her home circle? Truly when she undertakes this she has adopted one of the highest professions.

For the very reason that home making is a high profession, not every woman should enter it. It is a great mistake to lay home making as a "burden duty" before all women just because they are women. There are those who can never be good home makers. Many have inherited a strong distaste for the occupation, and small wonder that they should have done so considering the generations of our ancestor women for whom there

was no other possible life work.

True the ideal home making is that in which professional knowledge combines with the loving care which the wife and mother bestow upon her dear ones.

But how often life is a continual disappointment, not because she who ought to be the heart of the home is unloving or unloved, but because she lacks the inestimable power of the true home maker. Love is king, but he must have wise counsel if happiness is to prevail in the realm.

The most careful study of the subject but reveals a multiplicity of reasons why home-making should take equal rank with the practice of law or medicine or with any of the higher professions. But ere it can take the rank it deserves it must have its technical schools just as other professions have theirs.

A step in the right direction is taken by the establishment in our agricultural colleges and elsewhere of classes in the various branches of household economy. However cooking and sewing fit only for home making as arithmetic and grammar for teaching. They are good so far as they go, but are necessarily insufficient.

Special schools are as essential to the profession of home making as are normal schools to that of teaching.

Such a school should furnish opportunity for acquiring a thorough

knowledge of housekeeping, for though the home maker may seldom be obliged to perform the manual labor, she must understand it.

Here too must be given instruction in the management of help and there must be a training department for this help. Efficient assistants are as essential to the home maker as are trained nurses to the physician as is a competent faculty to the president of a school.

But it must go further. It must either give, or better, require of its candidates for admittance a broad general education.

A lesson is to be learned from the lives of the home makers of ancient Greece. They performed their household work and cared for their children as best they could, but they were unlearned in all things outside their narrow daily routine.

As a result their society was less sought, they were probably "less loved and respected" than were the other women of

the time who did not marry but were "the intellectual equals of man." Poor Xanthippe was at home alone with her laundry work while Socrates received inspiration from Aspasia or Diotima.

The student of home making must learn that an important element of her success will be her ability to secure the cooperation of the members of her household.

She must develop an ardent love for the twin sisters cleanliness and order. She must learn the intrinsic value of health, strength, sweet temper, grace, beauty, & tact. She will find opportunity to use all her intellectual attainments, all her accomplishments, her sympathies, her will power.

A woman with these endowments and this training may deem that in no home is there range of possibilities wide enough to give sufficient scope to her powers.

But the influence that it secures must needs be limited may become very wide and it blesses as well those who give as those

who receive. The reflection upon one's self may be of great import.

What woman ever experienced a more noteworthy exaltation than did Madame Maintenon when she rose from her girlhood's lowly estate to that high place she held in the court of Louis XIV? The key to it all was her ability as a home maker.

Who can measure how far shall extend the influence of one model home?

You who seek a new enterprise, you whose genius burns for a great undertaking go learn wherever you can and all that you can - study homes of every kind, study human nature, meditate upon all the lessons learned from the broad page of life and then found a school for the profession of home making.

Your school may not be popular at first. Its growth like that of all great things will go on slowly, but the final triumph will be worth all it will have cost.

The influence of the useful and beautiful lessons taught will go out

through all the land, and the homes of  
the future shall be hallowed places  
such as the multitude but dream  
of now.

Mary Frances Purgozne Harman.