

The Physical, Mental, Moral and
Spiritual Value of a Study of
Home Economics.

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The Physical, Mental, Moral and Spiritual Value of a Study of Home Economics.

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" " Moral " "

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"If the national life depends on the state, and the state depends on the homes of its people, we can clearly see that the first and primary responsibility rests upon the foundation — the home-maker and house-keeper."

Civil government teaches us that a nation never risks any higher than the homes of its people; therefore, if we are to become a nation strong physically, mentally, morally and spiritually, our homes must meet all these elements of growth. As all life is subject to the law of environment, the home must be surrounded by all the pure, healthful and practical environments necessary to its complete and perfect growth. Our education must also be surrounded by the same conditions, for true education means all that pertains to the development

of body mind and soul."

The whole value of a study of home economics cannot be told. Much of it so grows and becomes a part of us, that we fail to realize just how much it does mean to us. Perhaps the only way we can understand something of its value is to try to conceive what ideas we would have if we never had studied the subject at all. The value derived to-day from such a study is far beyond that received a very few years ago. Work along this line is growing broader and spreading rapidly now, but this rate of advancement is of recent origin. The student and teacher who keeps abreast of progress, must indeed "be up and doing."

Domestic Science. Domestic Art and Home Ethics are included under the term Home Economics.

Please think a little — do you remember the names of many people who are exerting any conscious

and intelligent effort toward prolonging their lives? Of course not. Almost all persons display the most unquestioned disregard for the simplest rules for the preserving of health. In the hurry of living, we do not think of and act upon those principles which should govern our care of "the house we live in." There are some who know, but are simply careless; but the great majority of people do not know how to live. They hold life as their dearest possession, and cling to it, but make little intelligent effort to preserve and prolong it. Hence the need of the study which has as its aim the teaching of the importance of, and proper methods of caring for the body: namely, Home Economics.

To-day, we fit or attempt to fit our boys for the work they are to do in the world. What are we trying to do when we give our girls the ordinary college education? Do we recognize that which is of

highest importance in the education of girls? And when it is over, do we really find them fitted for the positions which they ultimately occupy? A smattering of mathematics, literature, music and French and a diploma, and they are unfitted rather than fitted to live. Nothing practical is gained, and the sad part of it is that in many cases, the few practical, sensible ideas they had in the beginning of the process vanish as the work of "finishing" goes on. We want them to possess accomplishments if they be real, but we also believe that our girls should be taught something of the inestimable value of health and how to maintain it, and that home-making and management should come to them as a science. The growth of the mind is dependent on the growth and development of the body, and the state of the moral and spiritual nature is also involved in the conditions

surrounding the physical being. And is it not woman who decides "what we shall eat and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed?" "Worthy citizens are made by worthy mothers." It is a wonderful responsibility, this living, and one which should be accepted reverently as from God.

These things being true, where better can girls be trained in these essential lines of thought than in our colleges, where so many of them are found? There is now rapid progress in this work. There is much written and spoken discussion and anyone who keeps up with the times cannot avoid seeing that Domestic Science and Domestic Art possess a value equal to that of other sciences and deserve a place in the college curriculum second to that of no other subject.

In Domestic Science, we consider the principles involved in the proper

preparation of foods, that is, their selection, combination, cooking and serving, with the least expenditure of time, money, strength and material. As to cookery, let us listen to Ruskin: "What does Cookery mean? It means the knowledge of Circe and of Medea, and of Calypso and of Helen and of the Queen of Sheba. It means the knowledge of all herbs and fruits and balms and spices, and of all that is healing and sweet in fields and groves, and savory in meat. It means carefulness and involuntiveness and watchfulness and willingness, and readiness of appliances. It means the economy of our great-grandmothers and the science of modern Chemists. It means much tasting and no wasting; it means English thoroughness and French art and Arabian hospitality; and it means, in fine, that you are to be perfectly and always ladies - loaf-givers - and you are to see that everybody has something nice to eat."

A study of the composition of the human body and of the daily income and outgo, with the valuable dietary studies given, furnishes a scientific basis for classifying amounts and kinds of foods to be taken to be productive of the best results. We are taught the practical scientific and educational in cookery.

With all this we are given ideas concerning the general condition of the home, as to location, sanitation, convenience etc. All these things possess a vital connection with the physical man, for if foods and general conditions do not make the body, what does? So it is important that we have the best understanding of conditions, that we may obtain the best results.

In considering the physical value to be gained from a study of home-economics, comes the question of proper clothing of the body, which we will discuss under the head of Domestic Art.

We will also speak here of various hygienic conditions, as bathing, care of the eyes, mouth, and hair, the furnishing of rooms and taking of exercise.

Garments should be hung so as to preserve the proper shape of the body both internally and externally and all arranged so that the various organs may properly perform the functions for which they are intended; avoid materials containing poisonous compounds, and observe economy in the choice of fabrics for various seasons and climates. In short, clothing must conform to principles of art, good health and good taste. The real facts about bathing reveal to us that it is a much abused privilege. Thru the skin, the larger part of waste products should be eliminated from the body; therefore the necessity that the pores of the skin be kept open for the free passage of such materials if we expect to

maintain a perfect working of the system. Beside general rules for the control and prevention of disease, there is special care for the hair, mouth, teeth, eyes and ears. Much dust accumulates in the hair, and therefore germs; hence proper ways of cleansing are given. The mouth is known to furnish a good culture for certain germs, among which are those of typhoid fever; and also, the teeth are known to be deteriorating generally and in many cases particularly, but the whole mouth may be cared for so as to avoid difficulties of this kind. We know that when the eye is affected the whole system seems to be in sympathy, so that we find, generally speaking, the eye is best cared for by attending to the general health. For special difficulties there must be skilled, special treatment. We learn to furnish rooms hygienically - to use furniture of simple design and shallow carvings to prevent giving lodgement to dust and germs; to use, so far as possible,

that which is of greatest hygienic value, if it does cost more than other kinds; and how to remove and prevent as much as possible of the dust and muckiness with the accompanying bacteria, which invade our dwellings. Our work in exercise and physical training is good. We find which games are helpful and which harmful; when to exercise and when not to do so; how far to go before resting, and about the kinds for various cases and occasions.

Physical training is not much like it used to be, but very much improved in every way. Many people are not up to date, but follow the old rut, continuing to practise exercises really injurious to them, and so are wrecks physically instead of being perfect types of health. For now we do not believe that anything called physical training is necessarily right for all people to take in any proportion they see fit.

There must now be examinations passed for the different kinds of work, and from this, the proper kinds are prescribed for each. We find that weak persons can by judicious exercise, develop a good muscular system. Ideal human perfection involves not only the securing of fine muscles, but a good quality of nerve and a perfect balance among the organs. The high principles which we are taught should govern work, make it cease to be a drudgery and therefore a healthful exercise.

Home ethics involves the many, many questions which arise when we consider the great question of making a home what it should be — a real home. I mean the kindly, loving, Christlike deeds to be done — things which, while not absolutely necessary to the maintenance of life, are yet duties, for they help to raise our ideals, give a higher respect for the spiritual life, and

this most certainly, involve the up-
lifting of the moral nature.

In studying these subjects, we learn to think logically, and so are better fitted to solve the problems which come to us. New questions come up, and old ones are brought to our attention. One of these, is how to obtain a perfect ration for the working man of less than ample means, one which will be cheap enough so he can afford to use it. Our studies of Kindergarten work may result in good both mentally and physically. But the greatest value mentally comes indirectly thru carrying out carefully the principles of hygienic living physically; for as the body grows finer and stronger with right living, so the mental powers receive new life and follow closely in development. The two are inseparably linked together; each influences the other. Look

down in the slums where principles of hygiene seldom venture practically - you find no high mental development there, under the terrible conditions that usually exist. And then we are led to think more soberly and earnestly of life and its responsibilities.

The moral state of a being depends, in large measure, upon the physical and mental state of the body. Especially is this true of the latter. A person whose mind is in a low state of development does not possess the highest ideals morally. He cannot, from the very nature of things. A diseased body may, thru great effort possess a splendid mental and moral nature. The uplifting of the physical life leads to the uplifting of the moral tone. Look again into slum life. There you find the physical and mental conditions reaching a very low standard, and the moral condition

such as to make great hearts ache. Some philanthropists say that crime is largely the result of bodily cravings for generations unsatisfied. One of the first principles in allaying crime in cities is to see that the children have proper food. It is really a solemn thing to live.

As to spiritual value, we are given a truer regard for the body, "the temple of the soul," our ideals are raised, strengthened and more clearly defined. And there comes a stronger, deeper reverence for our Creator. Anyone who faithfully and intelligently investigates the subject of Home Economics cannot but find his ideas of usefulness in the world broadened. And one who knows not the joy of helpfulness misses one of the things which make life larger, better and truer.