

Evolution of Woman's Industries.

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Evolution of Woman's Industries

Of the billion and a half human beings on the earth one half are females. What this vast multitude are doing in the world's activities and what their mothers and grandmothers, to the remotest generation backward, have had in originating and developing culture is a question which concerns the whole race. The answer to this inquiry will benefit the living in many ways, especially if it can be shown that the achievements of women have been in the past worthy of honor and imitation and have laid the foundation for arts of which all are now justly proud.

To obtain a correct knowledge of primitive woman's activities it is necessary to call on the following witnesses:-

The first is the Muse of History, she gives information back three to four thousand years.

The second is language, this has

brought the Aryan peoples into a common brotherhood and showed the status of the common ancestors before the separation.

The third is Archaeology by which a study of primitive people is made by their relics left us.

The fourth is folklore, she gives all the old superstitions, old time customs, ceremonies of birth and marriage.

The last witness to help in this search will be a living member of any tribe accessible in every continent.

One of the first industries in which woman is found is as the "food bringer". To prepare a dinner, name the dishes, and serve a repast now is quite a problem, but the primitive woman had a still greater problem. To feed those dependent upon her she had to become an inventor.

In the vegetable world woman first used those fruits and parts

of the plant that were ready for consumption without further preparation, but she gradually increased her work until she was able to prepare roots, tubers, seeds, for use by roasting or boiling with hot stones.

Women were the primitivist cutlers. In savagery women were compelled to skin the animals, prepare the meat, and clean and cut the hides. The first article used for this was a sharp stone, to be sharpened by striking with another stone.

Woman's work in the art of weaving has dated from the earliest times, relics being found in the graves of primitivist women. In savagery the textile industry was divided into basket work and weaving, subsidiary to these chief divisions of the textile art as practiced by women in savagery are spinning, netting, looping, braiding, sewing and embroidery. All of these industries required

tools which the workwomen must fashion for themselves, and though the earth had raw materials in abundance they were not yielded without a search.

Weaving under the hand of woman grew from the simplest occupation to one of the fine arts. The first style being baskets and other small articles of the simplest type which were gradually changed in shape, weave of pattern, color and texture.

Again woman appears as an inventor making thread fine enough for the smallest needles now in use. The spindle has been in use for this purpose from the most primitive times and among very uncultured peoples.

Primitive women were not tanners but the mothers of tanners, and they practiced a variety of arts on the skins of animals. No where was a skin found which the savage women did not find some way of using, for clothing

or inventing some new use for it. The tailoring of savage women is most interesting. For scissors they used the woman's knife and at first fastened their garments together by sewing back and forth with their pieces of hide. In the fitting of garments these primitive tailors used the terms, puckering, gathering and hemming. For ticks in their more beautiful dresses they inserted band after band of the skins of different parts of animals, bits from different parts of the same hide, and strips of bare hide ornamented by quillwork.

Women were the first to develop all the technique, the forms and the use of pottery. These inventions are far reaching in the influence which they have had in the refinement and development of women. The first forms of pottery were far of the simplest construction, and it is easily seen by the style of improvements made

from time to time that man had nothing to do with them.

Each improvement was to make woman's work lighter and easier and therefore must have been thought out by herself. Woman also varied the use, finishing and outside coating of these jars giving them a completed appearance.

Transportation is a broad term. From woman's back, to the car and the ship, is the history of that greatest of all industries.

There are two sets of motives in the freighting of vessels and pack beasts, these are conveyance and freighting or the carrying of human beings and the carrying of things. Conveyance is probably older, for devices in which to carry infants probably came first in the order of invention. The primitive passenger-coach builders were strictly scientific in their methods, ingeniously adapting structure to function and environment.

ment. To insure warmth the Eskimo mother carries her child in her hood next her bare neck. In contrast to this in the tropics the mother carries her child naked and hanging to her girdle.

In our later civilization the infant has come around from the back to the left arm usually, but the train of baby carriers moves from the beginning of human history, one of the few occupations that culture has not replaced. In the early days the backs of women were burden carriers both for passengers and freight, the woman herself supplied the energy.

The top of the head and the forehead were almost universally used to help support a load resting on the back. Women bearing jars of water on their heads or carrying bundles of faggots, supported by the forehead were common sights among the savages.

Many other industries were

created, stimulated and modified by this carrying trade, in fact the burden bearer stands between each industry and its successor, passing the more or less changed material from the one to the other. In order that the burdens might be more conveniently carried women invented baskets and sacks.

Modern and classic art are indebted to women for the beginnings of landscape gardening, for poetry and music associated with the home and its surroundings, for all geometric ornaments of every kind whatsoever, for textiles, tapestries, embroideries, and laces and largely for freehand drawing and painting.

There are many ways imagined for the beginnings of speech, in any event women will receive their share of credit. Dr. Brinton says, that in most early languages not only is there a series of expressions belonging to the women, but in various nations we find a language

belonging to the women quite apart from the men.

Women having the whole round of industrial arts on their minds all day and every day must be held to have invented and fixed the language of the same. In any household, two women have it in their power to converse about a dozen subjects for a long time intelligibly to each other, but entirely beyond the comprehension of men who are present.

If women in savagery had to do with butchering and tanning, gleaming and carrying, milking and cooking and the unending list of drudgeries before mentioned their women's continual chattering or stammering or ejaculations thereabout repeated and repeated to one another and to their daughters, and even to their infant sons, became a considerable addition to the general language.

Savage men in hunting and fishing were much alone, and had to be quiet, hence their taciturnity

but women were together and conversed all day long.

In the dissemination of speech in primitive times it is almost safe to say that women had the larger share, at least before the beginning of commerce which mingled the languages as it did the productions of the nations.

In the wars between the different tribes having a different language the women were not killed as a rule but held as captives. They would take into their new home words and arts unknown to their captors. Thus they not only improved industries of one tribe or nation but greatly widened the extent of the knowledge.

From study it is found that every civilization is stimulated and enriched by new arts + new thoughts and new words from without, and this scattering has been largely women's work. In countries like China, where the women do not intermingle

it is found that the dialects are very much unlike and civilization the poorest.

To sum up the results of our study women in primitive life had their share in determining the relations of geography to history, in the conquest of the three kingdoms of nature, in the substitution of other forces to do the work of human muscles, in the production of language. By this is meant they had a peculiar part, other than they would have had to play merely as human beings.

In study of women of the Middle Period it is interesting to study those of several of the different countries. In every instance if the intellectual state of the nation is very low their women are treated with little or no respect.

In the lowest tribes of Africa women are treated as mere slaves doing all the heavy labor and during their marches the women

carried every thing and if food became scarce the women were the ones to do without.

Among the real Negroes the women were treated very differently being on an equal position with the men.

The Zulus were a patriarchal race the father being owner and master of the family, here the woman had no right being bought and sold at pleasure.

The condition of the women in Africa is almost stationary, having made little improvement since the middle period. Her industrial pursuits are limited to those followed by the savage women of the Middle Period.

In the Oriental countries the women were held in subjection to a marked extent, but their condition has been steadily improving for the last quarter of a century.

In earlier times the women of Japan were treated much the same as those of the other Oriental

countries, but now they are allowed more freedom, treated with more respect and consideration than in any of the other Asiatic countries. The girls are being educated in public and private schools. Some of the leading men of Japan now brave public scandal and are treating their wives like the foreigners. No woman's feet are ever bound now and among the middle and lower classes she is almost as much at liberty to walk and visit as in our own country.

The literary training of girls in the higher classes is at the hands of private tutors or governesses. The female children of the lower classes receive tuition in the public schools so generally established throughout the country during the last half century. Only a small portion of Japanese girls obtain an advanced knowledge of Chinese characters, though some read Japanese histories.

Socially the Japanese woman is the equal of her sister in the western lands.

The work of the Government must be done in the homes, and the leaders now marry the educated women. Filial obedience and polygamy block the advance civilization in Japan and China.

The women of India were educated only in the kitchen and ordinary work of life, they were taught a small amount of reading, writing and Arithmetic.

There was no sympathy between husband and wife intellectually. The women were regarded as live stock, born to drudgery and misery.

The industrial activities of the women of India have made little advancement, but their condition was somewhat improved under English rule.

No nation treated its women with such absolute freedom as Burma. They were on an absolute equality with men on law, religion and

custom. They were not so generally educated to read and write as the boys. Their condition is improving now in every way.

Among the European countries the condition of women was worse in Germany than in any other country unless perhaps Turkey. The Empress Frederick made heroic efforts to raise the status of women in the upper class of society that their intellectual and social equality be recognized. The wives of the majority of German nobility were mere housewives, upper servants, to look after the comforts of their lord and master. Her sphere was the kitchen and nursery. The same was true of the middle and lower classes, the effect was even more marked.

Among the peasant classes she was treated merely as a drudge, doing the heaviest kind of labor. In no other country was the condition of the peasant class so low.

Woman's industries have made little progress in Germany, even now being confined almost entirely to heavy farm labor and factory work.

The results of this system of the degradation of women was very marked through all classes of society. They lacked refinement artistic sense, this was shown by their unbecoming dress, crude decorations of their homes and talk.

Women in France during the Restoration were refined and witty, but at that time they placed intellect before every thing else. The French woman is by nature the first housekeeper in the world. Female education was either totally neglected or shamefully misconducted, the girls were brought up in hopeless ignorance of what they should have known, and knew too much about what could easily have been dispensed with.

The education of a young lady began with what concerned the toilet

She was taught that dress was the first consideration, taught to dance, sing and paint. For the development of her intellectual faculties she was sent for a year or two to a boarding school or convent where she obtained a bare notion of spelling, arithmetic and geography. Sometimes she was taught a little English or Italian. Lace making was one of their chief industries and still remains so.

One of the industries resulting from her education, which consisted wholly in a study of herself, her dress and toilet, is the modelling of fashionable costumes for the entire world.

Italian women have neither strong wills or strong feelings. At the age when American girls were first beginning their youthful experiences, the Italian woman was a matter of fact young person. They did not think the women should be before the public gaze. The Italian girl was

brought up in her mother's presence. All kinds of fine needlework was the chief industry of the women and they still continue to do fine needlework for the whole world.

Up to the time 411 B. C. the women of Greece were almost prisoners in their father's house. The Spartan addressed his wife as mistress while the Athenian caged his and regarded the Spartan as her pecked. The Spartans were almost the only ancient nation who thought the female mind capable of cultivation.

In the age of Aristotle the women were regarded as faithful slaves, spinning and rearing being their only accomplishments. Their book knowledge was very limited. During Homer's time they enjoyed as much freedom as men. They have made little progress in their extent of their activities since the middle period.

During the Middle Ages the women excelled in lace making, embroidery, and other household arts.

In America during the colonial

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days, woman's work was confined mostly to the house. Weaving was taken up here where it had been dropped by savage women.

Colonial women wove and spun all the material used in the house and for clothing, probably bringing weaving to its highest perfection, designing and weaving patterns of all styles, shapes and sizes. Most of her time was spent weaving and spinning.

She was skilled in the use of her needle, in embroidery, lace-making and all manner of fine needle work. Very little from books was thought necessary for a girl. She was trained to domestic matters, however must learn the accomplishments of the day, to play upon the harpsichord or spinet, dance and to work impossible figures and roses on canvas.

When Harriet Martineau visited the U. S. in 1846 she reported having found only seven occupations open to women - teaching, needlework, keeping boarders, working in cotton factories,

typesetting, bookbinding and household service.

In the relation of women to the getting and spending of money, the world has seen a most interesting development. In earlier years when this nation was a nation of country folk, women did little of the spending but helped much in the production of wealth.

Before the invention of machinery when transportation was slow and expensive production of most of the necessities of life centered about the home. Women very naturally came into close touch with this production, which called for little circulation of money, but for the work of the hands. Women did "their own work" which did not end with the preparation of three meals a day but covered the actual manufacture of many useful wares, as candles for lighting the house and soap for the family's use. Usually the dairy and poultry were also her especial charge.

Women can now buy all

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all the necessities they at one time
had to manufacture.

Today woman is not weaving
and spinning, she is not produc-
ing in the same ways she once
did. She does not work with the
raw material but she buys a dollar's
worth of lace, combines it with other
materials, and has as a result some-
thing which represents what she might
have paid two dollars for. That is
still production.

Many women have not lost their
function as producers but still possess
it, perhaps with even greater power,
because of the expansion along all
lines of demand and supply. On
account of the change in the economic
conditions of production, women have
however gained a whole new field of
activity, that of spending of money.

Previously women were largely
cut off from the outside world of eco-
nomic activity, but now it is nec-
essary for most women to under-
stand the laws of production and

exchange and all to fulfil the need
of study and training in the econom-
ics of consumption.