

Standards of Living.*

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If we accept the conclusion of the thoughtful students of human evolution and assume that what is represented by the term "home" is the germ of Anglo-Saxon civilisation, the unit of social progress; that no community rises above the average of its individual homes in intelligence, courage, honesty, industry, thrift, patriotism, or any other individual or civic virtue; that the home is the nursery of the citizen; that nothing which church, school, or State can do will quite make up for the lack in the home—then we must acknowledge that no subject can be of greater importance than a discussion of the standards involved in home life, and therefore no apology is needed from me for my subject, but only for my attempting to present it to you.

Man, as an uplifting, compelling force in the world, does not "live by bread alone," but in all ages has won his place by the ideals he has put far ahead and above him, and for which he has valiantly striven. "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" The man without a conscious aim slowly but surely degenerates. Habits of life have been allowed to lapse into those of savagery, where the present only guides action. Human life is so short, and human endeavour so weak, that the incentive to provide for his own personal future would not be sufficient to urge to the full capacity any man's power. To gain a home for wife and children, to secure an education for son or daughter, for the family he will strive, and thus gain the reward that comes with striving; for it is not the possession of a given thing which yields the most satisfaction, it is the contest which precedes possession. Our premises are, then, that the individual family group must be maintained—that is, that the ideal must be preserved, not the mere shell—and that in a manner consistent with modern progress.

If this Anglo-Saxon ideal of home life is to be maintained, the housekeeper must take the conscious direction of it, and so order it as to secure not only the most economical but the most efficient results—not in lavish display, not in a large bank account, but in the best developed men and women, the product of that home. Standards of living should be measured, not by money spent, not by servile imitation of others, but by that which will produce the best results in health of body and health of mind.

The economic changes which took all interesting occupations out of the home came too rapidly for a readjustment of habits; women were freed too suddenly, and have not yet recovered a proper

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balance. A higher plane of civilisation has been reached, and women must take a step up. It is like the child of the kindergarten, who carries home with such delight the work of its hands, and the student of the upper grades. The kindergarten stage is left behind, and childish things must be put away. To-day the daily routine of the home life is largely the clearing away of *débris*, the incessant warfare with dirt, with no constructive work. There is nothing tangible to show for the day's work—only healthy, happy lives! Women must go into the advanced class, put aside the merely childish way of looking at things, and see the end to be attained—a sufficient incentive.

Woman's greatest disqualification for the position of housekeeper is her lack of knowledge of and respect for science and the laws of Nature. Give her an education in the laws which govern the processes of daily life—in chemistry, in physics, in biology, in physiology, and bacteriology. Let her once acquire this knowledge, let her once gain perfect control of her machinery, feel it yield under her hand, know her power, and we shall hear no more of domestic difficulties so great as to cause hundreds of housewives to retreat into hotels and apartment houses. For she will then know how to infuse into the work of the house that interest and enthusiasm which it has lost.

That the household is held by popular opinion to be a place of menial service and petty, degrading duties, and not the centre of high and lofty ideals of health and happiness, is proved by the scant courtesy which domestic science, or home economics (call it what you will), as a branch of girls' education receives. That the household is not run on scientific principles is acknowledged by the neglect of it in the study of economics.

The twentieth-century household demands of its manager:

First.—A scientific understanding of the sanitary requirements of a human habitation. That includes, or presupposes, a knowledge of soils, drainage, plumbing, heating, and ventilation. Sanitary rules say that the soil should be clean, dry, and porous; that light and air must have access freely; that water should be supplied and quickly removed when used. How many think of these things, or, if they do, weigh them in the balance with fashion as to street or the style of the porch? Much of the expense complained of in modern plumbing is caused by neglect of the most obvious precautions.

Second.—A system of account-keeping that shall make possible a close watch on expenses.

Since the object of all endeavour to get wealth is to use it, and the use of the most of it is in connection with home life, it is evident that the household and its management is the most important factor in national prosperity. There must be a

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)