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The Woman of Power

By Lois P. Dondle - Commencement 1925(?)

Mr. President, Mr. Chancellor, Members of the Board of Trustees, Alumni and Friends of the University of Georgia:

In ancient Greece in its superb and virile youth, in the days of Sparta's power, her womanhood bore her share of the burdens. Not the mass of the women alone, but the king's wife and the prince's daughter do we see going to the well to bear water, cleaning the household linen in the streams, feeding and doctoring their households, manufacturing the clothing of their race, and performing even a share of the highest social functions as priestesses and prophetesses. With the decadence of her womanhood came the complete downfall of Greece as a nation. She was swept from Thessaly to Sparta, from Corinth to Ephesus, her temples destroyed, her effete women captured by the hordes of Goths whose monogamous domestic life was sound at the core and whose women were fearless, laboring and resolute.

In Rome, in the days of her virtue and vigor the Roman matron labored mightily and bore on her shoulders her half of the social burden. From the days of Lucretia, the great Roman dame, whom we find spinning with her handmaidens deep into the night to those of the mother of the Gracchi, we find everywhere, erect, laboring, and resolute the Roman woman. A few centuries later, and Rome also had reached that dangerous spot in the order of social change which Greece had reached centuries before.

Again and again this story repeats itself, the parasitism of the woman heralding the decay of the nation. For it is the woman

who is the final standard of the race; as her brain weakens, weakens the man's; as her muscle softens, softens his; as she decay's, decay's the people. And the reverse is equally true, for as some one has said "If you would know the political and moral condition of a people, ask as to the position of its women". Let us look then and see what is the future of Georgia with regard to its prosperity and development as a great commonwealth.

Our State, like the whole of our beloved Southland, being largely agricultural in its interests, should realize that Agriculture embraces Economic Production, Economic Distribution, and Economic Expenditure. While it is with Economic Expenditure that woman is chiefly concerned, I am not one who would remove woman from the field of productive industry. Rather would I repeat with Olive Schreiner-

"From the judge's seat to the legislator's chair, from the statesman's closet to the merchant's office, from the chemist's laboratory to the astronomer's tower there is no post or form of toil for which it is not our intention to attempt to fit ourselves, and there is no closed door we do not intend to force open. We take all labor for our province."

And yet the individual woman's interest in a gainful occupation is fortunately of short duration. Statistics show that 90 per cent of all women marry and that even half of the 10 per cent establish homes. While Man is the Producer and Protector, Woman must Establish and maintain in the home and it is a recognized fact that humanity will rise or fall as that social center is strong or weak.

The product of the home is the child. As there is no productive enterprise that yields so valuable a product, it is of exceeding importance that adequate training be given those responsible for the bearing and rearing of children. And yet only three countries in the ^{P V}vicilized world (Chili, Spain and Japan) have a higher infant mortality than the United States.

Unconsciously recognizing the fact that she is not trained for her specific task may this not be the real cause of the apparent unrest of woman? The Uneasy Woman of today is to a large degree the result of the belittlement of her natural task.

Recognizing the fact that science will give us the knowledge necessary to use our resources and that education which fails in this respect is narrow, we find the leading men and women of the old school among the first to establish and maintain Home Economics training for women. And it is in this field of education that we are to look for the right solution of the problem of Economic Expenditure.

The homemaker has entered not alone into a sentimental but also into a business partnership where her function is spending. It is her responsibility to house, clothe and feed the family and train the children in such way as to make for progress for the great bulk of Society, but it becomes her privilege only when she has a knowledge of applied science, and art and a practical knowledge of psychology and sociology and Economics. To illustrate, we can truthfully say, "Cooking is to food what varnish isto a table. As the table must first be designed and built, so must a meal first be

planned and bought before it can be cooked, and the larger responsibility comes first.

This involves not only the choice of foods, their proper combinations, their preparation and service but also consideration of the family needs and a just division of its income.

And so we find that in order to take care of the physical needs of her family from the standpoint of food in relation to health the woman in the home must have a knowledge of hygiene and sanitation, physiology, biology, bacteriology, chemistry, horticulture, poultry raising, home dairying, physics and nutrition. As we enter the fields of clothing, home-building and household management and the care and training of children we find a need for these same sciences, as well as an increasing demand for an equitable division of the family income, an understanding of the relation of members of the family to the home, the community, and the industries of the world, and for a general knowledge of history, English, art, civics, sociology, psychology and Economics,- This I claim provides a most liberal education.

At the beginning of the world war there was a movement under way in Germany to force all girls to do domestic service for a term just as young men are required to serve in the army. Certainly a paternal government should be entitled to look out for the training of its daughters as well as its sons, and an army of trained housekeepers would probably do quite as much real good in the world as an army of trained soldiers.

Ever alert to the needs of the day Georgia was among the first of the Southern States to provide adequate courses for the Home Economics training of its women and to offer opportunity for