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THE HOME AT THE BASIS OF CIVIC, SOCIAL, AND MORAL UPLIFT

By MRS. FREDERICK SCHOFF

The old world for myriads of ages has whirled through space, while countless generations of men and women have lived and loved, worked and suffered and passed on. Without volition of their own, life came to them, without volition of their own they were called away, in many cases unconscious of the Divine plan of the universe, and of the absolute dependence on each unit to perform its part for the perfect working of the whole.

Every one enters life through birth, and each human soul in thoughtful moments must acknowledge that a Divine power not only gave life but sustains it each moment.

For a brief space the work to be done is here—its continuance beyond our earthly vision. There is continuity, and through life's lessons each soul is fitted into the great mosaic of the larger life where each one has his place and work to do.

Unless one has the vision of life's scope in its entirety, unless one thinks beyond the day and hour, and lives in the light of the eternal verities; disorder and conflict are the result. It is because men and women have lost the vision, because their eyes are blind to the great spiritual causes of life, because they see only the material side, and that in a limited way that mankind grovels in the dust, and sets up as idols the fleeting shadows which seem substantial and real, but which have no permanence.

One cannot consider any real plan for civic, social and moral uplift except by an earnest, honest effort to understand the Divine plan of the universe, and under Divine guidance to use one's life as given by God, to be used in his service, in working out his great purpose for his children.

One cannot aim with accuracy or precision without light. One does not reach a goal with any certainty by aimless wandering. The cause of civic, social and moral degradation lies in humanity, and only as humanity develops true, clear standards of life can civic, moral and social conditions improve.

The cradle of humanity is in the home; God himself founded the home when he created man and woman, each with different qualities but neither complete without the other. He gave

it its greatest crown when he instituted marriage, bringing into spiritual union and oneness the masculine and feminine which together make one flesh.

He gave to both his own Divine blessing and work when by fatherhood and motherhood he decreed that each immortal soul should enter the gates of life, to be nurtured in the home which, in the Divine plan, is the cradle of the race. These duties and responsibilities are fundamental, vital, of deepest moment to the world and Heaven.

Marriage, parenthood, and the home are the living forces which make or mar human life, which make or mar civic and social conditions, and which are the definite cause of the moral status of society.

No reforms can be of real value that do not recognize the home as the basis of good or evil, and that do not take into account the fact that no lasting improvement can ever be brought about except by making the hearts of men know the right, and knowing it, wish to do it.

To the home is given by God the continuance of the race, the physical and spiritual nurture of the children. They come with the innocence of Heaven, with minds and bodies impressionable to all that is pure and good, with infinite possibilities in embryo; and the shaping of these tender little ones is given during the early years of life almost exclusively to the parents.

The trend of life, its ideals and its principles, its physical and moral tone are principally developed by them. Science to-day asserts that nearly all children are born healthy, that pre-natal conditions have less influence than has been supposed, that in the billions of ancestors, heredity is so large a subject that it is unjust to consider a child without good possibilities because his immediate heredity may be unfortunate.

A few of those who have given their lives to the study of the evolution of the mind and heart and body of the child have discovered that it is a science, exact and certain in cause and effect. The blind ones still ridicule those who consider a child worth studying. They still consider that instinct and chance can guide parents and teachers in their great work, but does the world to-day prove that instinct and chance have given the highest types of manhood and womanhood?

The little child, committed to our care by the Divine Father is the last thing to be studied, and the possession of education which will enable parents to develop in themselves intelligence and sympathetic appreciation of the wide scope of their work is to-day almost an unknown quantity. Take our civic conditions to-day—men and women are but children of a larger growth. They are the legitimate result of the early influences

of the ideals which took possession of their souls, and which each life in some sort tries to attain.

Are political conditions corrupt? They are but the sum of units which in human form have corrupt ideals of life.

Power to grasp for one's own selfish purpose is but the perversion of power which should be used for the service of all. It has its origin in selfishness, and in blindness to the higher standards of manhood. Trusts are again the result of selfish purpose to get for one's self without regard for others, without any thought of those who may be crushed in the process. It is failure to recognize the brotherhood of man, and is an evidence that the youthful ideals were not shaped by Divine standards.

Money, pleasure, high station are the goal of far too many lives who might have been taught that as a means to service they are good, but as an end they lower one's soul and degrade what should be the real purpose of life to material ends.

How few men in political places to-day use their places except to promote selfish interests, and advance personal friends regardless of their fitness or ability. The object lesson is before the nation. Its only remedy lies in putting within the hearts of men a higher ideal of citizenship and patriotism, and to the home only can we look for that. We may not be able to change the grown-ups but we may resolve that as far as in us lies, the boys of to-day shall have definite ideals of duty as men and citizens given to them in the formative impressionable years of life, that justice, equity, and righteousness may be so firmly built into character that in whatever station they may be they will not lower their standards.

We see with grave apprehension the alarming increase of divorce, lax ideas of marriage, and low standards of morality. Lawyers and clergymen from many states have met to confer on the remedy, and have shaped uniform legislation to prevent the evil which has already undermined and destroyed thousands of homes, and blighted the lives of hundreds of thousands of children.

The only real prevention of this danger to society must come from the home. It is there that we must look for any real improvement. Marriage, one of God's ordinances, the relation of the sexes in the holiness and purity which God gives them, has been perverted and degraded. The fault, therefore, is in the home which ignores these vital subjects, and which gives to youth no anchor by which to hold to what is sacred and holy, and leaves it to face these great questions without guide or compass.

Only through the home may we see society advance to higher standards of the sacredness and permanence of mar-

riage, and of its great duties, and the home cannot meet its duty until it regards lessons for home making and marital life as a necessary part of education.

Social uplift can only come by raising every unit in the social structure. Only within the last century has the world realized that it is the brother's keeper as far as disease is concerned, and that safety for one depends absolutely on safety for all. The war against tuberculosis, against yellow fever and other contagious diseases, the isolation of the victims, and the elimination of the slum may not have had their origin in absolutely unselfish motives, but the fact is recognized that society cannot be indifferent to the conditions of any of the members without sharing the results of such indifference and neglect.

The fact that the death rate among children shows that three-fourths of the deaths occur during the first two years and more than half in the first year is ascribed almost wholly to ignorance of the physical needs of infancy. This can be reduced to five per cent. by education of parents. The only remedy for it lies in the home. Physicians are deeply stirred, eager to remedy the fearful infantile mortality, but are helpless before parental ignorance and indifference.

Many of the physical defects of late years have their origin from the same cause. The absolute ignorance of both men and women on hygiene sanitation and nutrition is the undoubted cause of disease in childhood and maturity. The home which has no equipment for the physical or moral development of its inmates cannot look for the highest type of children, or the highest product of the race in maturity.

Mothers and fathers cannot be blamed for their ignorance, for they have had nothing in their education which would equip them to make even sanitary homes for themselves, and even less for their progeny.

Why are the prisons full of young men, who have entered criminal lives? Why does society complacently take it for granted that there must be criminals? These men and women in prison were impressionable children once. Is it neglect, ignorance, and indifference of parents and society that they are where they are? Is it ignorance of the treatment of juvenile offenders that each year adds to the list of criminals? There can be no question of this. For nearly ten years, I have made a special study of the juvenile delinquent in a large city, following each case and learning of the causes that led up to the offence, learning also whether the children are abnormal. The percentage of abnormal children is less than ten per cent. These children who are the embryo criminals of later years are in most cases the logical result of unwise, careless, ignorant

treatment by parents, of community carelessness as to children's needs, and of improper treatment when they offend against the law. This improper treatment is due to ignorance of humanity, and of the process by which it develops on the part of courts and community. Half of the arrests of children are for larceny, half for vagrancy, truancy and malicious mischief.

On the three counts of physical, mental and moral development there is to-day no adequate knowledge of the influence and methods by which the infant becomes the man, strong and true in body, mind and soul. There is to-day no adequate provision for education of parents, teacher or social workers, in the science of child nurture.

There is to-day no clear idea of the close relation between the physical, mental and moral growth of the individual, of the race tendencies. These three reasons are the causes for most of the evils which cause the disorders of our social system.

The home is therefore proved to be the basis of civic, social and moral degeneracy. No plan for such uplift can be successful that does not have for its purpose the development of efficiency and intelligence in the home.

The work is basic and fundamental, and without it the foundations of life are weak and insecure.

The most needed science is that of home making and child nurture. The most needed education is on those subjects, for whatever else one does, the proper knowledge of the human body and its functions, the soul and its qualities and development, the mind and its growth are elemental and of vital moment to every one. It is the foundation of a good parent, teacher, lawyer or judge, or a good business man.

The greatest work of the world lies in the development and conservation of each unit of the human race. It is a matter of deep concern to every nation. It took the Boer war for Great Britain to realize that industrial conditions under which men must labor had so lowered the physical standards of Britain that few could stand the physical test required for army service. Consternation and dismay were felt by men in high places that the race which has for centuries held a leading place in the world's history was deteriorating.

Whatever brings such a condition to the attention of a nation is valuable. In our own country there has been some government investigation in the South as to causes of physical deterioration among the poor white people of the South, and while the cause has been proved, and the remedy pointed out, the government of the United States can do nothing to apply the remedy.

In a limited degree the government is dealing with education in nutrition, sanitation, and home economics. It should do it in the broadest, deepest, most scientific and practical manner, because the quality of men and women who make up the citizenship of a nation make its greatness.

Every generation produces those who rise head and shoulders above the masses, who stand out as types of the greatness of which the human soul is capable.

To bring the masses up to these possibilities is the great duty of the home, but the home should be aided by the government, which has the power to study broadly the conditions affecting the home, and which should have the power to provide such means of education as will aid the home in its work. Instead of Children's Bureau, I would call such a department the Child and Home Department of the Government.

The powers should be those of investigation and education. The science of child nurture should be its line of education. The National Congress of Mothers after eleven years earnest study of child and home in all parts of this country, after bringing thousands of parents to a realization of the value of science in home making and child nurture has voted to organize in Washington "The Parents' Educational Bureau of America" to disseminate knowledge on all matter relating to home and childhood.

It has already secured the earnest interest and co-operation of such departments of the government as are working on such subjects, and their prominence of valuable further development on practical lines.

This is very valuable because the printing and postage of educational literature on topics needed in every home would be an enormous expense. To have these supplied by the government and franked will make it possible to extend the educational work much beyond the possibility of private effort.

This beginning has already been made. In order to reach the homes and parents, the Congress has for ten years been organizing parents' associations in connection with schools, and preparing the study of the child in the home, school, and state for use in parents' associations. These form the channel through which it is possible in time to reach and elevate every home.

The scope of the plan devised by the Congress is the establishment of a thoroughly organized system of education in child nurture which, through state and local branches, will be as much a part of the social structure as the public school system. The endowment needed for this utterly new form of education, which for the welfare of childhood, society, and the

nation, exceeds in importance every other form of education, should be adequate to carry on the work.

A board of trustees composed of men and women who have grasped the science of child nurture and home making must be chosen. A corps of instructors in physical and moral nurture should be employed, who would travel and visit the organized centres for parents in every school, stimulating study and thought by those who have the care of children.

Boards of health and physicians will willingly co-operate in the movement to extend a knowledge of the physical needs of infancy. Already through the efforts of the Congress this summer, an alliance has been formed with the Board of Health, Board of Education, and Mothers' Congress in several large cities and a valuable corps of physicians and nurses are patiently explaining to the mothers the care and feeding of little children. These lectures are given in the schools after school hours, and invitations to every mother are sent by Board of Health and seconded by personal calls by the women conducting the movement.

The lectures are translated to foreign mothers or in many instances are given in Portuguese, Yiddish, Italian, Polish, German and French.

Providence, R. I., which, with Lowell, holds the record for the greatest mortality among infants, is giving these lecture courses in 32 schools, and in all the above languages.

Philadelphia and New Orleans have taken it up with real earnestness and will give courses annually to mothers. The careful student of social conditions will bear testimony to the fact that the home is the root of civic and social defects. Yet society goes on with patch work, and as yet has made no concerted, practical effort to make every home what it should be. The International Congress on the Welfare of the Child. The Home Education Congress in Brussels, this conference on Children's Welfare are significant in showing that the thought of men and women is being directed to the science of the home.

The outlook is promising for the introduction of training schools in regard to sanitation, hygiene, the functions of the human body, the nutritive value of different foods, which are essential to every boy or girl, and lay the foundation for correct and wholesome life.

The government is performing an invaluable service in its enactment of pure food laws and in its educational campaign in regard to pure food. The work already instituted by the Department of Agriculture indicates a beginning of home protection by the government, and the desire to extend this education to women in rural districts, while giving to the farmer the knowledge of how to make the most of the soil is the next

step forward, which is even now being taken with enthusiasm at the solicitation of the Mothers' Congress, endorsed by our former President, Roosevelt.

Even the Department of Good Roads urges its work on the ground that illiteracy is almost unknown where good roads and accessible schools are at the service of the home, and that health also requires them. America insists that every child shall learn to read and write. It insists that every child shall go to school for a certain number of years. It imposes penalties for truancy. It looks with pride on its educational system, yet the education which means everything to life and health is not compulsory or possible.

Physiology is taught with such superficiality that the care and use of the most important vital organs is not mentioned. The boys and girls in most schools to-day are taught nothing concerning the function which, used as God intends, makes happiness, and which, abused, causes most of life's crime and misery. Few are the homes where parents give such information; yet is not a pure, healthy, high standard of morality one of life's most needed lessons?

The world can have no moral uplift while it leaves youth to chance instruction as to sex hygiene. It is one of the crimes of the century that for want of truth and light, homes are wrecked and lives ruined.

Every function of the body should be clearly understood, the care of the body in all ways should be a part of education for every one.

Knowledge of food, and its combinations, the need of fresh, pure air, proper clothing, the preparation of food and its care, are a necessary but neglected part of education. They lay the foundation for sanitary, healthy homes. The girls of a past generation took their first lessons in home making and motherhood when they played with their dolls, making their clothing, and in their doll houses learning of the system and order of a house. The little mother learned to sew with interest in fashioning garments for her doll, she developed in childish manner the mother love as she nursed her dolls, and cared for them as if they were really alive.

The Teddy bear has superseded the doll in this decade, and the little girl who plays dolls is an exception, and in the change a valuable means of educating a girl in her own greatest work is lost. Play may have a very important bearing on the after life, and the value of this is apparently overlooked. Whatever develops in the girl the qualities which are God given, whatever brings into the heart a high conception of the God-given duty of mothering the children of men, and of making the home a place of health and comfort and high

endeavor, whatever develops the unselfish thought for others and the intelligent power to serve is in the line of education which counts.

Whatever places before a woman another sphere as preferable, whatever diverts her ideals to business or a literary business, or political career apart from the home is in the line of descent from what is highest.

The world has never needed the home woman more than now. The children are suffering for her care. In homes where parents do not know how to bring up their children, in orphan asylums where massed together they die for lack of mothering; in reformatories, where mother wisdom has no sway, in prisons where lack of good mothering has sent them; in hospitals, in schools and colleges, where a false standard of education is dwarfing them; in mines and factories, and in courts and legislation the children are languishing, and will languish until woman realizes that by neglect of her special work, earth and Heaven are the losers.

Whatever develops in boys the sense of duty to the home of responsibility in bringing to the wife a pure heart and a high view of marriage and of sharing with her the building of a home in its highest sense, whatever puts into their hearts honesty, courage and a deep consciousness of the Divine power with which life touches the heights, is in the line of education which earth and Heaven need.

Science must lead to higher standards of life in the home, it must clasp hands with the power of the Divine spirit and into the hearts of fathers and mothers and men in high places put a deeper realization that the home and the children are the real purpose of all achievement.