

## EDUCATION FOR PARENTHOOD

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Approximately one million, one hundred thousand marriages will be solemnized in the United States in 1916.<sup>1</sup> In the families thus begun perhaps three million children will be born during the next six or eight years. One out of five of these children, or about 600,000 of them, will die within a year of birth, and another 150,000 before the fifth birthday.<sup>2</sup> The right kind of education for the duties of parenthood in elementary and high schools, colleges, and "continuation" classes would cut this startling total to perhaps 75,000, if one may judge from what has been accomplished in a few localities by efficient coöperation among health agencies.

Herbert Spencer in *What Knowledge is of Most Worth* wonders whether a puzzled antiquarian of a remote future, finding nothing except our school books and college examinations, would not conclude that our courses of study were only for celibates and monastic orders, and later he says, "When a mother is mourning over a first-born . . . when she is prostrate under the pangs of combined grief and remorse, it is but a small consolation that she can read Dante in the original." One might add today that she will find but small consolation in the algebra, Latin, German and ancient history which she has "taken" in high school, and in the "pure" science and psychology, advanced mathematics and foreign language, theories of ethics and of logic, which she has been required to pursue in order to secure a B.A. degree. Might she not wisely ask:

What have these subjects done to prepare me for the MA degree, surely the degree which every woman should covet? Would it not have been possible to "apply" my chemistry to food values and food combinations, and my psychology and ethics to the training of children, and to substitute courses in "Training for Parenthood" for the required work in foreign language, mathematics and philosophy? Would it not be wisdom to make these traditional subjects elective, and to require a subject which is really fundamental in the education of all?

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<sup>1</sup>The latest statistics available are for 1906, when 853,290 marriages took place, or 39 per cent more than in 1896, when 613,873 marriages occurred. The same rate of increase would give 1,086,063 marriages in 1916.

<sup>2</sup>See Professor Irving Fisher's *National Vitality*.



Would not such subject matter result in a kind of clear thinking, which is not now being done in our traditional high school and college subjects? Would it not be possible, even in the upper grades, to "apply" the physiology and hygiene and to substitute really "human worth" subjects for technical grammar and much arithmetic, in order that those who never will enter high school may have some training for parenthood? Further, is not the boy and youth and young man as much entitled to such training as is his sister?

Three questions perhaps should be answered, namely, (1) What is now being done in elementary schools, high schools, colleges and continuation classes toward educating for the duties of parenthood? (2) What should be done? (3) What can be done as a beginning?

#### WHAT IS NOW BEING DONE

Rural schools, graded schools, high schools, and even colleges are beginning to realize that food values, cooking and sewing should have a place in courses of study because of their practical worth, and as a result domestic science and art are being widely introduced. Whenever these subjects are taught in a way so practical that they will function in the laborer's house as well as in the home of the prosperous merchant, they may be truly said to contribute to the right kind of education for parenthood.

There are, however, two real dangers in the teaching of these subjects. There is doubtless much truth in the criticism that such work has its foundations in the clouds rather than on solid earth—that more attention is given to lace and fudge and angel's food than to kitchen aprons and bread or to economical buying and balanced menus. Furthermore, are not teachers, capable of the best work, too often hampered by tradition and by the thought of exhibits and examinations? And finally is there not too much emphasis placed on the logical presentation of subjects? Some colleges, for example, keep young women studying general chemistry, food chemistry, etc., for two years, before allowing them to enter the sacred precincts of the cooking laboratory. By this time a third of the young women have tired of the treadmill of theory and have gone home. The trouble with this sort of teaching is that life is not logical, and no dictum of the schoolmaster can make it logical. In life we do, and by doing learn the theory of doing that makes us

more efficient in doing the same thing again. Education based first of all on logic is seldom if ever efficient education.

In Hartford, Connecticut, Montclair, New Jersey, and in other cities girls in the upper grades are taught to bathe and care for babies. In a few high schools day nurseries are maintained, thus giving girls an opportunity to learn something of the care of infants. Many schools by physical examinations are emphasizing the care of teeth, of eyes, and of the general health. If the thought of using such information in their own homes is kept ever prominent such work is excellent training for the duties of parenthood.

In many schools play is supervised. Games and folk dances thus learned may be made splendid education for use in the home. A few high schools are teaching something of eugenics; others are teaching sex hygiene. Not many are teaching applied ethics, though the work of Professor F. C. Sharp of the University of Wisconsin along this line is having a manifest effect in that state and even more widely.

Perhaps more direct work is being done in continuation classes than anywhere else. These are maintained by many schools, as well as by Christian Associations and other organizations in districts populated largely by the foreign born. The work done in them in training mothers to feed their children wisely and to care for them properly is notably efficient.

#### WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

To answer this, consider first what the young man and young woman should be when they come to marriage. Physically they should be so developed that every muscle and every organ functions normally. They should understand the heredity, the food, the fresh air, the exercise and the moderation that make for such physique. Mentally they should be normal, and should know enough of eugenics to understand the grave danger of marriage on the part of the mentally deficient. Morally and spiritually, the more nearly they approach the teachings of Jesus, the better. They should know sex hygiene, and should have at least general ideas of food values for babies and children; of when to send for the doctor and what to do until he comes; of the symptoms of common diseases; of the value of work and play and rest and sleep and moderation; of the mental development of children; of the ethical and moral training of chil-

dren; of the effects of coffee, tea, tobacco and alcohol (within a week I saw a woman give a glass of beer to a child under three years old); and besides these general ideas they should know just where to get the books that will give the most specific help.

The early school years should train toward physically efficient bodies both by teaching and by practice. Fresh air, hygienic drinking cups, care of the teeth, no coffee, tea, tobacco, or alcohol, exercise out of doors daily, food values, how to eat, simple sex hygiene, lessons for girls in the bathing and caring of infants, something of how parents and children should play and chum and laugh and love and work together,—all this and much more should be and can be accomplished in the grades.

In the high school should come more complete training along all these lines, and in addition there should be courses in simple eugenics and eugenics, simple applied psychology, practical ethics after the plan of Professor Sharp, practical biology, both chemistry and physics as applied to the home, exact but very practical studies in food values, with at least one course of a year aiming directly to train for the duties of parenthood. Such a course might be called "Life Problems." It should bring into a unit all the less direct training found in the various courses. As a basis Professor McKeever's *Training the Girl* and *Training the Boy* might be used until some book written for the immediate purpose shall be on the market, both books to be read and studied alike by boys and girls. With this study should go constant reference to a class library of perhaps a dozen volumes, merely to give some knowledge of possible books for later reading.

In grammar schools and high schools emphasis should be placed on the value of this knowledge in self-training and in helping mother to train younger brothers and sisters. Its value in after years will care for itself.

All manual training work is education for parenthood, if it is so taught that in after years the father will make it possible for his children to supply themselves with tools and nails and screws and boards and to make the thing wanted, he giving such suggestion and inspiration as will help them over the hard places. It is peculiarly effective training when the pupil is permitted to make during his shop periods something he really wishes to make; when he is set at a

task and compelled to do what is irksome, its educational value is largely gone. And should not every girl have some opportunity to learn to drive a nail, and saw a board for the sake of the future home? Further, should not camp cookery and bachelor's sewing be given to boys while the more advanced work is being given to girls?

Where find the time for such studies as are here suggested? Would it not be better to require this work of all students than to require foreign language, algebra, geometry and ancient history, if it is impossible to include both? Just how do any of these subjects make for efficient parenthood or citizenship? Do they function in life? But you must prepare for college? Who said so? Should the high school, which is the people's college, refuse to educate merely because many college courses of today belong in the centuries long past? Some colleges already will accept the student prepared along the lines indicated; all that are of the twentieth century will accept them as soon as the high schools begin to graduate them, exactly as most colleges are today accepting entrance units in vocational work. Put in the courses, and the colleges will have to accept them. It is only a third of a century ago that most colleges would not accept a student unless he was prepared in Greek.

What should the college do? For the present exactly the things suggested for the high school, only it should do them in a more thorough and practical manner. The definite course suggested should be included as required work in all college courses, in both technical and liberal arts schools. Why? Because no college should send forth a man or woman for leadership who has had no training in the most important business of life. Courses in psychology (particularly in genetic psychology), in ethics, in philosophy, in all sciences, in pedagogy, in literature, should be taught with this end in view. Oral composition courses should include story telling for children. A required course in "Literature for Children" should be established.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE

One would think, the importance of the end to be attained being in mind, everything here suggested can be done shortly. Spencer's *Education* was published in 1861. He so clearly showed the need of training for parenthood that one would have expected a decade to

see such education firmly established. Nearly six decades have seen almost nothing done. So what can be done? Every interested teacher can do something indirectly if not directly. In time something will be done directly in every school. It can come only by littles. No school should wait for a demand for it from the people. The people do not demand advances in education. They look with a reverent superstition on the medieval curricula of today. Foreign language and mathematics are sacred. The colored man, freed from chains, thought a little Latin would educate him. His superstition is all but nation wide. The change must come through the steady forward march of educational leaders.

But this can be done: Every teacher can be made familiar with Course No. 3 of the Home Education Division of the United States Bureau of Education, "A Reading Course for Parents." It is made up of a splendid list of books which cover admirably the field of education for parenthood. A request brings the list. The books are not expensive. Teachers, once familiar with the course, can aid in its wide adoption; ministers can recommend it; all can give it publicity.

Teachers can send to the Bureau of Education for bulletin No. 610, *Education for the Home* (four parts), by Benjamin R. Andrews. This sums up all that is being done in schools and colleges the country over. It suggests how the sciences may be applied to home training and outlines various courses of study given at the University of Wisconsin, at Simmons College, and elsewhere. So, too, teachers can become familiar with the work of the American Association for the Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality.

Most of all, every community should organize continuation classes. At least 2,000,000 young women between sixteen and twenty-four are employed in this country, and not less than 5,000,000 of the same age are unemployed and yet out of school. Classes for such young women can be organized in every community if one individual has a real interest in the subject. The churches, Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. organizations, and schools—all are agencies that may independently and coöperatively carry on such classes both for young women and for young men, thus giving them a chance for out-of-school training, to make up for what the schools and

colleges have omitted in the past by way of specific training for the duties of parenthood.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>For the suggested required course in college and high school, perhaps the class library should include the following books, in addition to the ones mentioned: Tanner's *The Child*, Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1904; Hall's *Youth*, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1912; Hall's *Adolescence* (for college classes), New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1904; Lippert and Holmes's *When to send for the Doctor*; Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott Co., 1913; Adler's *Moral Instruction of Children*, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1895; Betts's *Fathers and Mothers*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1915; Forbush's *The Coming Generation*, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1912; Fisher and Fisk's *How to Live*, New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1915; Hodges's *The Training of Children in Religion*, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1911; Halleck's *Psychology and Psychic Culture*, New York: American Book Co., 1895; Sharp's *Moral Education*, Mrs. Fisher's *Self-Reliance*, and Kirkpatrick's *The Use of Money*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co.