

The Public Secondary School for Girls - A Study

It has been said that "All education is a development by culture and experience of that which is in the individual to the end that his best destiny may be accomplished." On the other hand it is said that "Whatever the state visions are good in its own advance, it rightly expects the school to impart," and the public schools' "first concern must be to equip each to co-operate with his fellows and then, and not until then, shall it turn to the more individualistic task of fitting each one for the highest economic efficiency." Apparently we have here two conflicting ideas of the function of public education; the latter being that the public school is intended primarily to promote the welfare of the state; the former that the public school is intended for the best development of each individual. As a matter of fact these are the two sides of a shield, and the shield can't exist without both sides, and it would be well perhaps to lay more stress in the grades upon training for public adjustment - for the state, ^{than upon} ^{the more individualistic} side, but in the secondary schools the ^{might well} emphasis should be placed upon individual efficiency. Yet at no stage in our educational

System should either side be totally disregarded. At all times the individual's training should be such as to make him a more efficient economic factor and a better servant of the State. The emphasis so far has been, upon ~~the idea that~~ to quote Dr. Brumbaugh, not on "the earning power for the individual but the service power for the state" Realizing this ^{and appreciating its worth} fully I wish in what follows to show that in our public secondary schools for girls there are certain obligations to the individuals as such and that in fulfilling ~~that~~ ^{these} obligations we will in the best way serve the ^{best} interests of the State.

No democratic State ^{is} ever better than of a higher order than the general personell of its citizenship; and the standard of citizenship is never far in advance of the standards of the mothers.

The best way to raise the standard of living is thru the mothers, for "as the Mother, so is the home." The home is the center and salvation of our state, and the mother is the central figure and guiding spirit of the home. How essential it ^{is} ~~is~~ ^{that} the home-keeper should be well prepared for her task by a complete mastery of the material

Conditions of those she serves! ~~as well as of~~
~~the finer~~ Well may we ask with Miss
 Arnold that "In our efforts to secure a gen-
 erous education for women have we not
 come to overemphasize and overestimate scholastic
 ability? to see it out of proportion to its
 advantage? to magnify schooling, and to
 minimize the value of the qualities and of the
 knowledge which are essential to fullest
 development— and particularly that knowledge
 and those qualities upon which her success
 in ^{her} home administration will depend!"
 What are we doing to better prepare the
 girls in our Secondary schools for the
 responsibilities of actual life as they
 are sure to find it when they leave
 us? We are training them for citizenship
 and that is no mean task. But are we
 not giving them fine clothes when
 they need a work-a-day suit? The average
 high school girl will in the course of
 nature marry and become the mother
 of a family. What are we doing to
 prepare her for these responsibilities
 of this position, than which there is no
 higher among men?

She will purchase the food and
 clothing for the family and this means

according to the United States Commissioner
 of Labor that if the income of the family is
 between \$300 and \$400 per year she will
 spend 69.73 per cent of it, if the income is
 between \$500 and \$600 she will spend 59.11 per
 Cent, if between \$700 and \$800 she will
 spend 55.22 per cent, if between \$900 and
 \$1000 she will spend 51.18 per cent and if
 over \$1200 she will spend 44.34 per cent
 for these two items alone. In other words
 she will spend at least half the annual
 income of the family for food and clothing.
 What are we doing to make her a more
 intelligent buyer. It is not what a person
 makes any more ^{than} ~~that~~ what he saves that
 makes him rich. Should we not
 teach these girls what kind of cloth
 to purchase, how to cut it and turn it
 into garments so as to get the best results?
 Should they not be taught the properties
 of different food stuffs and how to prepare
 each article of food so as to get the best
 results. How many hundreds of pounds of
 flour are burned ~~annually~~ into sodden
 bread and thrown into the garbage box
 or worse still put into the stomachs of
 growing children and thus liberally impairing ^{their} ~~his~~
 usefulness as a citizen? This is not overdrawn

The health of the child is often ruined simply because the mother does not know how to prepare its food.

Again how few mothers know how to clean a house or how to ventilate it! Consumption, perhaps calls for more of our citizens than any other one disease and yet fresh air and sunshine will kill Consumption. Is it not worth while to give these girls some training in "how to attend a home?" How many an infant dies simply because the mother does not know how to take care of it? And how many a sick person perishes for the lack of intelligent care on the part of those in the home? It is more essential therefore to material prosperity and to human happiness and usefulness that these girls get some such training than that they be given four year courses in the humanities and yet I hasten to say that I do not underestimate the value of the so called Classical Courses. They are valuable, even essential if you will, and yet there are other things that will not take much time but will be

of constant use to each girl as long as she lives. Not only will these household sciences be of service to the given individual but thru her they will be of service to all with whom she has dealings. If thru her knowledge she is able to make a home happier, by being able to spend 50 percent of the income to a better advantage, is able to preserve the ^{same} life and health of other young citizens, is able to lessen the suffering of the grown when ill and at times preserve life, and is able to ward off disease and lessen hospital expenses by knowing how to "keep house" is she not serving the state in the very best way possible? If therefore our training is for citizenship alone can we afford to neglect longer to give our girls that kind of training that will make them the best citizens? If it is the function of public education to increase the economic efficiency of the individual can we afford to neglect longer to give our girls that kind of training that will make them the best house makers possible? The theory of education is worth but little, if we cannot get practical results.