

# Better Homemakers Is Idea Of Bill Extending Work Of Public Schools

Author Of "Lucile" Says "Civilized Man" Cannot Live Without "Cooks" Or "Dining"—Public Schools Assume Neglected Home Duties And Pretty Chefs And Waitresses Are In Training Who Will Cater, In The Near Future, To Epicurean Tastes.

By EMILY EMERSON LANTZ.  
"The time has come," the *zealrus* said,  
"To talk of many things:  
Of ships and shoes and sealing wax,  
Of *embages* and kings."  
—Alice in "Through the Looking-Glass."

KINGS, having more or less toppled off their thrones during the World War, have lost interest as a subject for current thought, but the no longer humble cabbage (could any vegetable be humble at a cost of 30 cents per pound?) is still with us, and the immediate problem for the bloated dime-holder who buys one is how to cook it in such appetizing manner as to justify its price.

Perhaps one minor benefit that may accrue from the war and its consequent high cost of living will be a revolution in the sacred precincts of the home in relation to domestic science. The truth is the home has long since ceased to be a center of educational training, either for classics or household arts. An old Maryland plantation used to be a nucleus for many industries—the grinding of meal and flour, the shoeing of horses, the repairing of farm utensils and implements. Equally the home used to boast its own schoolroom, with governess or tutor, while the mistress of the mansion was directress of all domestic arts. Noble Greek women of ancient days were found at their looms, surrounded by handmaidens weaving under their instruction. In early Colonial days the lady of the manor supervised everything from cutting out of garments for plantation hands to the boiling of jellies that sparkled like jewels in cut-glass dishes upon her hospitable board. Today the home schoolrooms have been abandoned for the public schoolhouse, the college and the university. Hand looms and spinning wheels are relegated to the attic as cast-offs, or to the museum as relics. Ready-made clothing departments have supplanted the modiste and family seamstress. Trolley car and railway coach have marked the passing of the private carriage, while children of rich or poor are frequently born in hospitals, where every protection of science and equipment envious both mother and child.

However, two features of ancient home life still remain in the home. It is still the place where the family gathers three times a day for meals, and it is still the nursery of childhood and the altar of family affection. But for a long time prior to the World War standards of home cooking and serving of foods were steadily declining. Cooks who were skillful became increasingly difficult to obtain, and unskilled, wasteful ones rendered such unsatisfactory service that when war came, with its resultant high scale of wages and high cost of living, countless families found themselves unable to pay extortionate wages for unskilled service, unwilling to permit waste at a period of world famine and unable themselves to provide food, at such high cost, to an additional person.

## Cooks Extinct As Dodo.

In consequence, the home, as the one place in the world where a family can have good meals, where they want them when they want them, and of foods that appeal to individual taste and prepared after a manner desired, has seemed to be in grave danger of becoming as extinct as the dodo. Take it from the astute Lord Lytton, there are few pleasures in life that can compare to a well-prepared, well-served meal. That poet says: We may live without poetry, music and art; We may live without conscience and live without heart; We may live without friends; we may live without books. But civilized man cannot live without cooks. He may live without books—what is knowledge but grieving? He may live without hope—what is hope but deceiving? He may live without love—what is passion but pining? But where is the man who can live without dining?

Mark that Lord Lytton lays stress upon two words, "cooks" and "dining." At present the average family lacks a cook and dines at rare intervals. Inexperienced wives and sisters are trying to cook, but to apply the phrase "dining" to the result is laughable. That unpardonable vulgarism—the word "cats" or the mill-hand word "mealine"—has undeniable relation to the methods of procuring food, at the present time, for innumerable people now eat what they can, where they can and as they can. As a natural consequence the world is rife with folks so cross, there is no living with them. Truly "their manners are such!" But much should be forgiven them, for they suffer much in the region of the stomach. If, as Francis Bacon has said, "reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man," inadequate and ill-served meals make an empty, hungry and ill-tempered man; and, speaking very seriously, the world, under present stress of hunger and deprivation of accustomed

be held at the Eastern High School for grown women who can conveniently attend them.

There are more persons engaged in the occupation of homemaking than in any other single occupation. There were, when the last census was taken in the United States, about 20,000,000 homes in the United States that represent a demand for an equal number of well-trained homemakers, yet up to very recent time it was generally believed that a girl knew how to take care of a baby by instinct and that, in an increasingly complex civilization, she could drift into marriage, motherhood and homemaking in total ignorance of their tremendous demands upon her intelligence and her physical strength. To learn through grievous mistakes or some recollection of her mother's methods was her mournful portion. It is now admitted that the home is no longer the place where girls are taught this side of their life work, and, appreciating the vital necessity of restoring old-fashioned lines of house-keeping to their former dignity as household arts, those most interested in the youth of the country and the upbuilding of standardized homes are bending their energies to the further development of instruction in domestic science in public schools and women's colleges.

The aim of vocational home economics is to develop individuals who will become efficient homemakers and who will enter upon such duties instructed concerning the care of children, the care of the house and its proper equipment, the selection, preparation and serving of foods, the selection and care of clothing (and to some extent its actual making), and in the care of the health of the family.

## Scientific Vs. Home Training.

In many respects the instruction provided by schools and colleges in domestic science is superior to much of the former home training given by mothers to their daughters. The standard of cooking is higher, the training more scientific, recipes usually better and more exact and equipment more modern. Baltimore is abreast of the most progressive cities in the United States in vocational training, and the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of instruction given was recently demonstrated in an accidental way. A student of a vocational school, after three months' instruction, had secured a job. This week his employer told his former instructor

that the lad's efficiency was as high as the efficiency of untrained boys who had been in the shop three years.

A young mother who had been instructed in the care of her baby by physicians and nurses of the Child Hygiene Bureau was complimented upon the rosy vigor of her infant. "This baby gets proper food and care; that's why he looks so well," she answered proudly. Following intelligent instruction, this mother obtained splendid results from her efforts, whereas a poor, untrained little mother might strive with equal effort and affection for her baby and see it thin and pining.

The two greatest causes of infant

mortality are ignorance and poverty, and the Children's Bureau states that from three to six millions of American children are not getting enough to eat and that the proportion of undernourished children in well-to-do families is appallingly large.

The child is the greatest asset of the nation. He represents wealth, since the economic value of a normal human life is estimated at \$2,000. In producing a fine, vigorous child the home is building up the nation, and juvenile delinquency usually pertains less to the child than to parents and environment. No child is normal who is underfed.

Also, with proper training in child hygiene and domestic science, the mother is relieved from much drudgery, for the right way to do anything is, in the end, the easier way, and practicing any occupation for which one has had no training is always drudgery.

About one out of every six girls enrolled in public high school courses throughout the United States is now enrolled in home economics courses, which is excellent beginning, but such instruction must, and will be, extended to girls who are forced to drop out of school and go to work, to girls who are not at work, but who have left school, to girls and women over school age and girls in rural communities.

Mrs. John J. Abel, acting as chair-

man for the American Home Economics Association and thrift chairman of the State of Maryland, is one of those working most earnestly for increased opportunity for instruction in cooking and child care. She is among those ardently supporting a bill introduced by Mr. Fess in the House of Representatives, which has been referred to the Committee on Education. The object is to make education in home economics possible for every adult woman and girl over 14 years of age in the State who wishes it.

## George W. Gaither Interested.

Members of the executive board of the Maryland Federation of Women's Clubs have endorsed the Fess bill and Mr. George W. Gaither, supervisor of manual training and domestic science in Baltimore public schools, said that, while he is not acquainted with the provisions of the Fess bill, he is heartily in favor of any measure that will enable extension of instruction in practical homemaking in the State. There are now, he said, 10 schools for white pupils in Baltimore where household arts, cooking, sewing, drafting patterns for dressmaking, etc., are taught, with several centers fully equipped for practical application of instruction given. Night classes for women over school age at the High School are well attended and he fully expects that

next year similar classes will be opened at the Eastern High School.

Thus women are returning to old home duties but by a more modern, pleasanter route. They bring with them new kitchen equipment part of which is already installed—the hot water heater, gas or electric stoves, washing machines operated by power other than the human hand, electric irons, the fireless cooker, the vacuum cleaner—all these have superseded old methods as surely as the patent egg beater has superseded two forks wielded by hand.

Cooks are in the making, not the careless kind who guessed at a pinch of salt, but cooks who quietly measure portions and await successful results in calm surety. And the schools teach no less the art of setting a table and waiting upon it. So that should the author of "Lucille" experience a reincarnation five years hence, he will doubtless find "civilized man" again enjoying the comforts incident to experienced cooks and the now almost forgotten luxury of "dining."