

CATCALLS FOR CAREERS

An Old Controversy Reopened

WE had supposed that most of what there is to say on the subject of home-girl versus career-girl had long since been said, but the war brings into prominence new facets even of old controversies, and it is amusing to find in the newsmagazine *Time* the old problem re-aired under the heading "Razberries for Housewives." Says *Time*:

"Home and motherhood got an unexpected dressing-down last week at Stephens College, famed finishing-school for future mothers. The President of Stephens, James Madison Wood, believing that 'the mother in the home is the key to future civilisation,' had gathered some 500 housewives, psychiatrists, and teachers for a three day forum on *The American Woman and her Responsibilities*. But President Wood's family gathering turned into a family brawl.

"Stephens, a highly successful junior college of 1,700 students in Columbia, U.S.A., brooks no such nonsense as the theory that women are like men, and devotes itself strictly to making women more womanly. It likes to boast that 85% of its girls get husbands within five years of graduation. To train them fully for their functions as wives and mothers it teaches them the arts of 'dressing, making up, keeping a budget, reading the Bible, riding, singing, and talking politics intelligently.

"Convinced that United States morale, like charity, should begin at home, President Wood staged his forum to show off his college as a model of female education and to broadcast the opinions of assorted experts—dietitians, doctors, educators, club-women, journalists, etc.—on how to improve United States homes. The forum started with a talk on nutrition, but soon became more lively.

Forget the Spinach!

"At a packed meeting to discuss how 'current world conditions' affect United States women, Thomas Beck (publisher of *Collier's Magazine*) cried: 'Forget about Johnny and his spinach; there are going to be many substitutes for spinach . . . Are cooking and sewing going to win the war? No! You are going to have to work like men. Industry will win the war . . . If we had less sex distinction, there would be fewer divorces . . . My current wife was making 12,000 dollars a year before she married me, and this ability of hers to do all the things I can do makes her my past, present, and future wife . . . After the war you won't have the kind of home life you seem to be looking forward to . . . You can't train 40,000,000 housewives to be good cooks, but you can make 40,000 perfect cooks for restaurants . . .'

"Next day Stephens startled President and girls heard still more shocking talk. Exclaimed Dr. Leslie Benjamin Hohman, famed John Hopkins psychiatrist (author of *As the Twig is Bent*): 'Don't marry a soldier just because he wears a uniform . . . Marriage in this country is based too much on

romantic ideals. Romance is the whipped cream of marriage . . . Whole civilisations have been founded on the theory of marriage without love; for example, the French marriage of convenience . . .'

"Stephens' girls booed and hissed.

"Unruffled, Dr. Hohman went on to propose that young wives go to work.

"Plain Bunk"

"Retorted Mrs. Douglas Timmerman, wife of the executive vice-president of the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce: 'No! Marriage and a career don't mix. I tried it . . . and I'm glad to be back home. My child needs me.' (Applause from Stephens' girls.)

"Dr. Hohman: 'I think that's just plain bunk. Any women who can afford 15 dollars a week for a nurse will gladly turn over her kids to one.' (Boos, hisses.)

"Mrs. Timmerman: 'Do you have any children, Dr. Hohman?'

"Dr. Hohman: 'No, I'm a bachelor. But women pay me large sums of money to train their children for them.'"

But in spite of Messrs. Beck and Hohman, President Wood and his gallant 1,700 are still convinced that cooking spinach can win the war and the peace, too, and that the American woman's prime and all-absorbing responsibility is the care of her home and children.

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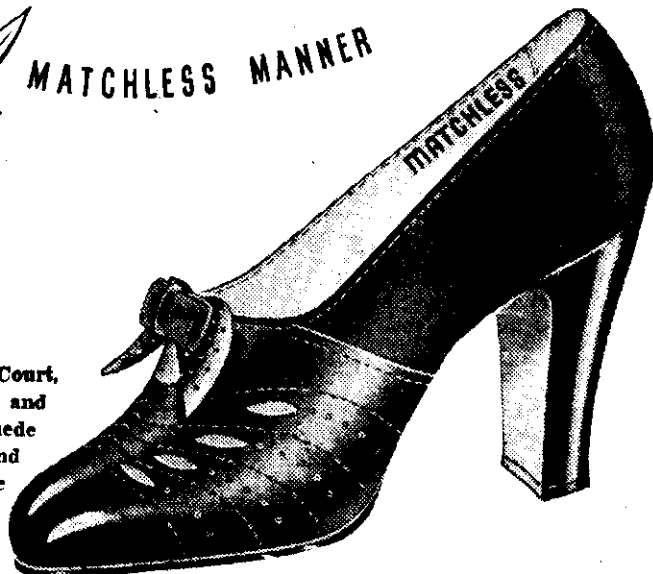
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