

VASSAR GIRLS TO STUDY HOME-MAKING AS CAREER

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New York Times (1923-Current file); May 23, 1926;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times with Index
pg. XX8

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New Course in Euthenics, the Science of Human Betterment, Will Adjust Women to the Needs of Today and Act As a Check on Spread of Divorce

By ROSE C. FELD.

WHY are there so many divorces? Why do parents fail to understand their children? Why do women think housekeeping more important than home-making? Why do women fail to apply the same efficiency in the home that men find successful in business? How can the home be made a career?

These are some of the questions that will be answered for a hundred women this Summer at Vassar's first Summer course. During the World War nursing was taught in Summer sessions, but this was done to meet the special emergency. With that exception Vassar has limited itself to undergraduate work within the college year, discouraging post-graduate work in its own schools. Now, to meet the needs of the present, Vassar is inaugurating a Summer school of euthenics.

Euthenics as a word is comparatively young. Various definitions are given for it, the simplest being efficient living. As feminized at Vassar it denotes the things that concern the woman living today, the things that go into the business of living as a wife, a mother, a home-maker, a member of society. It is not home economics alone, nor child training alone, nor social work, nor cooking, nor politics, nor mental hygiene, nor psychology, nor psychiatry, but it includes all of these and more.

Study of euthenics is directed toward giving the woman whose career will be home-making the same ease in handling the various conditions she will meet as an engineer has in dealing with his work. No situation is entirely without answer for the engineer; he can always refer to past records and past experiences of those who have preceded him. Euthenics, it is asserted, will give the woman a similar background to aid her to grapple with the problems of her future.

Matthew Vassar's Purpose.

Dr. Henry Noble MacCracken, President of Vassar, was asked the other day what had led Vassar to inaugurate a Summer school of euthenics.

"The present demands it," he replied. "When Matthew Vassar founded this college he was eager to develop a woman's college that would not be an imitation of a man's college. Time and

again in his letters to the trustees of the college he said, 'I beg you to remember this is a woman's college.' Unfortunately, small heed was paid to his words. Yet they who made of Vassar an imitation of a man's college were not wholly to blame. All women's colleges had been imitations of men's colleges.

"In the past there was some reason for this. Higher education for women was still practically new. Women had to prove that their brains were as good as men's, that they could attain the same kind of scholarship as men. Well, they proved it. No one today doubts it. What with the establishment of suffrage, with women entering the professions of men, there no longer is a question of woman's intellectual ability.

"It is now time for women's colleges to do the work that Matthew Vassar with great foresight intended Vassar to do, that is, to train women for their business of living. A woman does not need the same education as a man. His years of college are intended to train him for the work he will do as an efficient member of the community he lives in, as the head of his family. We shall not, at present, discuss whether or not his college succeeds in doing it. A woman's college should train the woman for the part she is to play in life.

"Over 75 per cent. of college women marry. Are they trained for the career of home-makers? According to reports we read in newspapers and the things that are discussed in households, I think the answer is 'no.'

Age Requires Different Training.

"This is an era of industrial progress. Hit-and-miss methods no longer work. All development is along scientific lines. For the man or woman who is adjusted to this change, life is a worthwhile adventure. For the person who is not, it is pretty much of a tangle. Previous social units, the family, the clan, no longer seem to exist, or, existing, no longer serve to answer all problems of living.

"There was a time when a young man or woman considering a career would take up the question with parents, or else there would be a consultation of the several branches of the family. The same was true in other matters, in business, in health, in education. These councils rarely are called nowadays. There isn't such

close family life, for one thing, and the family is not so all-sufficient as it was—it doesn't reach out as far as the young person wants to go. The social stability of the past is gone; in its place we have a social mobility, a movement away from the family, a movement toward greater community life. That being the case, each individual has to know more than before; each individual has to fit into a newer and wider pattern.

"To keep in step with this industrial civilization, women must be trained for their careers of home-makers just as men have been trained to apply science to the building of skyscrapers, to control of disease, to the disposal of sewage, to all things where science and efficiency have taken the place of lack of training and muddling through. An engineer who builds a bridge cannot do his job with but four years of academic college work that gives him his B. A. He must get his engineering training. A woman who goes in for building a home can no longer do it with nothing but her four years of academic education. She must be trained for her job.

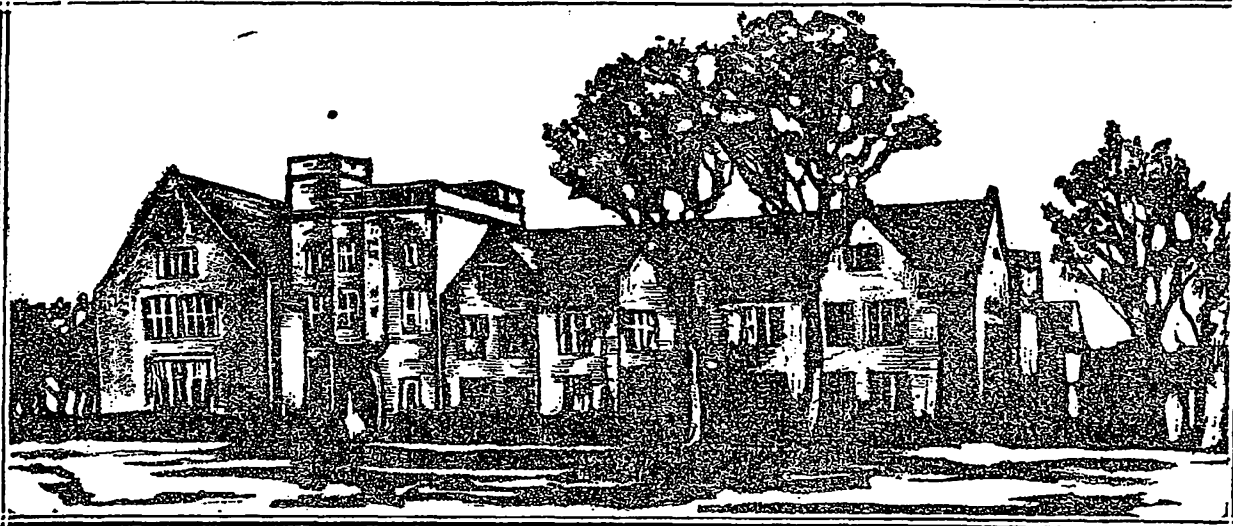
Euthenics Teaches Different Living.

"For a number of years Vassar has been giving thought to this work. A little over two years ago we definitely inaugurated a euthenics division in our curriculum. Many of the subjects in this division had been part of the curriculum before but never had they been tied up to make a comprehensive unit. Under the new régime a student can major in euthenics just as she might in English or history.

"The people who teach the subjects in this division are professors in old departments, the subjects being correlated to give the complete training. We are not trying to train specialists in euthenics, although there are avenues in that field. Certainly the woman who plans to be a social worker, a dietician, a research worker in labor or child health fields, will be better equipped if she is trained in euthenics than one who is armed with nothing but a diploma and a desire for a job.

"Because euthenics is a comparatively new word it has invited a good deal of amusement and criticism. Twenty years ago 'eugenics' was a new word, forty years ago 'psychology' was a new word, 'sociology' and 'anthropology' were new words years

VASSAR'S PROPOSED HALL OF EUTHENICS



ago. The new always invites a laugh. Euthenics, to my mind, is perhaps more important than eugenics. The latter deals with the generations to come; euthenics is concerned with making life of the present generation efficient and happy.

"No matter how greatly civilized we are, the home is the natural human centre. If you destroy it you have no unit left. The large trouble today is that women cannot meet the problems that arise out of the various new activities in which they are thrown. They haven't the same skill of knowledge and reference that an expert in other fields possesses. They do not know how best to serve their families and their communities so that neither suffers at the expense of either. We are interested in teaching women to make the family and the home a worthwhile place to stay."

Summer Course Subjects.

The euthenics undergraduate course at Vassar will take care of the homemakers and community leaders of the future; the Summer course is arranged to take care of a hundred women who have already tried their hand at homemaking and feel that they have much to learn. It includes numerous subjects, taken up under two main divisions—the family in its home relationships, and the family in its relationship to the community.

Child hygiene, nutrition, home nursing, parenthood, individual adjustments to new social and environmental conditions, household technology, are some of the subjects. Experts in each are to serve at Vassar this Summer. After the lectures there will be round table discussions at which each wife or mother or a woman who is neither may bring up definite problems.

Inasmuch as the study of child growth is to be included in the program, plans have been made to take care of twenty children who are be-

tween the ages of 2 and 4. Their ranks will be filled by the children of mothers who are taking the course. They will stay at the Vassar nursery school all day.

Untrained in Money Spending.

Professor Annie Louise McLeod is the director of the Euthenics Division.

"We are not outlining work of merely hypothetical value to women," she said. "We know they need it. Take up any periodical today and somewhere within its covers you will find reference to the maladjustment in the home due to lack of training. Standards of living are wrong because a woman doesn't know exactly what they should be. Men worry about the extravagances of their wives because women haven't learned how to live efficiently.

"It is a strange and surprising thing that while men are trained to make money, women, who spend about 80 per cent. of all the money made in the United States, have no training at all in properly disposing of it. It is more than a matter of budget, of household economics. It is matter of mental attitude, a knowledge of psychology, of adjustments to family responsibilities and to environmental influences. It includes home nursing, cookery, nutrition and domestic labor problems. All these things are important. They touch every man and woman. Yet a man's college can get five million dollars to build a school to teach men how to make money and Vassar can't get one hundred thousand to teach women how to spend it.

Great-Grandmother Enrolls.

"This Summer school is very much in the nature of an experiment. We are getting college women to come to the course, preferably women who have been out for a number of years so that they will know just exactly what it is they need. Women who have had the equivalent of a college

education will also be accepted. One such applicant is a great-grandmother, who feels that somehow she is out of tune with the times and wishes to find out where the trouble lies.

"A father of a family asked whether he might come for the month's course. We have accepted him. Certainly if he sees that training for fatherhood is as essential as training for motherhood, we shall not exclude him. Perhaps in time men's colleges will see a possibility of study in this direction.

"An interesting feature of the Summer course will be three lectures by a well-known sociologist, by a psychiatrist and by a woman lawyer. All will discuss the divorce problem from individual professional angles. Another feature will be a study of broken homes; their cause, prevention and cure.

"That sounds technical, almost institutional. But the fact remains that we have broken homes, and humans suffer thereby."

The Teachers.

Among the lecturers at Vassar this Summer will be Dr. Frank Howard Richardson, pediatricist; Dr. Mary S. Rose, Professor of Nutrition at Columbia University; Dr. Smiley Blanton, director of the Minneapolis Child Guidance Clinic; Dr. Thomas Salmon of the National Committee for Mental Hygiene; Ernest R. Groves, Professor of Sociology; several specialists in household economics. Margaret Sanger will talk on the marriage relation and racial betterment. Besides these there will be the staff of resident lecturers, leaders in their departments. The course begins on July 8 and ends Aug. 7. Students will live in the college dormitories.

To house the Division of Euthenics \$500,000 was given by Minnie Cumnock Blodgett, a Vassar alumna, who for many years has been interested in the introduction of this work.