

Home Life of a Century Ago and Now

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THE contrast between home life now and a century ago hardly can be imagined by those of today. The home in both country and town was then the great workshop for all the industries. Women, as mothers, wives, daughters and housekeepers, with all the natural duties that pertain to these relations, were constantly engaged in many forms of labor practically unknown in the home at present. They were dressmakers, tailoresses, adept in the use of goose and press board, spinners of yarn, knitters of stockings, weavers of all the family clothing, bed and table linen, dyers of different fabrics and yarn for carpets and blankets (skilled in all kinds of cooking, preserving fruit, making pickles, candles and soap, both for toilet and laundry.

The spacious kitchens a century ago differed widely from the little handboxes in the fashionable homes of today. Every autumn they were scenes of great festivities. Huge pigs were brought in to be dissected and the different parts classified according to their value. The skins had already been sold to saddle and harness-makers. The sides were cut in pieces weighing two or three pounds each, put into barrels and covered with brine. Head cheese and lard were made and packed in jars and the sausage meat, ground fine, seasoned and stuffed in cases. All these were carefully stored in the great cellar, already filled to overflowing with a goodly supply of provisions for winter's use.

Kitchen Childhood's Happy Home.

It was almost impossible to keep the children, always on a tour of inspection, out of the kitchen during this hilarious season. Its attractions were increased by the delightful negro melodies, for, as a number of the northern states had only recently abolished slavery, colored help still reigned and ruled in many families and were the special favorites of the children.

Many pounds of butter and cheese were made every year; turkeys, geese, ducks and hens were fed and cared for and hundreds of eggs greased with lard and packed in jars for the winter. A large amount of mince meat for pies and puddings, well chopped and seasoned, was put into small pails and hung in a dry place for future use. You will see these little tin pails, tightly covered, hung on hooks in the kitchens of New England today, where the heat is supposed to keep them from molding.

Over all this and much more the wives and daughters held the keys and kept a careful supervision, in addition to the daily treadmill and the never ending cares of numerous children.

Now all is changed and most of these industries are banished from the home. Bread and all kinds of pastry are made in public bakeries. Pickles, jellies, preserves and canned fruit are sold by the grocer. Laundries dispose of the family washing. Butchers supply every variety of meat. Men are cooks and waiters in the hotels, restaurants and many private families. Men are hair dressers, manicurers, chiropodists, milliners and dress-makers, and to men women go for the modern tailor made suit.

Into Higher Occupations.

Thus women have been forced into higher and more profitable occupations. They now compose the majority of teachers in private and public schools and are on the faculties of the universities. They give lessons in dancing, music and all the arts. They have mercantile establishments of their own and go to foreign countries to buy goods for them and for other firms. They are found in all the public offices as clerks, copyists and stenographers. They are typesetters, reporters, writers and editors on daily, weekly and monthly periodicals. They are in the courts, hospitals and pulpits, and in the theaters, concerts and on the lecture platform.

We often hear the complaint that woman has driven man out of his legitimate employments, but the facts show that man himself has robbed woman of her legitimate industries.

In the homes even of the richest classes in olden times women had few opportunities for intellectual development. They read but little, as libraries were scarce and magazines and journals few. They were supposed neither to know nor care anything about the technical questions of government, religion, science and art.

Holidays of Those Times.

The holidays were Christmas, New Year's, Fourth of July, County Militia Training day, when the troops were reviewed. For this the farmers from far and near came into town with their barrels of cider, pies, ginger bread, apples and cheese for sale, while the young people had their sports with a full band of music.

The contrast in the children's Christmas stocking then and now is marked indeed. Instead of jewelry, handsome books, expensive toys, attractive games and boxes of bon tons they had a 25-cent piece in the toe, a few raisins and almonds, a bright red apple, a fried cake, a catechism and a long stick, if the owner of the stocking had been unruly during the year.

Election day was another marked event when farmers came to town from all the country roundabout to cast their ballots for men and measures. Some voters indulged too freely in what was then called rum, and it was not an unusual sight to see one

American citizen held up by two others while he deposited his vote.

Women's relaxations were apple and quilting bees, school exhibitions, donation parties, church fairs, dinners, teas, evening parties, concerts and dances. Horseback riding was the favorite exercise, but all the present day athletics for women were unknown.

Literary clubs had not been thought of in those days, as women were neither readers nor students, and were almost totally ignorant.

Yet when Elphalet Knott, president of Union college, New York, invented his hall stove, by which all this labor could be saved, it was with great hesitation that they placed it in their houses, so afraid were they of fire from the red hot coals and pipe holes cut through the ceiling to heat dumb stoves above.

Our foremothers had more trouble with their water supply than with their fires. Every pail of water had to be carried from wells and cisterns into the house. On cold

our gas stoves and they are ready to bake, boil and broil in five minutes. We touch a button and our lamps are ready for us to read and write—no coal or kindling, no wicks or oil or filling or trimming of lamps or molding of candles. Now all is done as if by magic.

Our ancestors made a fetish of early rising, making even the children get up at 5 o'clock. A century ago breakfast was on the table before 6 o'clock in winter, dinner at 12, supper at 5, and perchance a "piece" before going to bed at 8, which usually consisted of a section of pie. They ate meat in greater abundance than is done at the present time; it was served at every meal. Vegetables were used when the men would take the trouble to cultivate them, but the garden was often neglected. There was no such use of fruit as now. All generations have taken to pies and puddings and there has been a universal taste for pancakes. In early times these were baked in long-handled pans and turned by being skillfully tossed up—the pancake turning a somersault and readjusting itself to be browned on the other side; hence the name "flap-jacks." The children especially enjoyed witnessing this performance and claimed a seat in the kitchen on all such occasions.

Plain, substantial clothing was the rule in both country and town. The girls usually dressed in red and blue flannel, a white ruffle around their necks and black alpaca aprons. The dresses came a little above the shoe tops and pantalettes were unknown. They were early taught to knit their own stockings. The boys' suits were of cloth, spun, woven and made at home, and so, for the most part, were the men's.

The school houses were few and far apart; the children often walking a mile or two on mud roads through rain, sleet and snow to their daily lessons. The teachers, who, if women, worked for \$5 a month and "boarded around" from house to house with their employers, were by no means adepts, being but little in advance of their pupils in the higher classes. Girls always had fewer privileges than boys. When free schools were first established they were not allowed to enter. Their education was limited to the "dame" schools, where they were taught to patch quilts, dress dolls, work a sampler with the alphabet and nine numerals, and also to study the catechism and spelling book. Great efforts were made to keep them in their appropriate sphere. More advanced classes were permitted to study addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, but fractions and interest were considered too intricate for their delicate brains.

After many years they were allowed to attend the free schools from 6 to 9 in the morning, before the boys came, and all day Saturday, while the latter were having a holiday. Whether their being in the same classes would enfeeble the boys or masculinize the girls is still an open question. Fifty-five years ago not a college in the land admitted women, and even Oberlin, the first to open its doors, did not grant them the same privileges as to men students.

Social relations were more stable than in our time. Divorces were only allowed for one cause, and the stigma was so great that they were almost unknown. The wife would not apply for one because, even when she was the innocent party, the courts gave the children and the property to the husband. Courtships were more natural and serious. There was not so much flirting and maneuvering. The court of love was conducted more honestly and simply. The young people did not begin their housekeeping in the

luxury with which their parents ended. They did much of their own work. The husband made the fire and ground the coffee, while the young wife set the table and cooked the breakfast. He chopped the wood and planted the garden, while she kept the house in order and did the necessary sewing, which, before the invention of the machine, was a never ending task. Our grandmothers would spend three days on an article that women now make in as many hours.

Today many young people live in a hotel or apartment where the wife does as little as possible and the husband strains every nerve to meet the expenses.

Rights of a Wife.

The wife in former days could not own even the property she inherited. She did not own herself, her children, her clothes, her ornaments. She was as essentially a chattel as a slave on a southern plantation. Her husband could lock her up at his pleasure unless she obeyed his demands. Now the wife controls absolutely her own property and wills it as she sees fit. In some states she has an equal right with the father to their children. If her husband confines her in durance vile her friends can get a writ of habeas corpus and bring her into court. If she wishes to leave him she can have a divorce, and, if he is the transgressor, she can secure alimony and the custody of her children. Many self-respecting women now object to the present marriage ceremony and will neither be "given away" nor promise to "obey," and they insist also upon keeping their family name. For example, the daughter of Moncure D. Conway, a distinguished clergyman, who married a Mr. Sawyer, issued her wedding cards, Mr. and Mrs. Conway Sawyer.

With hard work, many cares and few recreations women used to grow old much earlier than in these days. They were placed upon the retired list by 50. Now many distinguished women hold their places in society and are connected with important public measures at 60, 70 and even 80 years of age.

Marriages Then and Now.

Girls in past times married early and often had several children before they were 20. Now they are in colleges and business positions up to 30, deferring matrimony until they have a well developed body, brain and bank account.

In such wives highly educated men find wise mental companions and able business advisers. Mothers, nowadays, read, think and reason; they are recognized as the actual mistresses of their homes; they not only preside over the soup tureen, but lead in brilliant conversation at the table.

Undeveloped girls of 18 can fill none of these relations properly, and husbands, instead of securing congenial, healthy companions, often find themselves burdened with incapable, invalid wives and feeble children.

The women of today are better educated and hence superior in every way as wives, mothers, housekeepers and members of the community to those of a century ago, and they are treated with far more respect by the men of the household than formerly. Women's influence in all directions steadily increases with their higher development. Naturally they are far more contented and happy with all the privileges they now enjoy than they were under the old restraints. I know nothing that could be borrowed from the past which would improve their present condition.

When woman fully awakes to the beauty and value of science, philosophy and government then will the first note of perfect harmony be touched; then will the great organ of humanity be played on all its keys, with every stop rightly adjusted, and, with louder, loftier strains, the march of civilization will be immeasurably quickened.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON.

Just Wait

Salt Lake Herald: "Hello, Charley, I haven't seen you since I was married!" said a newly-married man to a friend he chanced to meet down on Main street.

"No," replied the friend, "you have been so devoted to home of late that no one has seen you."

"Yes, I don't hang around like I used to." "You are just like I was," said the other, who had been married for some years, "just found the society of the wife enough, eh?"

"Yes, we do not tire of each other." "Just like I was. I suppose you think it will never change, eh? Just always will be the same, I suppose?"

"I don't think I will change." "Just like I was. I suppose she has not asked you for a \$50 suit when you only had \$25 the day before pay day?"

"No, of course not." "You just wait!" and he turned on his heel and walked off down the street.

For a Special Occasion

Cleveland Plain Dealer: "You know what abominable table wine my venerable father-in-law-to-be sets out?"

"Yes, it's fierce!"

"Well, it was his birthday last Sunday and I took around a bottle of the best claret I could buy and told Lucy to put it at his elbow. And what do you suppose the old fellow said?"

"Give it up." "He said he guessed he'd save it until they had company to dinner."



ELIZABETH CADY STANTON.

ant on practically all of the questions handled by them so cleverly today.

Religion Took Much Time.

Their religious development was of the highest consideration. Regular attendance at church and a diligent reading of the bible were necessities of salvation. The catechism for women and children was considered of immense importance, containing such questions as "What is Justification?" "What is Sanctification?" "What is Predestination?" "What is Election?" "What is the Chief End of Man?"

Walking home from church one day with one of my sons, a boy of 12, after a prolonged silence, he suddenly exclaimed, "How tired I do get of 'Thou shalt not.'" Fortunately the bible which we were obliged to read every day and most of the time on Sundays, contained an Apocrypha with some amusing stories, as well as those scattered through the Old Testament, such as "Jonah sequestered in the whale for three days," "Joshua commanding the sun to stand still" and "Joseph with his coat of many colors," all of which in brilliant hues were illustrated in old-fashioned bibles.

Attending church was a severe ordeal when the thermometer was 20 degrees below zero. No stoves or furnaces were ever offered in the cold hospitalities of the Lord's house. Each attendant carried his own little stove in a wooden box, perforated with holes on the top, to keep his feet warm, whatever might befall the rest of his personality.

The church, a spacious two-story edifice, with numberless windows and no blinds, had a high octagon pulpit, from which the pastor expounded his religious theories; and just below him in another octagon pulpit stood the chorister to intone David's psalms, line by line, the congregation following like a flock of sheep, without rhyme or rhythm. Choirs, organs and all musical instruments were then unknown in country churches and attractive melodies were considered unholy.

Around the churches in the villages were rows of sheds, where farmers left their vehicles. As there were two sessions, they brought their dinners, and Sunday, with all its solemnity, was yet a kind of festive occasion, when the men met to discuss politics and the questions of the day and the women to talk about clothes, children and household matters. And all took this opportunity to enjoy a drive on Sunday morning, which was forbidden by the Puritans for any purpose except going to church.

Even the middle classes in their spacious residences had no stoves or furnaces, and some one had continually to be feeding the fires on the hearth. This was enough to keep one person busy from morning to

frosty mornings they must cut through the ice to get water from the cistern or spend hours thawing out the pump. Imagine what a labor it was for the women to do this for the family washing. Frequently all the water used in the house had to be drawn by cold iron chains from a depth of 100 feet. As the men were usually busy taking care of the cattle and drawing wood from the forest all this work added to the other burdens of the women. There was no such thing then as a bathtub and a cold sponge was about all our ancestors enjoyed in the winter season.

What a contrast to our present conveniences! Now we simply turn a faucet and get all the water we want, hot and cold; turn another and get rid of it. We light



QUEEN LILIUOKALINI AND HER PARTY AT THE UNION DEPOT—Photo by a Staff Artist.