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College of agriculture

Miss Bevier

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MISS BEVIER



ISABEL BEVIER
1860-1942

One of Her Favorite Quotations

*"Build thee more stately mansions,
O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than
the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome
more vast,
Till thou at length are free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by
life's unresting sea!"*

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What Is in Thine Hand?

Some ten years ago at a meeting of the American Home Economics Association, Miss Bevier asked this question of home economists. She said:

"It occurred to me that I might make this subject of revaluation both more personal and more interesting to you if I should use in connection with it an incident recorded in the Old Testament, out of the life of Moses and his leadership of the Children of Israel.

"This incident has to do with the question the Lord asked Moses when he objected to undertaking a certain piece of work. 'And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. And the Lord said unto him, What is in thine hand?'

"So I propose this question, too; what is in your hand for the homes and for the welfare of your community or state?

"You have tested knowledge of how to secure and maintain health, how to care for child life,

how to use your time, energy, and money, how to beautify your surroundings, and how to select clothing, equipment, food, books, pictures, and music.

"This knowledge enables you to make life more comfortable, more interesting, more stimulating, and more satisfying for yourself; and you a more useful person in your group.

"I beg of you, use this power in worthwhile activities, in work for worthy ends. The energy that is wasted by groups of women when the world's needs are so great seems to me tragic. The power of united, persistent, and intelligent effort wisely directed can do wonders in any family or community.

"This group has opportunity; the opportunity to set standards in work, in play, in buying, in selling, in social intercourse, in keeping a healthy moral tone, and in fair square dealing, no shirking, no poaching on another's preserves, no taking of credit for deeds not done, and no petty jealousies, but opportunity to show the saving grace of humor with pure motives and high resolves. Sit down with your-

self and
brain,

"Rev
liability
also, and
women
for this
needs c

money,
and how
books,
self and think what you can do with hand and
brain, remembering Herbert's words:

'Be useful where thou livest, that
they may
Both want and wish thy pleasing
presence still.
Find out men's wants and will,
And meet them there.'

thwhile
energy
then the
tragic.
elligent
in any
"Revalue not only your material assets and
liabilities, but the social and spiritual contacts
also, and answer the call of this new day for
women of courage and ideals who shall fashion
for this new day the new home fitted to the
needs of these changing times."

Isabel Barrie

Another Favorite Quotation

"Here we have no continuing city. But when I am making my house live, I and no other, putting into it as I best may something of the serenity of Athens and the sacredness of Jerusalem and the beauty of Siena, then it is taking its place beside my greater loves. Then I am creating a home, not only in this world, but in the next. I have put something over into the eternal world that fire cannot burn, nor floods destroy, nor moth and rust corrupt. It is safe, even from myself, forever! No Heaven can be holy to me if I have not made this spot holy. I shall not ask, even from the mercy of the Merciful, a heavenly mansion if I have failed to make this earthly dwelling live. Eternity begins beside my hearth, shaped by my will. A woman knows!"

Miss Bevier—An Appreciation

March 29, 1935

"But the final aim is gracious womanhood."—

The closing bell rang, Miss Bevier rose from her desk and the lecture on "Aims of Household Science" ended, and the senior class in methods went its way.

Some of us went rather far away, geographically, from the elm-shaded campus of the University of Illinois. The methods of making muffins that we were taught have been improved upon, the number of then known chemical elements has been added to considerably, vitamins have found their way into our vocabulary, styles in dress have changed and changed again many times, "Household Science" has become "home economics," Professor Bevier is now Professor Emerita. But gracious womanhood is still one of the aims of all home-economics teaching. It has undoubtedly been due to this insight into fundamentals on the part of its pioneers, that home economics holds its present highly respected position.

Miss Bevier is probably best known for her twenty years of service as head of the home economics department at the University of Illinois, and her part in building up our professional organization, The American Home Economics Association. She has had many other activities—most of them closely allied to her chosen field—notably her contribution to the work of the Food Administration during the World War, her membership on important educational committees and in honorary and professional organizations.

In doing a piece of work that called for reference to reports of the Lake Placid conference and early numbers of the *Journal of Home Economics*, I was struck by the number of times she was called upon to lead the way in this new field.

Miss Bevier stands out pre-eminently for her scholarly standards, being consistently unwilling to offer college courses devoted almost entirely to skills, unwilling to mortgage the student's time with specialized home economics

subjects to the point where courses in economics, literature, and art were crowded out, always standing for a liberal college course with a major only in home economics. Thus she was able to relate this subject matter field to other important fields, drawing heavily upon them and enabling the students to keep their perspective and to have at their disposal for the interpretation of home making much that was available in the more general fields of knowledge.

Not only in the development of college courses and the consequent effect on secondary and elementary home economics education has her influence been felt. In the program of home economics extension work she has had a heartening and sustaining faith. Her own farm experience has given her an insight into the problems that has enabled her to render invaluable service in developing plans and policies.

Her prophetic words, written some years ago, are worth rereading in these troubled days:

"The new farm life, whatever else it may mean, implies an appreciation of the fact that

the farm is no longer to be judged by the acreage of its crops, neither by the number of its flocks and herds, but by the character of the life maintained in the farm home—not just for Sundays and company, but for all the days and all the company. The new farm life means an attitude of mind that recognizes that land owners are trustees of a valuable inheritance which they should pass on unimpaired. It recognizes that people are more than land, more than machines—that the purpose of the farm home and the farm life is to produce healthy, happy, useful individuals who shall find their satisfaction, their means of expression, their place of contributing to the world's joy, bearing their share of the world's sorrow, doing their share of the world's work on the farm or in the farm home.

“One has said, ‘For the area of the new farming will be needed an enlarging group of country folk that through their general education have been enabled to grasp the meaning of the world's work, to understand the team-

work of the whole nation and with due regard for the common welfare to act as spokesmen for rural interests in law-farming bodies'."

Her largest contribution to home economics, I believe, has been her point of view—a respectful, critical appreciation of homemaking, its rewards, and difficulties, its demands and the sources of help in training to meet these demands; in all, a comprehensive, sane evaluation of homemaking as a source of personal satisfaction and a means of serving society. This particular kind of ballast has stood the whole movement in good stead. To a movement heavily weighted with emotion, even sentimentalism, she brought a balanced, discriminating mind, which was valuable to the profession itself as well as to her own department.

This she did with marked success, both in her own department and in the profession itself. A scholarly interpretation and appreciation of homemaking is something worthy of the fine intellect and the high courage she brought to this new field of study.

How I wish that I might catch an inspiration that would enable me to depict some of Miss Bevier's fine spirit of high courage, strictest honesty, great tolerance, keen insight, illumined by a sprightly and kindly humor that has endeared her to all of us. We respect the superiority of her intellect, the accuracy of her judgment, the fine flavor of her words, but we love the warmth of her understanding sympathy, the beauty of her gracious womanliness, the greatness of her generosity and human kindliness.

Significant for today is the statement she made during the tragic days of the World War:

"Home Economics, in either peace or war, has a chance to teach something of the beauty of life and the unity of life, to teach that there is an art in a well-ordered home and a well-ordered life; and that perhaps is the greatest thing that home economics has to do."

Lita Bane