used by them largely in learning to take better psychological and physical care of their children. Mrs. Gilman was indignant that women had no expert training for motherhood, and she also pointed out that to be at once a good mother and a good housekeeper is often impossible. Too frequently the highly important work of motherhood is incidental to that of cook, laundress, charwoman, and scullery maid.

To eliminate this wasteful, inefficient housekeeping, as an integral part of her new plan, Mrs. Gilman recommended "professional housekeeping" (not co-operative, as some have believed). Briefly, this meant that all marketing and meal planning and preparation would be done by persons expertly trained in those pursuits. At specific locations there would be professional kitchens from which food would be sent in airtight containers for home consumption. It would thus be more economical in price, to say nothing of human labor, and more scientifically prepared than by many an unskilled housewife who hated cooking. Homes would not necessarily be entirely kitchenless, although such a system would do away with private ownership of the elaborate and expensive equipment which we are all urged to buy and few can afford. The housewife would have a minimum of kitchen equipment, with which she could cook as she pleased without being bound to the three-meals-a-day grind.

Mrs. Gilman did not advocate such freedom from the exhausting, blighting routine of housework in order that women might have more leisure for meaningless activities but instead that they might have the opportunity to grow in social consciousness and responsibility and as individuals capable of making vital contributions to culture and society.

If her plans could be combined with widespread use of the Dymaxion house, described in THE FORUM in March, 1937,* the top of the hill would be reached. This revolutionary dwelling, described as "a house for a god," is designed to eliminate all the more burdensome aspects of housekeeping while giving the maximum freedom for serene, happy, creative living.

Supporters of the *status quo* will object violently to freeing women from their pristine bondage. Why, they will ask, should women be free to choose various types of work when there aren't enough jobs to go around among the men? Such criticism reveals a depressing lack of intelligence and vision and an awful blindness to the stupidity of our present way of existence. Shortage of jobs? Why in combatting ignorance and human misery and in beautifying the earth there are plenty of jobs for everybody for the next million years!

* *"A House for a God," by Janet Mabie.*

II — Creative Freedom

by MRS. RALPH BORSODI

THE ESSENCE of Sara S. Moser's ringing protest against homemaking for women and her passionate plea for its transfer from homes to institutions such as those which Charlotte Perkins Gilman previsioned is that "to many women who do not want to limit their lives to the instinctive level of homemaking" the making of a home "looms up dishearteningly as a veritable Sisyphean struggle."

Now there are three assumptions implicit in these phrases which must be challenged.

The first derives from her reference to the instinctive level of homemaking. She assumes that all careers other than homemaking — the one career natural to nearly all women — are nobler and more desirable. But many years ago Ellen Key, an even greater feminist than Charlotte Perkins Gilman, summed up the hollowness of this pretense in her statement that "the problem of women was not that of enlarging her sphere, but that of ennobling it."

The second assumption — that all women

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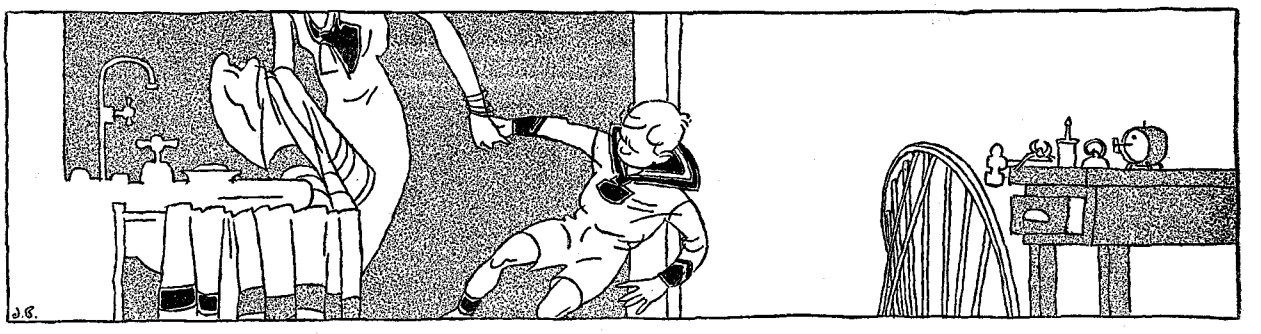

are alike — derives from her failure to recognize that what may be true for some women need not necessarily be true of women generally. Women are feminine, maternal, and domestic in varying degrees. The fact that a very few of them are nonfeminine, nonmaternal, and nondomestic does not justify us in assuming that all of them should live as may be most desirable for the small minority of exceptions. It is perfectly true that some women are exceptionally endowed with business ability, that some are endowed with genius in music and the arts, and that for many of these women it would be best if they felt perfectly free to adopt some career other than homemaking. But this does not alter the fact that for the majority of women the noblest career remains the making of a home and the creating of a family. What Sara S. Moser advocates for all women is a life which is desirable for only a few.

The third assumption is that there are neither ends nor satisfactions in this Sisyphean struggle of homemaking. Miss Moser probably assumes this, as do many nondomestic women, because of a constitutional inability to visualize satisfactions in a work whose spirit she cannot feel.

The woman who pictures the home as a place of endless slavery seems to me like a person looking at a scientist whose life has been unending slavery to his test tubes and wondering what satisfaction he can get out of such a life while knowing little or nothing of his field of work. For him, work in his laboratory may be endless, but it is not without ends. Each discovery or invention is an end in itself; a succession of such achievements is the purpose of his life; the discovery of even one important truth crowns what the outsider might call slavery with supreme satisfaction. Now the reason Miss Moser thinks homemaking unending slavery is that she ignores the fact that nature designed women to be mothers. She ignores the true nature of this supremely important truth and the consequences which flow into every aspect of life for women because of it.

She protests bitterly against the biological functioning of women. She thinks that a woman's acceptance of this and making a home for her children and her family is submitting to unending slavery. And she thinks that rejecting this slavery is freedom to develop in the varied ways man may.

Doesn't Miss Moser know that childbearing ends at about 40? That children grow up? That few women in homes today have more than 2 children? That a large majority of women need more children (rather than fewer), for their own physical and emotional well-being? That most families would be healthier and wealthier if there were more children and more hands for productive jobs in the home (rather than fewer)? That society itself needs more children (particularly from the best types of women), if not only the race but civilization itself is to be maintained?

II

THE TROUBLE with her picture of the slavery of homemaking is that it not only misrepresents the facts with regard to women but misrepresents them with regard to men as well. The vast majority of men are held as fast in the ancient pattern of some conventional method of living as are women. In both instances the sensible thing is not to cry for the moon.

After a lifetime of revolt Margaret Fuller said that she had "decided to accept the universe."

On hearing this, Thomas Carlyle commented, "By Gad! She'd better."

Miss Moser considers the argument that it is natural for a woman to be in the home the most asinine of all arguments. She protests against this way of being natural because she considers that it means remaining an appen-

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dage to man. And she considers that acceptance of this traditional role is to be cut off from life rather than subject to its risks.

Now the truth about life is the exact reverse of this. The woman who does not mate, who does not establish a home, or who does not have children is the one who cuts herself off from life. She is the one who refuses to take those risks which are natural to women because she prefers to take those risks which are natural to a business executive, a professional singer, or one of the many other kinds of people which men or women may become.

A woman of Miss Moser's nature tries to convince herself that a career outside the home is nobler than one inside the home because it is *noninstinctive* or *nonnatural* and praises those women who have refused to limit their lives to the instinctive level of homemaking.

Millions of American women have refused to do this and have substituted the *creative* level of working in steam laundries, clerking behind counters of stores, pounding typewriters, filing papers, or engaging in similar nonhomemaking occupations. It is true that a few women, like a few men, find work and careers which are creative and presumably *not* instinctive. But it is silly to generalize from this for all women.

Under the regimentation and slavery of most of the occupations of women outside the home there is small chance for original achievement. On the other hand, if Miss Moser thinks that all homes are alike and that all children are alike and that there is no opportunity for original achievements in homemaking, a little study of the part which women play in molding, for better or worse, the lives of their children and of all who come within the family circle should enlighten her. No two homes need be alike, no two families, no two children. And they are not. If the product of one home is better than that of another, it is no accident. On the whole, the opportunities for original achievement in the average home compare very favorably with the opportunities for original achievement in the average cannery, dress factory, and stenographic department of a life-insurance company. The fact is that, for every woman who has left the home for a job in which she can do creative or noninstinctive work, a thousand devote themselves to mechanical jobs in comparison with which homemaking is complete self-expression.

In 1890, Miss Moser reminds us, Charlotte Perkins Gilman outlined a new pattern of life for women, far superior to that of homemaking on the traditional pattern. Nursery schools were to be a part of this new pattern, but Miss Moser deplores the fact that this great boon is available to only a few women.

The women who park their children in nursery schools have, it is true, secured a great addition to their leisure time. But what have they done with it? If it could be said that most of these women had used this leisure time in creative work of some kind, there would be some ground for assuming that nursery schools for all women would be good. But the fact is that most of them do not use this time creatively. Most of the women who have actually secured leisure through the new pattern — no domestic work, few children, nursery schools, etc. — have become parasites who devote themselves to killing time rather than using it intelligently.

One thing Miss Moser is blind to, as was Mrs. Gilman, is that this new pattern which is supposed to free women from the exhausting, blighting routine of housework in reality means shifting the ordinary household tasks to other women who do nothing but some one of these tasks all their days. In order that women who do not do their laundry work at home should be free from the 4 hours a week required for home laundrying, 250,000 women spend every day a week, 8 hours each day, at grueling work in steam laundries.

III

THE SIMPLE TRUTH is that Miss Moser is a victim of one of the commonest ideological mistakes in history. It is not creative work but money-making work which she recommends to women. She believes (in common with most people today) that only that work is productive and creative which is paid for with money. If you cook and serve meals and wash dishes in a restaurant all day long and receive money for it, then you are free and are engaged in a creative activity. But, if you do this in your own home, you are not — even though in your own home you decide what to cook and how to serve it.

If women were better paid or produced more wealth as a result of this change there would be something gained. But my own experiments

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show that this is not true. A woman in her own home using modern equipment and efficient methods produces more wealth than the average woman is able to earn in a "gainful occupation."

Because of our cash economy, the woman who has stayed at home has been made to labor under an inferiority complex. Not only has she been made to feel that homemaking is inferior to the work which men do in industry and business but she has been made to feel that it is far less valuable than the work of business and professional women, because the housewife receives no money for the work which she does in her own home.

A careful study over a period of twenty years of the money value of the work which the average homemaker does in the home has proved to me that there is no reason for this feeling of inferiority. The economic value of the work which the average woman is doing in her home is greater than the economic value of the work which the average woman is doing in business. What is more, it is practically the same as the amount earned in industry, agriculture, and trade by the average man.

What is meant by creative and productive homemaking?

Living is a process involving production as well as consumption. In general, women have been led to think that the job of earning money is the productive job; the job of spending it, the consumption job. But this is untrue. Production, in the true sense, has nothing to do with earning money. The woman who cooks at home is engaged in producing meals even though no money is paid for them by those who eat them. The mere fact that the chef, the waiter, and the hotel owner are paid money for the meals they produce does not make them producers and the housewife who receives no money a nonproducer. The meals she cooks have a monetary value; the garments she sews have a monetary value; the clothes she launders have a monetary value.

When all the work of this nature, performed by a woman who runs a real home, is measured in monetary terms, the startling fact emerges that the housewives of America are the biggest industry in the nation. The money value of what the American housewife produces at home is over $20,000,000,000 a year. The value of what was produced on all the farms in the country in the same year the above figure was obtained was only $11,000,000,000. The entire output of the iron and steel mills was worth only about $7,000,000,000; the value of all coal and of petroleum and its products was only $4,000,000,000; of printing and publishing outputs, only $3,000,000,000; of rubber mills, including tires, only $1,000,000,000.

But, while homemaking is our biggest productive industry, this does not mean that the homemakers of America have met all the responsibilities of their job. There are two respects in which they have, in my opinion, failed.

In the first place, they have abandoned to industry many of the most interesting and profitable of the home crafts, in the mistaken belief that industry could furnish these services and products better and cheaper than they could produce them at home. They have not only given up productive crafts like baking, canning, and washing; they have also given to industry the creative crafts such as sewing, weaving, and dyeing.

The second respect in which they have neglected a responsibility is in the use of machinery, power, and modern laborsaving methods. They have not only proceeded under the mistaken belief that industry could produce certain things more cheaply than they could at home; they have also labored under the mistaken belief that modern appliances like the automatic range, refrigerators, mixers, laundry machinery, sewing machines, and looms are luxuries. This is not true. These machines pay for themselves in the home by what they save (or enable the housewife to earn without making a drudge of herself), just as machines pay for themselves in factories and offices by what they enable businessmen to save.

If the women of America would take back into their homes the creative and productive crafts which they should never have abandoned and if they would use modern appliances and efficient methods in working these crafts, not only would they add enormously to the comfort, happiness, and prosperity of their families, not only would they find new arts and crafts in which to express themselves, but their addition to the productive forces of the nation would help more to ensure prosperity and to stabilize industry than anything else to which they might devote themselves.

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Henry Ford, Schoolmaster

by **CHRISTY BORTH**

LAST YEAR some 500,000 people visited Henry Ford's enchanting Greenfield Village just outside Detroit. Most of them thought of this 200-acre replica of early America as a unique museum — a wealthy man's hobby. Few of them realized they were actually seeing a school.

But even the rare visitor who notices the school activities that give life to Greenfield Village is surprised to discover that this is the heart of an educational system with far-flung branches and that the baffling, many-sided Henry Ford is running it all personally. Henry Ford is schoolmaster to some 2,000 pupils at the moment; more than 6,000 have been graduated from his schools — and the business of teaching has become one of his major interests. Yet only scattering hints of Henry Ford's varied experiments in education have so far appeared in print.

In England, he is teaching mechanized farming at the Henry Ford Institute of Agricultural Engineering. At Ways, Georgia, near his winter home, he is running six rural schools for negro children and a village high school and vocational training center. In Brazil, he's combatting illiteracy with schools in the jungle for rubber workers and their children. In a half-dozen little Michigan villages, he has taken over and revitalized the rural schools, delighting the pupils — as he does those at Greenfield Village — with a kind of education that is part progressive, part old-fashioned, and essentially as unconventional as Ford himself.

All this seems the stranger when you consider that, only 45 years ago, Ford was a self-educated mechanic, who, at the age of 30, had floundered dissatisfied from job to job and was considered a tinker rather than a thinker by his few acquaintances. But the tinker became a pioneer in mass production and an industrialist who revolutionized American life. And now the industrialist emerges as a schoolmaster who is trying to bring education into step with this new American life and whose activities are so significant that famous educators come to Greenfield Village to study them.

FUN IN EDUCATION

IT'S NOTORIOUSLY HARD to find Henry Ford. He has no office of his own. You have to wander around hunting for him. And nowadays the best place to hunt is not in the shops or offices of the great River Rouge plant but among his school children in Greenfield Village. He's there much of the time, usually knee-deep in youngsters, obviously enjoying himself while keeping intimately in touch with their progress and problems and enigmatically meditating on new teaching methods to meet their needs.

Observe Ford in those surroundings and you may conclude that he's shy with children. Question them about that shyness and you discover that this is exactly the thing that makes them accept him as an equal worthy of confidences. It's his way of getting answers to his questions.

The schools that Ford operates in Greenfield Village are part of the City of Dearborn's public school system; but they are unlike any public schools elsewhere. The village streets are dotted with the homes of famous Americans and with other historic structures — some reproduced and others transported here piecemeal — and the classes meet in these buildings. The 250 children come by bus from homes in Dearborn. Most of them were registered at birth for this opportunity, for the application list is long, and the rule of selection approximates one used in the Ford employment offices — *Personnel must represent a cross-section of the community.*

When the bell in Greenfield's tiny white chapel rings, it is the signal for the children's daily nonsectarian services. Thursday morn-

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