

The Essay

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women are finally being accepted in the labour force since two and one-half million women are working outside the home in Canada and more than half of these are married. Between 1958 and 1968 the number of working wives rose from forty-three to fifty-five percent. There are several reasons why women do go back to work; they may want to get out of the kitchen and away from the sometimes monotonous household tasks, they may want more money for luxuries, or they may want to put themselves more in touch with the outside world, to once more get in the swing of things. Whatever their reason, women have proven themselves to be as capable as men and in some cases more capable. But there are challenges — including equal pay for equal work and combining household duties with “out of the home” duties, which sometimes requires a great deal of readjustment.

Then too urban women do have the advantage over rural women in seeking employment. As for me, a homemaker living on a farm, here in the centre of this great “Bread-basket of the World”, I have no desire to go back to my former career. There are so many interesting things to do on a farm, that they are in themselves a challenge to me. And it's always nice to have a few spare moments, to sit and read, to gaze at the starry skies, or just to take time to think.

Whether women join the labor force or whether they remain at home, the task of raising a family here in this second century will become a challenge to us. For more and more, outside influences are making it harder to bring up your family as you may like to. This new morality, based on free love, can undermine family life. Then, too, there are temptations, such as drugs, pills, alcoholism. And it will take courage, on the part of women to instill in the minds of their children that which is right and that which is wrong. We must keep our moral standards high, so as to set an example to our children to build even a richer life than we ourselves have had.

In one of the streets in Johannesburg, a city in South Africa, there stands a monument dedicated to all the horses that had lost their lives during the Boer war. On it is carved the figure of a horse. Kneeling in front of the horse is a man with outstretched arms and holding in his hands a bucket, as if he were offering the horse a drink of water. The inscription below it reads, “The greatness of a nation consists not so much in the number of its people or the

extent of its territory but in the extent and justice of its compassion.” This, too, is a challenge to women in this second century — that we do our part in having compassion on other fellow Canadians, regardless of their race, religion or creed. A shining example of this is the sewing machine project of the Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs. Teachers were sent out by the Extension Division to communities of Indians, where the Indian women were taught to sew. Upon completion of a course a sewing machine was presented to each. Many Homemakers' Clubs were involved in this project, providing machines and financial assistance. Life will be brighter and days happier for those who were given the opportunity to help themselves — because somebody cared — because someone had compassion on one less fortunate than herself.

Following compassion, the challenge of tolerance opens a wide field of thought. Tolerance is the cordial and positive effort to understand another's beliefs, practices and habits without necessarily accepting them. Here in this country, made up of people of different races and religions, of different upbringing, education and experience, it is necessary to be broad-minded. We must realize every man is entitled to his opinions and we must listen to other people's views. The meaning of the Ten Commandments is as real to people in to-day's environment as it was in the days of the Egyptian culture. It has been said that history turns on small hinges and so do people's lives. It is in little things that your tolerance shows.

My last challenge to women is the challenge of change. Progress can never be made without change. But we must be able to decide if the change is constructive. The winds of change are blowing here in this great land of hope, in this her second century. Will the skies remain clear or are there storms beyond the horizon? Who shall say?

In closing I quote the lines of the “Prayer of Serenity”. A prayer for all Canadian women who love this True North, strong and free.

God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

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I took a day to search for God,
And found Him not. But as I trod
By rocky ledge, through woods untamed
Just where one scarlet lily flamed,
I saw His footprint in the sod.

Bliss Carman

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