

The Egg Money

Remember when Mother had a few chickens and she bought the "extras" for the house and the children. We all know she fed the grain from "Dad's Granary" and he bought the bag of grit while at the feed store. Every morning they were let out to roam the barn yard and fields and at night locked up so they would come to no harm. Chickens didn't seem so sophisticated in those days or maybe it was the people.

Never mind, many a music lesson was paid for, and the extra quarter to spend at the Fall Fair came from Mother's secret hiding spot, the sugar bowl. She always put some of the egg money there for safe keeping and for a rainy day.

On a special day when company was coming, one of the hens that wasn't laying too well often provided a meal. Dad kept a special block for just such occasions and the hen was laid on the block, with hatchet in hand and a quick wrist action movement off came "biddy's" head and she often flopped around momentarily, headless.

Times have changed and I guess we wouldn't want it any other way. Our life style, our way of life and our needs have changed.

We hear about the liberated woman and the liberated society! What do we want for equality — not above or below but equal. If we can use our hands or brain and talents equally why not receive equal pay, recognition, job opportunities?

There is no doubt that our status has changed during the last decade, and will never be the same again. Our role has and continues to change — we've moved from the stereotypes "just a housewife" beyond the "second class citizen" to being our own person and doing our own thing.

We're free — for what?

It seems we have aimed toward fulfillment and equality of woman. In our attempt to be our own person do we ever give any thought to the family itself. What has happened to the family unit?

The Mother who fed the chickens and did some outside chores was no less a person; she didn't think too much about whether she was equal or not, her only thought was to do her best for her family. She had a strong feeling of belonging, of her tie to nature, her main concern was to establish basic feelings of trust, of being herself without having to measure up or be exactly like someone else.

Have we forgotten the value of the family unit in the 70s? Is it not important to recognize the interdependencies of families and the individual, of families and the community, of the interplay of people and things?

When we strive for equality we must beware that we do not lose our sense of belonging. We must be mindful and alert to the danger that "self" might become most important. This, of course, is not to say that every woman who works outside the home suddenly forgets all about home. Far from it. It could even increase the awareness, to belonging and believing in the family unit.

Today when we work for "those extras", what is our aim? To give our families things; to prove we can do something for them? Whatever it is, let us not ever substitute ourselves and our love for worldly possessions. Our aim and philosophy is to keep the family unit strong, and to continue to believe that there is a place for the "family" in today's world. This might very well be one of our ideas for a program for a branch meeting during International Women's Year — the role of the family in today's world.

Are we asking the wrong questions? We keep saying we should change in this changing world, keep up with the times; I sometimes really wonder what we mean? Remember the old question that has been asked many times, "If you're so smart, why aren't you rich?" It's the wrong question. We need to ask two more questions: What's so special about being rich? Who said we were smart?

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