

Teaching Girls their "God Given Place in Life"

by Robert M. Stamp

The Introduction of Home Economics in the Schools

Introduction

Sixty-five years have passed since the death of Adelaide Hoodless, long regarded as one of the foremost champions of women's rights in early twentieth-century Canada. From the day in 1897 when she founded the first Women's Institute in Stoney Creek, Ontario, a small village east of Hamilton, both the movement and Adelaide's name spread quickly across the country and around the world. For decades she remained the patron saint of an older generation of Canadian farm women as they gathered for their weekly "Institute" meetings. Adelaide Hoodless is also associated

with the origins of many other national women's organizations. Working with Lady Ishbel Aberdeen (wife of Canada's Governor General in the 1890's) she founded such venerable institutions as the National Council of Women, the Victorian Order of Nurses and the national Young Women's Christian Organization. There are few aspects of the middle-class women's world of twentieth-century English-speaking Canada that have not been influenced by this remarkable woman from St. George, Ontario.

Adelaide Hoodless has been well served by the various organizations she founded. A small library of eulogistic literature has resulted, depicting her many public crusades of the 1890's and early 1900's. Her efforts to bring up-to-date scientific information on food preparation, home management and child care to her fellow women are ably documented. And it is right that they should be for her work did contribute to healthier families by helping to reduce the incidence of childhood diseases and death. But there is one aspect of Mrs. Hoodless's work that deserves a re-examination--her successful campaign for home econ-



J.W.L. Forster
ADELAIDE HOODLESS
oil on canvas
University of Guelph Collection
Gift of the Women's Institutes of Ontario, 1912

omics classes for girls (in her day the subject was called "domestic science") in the country's public schools.

Introduced into the Canadian elementary school in the early years of the twentieth century, home economics was hailed as a forward step in the education of girls and women. True, it did provide a welcome addition to what was then considered a "male" oriented curriculum. But a closer look at the beginnings of the movement reveals that its advocates and supporters saw it, not as a vehicle for freeing the new twentieth-century woman from traditional domestic responsibilities, but rather as a means of fitting her for her "God-given place in life" as custodian of hearth and home. Among the various provinces, it was Ontario that witnessed the most vocal debate and the most widespread early developments in home economics. And among advocates of the subject, Adelaide Hoodless proved to be the most persistent and successful.

The traditional explanation for the motivation behind Mrs. Hoodless's domestic science campaign begins with the death of her eighteen-month old son in the summer of 1889. When she learned that her baby's death had been caused by the drinking of contaminated milk, she felt personally responsible, that she should have known better. At that point she made a dramatic decision--that she would do all in her power to bring within reach of all women the education necessary to prevent similar tragedies.

"Apart from my family duties, the education of mothers has been my life work," she is frequently quoted as saying.(1) Certainly this interpretation is a suitable starting point for an understanding of Adelaide Hoodless's initial motivation; at the time of her son's death her concern was more practical than philosophical. But this family tragedy is not sufficient in itself to explain her overriding emphasis on the role of home economics in fitting woman for her "God-given place in life." What sustained Mrs. Hoodless's campaign and ultimately ensured its success was her gradually evolving philosophy on the nature of urban-industrial change, the effects of that change on domestic life and the role of home economics in countering the unfortunate threat to the home.

Domestic Science in Hamilton

Adelaide Hoodless was thirty-two years of age at the time of her younger son's death, the wife of a prosperous Hamilton furniture manufacturer and Conservative politician, John Hoodless. During her first eight years of marriage Adelaide settled into a comfortable middle-class existence at "Eastcourt," the palatial Hoodless residence surrounded by four acres of lawn and garden. But the death of her child wrenched her loose from the usual kind of charitable work expected of "respectable" wives of the day. Her concern now became one of how to improve the education of girls and young women for homemaking and motherhood. If she had paused to give careful consideration

to her task, Mrs. Hoodless might well have been discouraged. In those days flies swarmed in most kitchens and ice-boxes were few and inefficient. Milk delivered through the streets in open cans was one of the principal causes of the "summer complaint" of which so many children died. Open wells led to epidemics and typhoid fever and few families had not lost at least one member from tuberculosis. From this background, Mrs. Hoodless emerged to tackle the complacent ignorance of society. "Complacent" was perhaps too mild a term. Homemaking was considered woman's "natural" destiny; education for homemaking seemed as absurd as education for breathing or for walking.

Adelaide Hoodless saw two possibilities for bringing domestic science education within reach of Hamilton girls--the public school system and the Young Women's Christian Association. Although her husband was a member of the school board, this group seemed too formidable an obstacle--nineteen male trustees collectively possessing little acquaintance with new pedagogical ideas and even less sympathy for the new urban-industrial woman. "School boards are not reliable enough, made up as they are of all sorts and conditions of men to trust to arrange a course in Domestic Science," she later wrote. "It is women's work and must have women associated in its development."⁽²⁾ The YWCA offered more initial hope. In the early 1890's this organization was shifting from relief and remedial work

among the poor towards a positive educational and social work. It had begun to emphasize practical work in the training of young girls, and the Y's in several cities had organized sewing, millinery and cooking classes. In 1891 Mrs. Hoodless joined the Hamilton YWCA, became its president two years later and helped establish evening and Saturday cooking classes.

Yet as a member of a small, isolated group in Hamilton, Adelaide Hoodless felt frustrated in her efforts to spread the gospel of domestic science to women throughout the country. The opportunity to establish a national forum presented itself in 1893 when she and sixty other Canadian women attended the World's Congress of Representative Women in Chicago. Under the leadership of Mrs. John Harvie, the Canadian women met daily in a parlour of Chicago's Palmer House and laid the groundwork for not one, but two national women's organizations. Immediately on her return from Chicago, Mrs. Hoodless wrote letters to women's leaders and mayors in every Canadian city and town urging the formation of a national YWCA. That autumn twelve Y's were represented at the first national conference in Toronto. By 1895 Mrs. Hoodless was national president, urging the association to "develop the highest type of womanhood for both the home and the Master's service."⁽³⁾ Also in the autumn of 1893 she organized a gathering of over 1500 women in Toronto that gave birth to the National Council of Women. Mrs. Hoodless was chosen the

council's treasurer and at the first annual meeting in 1894 urged the N.C.W. to "do all in its power to further the introduction of Manual Training for girls into the Public School System."(4)

Adelaide Hoodless was not one to give an inspirational address before 500 people, propose a successful resolution and then let the matter drop. When she returned home from the Ottawa NCW meeting in the spring of 1894, she at once set about planning how the resolution might be implemented. Armed with the backing of both the NCW and the YWCA she decided the time was ripe to tackle the Hamilton Board of Education. On July 18 she and four other members of the Hamilton Council of Women appeared before the board with very definite requests: that classes in cooking and sewing be added to the curriculum of Hamilton public schools; that competent teachers be employed; and that accommodation for two classes be provided in two new schools which were shortly to be built. The Hamilton trustees nodded sympathetically but effectively side-stepped the issue by claiming that special provincial legislation would be required before they could even begin to consider the request.(5) Back before a committee of the board in April 1895, this time with support from the Hamilton Trades and Labour Council, Mrs. Hoodless and her companions again asked what plans were being made to include domestic science in the two schools under construction. In reply the members of the board stated that they were unable to comply because of the cost and the lack

of trained teachers. Mrs. Hoodless declared that the Hamilton YWCA, which had been conducting classes for several years, could supply two qualified teachers at a cost less than that required to bring trained teachers from elsewhere. Again, the board resisted.(6)

There were the natural obstacles of prejudice and conservatism when a new departure was suggested. And there were special obstacles inherent in the character of the period. Woman's place was in the home and she was expected to stay there, venturing outside only to do church work or perhaps attend the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a dominant women's organization at that time. It was virtually unheard of for a woman to speak from the public platform. As Adelaide Hoodless's son later recalled the campaign:

Today one can hardly conceive that the attacks made upon her could have occurred. She was derided in the press and from the platform as one of those despised "new women." "Let her stay at home and take care of her family," was one of the pieces of advice most often handed out. As to staying at home and taking care of her family, well! no mother was ever more devoted nor any home better managed . . . She was a great mother.(7)

Those few critics who got past their prejudices towards "outspoken" women turned their attacks on practical details. Was it the function of the

school to teach trades? "These methods of education are a need of the time," she argued; "they are simply providing for the child, in organized form, what their parents received in a hap-hazard way through the daily activities of life, before machinery and other modern contrivances removed so many industries from the home."(8) But did the girls of Hamilton really wish instruction in domestic science? "Our accommodation is limited," admitted Adelaide Hoodless, "and I do not know how many we would have had [at the YWCA classes] if we had a large building--but we have had 126 pupils, all paying a very good fee, which, I think, is quite proof that this sort of education is wanted."(9) But was there room for it in the already overcrowded elementary school curriculum? To Mrs. Hoodless, it was entirely a question of priorities:

I quite agree . . . in bewailing the too numerous studies already inflicted upon the children I venture to state that nine-tenths of the sensible parents in this city would appreciate the practical benefits resulting from a thorough training in sewing and cooking than a brilliant discourse on the number of rivers in Africa. (10)

In fact, the introduction of domestic science would actually lighten the load for both teachers and pupils, "by adopting new and more interesting methods, which stimulate the mind and make the relationships between school and life

more apparent," with the result that the other subjects would become "more interesting through correlation, and the perceptive faculties are awakened."(11)

To a large extent the early opposition of the Hamilton school board was political. Although John Hoodless was a prominent local Conservative, Adelaide remained a vocal and active Liberal throughout her married life. Thus her enthusiasm for domestic science was branded as a "Liberal" policy by the Tory-dominated Hamilton board. Liberal Education Minister George Ross's eventual support of domestic science further stifened the resistance of the Hamilton trustees. As Mrs. Hoodless attempted to explain her frustration:

No matter what proposal or progressive movement came from the Dept. of Ed., they would oppose it as "another fad," They don't even consider the question. It is a "Grit" suggestion & that is enough. They at once take the opposition.(12)

Newspaper support for domestic science was likewise determined by political considerations. The Conservative Hamilton Spectator never fully endorsed the movement. "Do you imagine we will support any proposition of Ross?" the Spectator's proprietor asked Mrs. Hoodless. "If it were not for any personal appreciation of your own work, we would treat it much more severely."(13)

But Adelaide Hoodless's campaign slowly wore down the resistance of the Hamilton Board of Education. Rather than spend

\$1000 to equip a domestic science room in the new Hunter Street School, the trustees made arrangements to send their senior elementary school girls to afternoon classes at the YWCA. The classes began in January 1897 and proved so popular with the pupils that the Y's domestic science school seems to have done little else besides teaching the public school children. But the classes were never that popular with the trustees. Some regarded it as only a temporary arrangement until the board could provide its own classes; others, primarily those identified with the "Tory machine," continually attempted to block this educational "fad" and only desisted in the face of strong parental opinion.(14) The arrangements with the YWCA, and later with its Normal School of Domestic Science and Art, limped along from year to year despite its growing enrolment. Finally in 1904, on a vote of ten to nine, the Hamilton board established two domestic science classes of its own.(15) Mrs. Hoodless's most difficult battle, that with her own local school board, had finally ended in success.

The Campaign at the Provincial Level

As early as 1894 Adelaide Hoodless realized that provincial action would be essential in forcing the hand of the Hamilton Board of Education. Until changes occurred in provincial curriculum regulations and in the provincial grant structure, local school boards could always procrastinate on the grounds that their hands were tied. But

would George Ross, Ontario's minister of education since 1883, be any less formidable than the Hamilton trustees? Ross, after all, presided with pride over a school system that had been judged "almost ideal in the perfection of its details" at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He was reluctant to make radical changes in the system. Yet Mrs. Hoodless met with a remarkable amount of early success. Perhaps it was her feminine charm that captivated Ross; perhaps it was his political determination as a Liberal cabinet minister to embarrass the "Tory machine" in Hamilton.

In any case Adelaide Hoodless had two interviews with George Ross in the latter half of 1894; at the second of these meetings he encouraged her to publicize the new subject and to prepare a textbook for use in the schools.(16) It was the politician's way of determining the extent of popular support prior to a governmental commitment. During the next two years Mrs. Hoodless gave over sixty addresses to school boards and teachers' conventions on the value of domestic science. Ross himself became personally interested and, in 1896, visited domestic science classes in several American cities, returning "greatly impressed with its usefulness as a branch of education."(17) In January, 1897, the Ontario department of education published regulations which empowered boards of trustees to establish such classes. Stratford then became the

first city in the province to make domestic science an integral part of the school system under school board management. (18)

By 1898 Adelaide Hoodless's textbook, Public School Domestic Science, was published and authorized by Ross for classroom use. Mrs. Hoodless impressed upon her young readers the importance of domestic science as a school subject. It is "a science which relates so closely to the daily life that it cannot be left to an act of memory." The aim of the book was "to assist the pupil in acquiring a knowledge of the fundamental principles of correct living, to coordinate the regular school studies so as to make a practical use of knowledge already acquired." (19) Unfortunately, because of the limited time allowed for the course in the schools, the book went barely beyond the fundamentals of domestic science. Various chapters dealt with the parts of the body, the relation of food to the body, food preparation and nutrition, household management and infants' diets. Yet, in many respects, the "little red book" was far ahead of its time with a proliferation of calorie charts and chemical analyses of the different types of foods.

Adelaide Hoodless did not regard domestic science as an isolated subject inserted into the curriculum at an arbitrary stage in the child's progress through school. She envisioned it in all the elementary grades not treated as a separate subject but as part of the "new methods of educa-

tion and as an integral part of the general system." (20) It would begin in the kindergarten with practice in table-setting, bed-making and laundry-folding; these experiences would "connect in the minds of the little ones the artistic ideal of work with the practical duties of every-day life." Cooking and needlework would be added as the girls matured, not in their narrow sense but with constant relationship to the wider world of homemaking. (21)

Unfortunately for Adelaide Hoodless and her colleagues, the "cooking school" idea became established in the minds of the general public and caused domestic science to be degraded as a purely technical subject. "While cooking is an important feature of the work," she admitted, "it is not by any means the all important. There are many elements in the home to be considered beside feeding the family." (22) Her own definition of the subject was extremely broad:

Domestic science is the application of scientific principles to the management of a Home, or briefly--correct living. It teaches the value of pure air, proper food, systematic management; economy of time, labour, and money; higher ideals of home life, and its relation to the State; more respect for domestic occupations; the prevention of disease; civic and domestic sanitation; care of children; home nursing, and what to do in emergencies; in short, a direct education for women as home-makers. (23)



Students ironing in the laundry classroom, Macdonald College, circa 1916.

Adelaide Hoodless's speaking engagements and the publication of her textbook brought domestic science considerable public exposure and public support. Further support came after 1899 from Richard Harcourt, Ross's successor as minister of education. Harcourt's enthusiasm for the new subject seemed to know no bounds. "I wish to further the interests of Domestic Science teaching and am prepared to give grants here and there where the work will be done in compliance with our regulations," he confided to a Kingston supporter.⁽²⁴⁾ So determined was Harcourt that the schools take up the new subject that he adopted an almost "money be damned" attitude, a strange position for a former provincial treasurer. He implored James Mills, president of the Ontario Agricul-

tural College, to preach the virtues of domestic science in the Guelph area:

Kindly interview the representatives from each of the school Boards and place my suggestions before them. If these Boards will set apart a suitable room in which an up-to-date kitchen could be placed, and so arrange that instructions could be given by a competent teacher, and suitable provision made for imparting it to the classes in all the schools, the matter of meeting the expense will be made easy.⁽²⁵⁾

To the chairman of the Welland Public School Board he offered a "substantial yearly grant" because he wished "to have a commencement made in some of our best schools."⁽²⁶⁾ He expressed some annoyance when a Brantford supporter continu-

ally raised the question of cost. "You must not ask me to decide now about the extent of the grant since you know that I am desirous of giving aid to the full extent. If I make a mistake I want it to be on the side of generosity."(27)

Mrs. Hoodless remained in the forefront of the movement during these years. She travelled throughout the province, promoting domestic science among school trustees and the general public, supervising classes once they were established and advising on curriculum and equipment. Her ability to convince a skeptical public remained strong. "Her address created the liveliest interest," wrote a Meaford trustee, "so much so that a committee was appointed to consider the advisability of establishing a school."(28) Regular provincial grants began in 1903, and the following year domestic science became an approved option in the revised elementary school curriculum. The guarantee of financial assistance produced an abrupt reversal of thinking on the part of many trustees. While in 1903 the chairman of the London Board of Education protested that "the course of study in our schools is too heavy now, and no more subjects should be added," just two years later his successor was championing "the incalculable benefit derived from this work."(29) J.H. Putman, Ottawa's renegade though influential public school inspector, asserted that "nothing being taught in city and town schools is doing more for society than the teaching of household science."(30) By the time of Mrs. Hoodless's death in

1910, there were thirty-nine domestic science centres in Ontario's schools.(31)

One of Adelaide Hoodless's major concerns during her later years was the absence of any provision for special courses for girls in the developing technical schools of the province. Although she remained committed to the cultural values of domestic science and to the principle of "woman's place is in the home," she came to realize that financial circumstances would force many young girls to enter vocational pursuits both before and during marriage.

What becomes of all the girls released from school at fourteen or fifteen years of age? What has the school done to make them of value to employers of labour? The home industries are limited and the active, self-independent girl must seek employment elsewhere.(32)

Mrs. Hoodless, however, was concerned that the campaign for technical education was too one-sided; the work was being "planned and carried on in the interests of boys and little if any attention [is being] given to the claims of the girl pupils."(33) She believed that this oversight would have social as well as vocational consequences. "The criminal and social outcasts are largely recruited from this class. It is reasonable that such consequences should follow where struggling incompetence causes discouragement before sufficient skill is developed to command living wages."(34)

In 1908 R.A. Pyne, the new minister of education in the Conservative government, commissioned Adelaide Hoodless to visit and report on technical schools recently established in the United States. Her visit took her to technical institutions in Pittsburgh and New York City where she was able to observe trade education for girls. In her subsequent report she urged such training as a solution to the social and moral dilemma faced by many young girls:

This is where the trade school comes in as an organized apprenticeship, enabling the pupil to learn a trade under social and moral conditions which will carry her through the two or three years, which may be called the transition period between girlhood and womanhood, and sending her into the field of labour, a self-respecting, intelligent worker, conscious of her duty to her employer and to herself.(35)

Unfortunately Adelaide Hoodless did not live to see the success of her final efforts in the education of the new women. On the eve of her fifty-third birthday, on February 26, 1910, she collapsed and died while in the middle of yet another impassioned speech to the Federation of Women's Clubs in Massey Hall, Toronto. Yet within another year technical education for girls as well as for boys had been placed on a firm footing in Ontario with Superintendent of Schools John Seath's report, Education for Industrial Purposes, and the Industrial Education Act of 1911.

Higher Education in Domestic Science

Adelaide Hoodless's repeated contention that "woman's place is in the home" often drew the criticism that she opposed higher education for girls. "I am not opposed to university education," she proclaimed, "but I am opposed to it on narrowing lines." It seemed unfortunate to her that girls without aptitude for the classics should be obliged to take the same university course as boys. "The higher education does not mean the same kind of education necessarily as that given to boys." (36) What, then, was an appropriate higher education for girls?

Surely mental development could be secured on lines bearing more directly upon matters relating to social and domestic laws, with which women must deal. That a trained mind is desirable in the proper regulation of domestic matters we must admit, but whether the solution of a problem in "Harmonical Progression" or the translation of 'Bellum Gallicum' will prove more conducive to the comfort and happiness of the home than the scientific knowledge of sanitation, food values, care of the sick, artistic furnishing, the management of children, etc., remain to be proved. (37)

What bothered Mrs. Hoodless was the absence of higher education in domestic science in Canada. "I am at the present time preparing my daughter for a university education, but to my sorrow I find

that my conscience compels me to send her to the United States to be educated at Columbia University, because there is a Domestic Science class there."(38)

In addition to university-level home economics classes as part of the general education of women, Adelaide Hoodless also saw their value in training teachers for public school domestic science classes. She deplored any casual approach to teacher preparation. "It has been claimed by some people that any good needle-woman can teach sewing, any experienced housekeeper and cook, domestic science." But this was wrong. "If the domestic arts are to accomplish their objective, they must be introduced and taught by intellectually cultured teachers."(39) As early as 1896 the National Council of Women accepted a resolution presented by Mrs. Hoodless calling for pressure to be applied on each provincial legislature to establish teacher training courses.(40)

As with elementary domestic science classes, Adelaide Hoodless began her campaign for a teacher training institution in her own city. And again the impetus came through the Hamilton YWCA. In remarkably short order Mrs. Hoodless and her colleagues collected the necessary funds from the provincial government, from Lord Strathcona and from interested local citizens. In February 1900, the Ontario Normal School of Domestic Science and Art opened with Miss A.G.E. Hope of Boston as its first principal. Its pupils were all holders

of either a first-class high school diploma or a university degree. Following a one-year course the graduates were quickly employed at salaries ranging from \$500 to \$600 annually by various school boards and local YWCA's as domestic science classes expanded.(41) By this time the three provincial normal schools and the Lillian Massey Normal Training School of Household Science in Toronto were also preparing home economics instructors; and again, Mrs. Hoodless had been influential in getting these classes established.

In teacher training, as in elementary school classes, Adelaide Hoodless soon found that the political and educational climates in Hamilton were not the most conducive to steady and healthy development. As early as 1901 she confided to Harcourt that "the unprogressive, apathetic nature of our educational authorities in Hamilton impresses me very strongly with the fact that a better place could be found for the training school."(42) Her eye was now on the Ontario Agricultural College campus in Guelph. OAC professors of bacteriology and chemistry were already giving voluntary lectures in the school in Hamilton, and a closer liaison with these and other departments of the college seemed possible. Besides, an OAC location would coincide with Mrs. Hoodless's growing concern for the needs of farm women and the education of farmer's daughters. Moral support came from OAC President James Mills and financial assistance was forthcoming from both

the provincial government and Sir William Macdonald, Canada's eccentric tobacco millionaire and educational benefactor.

In September 1903, the Macdonald Institute opened at Guelph with courses in domestic science, manual training and nature study. Miss Mary Watson, principal of the discontinued school in Hamilton, became the first head of the domestic science department and within a few months dean of the institute. Adelaide Hoodless herself was a part-time member of the Macdonald faculty from 1903 to 1909, commuting by train from Hamilton and lecturing on ethics. She never stopped stressing the importance of family and the need for intelligent, inspired and informed homemakers. With the establishment of college programs at OAC, Toronto, McGill, Acadia and Mount Allison by 1908, the vocation of homemaking was approaching the professional status that Mrs. Hoodless always claimed was its ultimate goal.

The Success of the Domestic Science Movement

Adelaide Hoodless was one of those fortunate reformers who was able to see her own dreams realized during the course of her lifetime. The success of the domestic science movement came not by accident; nor can it be attributed solely to Mrs. Hoodless's tireless efforts on the public platform. The campaign's success is due primarily to the

fact that domestic science offered a solution to two pressing social problems of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Canada--how to provide a "relevant" school curriculum for the nation's girls and how to arrest the threatened breakdown in domestic life caused by the contemporary pressures of urbanization and industrialization.

By the latter part of the nineteenth century it was evident to Ontario educators that girls were as interested as boys in pursuing elementary and secondary work to the upper limits of their academic ability. School trustees in Hamilton, for example, discovered to their concern in 1876 that girls outnumbered boys for the first time at the collegiate institute--245 to 241.(43) The old argument that girls' minds could not grasp the rigours of the classical and mathematical subjects was discredited. But it was replaced by a new concern--were these subjects of equal value to the two sexes for their future roles of life? "I do not doubt the capacity of Girls to learn Latin and Greek," confessed grammar school inspector George Paxton Young in 1865. "But I am not sure that, for the proper development of their minds, a different Course of Study might not be preferable."(44) Education Minister Adam Crooks proposed a possible solution as early as 1881. "It is evident that in the higher classes of the Public Schools, such subjects as music, drawing and needlework should be available for girls, and that in the High Schools they might be correspondingly relieved from studies

of less value or application to the duties of their sex."(45) It was this "duty of their sex" argument that Mrs. Hoodless would later emphasize.

By the 1890's Adelaide Hoodless and other Canadian social reformers realized that the new urban-industrial world was disrupting not only the pattern of man as a self-reliant producer of his family's necessities, but also the traditional pattern of woman as the centre of her family's domestic needs. Homemaking was no longer woman's sole activity. Increasing industrial opportunities were beginning to open new vistas to Canadian women that led to activities beyond the family hearth. Daughters who attended school for six or eight years and then took a job outside the home until they married had little opportunity to learn the essentials of homemaking from their mothers. How could their school education be made more practical? In particular, how could it contribute to future domestic stability?

Adelaide Hoodless saw the new independence of women as a mixed blessing-- the advantages of the new freedom had to be balanced against potential disadvantages for home and family life. Young girls and women working in factories, shops and offices had too little time to devote to domestic occupations, were exposed to "too much of the seamy side of life" and were deprived "of the refining and protecting influences of home life at a time when the character is being formed."(46) To Mrs. Hoodless,

the home, the church and the school were the foundations of Christian morality. Unfortunately the home, "the cornerstone of the structure has been left unprotected and is fast falling into decay." But why was the home so important? To Mrs. Hoodless, home influence constituted "a second heredity, a moral shaping by suggestion, example and influence."(47) The management of the home, she believed, "has more to do in the moulding of character than any other influence, owing to the large place it fills in the early life of the individual during the most plastic stage of development."(48)

The most important facet of homemaking was motherhood:

Upon the mother 'who is divinity' to her growing boy, and upon her early influence, must rest the foundation of her boy's character. Up to a certain age the mother has infinitely more influence over a boy than the father, and upon the character of that influence depends their future relationship If we are to have good politicians and true, honest men, we must have a higher type of womanhood.(49)

There was no doubt in Adelaide Hoodless's mind that woman's place was in the home. "Woman has had, from creation, distinctly defined duties, and until the power of education and influence is brought to bear upon these duties, and she has demonstrated her ability to do her own work well, she has no right to infringe on man's prerogative."(50) Yet the new

urban-industrial world created opportunities for women to infringe on that prerogative. "Instead of finding the chief pleasures and duties of life in the Home circle, our young women seek a career in the world of commerce or elsewhere. . . . Inventions and changed conditions have altered the whole structure."(51) The result, she concluded, was contrary to "natural law" and a threat to domestic life:

The subversion of the natural law, which makes man the breadwinner and woman the home-maker, cannot fail to have an injurious effect on social conditions, both morally and physically. . . . The trend of education, which has diverted the attention of girls from home to commercial life, the absence of any corresponding educational influence upon home duties, the indifference of women to their responsibilities, has been conceded by all to have a decidedly disintegrating effect upon domestic life.(52)

Adelaide Hoodless believed that the educational system of the 1890's was compounding rather than solving the problem. In part this was due to the failure of the schools to adjust to the demands of the new society. When the home was the manufacturing centre, "from which the necessities of life were produced," little was demanded of the elementary school except a knowledge of the three R's. But "changes in industrial conditions demand a readjustment of educational methods and courses of study."(53)

Unfortunately, theoretical questions took precedence over purely practical problems in the curriculum. "The mind is educated while the faculties that deal with the realities of life are crowded out of existence." This had unfortunate results for homemaking. "If practical knowledge formed part of the education of every girl we would not see so many domestic shipwrecks." (54) Schooling would be improved if it were less isolated from the ordinary concerns of home life. A partial answer for Adelaide Hoodless, seemed to lie in the new education which "aims to affiliate school with life, to correlate all subjects into a unity of physical, mental, moral and spiritual action."(55)

The proper education of girls also suffered because "education has been organized according to man's mind," with a resultant neglect of education for homemaking. "The home has been left to haphazard knowledge, traditional instinct and unscientific methods."(56) The neglect of home studies and the school's orientation towards the male-dominated business world seemed to be making girls "home-breakers" rather than "homemakers." Again, an answer suggested itself to Adelaide Hoodless in specialized education for girls. "Girls should be educated to fit them for the sphere of life for which they were destined--that of the homemaker." (57) Adelaide Hoodless recommended the inclusion of domestic science in the elementary school curriculum as a

means of correlating the relationship of home and school and preparing girls for homemaking.

Her appeals to the natural "destiny" of girls and to the strengthening of home life won considerable public support for domestic science. Thomas Kirkconnell, the famous principal of Lindsay Collegiate in the early years of the twentieth century, supported the new subject because he believed "the whole curriculum was so irrelevant to a girl's normal destiny as a home-maker." (58) James Robertson, champion of educational reform and chairman of the federal Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education, expressed it this way:

We need training for women and girls to give them fundamental concepts of sanitary conditions making for the safety of the home, hygienic nutrition making for the economical maintenance of the family, and domestic art that will enable them to further enjoy their love of the beautiful by ability to make beautiful things for the house. (59)

In the final analysis, domestic science was promoted, not solely for its limited educational purposes, but for its more sweeping social and moral promises. "There are tremendous possibilities involved in this new movement," wrote Adelaide Hoodless, "not only as an educational factor, but as a social power." In the city, domestic science would help

An earlier version of this paper was published under the title "Adelaide Hoodless: Champion of Women's Rights" in Robert S. Patterson (ed.), Profiles of Canadian Educators (Toronto: D.C. Heath, 1974).

alleviate the social problems of slum housing by instilling into girls the desire and the "executive ability" to turn "hovels into homes." (60) In the country it would attack a main source of social dislocation--rural depopulation--by imparting to the country girls a fitting appreciation for rural life, by training up "proper farm wives" to create and maintain an agreeable home life. (61)

Above all were the ethical considerations: Character is formed in the home, and largely under the influence of the mother, and unless women are educated so as to realize and faithfully perform the duties and responsibilities of home-makers, we cannot expect a high type of citizen. . . . There is no branch of education so conducive to ethical instruction as that of Domestic Science, dealing as it does directly with the home and the operations carried on there. (62)

Finally, domestic science seemed to Mrs. Hoodless the only hope in stemming the tide of women away from the home. "Girls should have special opportunities for acquiring a knowledge which not only develops strong character but fits them for their God-given place in life." (63)

NOTES

1. The traditional interpretation of the beginnings of home education in Ontario is presented by Ruth Howes, Adelaide Hoodless: Woman With a Vision (Ottawa: Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, 1965), and by Ethel Chapman, "Adelaide Hoodless," in Harriet Rouillard (ed.), Pioneers in Adult Education in Canada (Toronto: Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1952).
2. Archives of Ontario, Education Department Records, Adelaide Hoodless to Richard Harcourt, July 15, 1901.

3. Edith Child Rowles, "A Brief History of Some Early Canadian Developments in Home Economics" (Teachers College, Columbia University, unpublished Ed.D. thesis, 1956), p. 21.
4. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada: Proceedings of the Annual Meeting and Conference of the National Conference of Women of Canada, 1894, p. 114.
5. Hamilton, Spectator, July 19, 1894.
6. Hamilton, Evening Times, April 30, 1895.
7. Howes, Adelaide Hoodless: Woman With a Vision (Ottawa: Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, 1965), p. 9.
8. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science as an Educational Factor," Proceedings of the Ontario Educational Association, 1900, p. 331.
9. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1895, p. 92.
10. Hamilton, Evening Times, September 21, 1895, letter to the editor from Adelaide Hoodless.
11. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1902, p. 120.
12. Archives of Ontario, Education Department Records, Hoodless to Harcourt, August 5, 1901.
13. Ibid.
14. Hamilton, Evening Times, May 5, 1908.
15. Hamilton Board of Education, Minutes, 1904, p. 58. The Hamilton trustees belatedly recognized Mrs. Hoodless's efforts by naming a new school after her in 1912.
16. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1895, pp. 38-39.
17. Ontario Department of Education, Annual Report of the Minister of Education, 1898, p. xxxvi.
18. Archives of Ontario, Education Department Records, Hoodless to Harcourt, February 2, 1902.
19. Adelaide Hoodless, Public School Domestic Science (Toronto: The Copp Clark Company Limited, 1898), p. v.
20. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1902, p. 117.
21. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1894, p. 119.
22. Archives of Ontario, Prime Minister's Office Records, James Whitney File, Adelaide Hoodless to James Whitney, n.d. (circa 1905-1909).
23. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1902, p. 120.
24. Archives of Ontario, Education Department Records, Harcourt to G.Y. Chown, copy, June 6, 1901.
25. Ibid., Harcourt to James Mills, copy, September 19, 1901.
26. Ibid., Harcourt to A.O. Beatty, copy, May 21, 1901.
27. Ibid., Harcourt to T.H. Preston, copy, October 15, 1901.
28. Ibid., A.M. Cameron to Harcourt, December 23, 1901.
29. London Board of Education, Annual Report, 1903, p. 4; and Annual Report, 1905, p. 9.
30. J.H. Putman, Fifty Years at School: An Educationist Looks at Life (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1938), p. 139.
31. Ontario Department of Education, Education for Industrial Purposes: A Report by John Seath, Superintendent of Education for Ontario (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1910), p. 267.
32. Adelaide Hoodless, Report to the Minister of Education, Ontario, on Trade Schools in Relation to Elementary Education (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1909), p. 5.
33. Ibid., p. 4.
34. Ibid., p. 5.
35. Ibid.
36. Adelaide Hoodless, "The Labour Question and Women's Work," Women Workers of Canada, 1898, pp. 284-285.
37. Ibid., p. 261.
38. Ibid., p. 284.
39. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1896, p. 386.
40. Ibid., p. 382.
41. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1901, p. 117.
42. Archives of Ontario, Education Department Records, Hoodless to Harcourt, October 15, 1901.
43. L.T. Spalding, The History and Romance of Education: Hamilton (Hamilton: Design Lithographers Ltd., 1972), p. 17.
44. J.G. Hodgins, ed., Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada, XIX (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1907), p. 96.
45. Ontario Department of Education, Annual Report of the Minister of Education, 1880-1881, p. 247.
46. Adelaide Hoodless, "The Labour Question and Women's Work," Women Workers of Canada, 1898, pp. 257-258.
47. Dominion Educational Association, Proceedings, 1907, p. 192.
48. Howes, Adelaide Hoodless: Woman With a Vision, p. 17.
49. Adelaide Hoodless, "The Labour Question and Women's Work," Women Workers of Canada, 1898, p. 256.
50. Ibid., p. 257.
51. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1902, p. 118.
52. Adelaide Hoodless, "The Labour Question and Women's Work," Women Workers of Canada, 1902, p. 258.
53. Adelaide Hoodless, Trade Schools in Relation to Elementary Education, p. 3.
54. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1894, p. 117.
55. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1902, p. 119.
56. Dominion Educational Association, Proceedings, 1907, p. 193.
57. Howes, Adelaide Hoodless: Woman With a Vision, p. 12.
58. Watson Kirkconnell, A Canadian Headmaster: A Brief Biography of Thomas Allison Kirkconnell (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1935), p. 136.
59. Ottawa Citizen, February 28, 1911.
60. Archives of Ontario, Education Department Records, Hoodless to Harcourt, June 8, 1903.
61. Adelaide Hoodless, "A New Education for Women," Farmers' Advocate, December 15, 1902.
62. Adelaide Hoodless, "Domestic Science," Women Workers of Canada, 1905, p. 38.
63. Archives of Ontario, Education Department Records, Adelaide Hoodless to John Miller, September 1, 1900.