

Doctor Advocates Home Training Before Marriage

"No girl ought to be allowed to marry until she knows how to look after a home and children," said Dr. Idris Morgan in an address to the Newcastle Business and Professional Women's Club.

The family unit was still the social basis of the community. The nation's health, culture, and tastes depended in no small measure upon the standard of the family life. That standard could not be high unless the persons whose responsibility it was were trained.

In Australia deficiency diseases were seen quite frequently, Dr. Morgan said. This was not because there was any dearth of essential factors or any dearth of the money to buy them, but because there was a widespread ignorance, even among so-called educated people, of what constituted a correct diet—a matter of which, for all practical purposes, sufficient could be learned in a few hours.

Latin, French, algebra and the intricacies of the relationships of the sides of triangles and the angles contained between them were deemed important at school. These subjects had their value, but the illogical valuation of their relative importance to the individual and the community had to be deplored.

Dr. Morgan said that it was a matter of daily experience in the life of any doctor and in every baby health centre to see children on the verge of death, solely because the diet was ill-balanced and the nutrition wrongly planned.

The main faults of the average diet were—

An excess of carbohydrates—cakes, scones, biscuits, chocolates, sweets, pastry, etc. These things had a place in the diet, but were often in excess.

A deficient quantity of animal protein—milk, meat, eggs, fish and cheese.

Insufficient raw fruit and green vegetables.

Insufficient amounts of certain vitamins.

HOMEMAKER'S COURSE.

Dr. Morgan advocated that all young women before thinking of marriage should fit themselves by taking the homemaker's course at the Newcastle Technical College. This course was essential to the welfare of the nation, and was as concise as possible. It included dressmaking, cookery, home decoration, medical hygiene. There was no attempt to turn out qualified or even partially qualified medical practitioners or nurses. An attempt, however, was made to give elementary knowledge, lack of which too frequently resulted in tragedy.

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On the management of the home depended the physical fitness of the nation. The mother ordered the diet. She inculcated the knowledge of personal and home hygiene into the minds of her children. She had the spending of the family income. Her position and the influence of her actions on the national health and well-being was sufficiently great to warrant that the young womanhood of this country should learn the basic principles of what was to be the life work of most of them.