

Improvement in Farm Homes.

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Advancement in all lines of work is being made more rapidly at the present time than ever before. In the benefit that comes from modern improvement there is no one who deserves a share more than the farmer. Of course there are great improvements in farm implements, but reference is here made more particularly to the improvement in the farmer's home and in his family.

The house does not need to be a costly affair but it should be arranged and furnished with such taste that the first glimpse would suggest "home." Houses, especially in the country, are usually planned by a man even though a woman must live in them and work in them much more than man does. It should by all means be planned by a woman. One seldom hears of a woman

building a house. If our neighbor builds a house, it is always "Mr. A is having a house built," never "Mrs. A is having a house built," but Mrs. A. will have to live and work in it, no matter whether it is convenient or not.

In choosing a site for a house the quality of the soil should be examined to see that it is properly drained. This is an item that is often overlooked. Farmers in Kansas usually have eighty or more acres from which to choose a site, and yet we often see the house standing in a hollow, in the middle of the farm, as far away from health, neighbors, and comfort as possible. There is an old saying that God made the country and man made the town; but it seems doubtful whether God had a hand in making the houses in which many of

our country people live, for if he had, there would be a great deal more comfort in them.

The cellar should be cemented, and all pains taken to see that a dry, pure, and sweet atmosphere is present every where. Many of the old houses in England and New England which our forefathers believed to be haunted - were haunted only by ghosts which originated in a damp cellar. Their presence is known by the odor of dampness that pervades the house.

The cost of building an improved house seems at first to be large, but is really more economical to make the house a healthful place to live in, for there will be fewer doctor bills to pay, and the happiness that health brings is worth more than the cost of a good house.

The surroundings have much to do with the looks of the house.

Passersby will have a better opinion of the inmates if the surroundings are beautiful. If one passes a farm-house, and sees the yard cluttered with wornout machinery, fences broken down, and barn-doors off their hinges, it suggests at once a mortgage and everything going to rack and ruin. Little wonder that children of such homes long for something better! It is not surprising that many farmers' daughters and sons lack the cultivated tastes of many of the city-bred children, when we think of the few opportunities they have to cultivate their tastes for music and literature. Little can be expected from young people who must pass their time from sunrise till sunset almost every day in the year behind the plow or doing the hard work that farmers' children must do, with scarcely any time for education, except a few months in the year.

No one will say that this work is not honorable; of course it must be done, and the parents must not do it all; but it is not necessary that every moment be spent in this way. Many boys and girls have become tired of the farm, and gone to the city just because the work was too hard and their homes were not attractive. Farmers as a rule work too hard. They think too much of money, and saving it for their children. Would it not be better to use some of the money now, and enjoy it with the children? A few dollars spent in books and magazines and a few beautiful pictures for the home would not be missed, and the good effect could not be counted in dollars and cents. Magazines on improvement in farming would interest the boys, and make them

more contented and willing to stay on the farm. Books and papers on house-hold economics and floriculture would please the girls and they would make the home more pleasant for the whole family.

There are new ideas and machinery for the kitchen as well as for the farm or shop. It takes brains as well as muscle to run the affairs of the household. The cooking of food is very important, and it takes a knowledge of science to do this properly. It is often thought that woman needs no education, for she is going to keep house and she needs to know nothing except what she can learn from her mother; but this is a great mistake. It is of vital importance that she should have an education. An intelligent housewife

may, by her knowledge, prolong many a life and make it much happier.

✓ This is an age of clubs. Every woman who is up with the times belongs to one or more clubs; and great benefit is derived from them. It would be a wise plan for the farmers' wives and daughters in every community to organize a mutual improvement club. They might support a library, and take magazines and papers. This would enable the members to get the best reading matter without the expense of buying their own books. Papers might be prepared by each member in turn, treating the different kinds of work done in the household. One woman may know how to make the best bread, another may know how to sew better than the others, another may be

a good nurse. There is hardly a woman who does not excel in something. Music and literature may find a place.

These clubs could not help but bring the farmer's family to a higher plane of intelligence.

The making of the home is the most important work that woman can do, because it is the home surroundings that mould and influence the lives. "The hope of America is the homes of America." The home ties are stronger in the country than in the city, for there is not so much to detract the attention from the country homes. But the country homes must be attractive to have the best influence. The grounds about the house should be made beautiful. It is not a hard task to keep the grounds in

order, if they are once well arranged. The back yard as well as the front yard should be seeded down to grass, and ornamental trees and shrubs should be planted over the lawn. The pigs and chickens should be confined to the barn yard. A hammock swung in the back yard, under a tree, where the farmer's wife could take a quiet nap in the afternoon, or where the farmer could take his noonday rest would give a great deal of comfort.

More than half the inmates of the insane asylums are farmer's wives. You may ask what this means. It means a great deal, It means that farmer's wives work too hard, they worry too much, and do not take enough recreation. They work too hard, because they do

not have proper utensils to aid them. Very few have a cistern, a sink, or an oil stove. Often they do not even possess a washing machine or a wringer. Imagine a farmer of today cutting his hay without a mower or his grain without a reaper. He would think that quite out of the question; yet his wife may go on doing her work by hand, just as her grandmother did before her, and nothing is thought of it.

Tableware and cooking utensils cost very little indeed, yet many a country housewife has not enough to use in preparing one meal without stopping to wash some of them. Pretty dishes are as cheap as ugly ones. A very good quality of silver knives and forks may be bought for a little

more than the common steel ones so much used, and they do not require one tenth the care to keep them in order.

Usually on a farm, the best dishes are kept for special occasions, and napkins are an unheard of luxury except when there is company.

Why save everything for company? The farmer's own family can appreciate these things as much when alone as when company is present, and this is the best way to teach good table manners.

When one is accustomed to refining surroundings, he will know how to act when away from home.

The country home should be the happiest home. Away from the dust and heat of the city, surrounded by

the beauties of nature, the farmer's life should be the happiest of them all, and his children should be able to say with the poet—

How dear to this heart are
the scenes of my childhood,
When fond recollections
present them to view!

The orchard, the meadow,
the deep tangled wild-wood,
And every loved spot which
my infancy knew—