

BEAUTIFYING RURAL HOMES.

GUY ELLIOTT MITCHELL.

The Englishman lives in a house which in all probability his father and his forefathers have lived in for a dozen generations. Even where the house is not owned by the resident, the preferential right descends from father to son to rent and occupy it. It is a true home.

Americans are strongly imbued with the idea of owning homes, houses with accompanying plots of land; but as a rule Americans are all too careless, at the same time, about creating a bit of scenery or making the home such an attractive abode as will cause the traveler to pause a moment and exclaim: "What a pretty little place!"

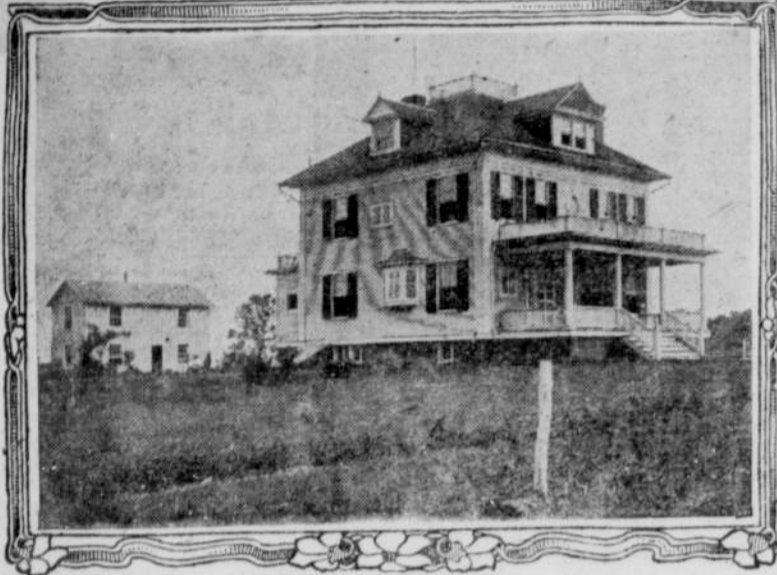
In the first instance where his English cousin, or the English landlord erects a stone house, at an advanced cost doubtless, but more than evened up in a few years by repainting and repairing, the American throws togeth-

skirts and they built a barn and moved into it and lived there the first year, while they were building their house.

They at once planted a garden which seemed to them like a real farm after their tiny back yard, and the first year they raised all the vegetables they could eat, besides over fifty chickens.

And since then they have gone on beautifying and embellishing this place, until it is now a lovely country residence, twenty per cent. higher in value than it would have been if, five years ago they had made it a mere habitation.

In the first place they employed an architect and built a good house, one which, with ordinary repairs, will stand in good shape fifty years hence. They painted it well. Many long winter evenings of the first year, while they lived in the barn, were



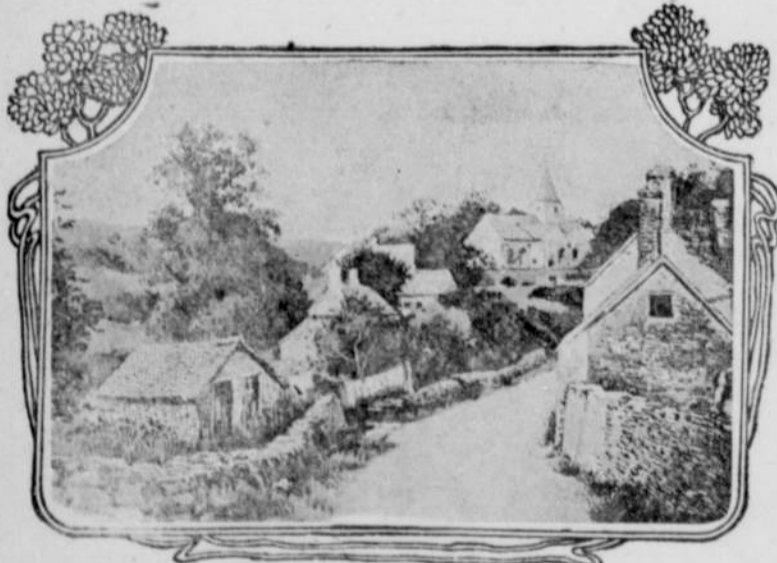
THE HOME THEY MADE AND THE BARN IN WHICH THEY DWELT WHILE BUILDING IT.

er a frame dwelling, usually of cheap, second-growth timber. In twenty years the English home is covered with ivy and has the appearance of substantiality and solidity, as though it had always been there, an intended remaining. If you mention "twenty years hence" to the American, he will shrug his shoulders and smile and tell you he expects to be somewhere else in twenty years, if he has not bettered his condition and gotten out of it in half that time. But twenty years pass more quickly than is expected, and what does the place look like then? It has had perhaps three coats of paint. The second set of shingles is curling up and needs replacing and the house itself is worth one-half of its value when new.

Yet it must be agreed that every man should build a house with the idea of making it his permanent home, adding to it as his needs grow, but continually improving it and beautifying it. If for no other cause than increasing its selling value, he should build well and improve. And this applies to the surrounding grounds, the outbuildings, etc., fully as much as the home proper.

"What is home without a mother" and a good wife and children? What is home, I would add, even with these blessings, unless it is a real home, a comfortable and a beautiful one? Ah, there is a difference, and such a wide difference, between an abode or a mere dwelling place and a home.

Trying to treat this matter from a practical standpoint, the Department of Agriculture recently issued an illustrated bulletin on beautifying back yards. This applied to city and suburban homes, but the idea is the same everywhere.



OLD ENGLISH SUBURBAN STREET AND STONE HOUSES.

And this calls to mind a practical illustration of what a good thing it is, what a splendid thing, to start in growing something in your back yard, if you have nothing bigger. For I have in mind two people, a young man and his wife, who started their married life in a rented city house with a back yard 18 feet wide and containing about one-fortieth of an acre. They had lived in the city all their lives and knew nothing of the wonders of plant and animal production. But they commenced at once to see their ground. They planted radishes and lettuce and some flowers, and trained tomatoes against the fence, and they set a hen. Their failures and interesting experiences during the two years they lived thus would fill a volume. But the great result was that before the end of the first year, they had never lived outside their four walls, felt terribly confined. They longed to get out and have enough land to grow more things, to make a genuine garden and to nurture and rear and reap the things which they ate. And so they moved into the country, hardly the real country yet; but they bought half an acre just beyond the city out-

handsome and well-built homes. The care and attention given to this place may in itself have brought good neighbors.

A good lawn was made, shade and fruit trees were immediately set out and sedulously cared for, the man has become an expert gardener, the chicken business has become an important adjunct, furnishing not only an ample meat supply, but a considerable additional income from eggs, broilers and capons. The fruit trees are beginning to bear and the berry bushes have long since yielded fresh fruit for the table and jellies and jams for winter. The place is constantly improving and being improved.

The interior of the house was well finished to commence with. Room after room has since been furnished and beautified as means admitted.

For making this move, for adopting this change in their modes of life, this couple are better people; they are better citizens, they are broader, they know more, they are happier and they are richer in two senses. They make more money and they save more. They buy less of canned vegetables and meats and they have more to spend in improving their place and

adding to its beauty and desirability. They have lately put up a substantial light iron fence, which, kept well painted, will last unto the third and fourth generation.



A COSY FIRE-PLACE CORNER.

"Ah," said the man, "if we had only had the advantages when we were young which our children have here, there would have been a lot more in life for us."

And so it is everywhere. It matters little, if you live in a brown stone front with the brick pavement directly under your window, whether you have a plain or a colored window sill, but it does matter whether your front or back yard is well kept and well fenced and is prettily decorated with plants and vines, and whether, if you have more ground, it is a poor, unattractive plot, or instead is a thing of beauty and a joy, not only to you but to all who see it.

How many men you run across who have been "awfully busy" but are going to "fix up" their places. They seldom get fixed. Before they get fixed up with the little things a home should have, they need fixing in earnest—they are old places.

If as a people we could become educated to the idea of greater permanency in our mode of living, of building and improving for our future years, or doing something with the idea in mind that we would not have to redo it in ten or fifteen years hence, the average American home would have a far more substantial, comfortable and attractive appearance.

PLANTS BELOW THE SILL average five and a half times as much as a cubic foot of water.

It costs as much to fire a 16-inch cannon as it does to pay a private soldier his wages for five years.

The ruins of a prehistoric fortified British village have been unearthed near Carshalton, England.

The fly is seven times stronger than a horse, weight for weight. It can lift twenty times its own weight.

The canning of blue berries is an important industry in Vermont. One factory last season canned 300,000 gallons of the berry.

Balanced Rations for Man and Beast.

Two Farmers' Bulletins of the Department of agriculture, widely dissimilar in contents, yet treating of subjects which have a closely-connected relationship are the Feeding of Farm Animals and the Principles of Bread Making, and both of them have proven so popular that their reprinting has been required several times.

The feeding of the animals on the farm is a matter which every farmer is studying more or less closely. The more successful ones the most closely, since it is a matter of constant experiment and inquiry to determine just what is the best ration for work, meat and dairy animals. While each man's experience must be to a great extent his guide, there are certain laws, the results of wide experiments, which afford much aid to the intelligent feeder and these are summarized in the bulletin mentioned—Farmers' Bulletin 22. What is known as a balanced ration is always the thing to be attained. Food is divided into two general classes; fat and heat producing,

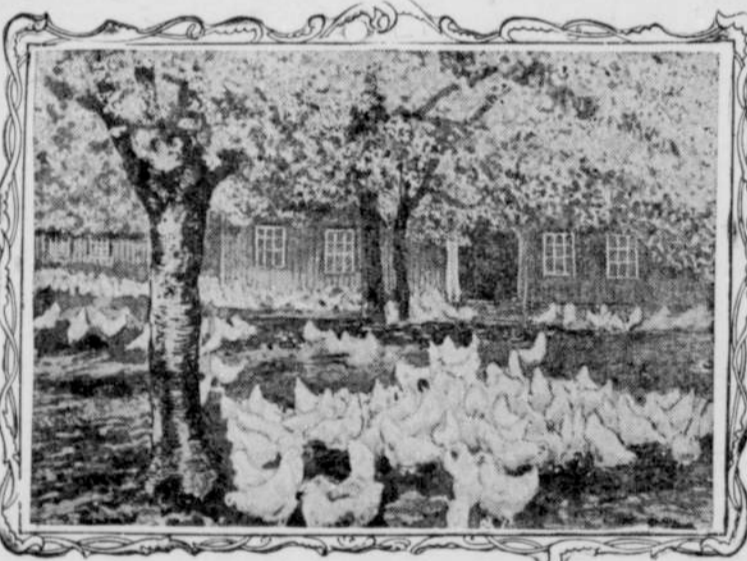
known as carbohydrates, and muscle and bone producing, known as nitrogenous, and these two foods should be supplied the animal in the proper proportion. If there is a preponderance of either, the ration is unbalanced.

Both of these bulletins can be obtained free through members of congress or senators, or by writing to the Secretary of Agriculture at Washington.

Corn, for instance, is a food rich in carbohydrates and should be "balanced" by a portion of some nitrogenous food such as barley, bran, cowpeas or others of the legumes. A reprint of this bulletin will give the reader a very clear understanding of the value of food for animals.

Food Value of Bread.

The second bulletin on Bread Making, Farmer's Bulletin 112, also goes into the question of what is a balanced ration, but for human food. As corn and corn fodder is a fat-producing food for animals, so corn bread is a one-sided diet for man and while it produces fat and energy or fuel for the body does not tend to give him the same capacity for endurance that



ONE OF THE DELIGHTS OF THE RURAL HOME

doing hard muscular work should have daily food with a fuel value of 4,350 calories while a man taking little exercise needs only 2,450.

Switzerland is the oldest as well as one of the smallest republics in the world. The cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden formed a defensive league in 1291, and this was the beginning of the Swiss Confederacy.

The American harvest of broom-corn this year will furnish material for 42,000,000 brooms worth, approximately, \$15,000,000. With 4,000 brooms to a car, 10,000 freight cars will be required to transport the broom output.

The star nearest to the earth is Alpha Centaur, estimated to be 25,000,000,000,000 miles away or 275,000 times farther distant from the earth than the sun. Needless to say these figures are in what are known as "round numbers."



"GOLLY, I'M GLAD I DONE LOOKED IN DE WINDOW FUST."

wheat or rye bread does. The wheat berry in itself comes very near being a balanced ration. If it is robbed of its gluten, which lies next to the skin, it is no longer a complete food. Potatoes are extremely one-sided and should be eaten in connection with some nitrogenous food, such as lean meat or beans, which, however, if eaten alone would afford the system too much nitrogen. This bulletin, which is written by a woman, also discusses the practical side of bread making and can probably be read with benefit by any housewife.

Items of Interest.
Oscar Hunt of the Carlisle football team is a millionaire Indian.

Old, battered, second-hand silk hats are in good demand among comedians—also among the colored fraternity.

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average five and a half times as much as a cubic foot of water.

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Though there are many women colonels the only woman admiral is the Queen of Greece. She is an honorary admiral in the Russian navy.

A cubic mile of earth weighs 25,649,300 tons and the volume of the earth is 259,880,000,000 cubic miles. Question in mental arithmetic: How much does the earth weigh?

Professor William T. Hornaday, the zoologist, is seeking to have the general government establish a great buffalo park in the west that the animal may not become extinct.

There are only three million Cossacks in Russia. The number of peasants is about one hundred million, there are 14,000,000 "lower city dwellers" and 8,000,000 nomads and semi-barbarians.

Dietary experts of the Department of Agriculture estimate that a man

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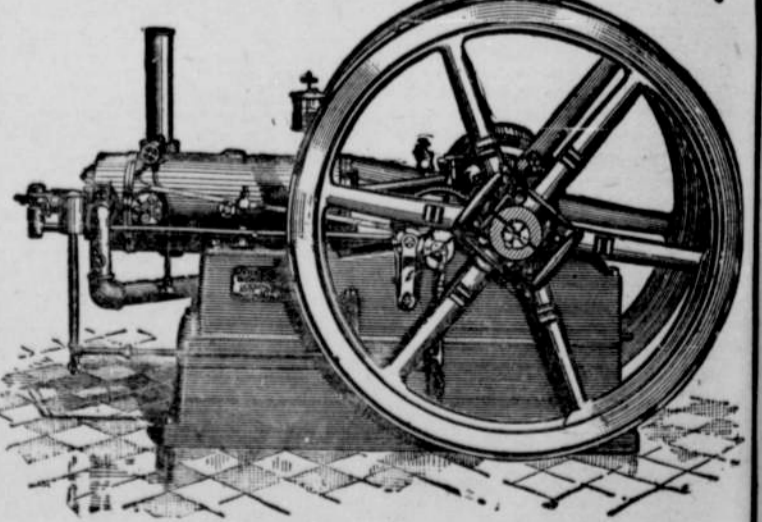
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