

The Practical Value of Beautifying Country Homes.

Much has been written and said about the improvement of rural homes, and, since the importance of the subject cannot be too highly emphasized, it may not be amiss to offer a few suggestions upon the subject to the readers of the "Review." In our remarks we shall say very little regarding the methods of improvement, but rather, we shall consider a few of the more prominent reasons for improving, and also the effects of such upon the welfare of our country and its people.

The owner of a home in the country may make that home a thing of beauty and a source of joy to himself and others by using to advantage the gifts of nature that are within his reach. The condition of things within the home may not be as bright as might be desired, but such may be materially improved by beautifying the outward aspect. Moreover, the occupants of such a home will soon learn to recognize the harmony of their environments, and in a short time will endeavor to reconcile the inward discord with the outward harmony.

Many farmers realize the possible pleasure and pride that beautiful surroundings will afford them, but when contemplating the required improvements they make a mountain out of a mole hill, and consequently their ideas seldom materialize. They should not allow the slight expense and the extra work to interfere with their desire to improve, because when they look the matter full in the face, so to speak, they will convince themselves

that these obstacles are not quite so formidable as at first supposed. They should make a start at least. The first thing to do is to clear away the useless and unsightly stone piles, fence poles and other debris—the accumulation of years—that is usually to be seen about the farmer's dooryard.

The aphorism, "a thing well begun is half done," applies just as forcibly to rural improvement as it does to any other pursuit of life. Besides this, if the improvement is well begun it will incite the improver to further action. The family, touched by the appreciation of what has already been done, is inspired with a desire to continue the good work. They will endeavor to make all portions of their home correspond to that initial portion which required in its commencement so much will power.

The influences of rural improvement are numerous and important. The slight and inexpensive adornments, which may be added to make the home beautiful, teach us most forcibly the influence of beauty upon life and character. Among the many factors of ornamentation, the flower garden exercises the most influence upon the development of our higher nature. Their refining influence is highly conducive to moral elevation. They awaken our perceptive faculties and enable us to appreciate more keenly the beauties of nature. They are our lifelong companions if we choose to cultivate their acquaintance. They influence us in many ways, unconsciously so perhaps, yet we cannot ignore them and we cannot fail to appreciate their value. Men admire them, women love them, and children adore them. Hence, we see their