

The Farm Home

A Plea for the Small Kitchen.

By Megyra.

A kitchen, according to the dictionary, is a room in which to cook. If this be so, then, why have it large? If there be room for the stove or range, and the cook, why should we demand more? Very many writers speak ecstatically of "the large, roomy kitchen, with beautifully polished stove at the end; snow-white curtains at the windows, white scrubbed floor and tables, and at the other end large, roomy cupboards in which are kept everything, and on the walls hang brightly scoured tins."

They never consider, however, the useless steps for tired feet required in travelling from end to end of the large kitchen. We are told to have rocking chairs and foot-stools. I say No! No! No! Let us cook and cook only in our kitchens. When we have even one minute to rest let us get out of the cook room and shut the door behind us, and let us go into some other comfortable, well-aired room, free from kitchen cares.

I would have only a stove and some shelves about on the same level as the top of the stove or range, that there might not be much lifting and so near the stove that the cook would not have to take a dozen steps, or even one, in reaching what is required for her work—i. e., such things as meal and salt, pepper or any seasoning for soups and stews, knife, fork and basting spoon, but no more than is really required for stove work. Behind these shelves a slide door should connect with the pantry or work room. Near the stove at the other side I would have a hopper-shaped wood box, built in that wall of the kitchen, which is next the wood room. A man on the outside can fill this box and close the lid to the outer half of the hopper, while the cook can raise the inner lid and take out the wood for her fire. I would have as many windows as convenient and would have them well fitted with screens and shades, and the remainder of the walls should be in some bright color. The floor should be of well-oiled hardwood, so that it will need no scouring even though a little grease should be spilled. Beside the stove where the cook will most frequently stand, a sheepskin rug would be elegant, light to handle, restful to the feet, and if a spark fell it would soon be extinguished. I can imagine two chairs might, some cold evening, be introduced, and two pairs of feet be put in the oven to warm. But this is not the intention of the kitchen.

One door is all that is really necessary, that opening into the adjoining pantry or work room. This should be a spring door, and swinging both ways,

though another might lead to the laundry or wash room. The kitchen needs no outside door, for we expect callers will not come to the kitchen, and we do not intend it as a reception room.

In the adjoining room all other utensils and ingredients for cooking should be kept. The baking cabinet, with its flour, sugar, meal, etc., compartments, should be near a shelf corresponding to the one on the kitchen side of the slide doors. When any food is prepared for the oven or fire, the slide door can be opened from either side, and the uncooked set through to the kitchen, or the cooked to the pantry, and the doors immediately closed. The heat being excluded we need no summer kitchen. While the doors are closed the pantry is always cool, and of course in winter we can leave them open to warm both rooms.

In the work rooms, chairs should be kept for working, as I see no reason why work tables and sinks might not be just as low and as easy to work at when seated as our writing tables in the office. But a light, soft rug or cushion should be always handy to place under the feet when any standing work is needed.

Of course I would want pipes connecting with the kitchen hot water tank, fitted with a tap near the dish-washing sink, and also near it I would have slides connecting with the dining room. I would not be in favor of having this room larger than to allow of two or three workers engaging in separate occupations expeditiously. There is no need of large floor spaces to travel over nor to scrub.

Our foreparents had not the advantages we enjoy, and they were content or compelled often to make one room do for kitchen, pantry, dining room, reception room and parlors (and even bed rooms), but we do this from choice. We would consider it a hardship did we possess only a one-roomed house with perhaps a sleeping room above, but in scores of cases this is practically all of the house that is used, yes, even in the long winter evenings. 'Tis true there is a handsomely furnished parlor, often double, and an up-to-date well appointed dining room, both of which are used on the rare occasions when such favored guests as the minister and wife arrive. On all other occasions we cook, eat, work, sew, read, and entertain our neighbors in our spotless, roomy kitchens.

Then make the kitchen so small that we cannot do this. Let us who have to pay for the house and its furnishings enjoy to the utmost our parlors and dining rooms, not on the rare occasions only, but in every spare minute also, and these spare minutes will come far oftener through our not

having to waste our strength in travelling the long distances and in sweeping and keeping clean that roomy kitchen.

Our dining rooms must be large—enough space to accommodate the threshers or family gatherings; our parlors, which should be our living rooms, should also have lots of floor surface, and our sleeping rooms also, but we will be a healthier, more intelligent class if we do not live in our kitchens.

From my window, as I write, I can see a large two-story house with a low kitchen tacked on behind. (Why do so many people spoil an otherwise beautiful house by adding low attachments?) Not twice in a year do I see a light in any room but that kitchen.

One summer day two years ago I called there. I found the mistress—a semi-invalid—not resting in an easy chair in the parlor, nor on the sitting room sofa, nor on the dining room lounge, nor even in the rocker in the spotlessly clean kitchen, nor in a hammock under a shade tree; she was gaining strength and making life easy by occupying a hard, straight-backed uncomfortable seat in the summer kitchen and—hooking rag mats to shut up in the parlor. It is needless to say she is still an invalid.

Meat and Other Foods.

Questions Answered by Mrs. S. T. Rorer.

Q. Do you prefer to cook meat in a pot or oven?

A. As far as the heat is concerned, there is little difference; but we are accustomed to the roasted, scorched taste produced by the dry heat of the oven. Most people consider roasted more savory than that cooked in a pot. Stewed meats, or meats cooked in water just below the boiling point, however, lose less in weight and are much more easily digested.

Q. Do you put sugar on porridge?

A. No; sugar, here is liable to produce the fermentation spoken of in some of the previous remarks. Porridge is an admirable food, and it may be taken with milk; but not with sugar and milk. Simple foods are more easily digested than when made complex by the addition of other materials.

Q. Do you believe a straight line of foods will answer for all people in all conditions?

A. No; certainly not. The actions of the United States army may be exceedingly good in our climate, but certainly did not prove so in Cuba. Fat pork is not the proper food for summer, and people living on such diet in a hot climate must necessarily fall ill.

Q. Give a recipe for a good cup of tea?