

# The Farm Home

## Information Wanted.

By way of opening up a discussion that we think will be very helpful to all concerned, we would like to have as many short articles as possible from the readers of these pages dealing with the following topics. Contributors can write on any one or all of the subjects as they see fit:

(1) How can the long winter evenings in the farm home be most profitably spent?

(2) What are your ideas as to entertainment for young people in the country?

(3) What would be the best plan for arranging a reading circle in the farm home, so that every member of it who could read could take part?

## Rag Mats.

By Megyra.

My personal experience with these articles has not been very extensive, but I have been in their company enough to be able to decide that they are seldom even pretty, they are usually unnecessary, and they are not conducive to the health of the housekeeper. When I was young a girl was considered shiftless and lazy if she did not prepare a dozen or more hooked mats for her future home. Long before she knew where her lot would be cast she would begin making mats and the other home-made furnishings that were formerly considered a part of every girl's marriage portion. In fact I fancy that even in these enlightened days I am looked upon as a very poor housekeeper by my neighbors when they discover I have not a single rug in the house.

I did make one, however. As I had a horror of the usual mis-shapen, unnaturally colored dogs, cats, and other objects that required to be labeled before one could tell what they were supposed to represent, or the flowers and birds in startlingly showy colors, and as I had not a sufficiently artistic soul to see any beauty in them when trodden underfoot, I decided to make a hit-and-miss, crazy affair. I prepared the rags, and as I wanted it fine and close I began to work. I hooked, and I hooked, for days, yes, weeks, before my canvas was filled. I was not proud of the result, but I had a "rug" which I dutifully placed on the floor. I faithfully swept it and shook it, which was necessary, though when this work was added to the work of hooking, it made the thing rather expensive. It wore well, too well, for I never could see any excuse for its existence. It saved the carpet, but what was the carpet for if it had to be covered to save it? I was glad when a young puppy ate holes in it.

Some people have handsome, or rather costly carpets, which they almost completely cover with home-made rugs, which have to be lifted and carried out of doors on sweeping days. They are used to save the carpet, as though a woman's strength is not better worth saving than even the most expensive carpets.

I have been astonished to hear people say, when seeing the floor covered with these highly-colored monstrosities, "What lovely rugs you have!" I congratulated myself, inwardly, that I did not have to live in that house. Mats are addicted also to the bad habit of being easily turned up at the corners, causing the awkward boy to trip or the profane man to swear just at the time he is trying to be very correct.

Rag carpets can seldom lay claim to much beauty, but compared with rugs, they are a genuine comfort to the housekeeper. She can come into the room with her broom, sweep the whole floor surface, and leave without having these heavy rugs to carry out and shake. One wonders how the frail woman can stand it. She does not stand it always, though she never connects that weakness or pain in the side with rugs. It is attributed to cold, and she goes on sweeping and shaking until at last the doctor is called in. If she dies the verdict is often death from overwork, and the husband is blamed for not keeping a servant. I should pronounce it suicide, or perhaps "rugicide." Why does a woman make a rag carpet, then use twice as many rags to make mats to cover it? It would be far more sensible, if the carpet really needs covering, for her to use the rags in making a second carpet to tack over the first.

There is yet another side to the subject, viz., the time and opportunities wasted. These women never have time for reading and mind improvement, their time being all taken up with the making of rugs and other useless things.

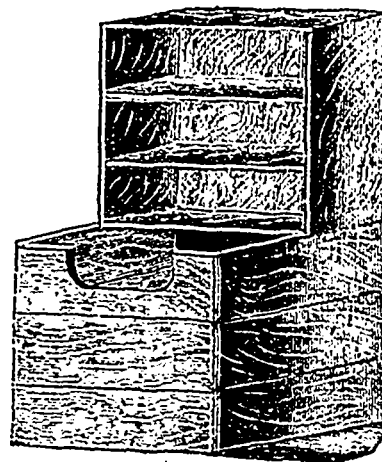
They cannot fully enjoy the company of their husbands and children. They are always too busy or too tired to keep their minds on even a story if one should be read aloud. They can not even do any profitable thinking, for while their hands are busy their minds are running on the pattern for the next rug.

There are women who might spend many happy hours outdoors with a book or studying nature in some of its many phases, but instead, they confine themselves in a close room, over a mat frame, filling canvas with rags. You invariably see their families living almost entirely in the kitchen, and the children seldom have company, all on account of those easily soiled colors on the parlor floor.

So the story goes. Our lives are too short to waste on such things, and we have no right to shorten them with overwork. Let us enjoy all the good things within reach, and if we have no natural taste for intellectual pursuits we can soon gain an acquired liking, but I have noticed that a high grade of intellect is seldom found in the woman who devotes her time to hooked mats even if they are pretty. For I must admit some of them can claim a fair share of beauty. If they are really made for the purpose of beautifying and making comfortable the home, then the maker of them deserves praise for her well-meant, though mistaken, efforts. A rug in front of a bed is pleasanter to the feet than the bare floor, and is more easily kept free from dust than an all-over carpet, but let it be something more easily made and lighter to handle than a hooked mat.

## Handy Wood Box.

This wood-box can be made of any size to fit a particular corner or niche, and has the additional advantage of utilizing space which would otherwise be unoccupied. The top can be used to hold the water pail, pans, cups, etc. One shelf may be used for the whole brush family—scrubbing, shoe, stove, etc.; another for skillets, frying pans, etc. A few hooks—or nails inserted



WOOD-BOX.

in spools do almost as well—may be placed upon the sides of the upper part and will be handy for uses which will suggest themselves readily. A curtain should be hung in front of the upper portion, and the box can be painted, papered, or grained to suit the taste.

## Modified Milk for Infants.

By Mrs. S. T. Rorer.

Heat two quarts of milk to 100 (Fahr.), add two dissolved junket tablets, allow the milk to stand until