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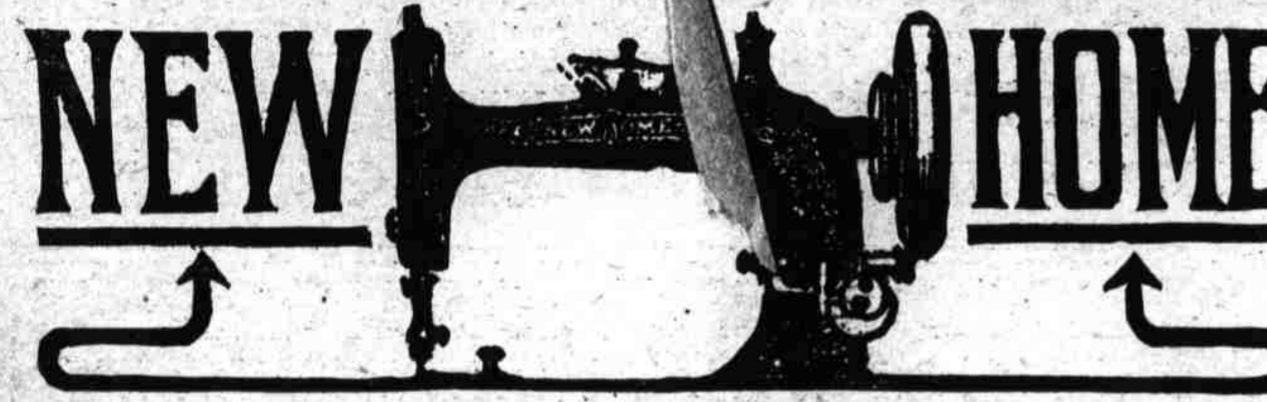
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THE HOME CIRCLE

SEPT.

I HAVE not been among the woods
Nor seen the milk-weeds
their hoods,
The downy thistle-seed like wings,
Nor the squirrel at his nutting.
And yet I know that to God
The mute mouth of her golden-rod,
That clump of corn, o'errun with
vireos,
Twinkle clustered muscadines,
And deserted churchyard places
where the wild roses
grow how, ere her green is shed,
The dogwood pranks herself with
red;

How the pale dawn, chilled through
and through,
Comes drenched and draggled with
her dew;
How all day long the sunlight seems
As if it lit a land of dreams,
Till evening, with her mist and
cloud,
Begin to weave her royal shroud.
If yet, as in old Homer's land,
Gods walk with mortals, hand in
hand,
Somewhere today, in this sweet
weather,
Thinkest thou not they walk to-
gether?
—John Charles McNeill, in "Songs
Merry and Sad."

THE WOMAN'S PHASE OF NEIGHBORHOOD BETTERMENT.

Small Allowance to Daughters Will Usually Keep Them Satisfied at Home—Young People Make Better Neighborhood.

By Mrs. F. L. Stevens, Mayaguez, Porto Rico.

A MONARCH of France, when asked to define the State, exclaimed, "The State—I am the State!" Someone has aptly extended the comparison, so might the farmer's wife, when asked as to the life of the farm, respond, "I am the life of the farm." And there we see how the life of the community, the spirit of the community, is dependant upon the life and spirit of the individuals who make up the community. We are able to estimate the woman's part in neighborhood betterment.

The greatest subject now before our rural communities is the new science called efficiency. Efficiency as a neighborhood science, can only be brought about by neighborhood co-operation.

"Men, usefulest in the world," says Mrs. Browning, "are simply used." So women are often "usefulest" knowing it not, as was one of my acquaintance. Miss B. recognized the opportunities for development in her local neighborhood, she loves the people both for what they are and for what they may become, so she is doing what she can to help bring about a real spirit of community-building. Every school girl knows that, however simple her achievement, the finding of a new flower, the successful making of a table dainty, or a simple home garment or the accomplishment of a hard earned school honor, she has earned from Miss B. sympathetic appreciation. As a result of this community interest a successful girl's club has developed. Every boy knows where he may exhibit his latest nature study find, or where he may give vent to the extent of his enthusiasm over the latest baseball game with full assurance of keen appreciation, or where he may consult a favorite book or periodical, or enjoy a fascinating game, in short where he may find a jolly good comrade, one who will sympathize with his trials, rejoice in his victories; a friend who will deal gently with his weakness but unflinchingly and justly with his wrong doing. From this one woman's effort there has developed a nature study club, an athletic club and a debating club among the young people of the neighborhood.

Changes Must Come In Order to Keep Girls On the Farm.
Happy is the community that has such young women, who have found it desirable and profitable to stay by the farm.

But if we are to keep the girls on the farm, that they may do their work toward neighborhood betterment, some things must be changed. In these new days of science applied to work, many a girl leaving home to enter a business office makes a surprising discovery. The change from the old homestead to the office, is startling if not mortifying. In the office she finds everything arranged for her personal comfort and efficiency. She has a convenient desk or table fitted with every appliance that will add to speed and ease. She learns that she is expected to work fast and to work well, yet everything is arranged that she may do her work in the most simple, convenient way. On her return to the old homestead how is it? There she probably finds her mother at work over a hot stove, in a dark gloomy room, ill planned for work; she even finds her mother using primeval tools and working in crude inefficient ways. Seeing all this she is mortified, discouraged and the farm neighborhood loses one of its most valuable assets.

The improvement spirit, like all other good movements must begin at home, from thence will go out the throbbing, heartening confidence in the possibilities of the community, each laboring "over against his own household," thus quickly realizing the community ideal. Frequently neighborhoods have a preconceived notion that there are no young people left, that movements for common good must necessarily fail for lack of leadership. Recently in one such neighborhood, where the idea was strong that since there was no one pre-eminently qualified for leadership, nothing could be done! When the call came, 40 young men, all ready for leadership, only waiting for the occasion, came forward at once eager and intent upon the new project.

Years and years ago men of the farm learned the value of neighborhood co-operation in solving the labor problem. "Log-rollings," "barn raisings," "threshing bees" have been practiced since the early days. The "quilting bee," the "sewing circle" are perhaps the extent of woman's effort to combine tasks for mutual benefit.
The Right of the Farm Housewife.
There is a general belief and a true one that the farm housewife is over-worked; first, for lack of up-to-date tools and second, because of the