

BEFORE THE HEARTH

The Hearth Often Gives the Distinctive Touch to The Home—Fireplaces Should Be Simple, Smokeless, Safe And Beautiful

THE homiest picture in the world is that of flickering firelight playing on a mother and her babe in a low chair before the hearth.

The construction of the fireplace and mantel can be of infinite variety, but comfort, simplicity of design, harmony and safety are always the most important points for consideration.

Most of our fireplaces are pitifully alike, and this in a land where the vast majority of homes are dependent upon the heat that comes from its hearth and the cheer that centers around its radiance. Familiarity with the fireplace seems to have given us a contempt for its possibilities. Perhaps it is because we have not paused to consider its real significance as the center of home life during our damp and chilly months.

For comfort, the fireplace should be large enough to heat the room and utilize the fuel available. Where wood is easily obtained let the fireplace be deep and broad, and andirons big and sturdy; where coal is used—and it is astonishing how many country people now use it along the lines of railways—let it be narrow and shallow, with an out-setting grate to hold the fuel. After all, its value is that of a source of heat; where one uses it for ornament, five hundred do for heat.

A smoky chimney is not classed among the "joys forever", neither is the one that blisters the face, freezes the back and almost sucks the furniture into its cavernous and windy maw. These defects are caused by faulty construction. Of course, the fact that from 85 to 95 per cent of the heat value of the wood is lost in the latter type does not matter, since those who have chimneys like this often have fire-wood for the cutting, and father delights in this pleasant means of developing his muscles.

Simplicity in Design Usually Means Beauty

AN architect tells me that it is difficult to get the maximum of heat from a fireplace whose room opening is larger than three feet wide by two feet high; that the opening into the room should be ten times as large as the chimney-throat; the depth of the fireplace one-half its width; the width of the back two-thirds that of the front; that the walls should rise straight a few bricks and then slope inward and that the flue proper opening should be over the center of the fireplace, to insure equal draft. A damper is a great addition to a fireplace. I wonder why all of our chimneys are not equipped with them? I do not know what it costs, but it cannot be over a dollar surely.

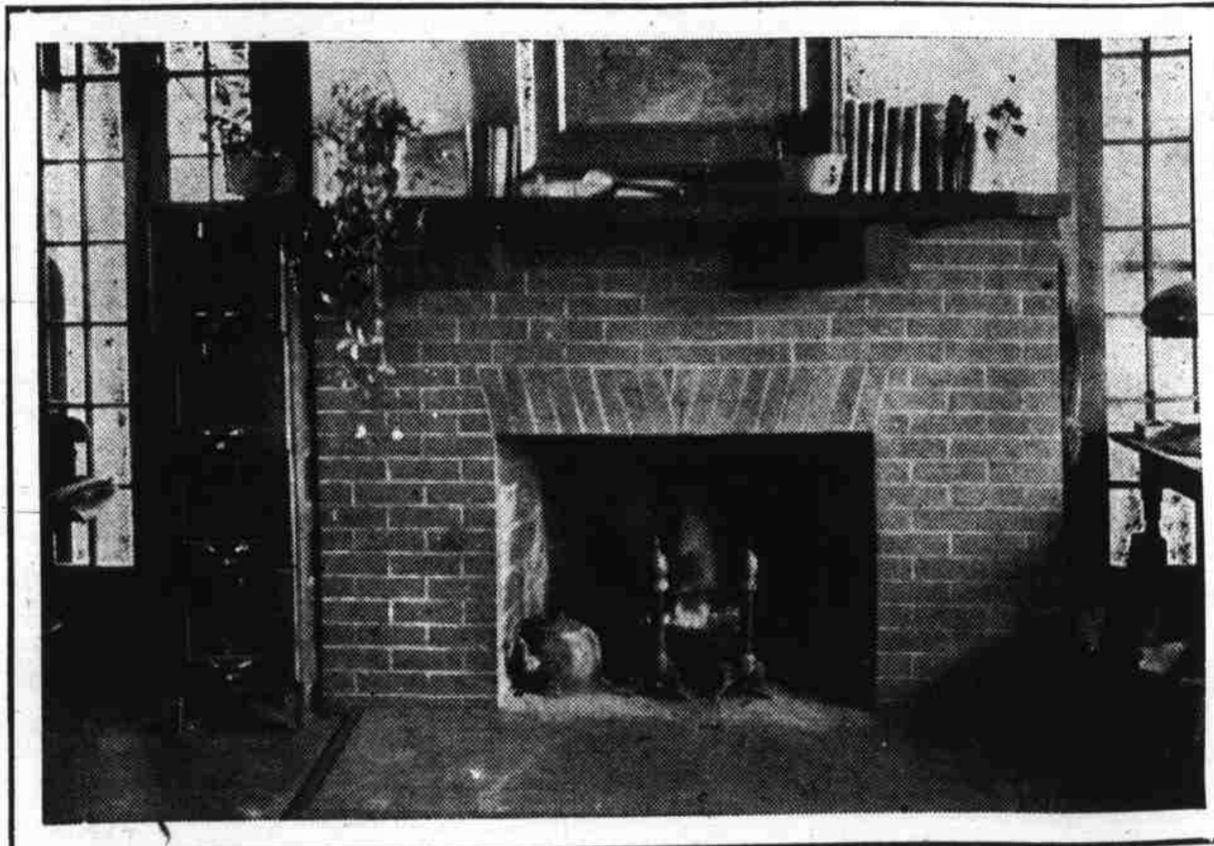
Under the head of comfort might be mentioned the floor dampers that permit the ashes to drop to an enclosed iron box in the cellar. A met-

al hood will sometimes keep a flue from smoking.

The fireplace in the illustration is made of red, unglazed brick, the hearth of unglazed tile the same color. The mantel is simply a heavy oak board resting on two beam ends, board and beams having a dull waxed, weathered finish like the rest of the woodwork in the room.

A great boulder or rough stone fireplace is beautiful, where the architecture is in keeping, beam ceilings, oak furniture, etc. White woodwork, slender columns and fluting and prim moldings are lovely where the house is of the colonial type. Some of the loveliest have no mantel at all. There are also lovely effects in dull tile and cement. Let us be thankful that the short day of popularity of bilious, glaring tile and shiny mantel shelves is a thing of the past. All we can do, if such we possess, is to fill them with books and let the glazed ugliness be buried in their depths.

Let there be no wooden timbers run through the brick or masonry close to the fire chamber. Bricks lining the fireplace and for some distance up the chimney should be hard burned and set in mortar. The best cement mortar should be used, never ordinary lime mortar. It is best to build the chimney straight up from the ground on a substantial foundation 12 inches larger than the chimney, else it may sag and some day cause a fire where roof and chimney



THE HEARTH IS THE HEART OF THE HOME—MAKE IT BEAUTIFUL

meet. He who builds a chimney on floors, beams, joists or other such supports invites a conflagration. Make the hearth deep, and never leave the room without the fender in place. A couple of dollars spent in a fender may save the life of a child.

Group the furniture about the fireplace. A built-in book-case on each side of the chimney, comfortable chairs in front, an Angle lamp suspended just back of the chairs, the mantel with a vase and a few books, give a home-like effect. If the room looks big and cold put the big, long table in front of the fire and between it and the fire, back to table, place the couch. A lamp with a yellow shade, a bowl of nuts and apples,

dry outfit and then the furnace and wood. How nice getting up on a cold sleety morning and find plenty of wood and kindling in the cellar, nice and dry.

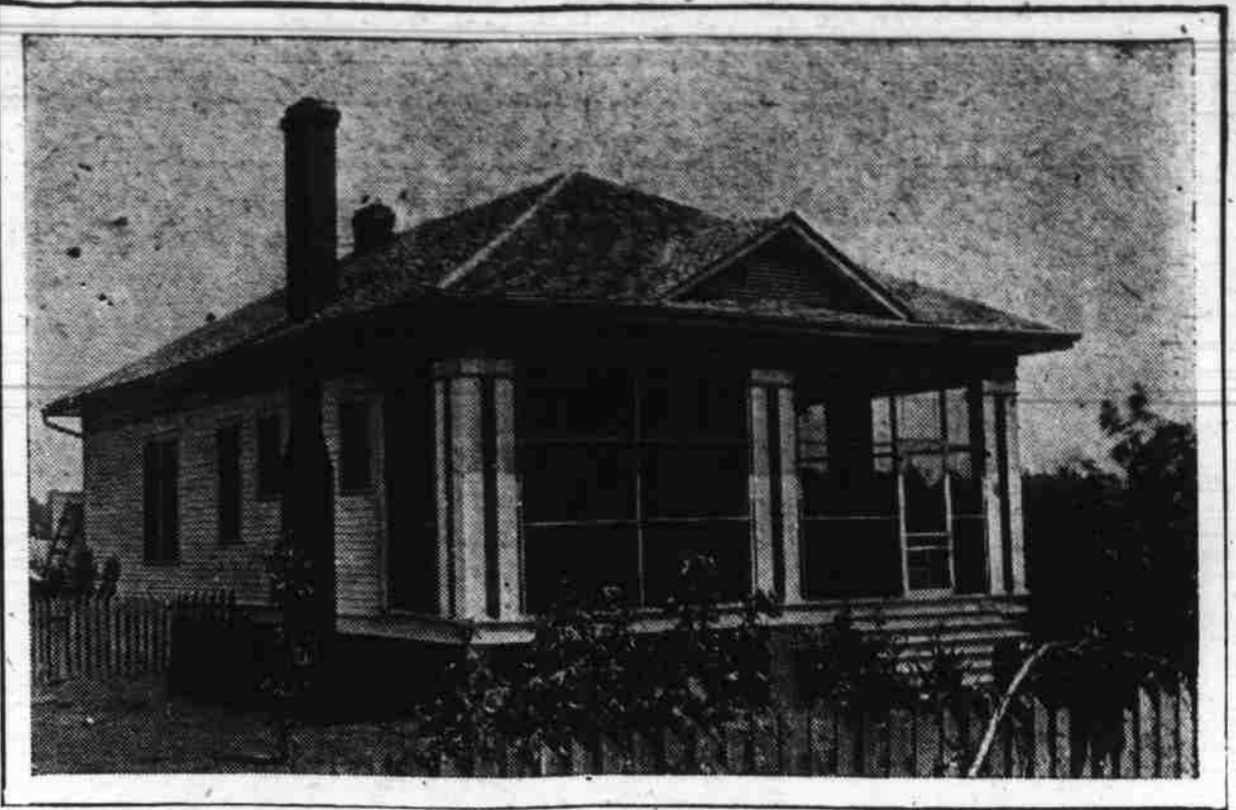
On the main floor back of the hall is a 10 by 10 bathroom with all the conveniences, including linen and medicine closets. Above the bathroom we have a 60 barrel steel tank which takes the rain water from the eaves. Then we have a 100-barrel cistern for the overflow water, and it is connected to the elevated tank by pipe and a force pump is in the cistern.

West of the hall we built a 16 by 18 living room. It is furnished nicely, with a piano and fine Victrola and all the latest records. In the hall upstairs and in the office below we have some 600 books.

The office at the east end of the house is 12 by 14, with desk and typewriter, letter files, magazines and paper racks, telephone, and necessary office equipment.

But so far this is all business and study; where is the fun? Fun on a farm! What an idea! That is a place for work from sun-up to sun-down. If the young folks are not too tired and dad is willing, they can hike off to town and get fun,—good, bad and indifferent, more often bad and indifferent.

We used to use the living-room for fun, but the rug had to be rolled up and the furniture carried out. Then it was not big enough. For when the Victrola played a march the folks would start the Virginia Reel, then the schottische, waltz and lancers. We do not dance all the time; we rest by playing rook, and have some mus-



PRETTY FARM HOME OF W. B. BUSH, MELLWOOD, ARK.

some bright pillows and books—what better could any woman ask?

A HOME THAT IS A REAL HOME

How an Arkansas Family Is Finding The Secret of a Happy Life—Second Prize Letter

A FEW years ago we remodeled and enlarged our home, making it a place to live. We made a large basement under the entire house. Here we put fruit and vegetables, canned goods, cream separator, laun-

ic. We have had some very fine singers and musical performers at our house.

But the room was not large enough so we enlarged the front porch, making it 16 by 30. It is just finished and is fine. We took more pains with the floor than we did with the ceiling. It is enclosed by glass on three sides. My wife calls it a sun parlor, but she misspeaks; sometimes it is a fun parlor, although she took her ironing board and gasoline iron out there yesterday and did her ironing.

Where did we get the money to do all this? Made it growing fruits, berries and livestock; diversified farming. We all work and have made something farming. We work with our heads and we work with our hands; we study, plan and think about our work and farm. We are all interested in it. It is our home, our business, our school and our playground.

Our daughter who is in college is home Monday nights, and we celebrate her home coming as they did the return of the Prodigal Son, with music and dancing. We believe in well-directed amusements in every home. We believe that good people, the church, the school, should direct the amusements of the young and not leave it to the direction of the devil, and then blame the amusements. Recreation is a necessary part of life, and when we are not working let us play, for "Satan finds something for idle hands to do." Work, play; don't loaf and drift.

Decatur, Ark. E. N. PLANK.

A PRETTY COUNTRY HOME

Mr. Smith Also Points Out Benefits of Having His House Near a Neighbor's

IN THE spring of 1911, my wife and I decided we would build us a home. We had very little money, but we had faith and a desire to build us an attractive country place.

I had the bill made for the house and cut the logs from the place and hauled them to a nearby saw mill and had them sawed and racked the lumber. In the fall of the same year we had the lumber dressed and built the "Ell" and moved into three small rooms; and in the summer and fall of 1912 we built the large part of the house. By doing so much in the way of hauling and furnishing lumber we saved a great deal and the outlay of money for the house was about \$1500.

The house is just eighty yards from my brother's house and, by thus grouping our homes we use the same lighting plant (acetylene gas) as well as water system—that is, the same power and main. By having our homes so near we use the same daily paper, many farm tools, and in many ways save by cooperating. Then, too, our families are so much comfort to each other.

When we had finished the house, we saw unless we had a pretty yard it would not look well, so we went to work on the yard, put out shrubbery and a hedge, as well as canna beds, and other flowers.

JUNIUS H. SMITH.
McCullers, N. C.



A GOOD PLANTING SCHEME—GROUNDS OF MRS. J. H. WILLIFORD, COMMERCE, GEORGIA