

## THE FARMSTEAD BEAUTIFUL.

[Address delivered by E. Benjamin Andrews, of the University of Nebraska, before the National Farmers' Congress at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Wednesday evening, October 2, 1901.]

The entire nation is interested in keeping its agricultural population on a high plane of life. The result will not be secured without care. In all lands rural folk tend to become mere peasants, hewers of wood and drawers of water to those better off. Can we in the United States stem this tendency? I believe that we can. Already many innovations are coming to our relief. The telephone, free rural postal service and good roads conspire to bring remote farms into close connection with the living world. Up-to-date, scientific farming, making the business pay, supplies the farmer and his family with the means for reading matter and for wide education and travel. These are all first rate civilizing influences. There is, however, one additional appliance without which the work will be painfully incomplete, your sons and daughters continuing to leave you, preferring almost any sort of a life in town to that which your homes offer. This other aide, this missing link, is the development of beauty on the farm, more particularly in and about the farm home. We need to make the farm home itself rich in cultivating influences, a live inspiration, a perennial joy to the farmer, his wife and children.

I begin with a consideration or two relating to the farm at large. In many parts of the country the scene which the farm presents is surpassingly beautiful by nature. There are hills and valleys, ponds, water-courses, waterfalls, woods, groves and open fields, making a picture which the most consummate artist that ever lived could not render more lovely. In such cases, of course, let well enough alone. Upon the average farm in the relatively level parts of the country, there is more to do. Art is required to render the farm scene as delightful as it may be. You can straighten water-courses or beautify their curves, wall in their banks, create a few artificial lakes or ponds and put in some timber patches. These last, if the trees are properly chosen, will create profit as well as beauty. Properly selected and cultivated trees can be produced on any farm in any state in the Union enough to supply, when they are mature, by culling out one here and there, all the timber needed on the farm. Mr. Clothier, the government forestry expert, says that hackberry, white elm, bull pine, Platte red cedar, western red cedar, green ash and red ash will thrive upon the most arid land in Nebraska, which means, I presume,

that they will grow anywhere in this tier of states. Almost everywhere burr oak also will grow, and, in the lowlands, cottonwood. Cross trips of these trees east and west several rods wide, leaving long narrow ribbons between, will immensely aid in conserving moisture and in sheltering from the wind. They save the moisture not only by holding it in their leaves and bark but also by decreasing the velocity of the wind, swift wind vieing with the sun itself as a desiccating power during the summer months.

Choose with care the location of your farmstead. If your farm is mainly level I should say select the highest twenty acres bordering or near the public road. If the very highest land you own would be too elevated you could select another site, but it should be itself an elevation so as to have perfectly free air and water drainage. Another great advantage of such a site will be its sightliness, permitting you from every window to see a large part of your farm and vast reaches of territory besides—hill, dale, mountain stream and lake. The farmstead should be not far from square, the house two or three hundred feet at least away from the road, and the barn at least twice this distance further away, straight behind the house if the configuration of the ground permits. The farmstead land should extend some distance up and down the road and back toward the main part of the farm. With the exception of ample room for the buildings and for one or two water reservoirs, it should be devoted to forests, orchards, gardens and shrubbery patches. These various plantations may be arranged so as to make the farmstead a place of extraordinary beauty summer and winter alike. No excessive drought or heat need be suffered there.

The location of the barn should be lower than that of the house and considerably further from the house than is usual. Take abundant room for the barn, also for each of the other out-buildings. Place a cellar under the barn and house all fertilizing material therein. Do not have an old-fashioned yard for the stock, but good-sized paddocks and plenty of them, changing the cattle between them from time to time. There may be a permanent piggery and a permanent chicken palace—either directly in rear of the barn or flanking its far end as horse barn and implement house should flank the main barn front—but in all suitable weather both swine and chickens ought to be confined on the paddock plan the same as cattle. By such arrangements the existence of any filthy looking spot anywhere on the premises may be prevented. Place the

horse barn to the left of the main barn as you look down from the house opposite it to the right, equally far from the main barn, rear an agricultural implement house where reapers, mowers, plows, cultivators, heavy wagons, etc., can be stored. Buggies and light wagons may be kept in the horse barn. Have a place for everything and have everything in its place. Nothing mars the beauty of farm grounds more than heaps of rubbish, broken implements, pieces of machinery, old wheels, sleighs and such things lying here and there. This is another point at which use and beauty perfectly agree, for the loss suffered by shiftlessness of this kind is as great as the offense it offers to your sense of beauty.

By the "home lot" I mean the space immediately surrounding the house. A nice shape for this tract is the perfect square with the house in the center, the front of the square bordering on the street. Have the ground slope gradually away from the house in all directions, making the house foundation the acme of a pyramid. Each face of this pyramid should be a lawn, the arrangement and beautification of which will be discussed presently. There is no real necessity for a house yard. If wood is burned have a neat wood house, a little removed from the mansion, or, what is still better, a cellar roomy enough to hold the wood pile. The house will probably have a special front toward the street, but all the other frontings or approaches should be kept with as scrupulous care as the one facing the street. Whatever way one looks from any window in the house, one should see what is pleasant to the view, nothing unkept, unsightly or dirty. The most essential direction for constructing a beautiful house lawn is that it should be seen at a glance, by the uninterrupted green expanse of it, to be meant for a lawn, not for an orchard, flower garden or shrub patch. Do not distract the impression by scattering upon it trees, flower beds, or plants. Make it free for the horse mower. The area should have size somewhat in proportion to that of the house. It should be smooth, uniform in its slope or slopes, and solidly sodded with blue grass and white clover. Unless the soil is rich it will pay to subsoil or trench it and to put in manure. If the grass seed fails to come in perfectly or if spots are winter killed, do not plow again, scratch in new seed with a rake and cover with a thin layer of very rich loam. To make a good sod takes time; do not be impatient if growth seems slow. Top-dress, irrigate, pull the weeds, mow. The desired result