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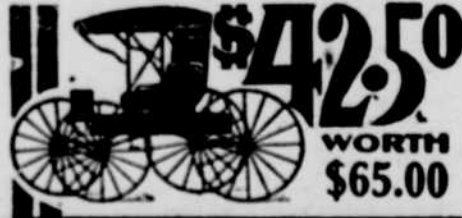
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**THE HOME CIRCLE**

All letters intended for this Department should be addressed to "Aunt Mary," care of The Southern Farm Gazette, Starkville, Miss.

**Epilogue to "Asolanda."**

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,  
 When you set your fancies free,  
 Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—  
 Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,  
 —Pity me?

Oh! to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken;  
 What had I on earth to do  
 With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?  
 Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivell  
 —Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
 Never doubted clouds would break,  
 Never dreamed, tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
 Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time  
 Greet the unseen with a cheer!  
 Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,  
 "Strive and thrive!" cry, "Speed—fight on, fare ever  
 There as here!"

—Robert Browning.

**Brighten Up the Home.**

Now is the Time for Books and Music and Games and Hearthstone Gatherings—Is Your Home One Where These Things Are Found?

Now, as we are approaching not only the season of clouded skies and unpleasant weather, but also the season of good cheer and festivity, is the time of all others to think about the brightening up of the house, and the making of an attractive place to live for both young and old.

The home should be the pleasantest place in the world to the boys and girls; and the making of such a home is a life's work worthy of the most gifted or the most aspiring. If the boys and girls of your family—and of your neighbor's family for that matter—do not care for your home circle, do not enjoy gathering about the family fire, find nothing in the house to interest them, there is something very wrong somewhere about it.

Are there books in your home such as young folks like to read, stories and poetry and histories and books of information? If not, there is something being missed by all who live there. Books cost very little nowadays; and the boy or girl who grows into manhood or womanhood without having learned to love to read misses more of the sweetness and beauty of life than he or she can ever know.

Are there pictures on your walls, and some growing plants by the windows, something to make the place attractive as well as comfortable? Surely you could have these things if you wished.

Is there any provision for music or games or any of the amusements

so dear to the hearts of the young? Someone has said that no home is complete without a musical instrument of some kind; and there is not so much exaggeration in the statement. Why not a piano or an organ, a flute or a violin? If there is anyone who has any taste for music, that taste should certainly be encouraged. If no one can play at all, you can still have a phonograph.

It is worth while to think of all these things as the Christmas season approaches. If half of the money that will be spent for sheer foolishness, for useless trinkets and fantastic gewgaws, should be spent for books and pictures and games and musical instruments, many homes would have a beauty and a brightness and an air of friendliness the whole year round that they have never had before.

But above all that which makes the home cheerful and glad and dear to those who share it is the spirit that fills and governs it. If love is there for the inmates, and friendliness for all who come, and hope and cheerfulness and the spirit of helpful aspiration, it will be a home in the fullest sense of the word. Though it may be humble and plain, it will be the dearest place in the world to those who share it.

So at this season of peace and good-will let us not only try to make our homes attractive to the eye and interesting to the mind, but let us throw over them also the spell that binds the heart.

**Some Christmas Fruit Cakes.**

Bake Them Now So They Will Be Ready When the Time Comes to Eat Them—They Will Be Better Anyway.

In giving the following recipes, I am endeavoring to please all tastes, not forgetting those who cannot afford expensive cakes, as well as those who can afford the richest ones. All the recipes, however, will require much time and care in their preparation; but as Christmas comes but once a year, most of us are willing to give them. All recipes are for fruit cake, the first being for a very rich cake which will keep a year.

Three-fourths of a pound of fine

layer raisins, mixed with a quarter of a pound of finely shredded citron, three-fourths pound of cleaned Sultanas, a quarter pound of shredded lemon peel, a quarter pound of shredded orange peel, half a pound each of candied or preserved plums, cut in halves, preserved apricots and candied pineapple shredded. After mixing these all well together, dredge them with a quarter pound of flour. Beat to a cream half a pound of sweet butter. If the butter is salted it should be washed thoroughly in ice water. Add care-

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