OUR American civilization is producing in increasing numbers men and women of cultivation and refinement to whom beauty and dignity in their surroundings and mode of life seem no less imperative a need than are the so-called "necessities of existence" to others differently educated and endowed, yet who are unable by reason of their lack of fortune or limitation of income to gain for themselves in a country where every sort of beauty must be purchased at a price (too often a high one), that happy environment which shall satisfy and express them. It is such as these, I venture to believe, who form the majority of the readers of The Craftsman.

Assume, if you please, the case of such a married pair. Having found, by calculation or experiment, that they will have paid enough in rent, in the course of a few years to have built for themselves some sort of dwelling which, though small and simple, would at least be free from the meretricious vulgarity with which the average landlord baits the trap in which to catch the "tenant of moderate means," they decide to build a house for themselves. How shall they go about it?

Commissions of this sort are not as a rule eagerly welcomed by the successful architect for the reason that, though the planning and designing of a small and cheap house is really a more difficult matter than the production of a large and expensive one, it adds less to an architect's reputation, and is far less remunerative. Engrossed in more interesting and important work, he is usually unwilling to spend the time necessary for a thoroughly successful solution of a problem which involves a hundred restrictions, limi-
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tations, and petty economies of every sort. Vaguely aware of this, our clients are perhaps beguiled by means of a persuasively worded advertisement into getting their plans ready-made from an agency, but the results of such a course are seldom satisfactory. The finished house is probably found to look far less attractive than the cleverly rendered sketch which caught their fancy; the estimates of cost are apt to be misleading, and many things are sure to go wrong through lack of proper superintendence. They have still more trouble if they essay the role of architects themselves. In nothing is the amateur so pitilessly and publicly revealed, and his inevitable ignorance and incompetence so surely punished—by bad workmanship, and by financial loss—as in a building operation. Without years of experience and a certain natural aptitude in such matters, a person is bound to be the victim of the dishonest workman, or else a false and uncertain guide to the honest and well intentioned. He must know not only what he wants, but how to obtain it.

The services of an architect are therefore necessary, but our pair will be well advised if they select a young and ambitious man of sufficient experience, whose practice is not yet so large that he cannot devote a great deal of personal attention to every problem. They should go to him with a full knowledge if possible of what they want, and tell him frankly how much money they can afford to spend. If, as is likely, they want more than their money can possibly buy, their only course is to reduce their requirements or increase their appropriation, and not expect their architect to perform miracles. Though they are at liberty to criticise his drawings freely, they will be wise to let him do all the actual planning and designing himself, for that is a game at which he is more skilled than they. All his suggestions should be carefully considered, and if his arguments are sound, they should relinquish cherished ideas of their own. He, on his part, will be guided by their desires in so far as it is possible or wise. The great advantage of employing an architect is that one gets a house “made to measure” instead of “ready-made.” There is no “best” plan, or rather there are a thousand best plans and all different, that is, there are a thousand different conditions and only one best way of fulfilling
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them. The wants of different families vary so greatly, the arrangement of the rooms of a house are so largely determined by the size and position of the lot, the contour of the ground, the view, the prevailing winds, the orientation, that what is very good in one place, will be very bad in another. For this reason the plans one finds in books can be suggestive merely, and the particular one which accompanies this article has been devised for this purpose only, and to illustrate certain points which should be taken into consideration in houses of this class. It is the text, as it were, of my sermon.

The controlling and determining ideas according to which this house has been designed are three in number (assuming, of course, that it be made complete and convenient): first, to get the maximum of accommodation with the minimum of cost; second, to obtain an effect of exterior size and interior spaciousness in a building actually small; and third, to produce an effect of beauty and distinction by simple means, and with inexpensive materials.

The cheapest, as well as the most convenient house (other things being equal) is one which in plan is a parallelogram nearly approaching a square, for the reason that a square contains the maximum of area in proportion to the length of its perimeter, which is in this case represented by the outside walls, and it is these which are expensive; also because all rooms being centrally located, long corridors and other waste places are avoided. It possesses the further advantage of permitting such an arrangement of bedrooms (one in each angle) that each may have a window in two directions. The roof which surmounts this simple mass consists of a single unbroken gable because such a roof is the cheapest, the most easily constructed, the tightest (there are no dormers or valleys for the snow to lodge against); it gives a larger attic, and it is best also from a standpoint of design, because a simple roof makes a small house look larger. To make a single chimney answer for both the living room fireplace and for the kitchen stove is a great saving, for masonry is expensive. The usual objection to this—the necessity of having these two rooms adjoin—has been overcome in this instance. In order to economize space only one stairway has been provided, but this is centrally located in a hall
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by itself, accessible with equal ease from either the living portion or the service portion of the house, and to secure privacy for the bedrooms, a branch of the stairway leads to the servant’s room directly, so that in going to it the second story hall need not be entered.

The feature of the interior is of course the large living room. The dining room is so arranged with relation to it that the latter has the effect of a great deep alcove, the necessary privacy being obtained by means of wide glazed sliding doors, which push back into pockets in the wall. The two bay windows being identical in size and form contribute to this effect of a single great apartment, and it may be still further enhanced by using the same scheme of furnishing and decoration throughout. Indeed, in a small house particularly, it is a mistake to treat rooms very differently from one another.

The exterior of the house is what is known as “rough cast,” which is a cement plaster mixed with fine gravel applied in a particular way which gives an interesting texture. This kind of exterior finish is handsome, durable, and only a little more expensive than shingles or clapboards. It makes an exceptionally warm house, and as the plaster is left in the condition in which it is applied, no painting is necessary. The window frames and other exterior woodwork are stained apple green, and the sash are painted white. The roof is covered with shingles, stained a silvery gray. The chimney is plastered, like the sides of the house. The effect of this color-scheme, against green trees and a blue sky is charming. The green of the woodwork repeats the green of the leaves of the trees, the gray roof echoes their gray trunks and branches, while the white walls suggest the cumuli clouds of the sky. To give accent to the whole the front door is painted a dark, rich blue, and the leads of the simple panel of glass which it contains are gilded with gold leaf.

The interior finish of the house is necessarily very simple. White-wood is employed throughout for the trim, and Georgia pine for the floors, as these are now the cheapest woods obtainable. The white-wood takes stain very nicely, and almost any of the
color schemes described in this and previous numbers of *The Craftsman* could be carried out to advantage.

A house of this description could be built complete, for from four to five thousand dollars, and in some localities for less. A few years ago it would have been called a twenty-five hundred dollar house, but except under the most favorable conditions and with the most rigid economy, it could not now be built for anything approaching that figure, the advance in the price of labor and materials has been so great.

It is a house designed for people who would lead "the simple life," yet who would live with a certain dignity, withal: to whom beauty in their surroundings is a necessity rather than a luxury. Like Bernard Shaw, I have little confidence in the protestations of those who cannot produce what they profess to admire. A person who has a true and ardent love for beauty—one to whom art means more than pictures and statuary—will inevitably create for himself a beautiful environment. This is the true test of aesthetic culture:
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it does not consist, as many people seem to suppose, in surrounding one's self with brown photographs of ruined temples, and disfigured sculpture, or in being able to name correctly all of Raphael's madonnas.

Lacemakers

Florence G. Weber

On our arrival in Europe to study the lace-makers, our minds were full of traditions and anecdotes about their customs and conditions. Since the origin of point lace has been conceded by all to Venice and that of bobbin lace by many to the adjacent provinces, it was to Italy that we went first.

The lace industries in Europe are of two kinds: the factories in or near large cities, and the cottage or village-industries in fishing hamlets and hill towns. With the exception of a few convents, it is in the factories that point lace is produced. The lace is called point simply from its being made with a needle. Venice, Brussels, Vienna, Moscow, Athens and Florence have establishments for the training of lace-makers and the production of lace. At these places are sold also all kinds of laces made in the surrounding country as well. Thus, in the shop of Signor Navone in Florence one buys not only the points of Venice and Burano but also torchons and heavy silk laces from the fishing villages of Santa Margherita and Rapallo, the guipures from Cantù, near Como, and the revivals of early drawn work from the convents at Assisi.

Santa Margherita on the Riviera di Levante, some seventeen miles from Genoa, was full of interest to us. Our acquaintance in Boston with a family of lace-makers who had come from that town, their enthusiastic descriptions of the place and the excellent character of the lace produced there, drew us early in our journey to Santa Margherita. The men seem to be engaged in one of two pursuits, either fishing or keeping hotels. The women apparently all make lace; at least they all know how to make it. The town is arcaded. In the morning, the women sit with their cushions under the cool shade of the arches and in the afternoon, on the beach. Many are at work on wide scarfs of white or black silk