A HOUSE DESIGNED TO MEET SPECIAL NEEDS: BY E. DRUSILLE FORD

In considering the cost of a building, it is well to remember that any house is expensive which absorbs the amount we wish to expend upon it, yet falls short of our requirements. The erection of “after-thoughts” adds more than their proportion to the expense. Often they mar the beauty of the grounds or cut off some pleasing vista. The builder of a home knows what special hobbies abide with him, and he is wise if he takes them into account at the outset.

The house here presented provides for one or more of the utilities usually treated as distinct propositions. The illustrations show the construction to be of cut stone and plaster, with shingled roof. The design would be pleasing in effect, worked out with field stones for lower story, columns and balustrade, and shingles above. The projection of the second story, the balcony and the extended eaves of the wide roof gable suggest the simplicity of Swiss architecture and anticipate a certain simplicity in materials employed.

The feature of the exterior most noticeable is the proportion of width to the depth, adapting the building to the dimensions of a wide, shallow lot. This breadth and the long roof lines detract from the height, giving the low, well-grounded effect much to be desired in domestic architecture. A certain balance is achieved by the porch and the driveway entrance, and by the principal chimneys united to the roof by their supporting gables, while the terrace, in its relation to the main entrance, gives the touch of variety. And this terrace, with pedestals providing for the placing of potted plants, is chiefly responsible for the quaintness one feels at first approach.

A hospitable front door, one would say, the open vestibule taking the visitor inside the outer portal before he has made his request. Within, the reception hall offers a further argument for the deep-set door, in the pleasant window-nook formed thereby. A wide seat follows the contour of the shallow bay, and the panels on either side open to closets for hats and overcoats. No provision is made for the old-fashioned hall-tree, which, although it may be beautiful in itself, is often a pitiable object when draped with human habiliments.

The side of the living room in view from the reception hall entrance is shown in the interior illustration. The ceiling of the living room is divided into three panels by plastered beams. The one crossing the main portion accentuates the mantel and its accessories; the other, with its supporting columns, suggests a division between the room proper and the piano alcove. At one end of the central beam the column is omitted, the wall space being reserved unbroken for the disposal of pictures and furniture.

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A French window opens upon the porch and a wide doorway with sliding door gives access to a cozy den, the windows of which overlook the garden at the rear. With the convenience of the adjoining lavatory, the den may be converted into a sleeping room when necessary.

From the rear of the reception room, the main stairs lead to the upper hall, so spacious as to tempt to various uses and schemes of decoration. With a desk under the casement window, it may become a study for the children or the literary members of the family; with a table and a low chair, the work room of the home mistress; or with heavy curtains between the columns, an additional bedroom. The writer recalls one upper hall, utilized as a gallery by the artist of the household. Almost surrounded by the sleeping rooms, it is so cool in summer, so cozy in winter, that it has grown to be the best-loved living room of the house.

On the second story floor plan given is shown a widened stair well, which gives a
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Charming view of the lower hall and glimpses of the living and dining rooms. From the rear of the hall a corridor leads to a porch, a part of which is roofed and protected by the house walls. From the bedroom at the other end opens a similar porch. To the fresh-air enthusiast it is unnecessary to suggest that a screen wire partition along the line of dashes defining the roof would transform these alcoves of the outdoors into open-air bedrooms, while attic stairs ascend from the alcove at the end of the corridor. The attic is eighteen feet wide and thirty-five feet long. With glazed doors opening upon the balconies at each end, it would be a most attractive play room for the children, and is sufficiently spacious for the entertainment of small dancing parties.

Once more in the reception hall, the man of the house opens the rear door at the right upon the unroofed space beyond the wire partition, the household bedding might take its sun bath.

The stairs from the kitchen lead just opposite the wall of the linen closet, and the and invites the visitor to “see where he plays when his day’s work is done.” Down they go to the basement billiard room, with its cluster of windows at one end. made
possible by the slope of the ground outside. The other end of the room, set apart by a heavy beam across a wide opening, is dimly lighted by window wells in the porch floor. This nook is fitted up in Dutch style. The glow from the open fire plays over warm-toned furnishings, the rich yellows, browns and blues of old pottery, and the broad throat of the chimney swallows all odors reminiscent of bygone revels.

The service portion of the house is arranged to preserve, as far as possible, the privacy of the family and the help. The maid's room, near the upper landing of the rear stairs, is conveniently planned and has a door to one of the upper porches. The entry between the reception hall and the kitchen minimizes the distance from the latter to the front door, and from this entry a door opens to basement stairs, under the rear stairs, by which the furnace room, laundry, etc., are reached. This segregation is often a greater boon to the maid than is generally realized, shielding her on busy days from the distractions of affairs without interest to her and from chance encounters with visitors.

The garage, gathered under the house roof, fulfills the requirements of economy as well as convenience. Its entrance has the effect of a porte cochère. The motor discharges its passengers upon the steps of the terrace, protected by the overhang of the second story and the further extension of the roof. The garage is lighted by three leaded-glass windows, and the front doors have leaded-glass panels, chiefly for exterior effect. There is no communication, however, by door or window, with the house. The sink is supplied with water and a suitable drain, its plumbing being included in the group with that of the kitchen and porch sinks—a most economical arrangement.

This house is unusual in the amount of available space obtained within the given dimensions; the living rooms, exclusive of porch and garage, being comprised within an area of thirty-two by fifty-two feet. Compactness in building often entails an ordinary if not ugly exterior, owing to the difficulty of securing sufficient room on the second floor without destroying the pleasing sweep of roof lines. The subordination of exterior effect to interior spaciousness is too great a sacrifice for either owner or architect to make. Usually, a further consideration of the conditions would make such a sacrifice unnecessary.