A COTTAGE CONFORMING TO THE IRREGULARITIES OF ITS SITE: BY G. H. AND E. D. FORD

"T"he very soul of the cottage,—the essence and meaning of it—are in its roof; it is that, mainly, wherein consists its shelter; that wherein it differs most completely from a cleft in rocks or a bower in woods. It is in its thick, impenetrable coverlid of close thatch that its whole heart and hospitality are concentrated." In this wise, John Ruskin wrote, sixty years ago, and the popularity in recent years of the bungalow and kindred structures in which the roof is the predominant feature is a recognition, often an unconscious one, of this essential quality. We say of the much-roofed house that it looks "homey," and "home" is the strongest word in our language, implying shelter of every kind. The roof is the most significant feature; indeed, the cottage which appeals to us as attractive, is usually "more roof than anything else," so in the development of the house exterior the roof becomes the architect's chief concern.

In the house here illustrated, the quality of protection is strongly evidenced, although the roof does not wholly dominate, even upon first impression. The skyline, drooping as it approaches the corners and amply overhanging them, suggests an adequate covering for the occupants and their possessions. The nestling of the corner porch under the main roof bespeaks a hospitality felt by the approaching guest, and the low broad chimney, capped by tapering chimneypots, is an earnest of the open fire within. It is the tall, ugly chimney which suggests the ugly, closed stove.

This house is adapted to a slightly elevated location,—at least one which slopes

FIRST FLOOR PLAN OF FORD COTTAGE.
BEAUTY GAINED BY BUILDING TO SITE

REAR OF FORD COTTAGE, SHOWING AN ENTRANCE STAIRWAY OF UNUSUAL BEAUTY, ALSO AN ESPECIALLY GOOD PLACING OF SLEEPING PORCH AND INTERESTING GROUPING OF CASEMENT WINDOWS.

materially at the rear. The approach to the corner entrance gives a pleasing perspective of front and side. The design is especially good for a combination of stone and plaster, the group of windows in front justifying the stone wall beneath; and the buttressed effect of the projections admits a stronger material than is necessary for the side walls. For the porch balustrade and column supporting the roof, stone is obviously necessary if used for projections and wall beneath windows.

The effect of the exterior would be good if clapboarded with rough, 1-inch boards, 8 or 10 inches wide, put on horizontally and lapped like ordinary siding. Such treatment would retain the substantial appearance and be less expensive than stone and plaster. As the vestibule is but an alcove, the entrance door opens upon the living room, which presents its chief features to their best advantage. The substantial brick chimney-breast, in its intimate connection with the partition above and the ceiling of the posterior portion, is also the determining line between living and dining rooms. Its dignity, due in great measure to its ample copper hood, is further augmented by the variety of its service. The long seat at the end is flanked by the pedestal-balustrade of the stairs. The position of the built-in bookcase is as convenient as effective, and the windows on the stairs admit light at the right angle for this library corner. The clustered casement windows, which contribute so much to exterior appearance, are no less quaintly attractive inside. Carrying up the entrance portion of the room to the actual roof serves, by comparison, to accentuate the aspect of coziness of the farther end, where the highest point of the vaulting is but little above an ordinary ceiling.
The placing of the dining room three steps below the living room level not only enhances the decorative quality of the former room, but brings the gallery, shown in the interior illustration, within six feet of the floor of the latter, and this gallery, with its leaded casement windows, is a valuable adjunct of the living room, not only in the view it contributes, but the service it renders in improving the ventilation. The dining room, too, has casement windows overlooking the garden. In the corner adjacent to the living-room fireplace is the grate, whose low shelf, with overmantel and built-in cupboards on either side, is utilized as a sideboard. The china cupboards have drawers below and shelves above, the upper section of one being available from the kitchen. One corner is reserved for a serving table; in the third, a door opens upon the screened living porch. From the dining room, a curtained doorway leads to a corridor from which open two bedrooms and a bath.

The stairs at the end of the living room give access, through a short corridor at their head, to the upper hall, which is the gallery seen from below. Well lighted by the French windows occupying the entire side, this is an ideal room in which to pursue various household occupations. Opening from this hall is a bedroom, and from the corridor open a linen closet and a lavatory, the plumbing of which is grouped with that of the kitchen.

If an additional enclosed bedroom should be preferred to the wide hall and narrow sleeping porch, a partition could be so placed as to leave the gallery only the width of the corridor, and the French windows shortened to casement and placed on the line of the porch balustrade. In this case, the charm of the balcony might be retained by the introduction into the partition of opalescent glass panels, leaded panels filled with opaque glass or an arrangement of pictures supplementing a bit of choice bric-a-brac or a fern jar upon the balustrade. The necessity of providing for plants, vases of cut flowers and the various small objects, more or less useful, if present in the architect’s thought as he develops the interior, manifests itself in deeper window-stools, and the broadened cap of railing, newel-post or pedestal.

Owing to the steep slope of the site, the basement is almost wholly above ground at the rear. To the conformity of the house to the irregularity of the site upon which it is built is due much of the picturesqueness of this side,—the latticed windows and arched entrance to the basement, the iron gate and the steps from porch to garden.