If my neighbors had only been reconciled to the typical small rented house they might have missed the joy of building according to their own ideals. They would have paid their rent each month for half of a double house, for a tiny front porch, a narrow four foot entrance hall with its straight flight of stairs, a parlor by the side of the hall, back of that the dining-room, farther back the kitchen, and still farther back the tiny latticed porch.

"I know the type so well," sighed the mother in my neighbor's family after the second day of house hunting, "that if I opened the front door, blindfolded, I could go to any room of the house. We might perhaps be satisfied if only we could find a house in which the tunnel hall was five feet wide instead of four, or discover a five foot cupboard space instead of four, but that seems too much to ask of a rented house."

But my neighbors had to live somewhere, so at last, after diligent search, they found a little house 28x30 feet which was out of the domain of the commonplace, and in due time they moved in cheerily and arranged their belongings to the best of their ability. It was some-

Close View of the House Built for Comfort, what trying to find that the doors were so placed that they clashed, and that the windows were inserted in regard to appearance from the outside and not with any consideration of the disposal of furniture. The exclamation of visitors, "Such an artistic little house," undoubtedly helped them over a great many of the annoyances of living in that house, though all the time they were uncomfortably conscious of the fact that careless house-planning had added unnecessary steps to the work.

Then came a cold snap that froze all the pipes, and at the same time came a polite little note from the landlord wish-
BUILDING FOR COMFORT

build a house 30 feet square that was planned to suit our family, than to rent the same sized house planned to suit some builder?" Then came the query, "What would be required for a home?" "Pipes placed where they won't freeze, wide living porches, big closets in every room, enough cupboards to hold dishes and household linen, fire place round which the family can gather, a convenient relation of rooms to facilitate work, proper ventilation, a garden, trees for shade and for fruit, flowers and a small place for chickens, comfort for every one of the family and beauty for the consideration of neighbors as well as ourselves."

The father of the family summed up the situation thus: "If we can embody our needs and wishes in a house where the interest we will have to pay on the investment would be no more than the rent for a house which does not suit us, should we not build. If it pays to build a house to rent to us (and surely it must, else landlords would not do it), it would pay us to build, even though we have to borrow nearly all the money. If we faithfully set aside each month what we would have to pay for rent, in a few years we would hold a deed instead of a large pile of rent receipts. Besides, a deed is a much more marketable possession."

So with high enthusiasm they began the joyous task of planning and building.
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They needed courage, for their knowledge was small. They knew that the cheapest form of a house was square, also that for economy’s sake there should be but one chimney, and that the bath-room should be situated in such relation to the kitchen that but one system of plumbing for supply and drainage would be required. They pored over books of house plans and studied the house building magazines, eventually drawing their own plans. They learned how to draw them to scale, and took just pride in seeing their own blue-prints. They selected a lot within commuting distance of the city and at the edge of a grove, for they loved trees. Because they built in the woods, and the nearby fields were full of stone, they made their house of wood and of field stones, carefully selecting those covered with lichens and weathered with age. Thus
BUILDING FOR COMFORT

Second Floor Plan

would not supply all the needs of the family, despite the help of the sleeping porch, so they extended the house to include a third story for they found out that the cost of the building lay largely in foundation and roof, and that an extra story added little to the expense. A broad dormer gave head-room for the third story stairs, while long, low windows insured proper ventilation. The chimney passing through one of the third story rooms was widened out to form a tiny fireplace built of common brick, rough side out, and pointed up with black. "As I was musing, the fire burned," runs the legend above the black mantel shelf.

They were very doubtful of that third story, fearing that their little house would look ungainly. They laid the alternate course of shingles double to reduce the apparent height, producing an effect of horizontal lines. The long lines of the house, the stone first story and the dark stained shingles, all contributed to creating a low effect, so that people entering the house were surprised to find that it was a three story building. By this careful attention to appearance their home did not look out of harmony with the bungalows on either side.

This house is a perfect example of the satisfaction that comes to people when a just relation between the outer and inner life has been achieved. All the writers of home building agree that a home should be an expression of the people who live in it, else there never will be harmony or comfort. Every individual has a different need. No architect can know exactly what that need is to bring about their ideal of convenient living. The old Italian poet, Ariosto, has said a thing that has been widely quoted because so true, "Small is my humble roof, but well designed to suit the temper of the master's mind." "To suit the temper of the master's mind" is exactly what every one would like to achieve in home building, but few are able.

This house of my neighbor's was built to embody their needs as scientifically as a colony of wasps create their series of combs to accommodate all the members of their family. Each individual member of my neighbor's family has his or her own room, large or small according to their importance, each room in natural relation to the other members of the family; also each room is developed in the color most approved of, and the furniture arranged according to his or her idea of convenience.

There are outdoor rooms for those who like to look at the stars, to watch the sun rise or to be soothed by the sound of the wind in the tree tops, and there are bedrooms snugly enclosed from all outside disturbances—if such wonderful sights and sounds could be called disturbances. There is no pleasure in the world so great as the building of a home, even though at times the flower of joy seems possessed of thorns.
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