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HOUSE COMFORTABLE

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by

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In taking up this study of the evolution of the home, we have considered it not so much as a dwelling-place for a family, but as a structure,-first, as a natural,-later as an artificial, edifice,-a work of architecture, tracing the history of home-building from primitive times up to the present day.

Home is defined as one's fixed place of abode, while house is defined as a place of abode or shelter,- a structure designed as a habitation,- and it is in this sense that we will treat it in this thesis.

It is impossible to trace these early stages of the process by which architecture grew out of the first rude attempts of man at building. The rude and elementary structures built by savage and barbarous people, are not in themselves works of architecture, nor is any instance known of the evolution of a civilized art from such beginnings. How the earliest architecture came into existence is as yet an unsolved problem. Primitive architecture is, therefore, a study for archaeologist rather than for one studying the history of house-building.

Man, at first, had no institutions. He existed in the simplest and most spontaneous way, finding shelter

in caves and the clefts of the rocks, and beneath the primeval forests. At this time he had no fire, and must have devoured his food uncooked and only sheltered himself from the cold by the thickness of his clothing or at night by finding shelter in close, underground houses.

In studying the life of the Paleolithic man, of whom we have occasional traces, we find that he had probably no fixed home, and no obligations beyond the circle of his own family. However, some sort of family or tribe must have held together, for the sake of protection. In the inclement seasons they were crowded together in the caves, perhaps for months together almost without moving. Their companions were the cave-bear, cave-lion, cave-hyena, mammoth and other now extinct wild beasts. Their dwellings at that time were at least permanent, if not artificial. No skill is shown by the Paleolithic man in securing his home, but family life was born then and later, in studying the cave-dwellers, we see marked signs of a higher civilization.

Passing on to the men who raised the tumuli, we find still further signs of progress. In the tumuli we see the beginning of the art of building. Houses may not have been unknown to the kitchen-midden men, but we have no proof that they lived in houses, and in the case of the still earlier cave-dwellers, we may take it for granted that the art of building was quite unknown to them.

True, the tumuli are not houses; they are tombs. But men who could raise these tombs could raise houses likewise, and there can be little doubt that the architecture of the tombs here and throughout the history of mankind, was modelled upon the architecture of the houses. Wherefore we may assume that these last were low and narrow chambers, a sort of constructed caves, which is just what we should expect the earliest houses to be. We should expect that the first advance from cave-dwelling or burrowing in the ground would be to raise an artificial mountain and burrow within that. But soon the insecurity of this house would become apparent, and the next advance would be the propping of stones one upon the other, to make a chamber before the earth was heaped up in the tumulus, and when that step had been reached the art of house-building had begun.

Passing on to the study of the Neolithic Age, we find here the evident beginnings of modern life. Though mankind then required but the simplest kinds of buildings, the purposes which they served were the same as those of later times in civilized communities. A hut or house for shelter, an shrine of some sort for worship, a stockade for defence, and a mound over the grave of the chief or hero, were provided out of the simplest materials, and these often of a perishable nature. Boughs of trees bent together, or poles, supplied the framework; wattles, skins or mud, the walls; thatching or stamped

earth, the roof. Only the simplest tools were needed for elementary construction. There was ingenuity and patient labor in work of this kind, but there was no planning, no fitting together into a complex organism of varied materials shaped with art, and handled with science. Above all, there was no progression toward the higher ideals of fitness and beauty.

Later in the Neolithic period, timber was available, tools were made, and some wooden structures were erected. The lake-dwellings of Europe belong to this period. These comprise a considerable number of very primitive houses or huts built on wooden piles in the lakes of Switzerland and Northern Italy, and forming in some cases villages of no mean size. These lake-dwellers adopted for the sake of security the custom of making their dwellings, not upon the solid ground, but upon platforms constructed with infinite trouble above the waters of the lake. The piles, composed of tree-stems taken from the neighboring forests, were felled, sharpened and driven in from a raft by use of ponderous stone mallets. This task finished, the piles were levelled at a certain height above the water, and a platform of boards fastened on with pegs. On this platform were erected huts, probably square or oblong in shape, adapted for the use of one family. The huts were made of wattle-work, coated on both sides with clay. The object of the enormous trouble of erecting these lake-dwellings was to protect their inhabitants from their enemies, the wild

protect their inhabitants from their enemies, the wild beasts, and possibly neighboring villagers.

These men of the lake stand in no degree behind the mound-builders for the material elements of civilization. And let it not be supposed that these lake-dwellings extended only over a short period. This custom of building spread rapidly and while extending back through the Stone Ages thousands of years, it also lasted into historic times, and these buildings were seen by Roman eyes almost as late as the beginning of our own era.

We cannot trace the development of architecture from primitive times, but we know that somewhere and somehow the people of Egypt must have developed from crude beginnings the architectural knowledge and resource which meets us in the oldest monuments of a primitive character belonging to relatively recent ages, throws some light on the probable character of the transition from barbaric to civilized architecture.

In studying the architecture of Egypt, we find that domestic architecture did not hold a prominent place, for the Egyptian lived so much out of doors that the house was a much less important edifice than in colder climates. Egyptian dwellings were probably in most cases built of wood or crude brick, and their disappearance is thus easily explained. The architecture was extremely simple, as has been discernible from the ground plans of some of the houses, found in the ruins of Egyptian cities.

In Greece, domestic architecture never attained great importance. Very few remains of Greek houses have been found sufficiently well preserved to permit of restoring even the plan. They are generally insignificant in size and decoration. The exterior walls were pierced only by the entrance doors, all light being derived from one or more interior courts. In the Macedonian epoch, there must have been greater display and luxury in domestic architecture, but no remains of any completeness have come down to us.

In Roman architecture, we find the villa, in reality a country palace, arranged with special reference to prevailing winds, exposure to sun and shade. These villas were supplied with baths, theatres, sun-rooms, and shaded porticoes, and were entirely too elaborate to serve and purpose in this thesis.

There are in Rome few remains of the domus, or private house. In these, all rooms opened upon the interior courts, from which alone they borrowed their light. Under the brilliant skies of Southern Italy, windows were little needed, as sufficient light was admitted by the doors, closed only by portieres for the most part. The general plan of these houses seems to have been of Greek Origin. They were lightly built, with wooded ceilings, and roofs instead of vaulting, and usually with but one story on account of the danger from earth-quakes.

The interesting domestic architecture of the early Christian era is preserved in whole towns and villages in the Hauran, which, deserted at the time of the Arabian conquest, have never been reoccupied, and remain almost intact, but for the decay of their wooden roofs. They are marked by dignity and simplicity of design, and by the picturesque massing of gables, roofs and porches.

In the early mediaeval period in Italy and France, we find a new architecture was developed, but little can be found concerning any domestic architecture.

In Germany, architecture developed less rapidly and symmetrically than in France. Except in one or two provinces, few works of importance were erected until the Thirteenth Century.

Previous to the Norman Conquest in 1066, there was in the British Isles little or no architecture worthy of mention. The few remains of Saxon and Celtic buildings reveal a singular poverty of ideas and want of technical skill. The Norman builders employed great picturesqueness and less refinement than the Romans, but used the same general features.

In studying the formative period of architecture in the United States, we find that the early English colonists did not undertake any elaborate building, either in wood or stone. The most important structures were built of brick imported from Europe. Wood was

the material mostly used for dwellings, but there was no striving after architectural elegance until well into the eighteenth century. Instead, their structures were very simple in design, and pleasing in proportion, without elaborateness.

From 1725 to 1775 increased population and wealth along the coast brought about a great advance in architecture, especially in the dwellings of the wealthy. During this period was developed the Colonial style. But scarcity of architects and the necessity of using wood modified any elegance that might have been desired by the aristocracy. The majority of the New England houses were of wood, more compact in plan, more varied and picturesque in design, than those of the South, but wanting somewhat of their stateliness.

The war period from 1850 to 1876 was one of activity along architectural lines, but we find no special change in domestic architecture, still it is in this field as a whole, that the most characteristic and original phases of American architecture are to be met with, particularly in rural and suburban residences. In these the peculiar requirements of our varying climates and of American domestic life have been studied and in large measure met with great frankness and artistic appreciation. The broad stair-case hall, serving as a sort of family sitting-room, the piazza, and a picturesque massing of steep roofs, have been the controlling factors in the evolution of two or three general types which appear

with an infinite number of variations. The material most used is wood, but this has had less influence in the determination of form than might have been expected, since our architects are so able in the handling of wood.

The greatest element of success in modern house-building is the artlessness of the planning, which affords great convenience rather than conforms to any traditional type. It has resulted in exteriors which are the natural outgrowth of interior arrangements, made for comfort and utility, without affectation of style. But the resulting forms seem in many cases to be an end rather than an incidental result.

We cannot, in this short treatise, go into the details of the many styles of modern homes, but from the palatial residence of our kings of finance to the little modern five-room cottage of our day-laborer, we find every variation in plan, material, and decoration, and this variation gives us the greatest opportunity for choosing a model and sanitary house.

"Home is not merely four square walls,
All hung with pictures nicely gilded
Home is where affection calls."

We might ask ourselves, what is a house? The house is to us, what the shell is to the shell-fish. The house is the essential skin, bark, shell, outer covering of the human organism. The fact is that the manufactured world is as much a part of human life as feathers are of bird life, or as scales are a part of the fish.

While the house to the human creature is as essential as the carapace to the turtle, it does not have to grow on him and he does not have to carry it around on his back. We, the living constituents of humanity, can make vast and lasting homes, temples, palaces, in which human life can ebb and flow and reach toward higher things.

With this in mind, think then of the importance of the home, the outer body of the human soul! Our bodies of flesh are but limited vehicles for the expression of the personal soul. Man was not content with the body of flesh. Human development requires commensurate development in manufactured things.

Into the house which we make are born our children, and the houses have a hand in making them. The highest and most enlightened human soul would naturally make for itself noble and beautiful houses, rightly situated, built, arranged, furnished, and adorned.

So, in turn, would such houses tend to produce and develop high and enlightened human souls. The house makes or mars its tenant far beyond what we have dreamed, and, by long living in its limits, we conform to its structure and actual automatic action sets in. The house is not only the result of character, but it also determines the character. The effect of habitat is one great factor in the making of any organism.

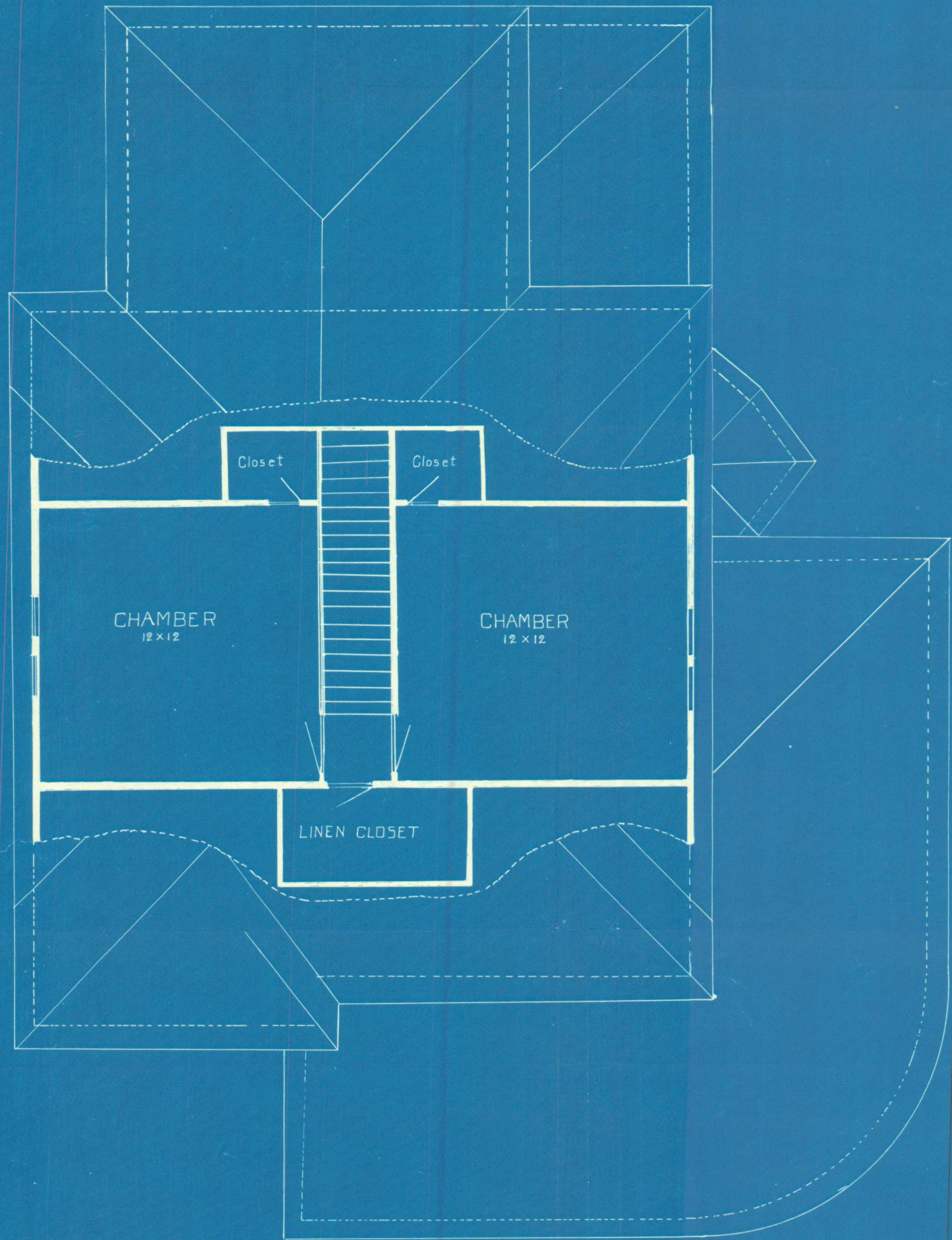
All applied art is modified by use; and architecture is an applied art in its very essence. The private house, in its essential purposes, carries its architectural limitations, and only vulgar ignorance will build beyond them.

All great art must be public; that is, it must present large ideals, generalities, types; the church, the palace, the theatre etc.

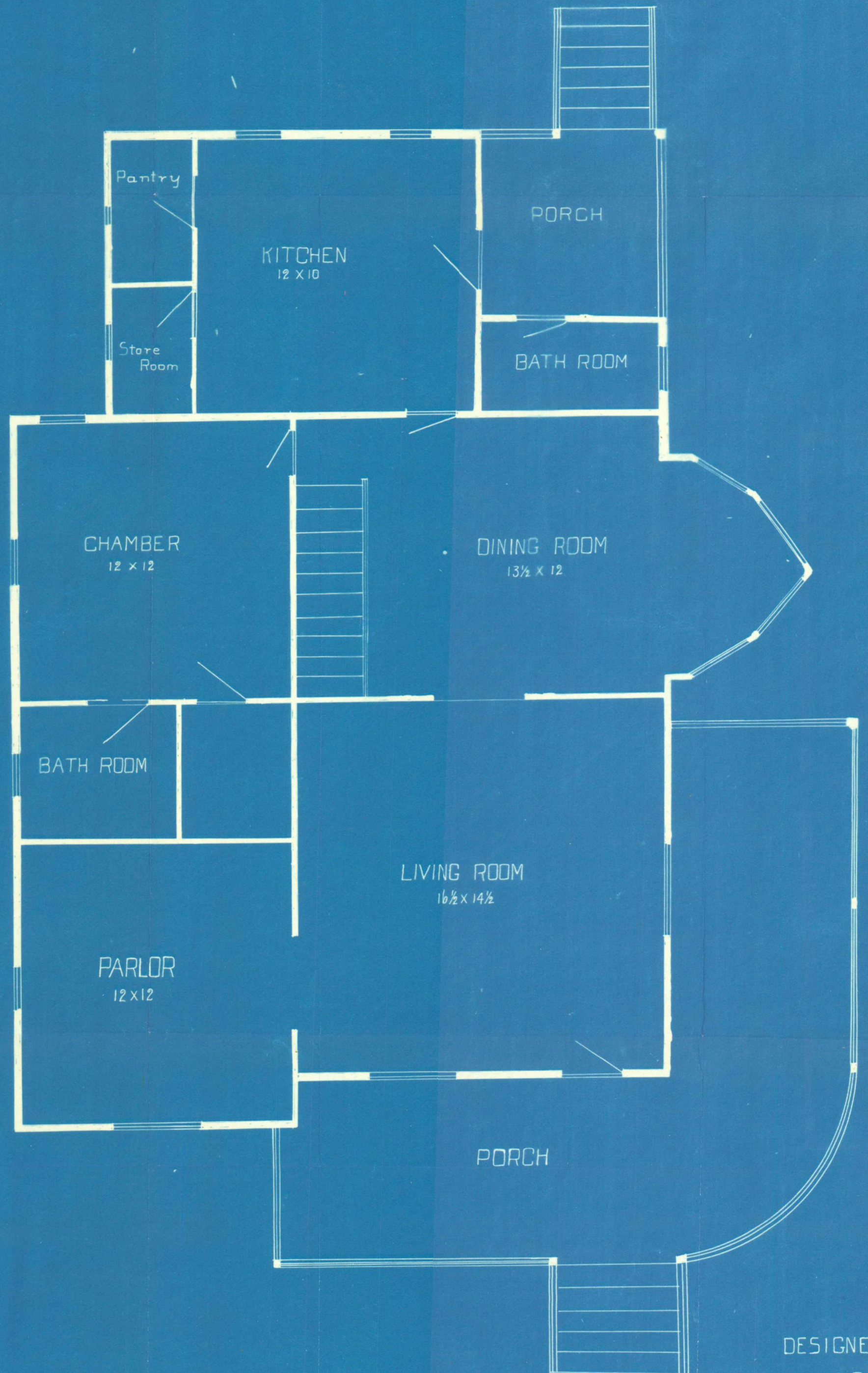
Location is a very important thing in building a house. See that the ground is well drained. Look out upon beauty of it can be found, since we already know the effect of habitation, on human kind. Above all, place the house so that full sunshine may be in each room during some part of the day. Disease flies before full sunshine.

Pure air, pure water, plenty of sun--our house should stand where it can have all these.

"Sweetness and light are the noblest things in the world."



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

DESIGNED by
 L. Pearl Leonard.
 Bessie R. Herbert

On the preceding page you will see a blue print design of the floor plans of a modern, comfortable, and convenient house, which could be built for about \$1800.

The large porch extending across the front of the house makes it an ideal resting place and adds very materially to the appearance of the house. We should cultivate the habit of using these porches as a resting place, where we can be out in the open air when reading. This front porch is 8 feet wide, making plenty of room for a goodly number to use it at one time when necessary.

The first floor is divided into a parlor, living room, dining room, one bed room, kitchen, pantry, two bath rooms, and large closet opening off from bed room.

There is an archway separating the living room from parlor and also one between living room and dining room, thus making it very convenient for entertaining, as thus one can have the use of three large rooms.

The parlor is 12 x 12 and contains two large windows.

The living room is $16\frac{1}{2}$ x $14\frac{1}{2}$ and also has two large windows and a large open fire place, which makes a home cheerful and is much more healthful than a stove.

The dining room is $13\frac{1}{2}$ x 12, and a good feature about it is the octagonal bay window, which makes it bright and cheery; there is also a fire place in this room, which adds much to its cheerfulness.

The bed room is 12x12 and has two large windows, a large closet and a door opening into the bath room which is quite convenient.

The kitchen is very convenient, the pantry, store room, and sink are arranged in such a manner that will save unnecessary steps.

The pantry is just off from the kitchen and is provided with shelves and also a window. Every pantry should have a window, as it does away with the stuffy atmosphere which prevails when there is no ventilation or sunshine in a room.

There is also a toilet on the back porch, and this is certainly the best place for one as the other rooms are then free from the danger of possible noxious gases.

The only means of heating the house is the fire place. This should heat the living rooms sufficiently. As to the bedroom, it is better to have no fire, anyway. So many people make the mistake to sleep in over-heated bed rooms during the winter months. One should open not less than two windows and then keep oneself well covered, and it will be surprising how refreshing your sleep will be as compared to sleeping in a close, stuffy, over-heated bed room. We have tried it and find it much more healthful.

The Second Floor is divided into two bed rooms which are well equipped with clothes closets. Each bedroom has double windows, thus giving plenty of light,

air, and sunshine.

There is also a large linen closet at the head of the stair, which makes a convenient and definite place to store linen and avoids storing it in odd nooks and corners about the house.

We have visited several new houses in town and have written a short description of some of them.

The following is a description of Mr. Gray's new house, which is being built south of the O.A.C. Campus. The family are building this for their own home and they are trying to make it as convenient and comfortable as they can.

The house has a six foot porch extending on two sides and part way across the back.

The front door opens into a reception room and this is separated from the parlor by a large arch way.

The dining room is next to the parlor; it is of good proportions, and well lighted by three windows, forming a bay.

On one side of the dining room is a door opening into a cozy and comfortable room called "the den." From this room is a door leading into the bath room, but there is also an outside door to the bath room, a good means for ventilation.

This den can be converted into a bed room, in case they should need one down stairs, but they prefer using the upstairs for bedrooms, which is much more healthful.

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The kitchen is just back of the dining room and is small, but very convenient. The stove is near the pantry, and the sink is in the pantry. Mr.s Gray has planned this part of the house in such a way as to permit her to make as few steps as possible, as she knows a woman's work is never done.

The upstairs contains three bed rooms and each has a double window and one extra large clothes closet. They have hot and cold water in the hall upstairs.

We were quite favorably impressed with J. J. Cady's new residence on Van Buren and 12th Streets.

The first floor contains the reception hall, parlor living room, dining room, kitchen, and family bed room, with bath in connection, all admirably arranged.

There is a large porch extending round two sides of the house. Also one along the dining room and kitchen. We think there is nothing better than having plenty of porches; it is just recently that people are beginning to realize there is nothing so healthful and pleasant as being out in the open air and sunshine. It is especially good to have back porches as they are more private and one can learn to do much of one's work out of doors.

Another good feature about their home is that all the rooms down stairs except one, have an outside door, making it very convenient.

A columned archway separates the hall from the par-
ler; at the entrance of the stairway is a cozy and in-
viting nook.

The living room is very large and well lighted, it
is separated from the parlor by sliding doors.

The dining room is of good proportions and well
lighted. It contains a China closet.

The kitchen is very small, but convenient.

The second floor contains four bedrooms and two
windows in each room.

We have visited a number of other houses and are
glad to say that the people are giving more attention
to the ventilation of their homes, constructing plenty
of windows so that the air and sunshine may have full
sway.