

## PRACTICAL HOMES.

I HAVE tried in this little house to give an example of the advantage in small houses of communication. It has been the watch-word of progress in religion, politics, and the social world. We improve fastest and maintain the best conditions when we come in close contact with the action and mental warfare of the world's stage.

The science of harmony is never monotony. A single note never can produce discord, yet it is not harmony.

In the furnishing and decorating of a house the thing first to be studied, "for it is a delightful study," the success of which depends on your own careful selection of every bit of coloring, the usefulness and comfort of every article of furniture, and the relation it bears to the use of the particular room, and its effect on the communicating rooms.

This house will cost about \$4,500, local stone to be used to the top of the second story joists, then shingled and ornamented as shown; the roof is of Bangor slate, cut square on the ends. Inside the first floor hall is finished, including the open fireplace and stairs, in red oak. The library, with its low book-cases, is scarcely more than an alcove opening out of the parlor or living room. The hall, parlor, library and dining-room can all be thrown together, so that they form one apartment. The advantage of entertaining in a small house so arranged can hardly be over-estimated. The dining-room is extended at will to accommodate the home gatherings at the holiday season.

What child that does not remember some anxious hungry moment when they waited to be assigned their place at the table, stretched to the utmost limit of its four walls, only to be sent back to the deserted parlor to wait until the larger folks were through, at last to sit down hungry and disappointed to a cold dinner, a dismantled and disordered table, to be waited on by a hungry, weary maid. I suppose you ask if I would have you design your houses for these few chance

occasions. I do not quite ask that, but I do wish that the possibilities of house-planning were carefully studied. I have received so many interesting letters from the two articles that preceded this, and the signs of interest in home-making and house-planning promise a rich harvest in the new crop of homes. Whether you secure the services of the most gifted member of the architectural profession, or depend on the services of the village carpenter, there is a duty you owe your house that no one can pay for you; yours is the right and privilege of stamping it upon your own individuality.

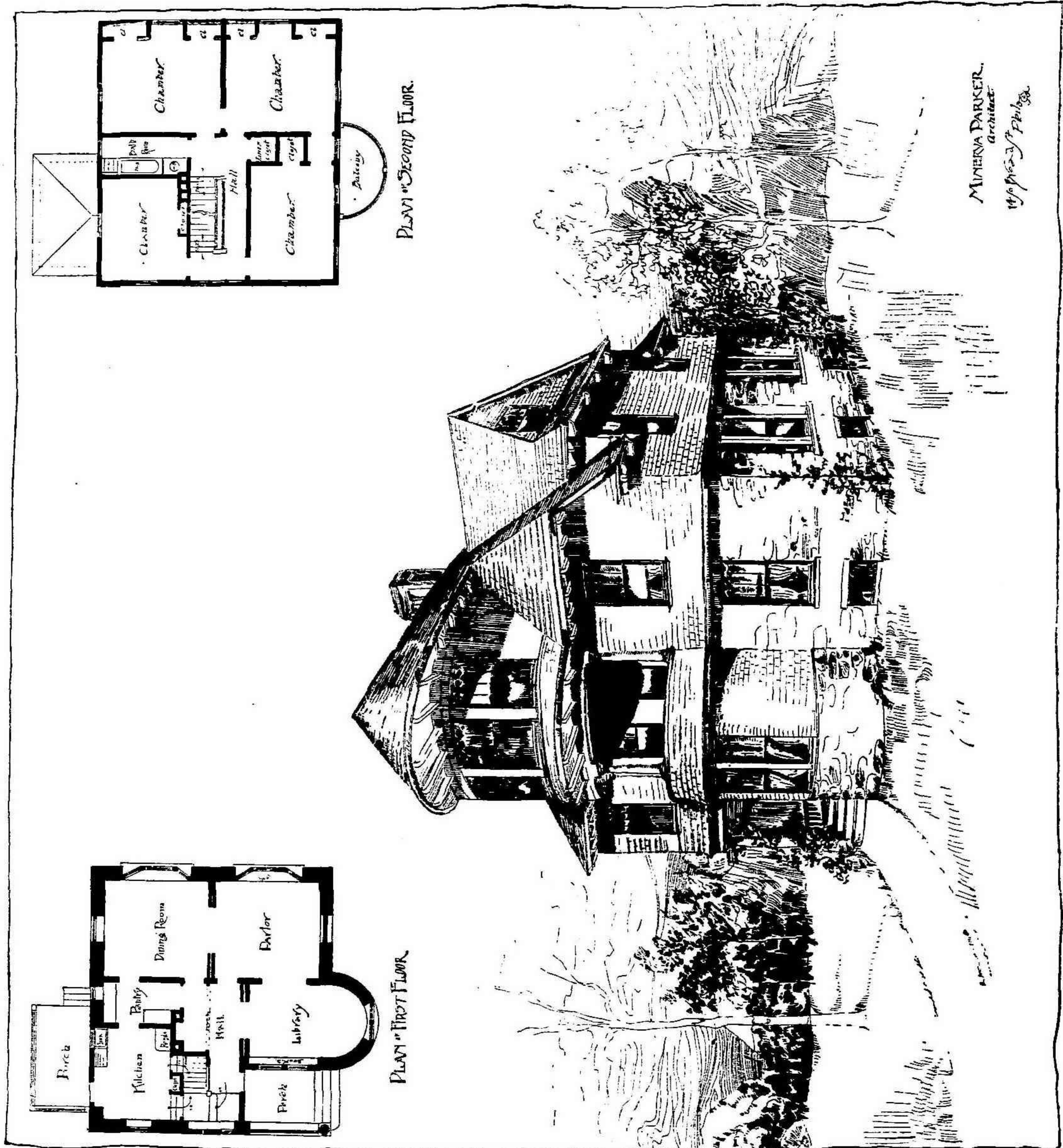
Then before I leave this duty of planning, let me urge a strong plea for that large army who live in rented houses or buy their houses ready built. It seems to me that owners and builders are too negligent both in regard to their own interests and those of their tenants. A house built for sale is apt to be built with a general disregard for convenience and comfort.

Our country houses, or more strictly speaking, our suburban houses, are showing a marked improvement in the care bestowed on their designing; every art and science, every style and period, are called into use to add to their attractiveness.

Our city houses need a radical change. The greatest evil, and one which under proper conditions might result in much good, is that of building large blocks of poorly-constructed houses with enough flimsy ornament to attract buyers. The method of paying for the home is so alluring that one is readily induced to become a home buyer, often to find afterward that you own a poor little shell that must be enlarged and repaired before it fulfils the requirements of your family. People frequently buy in this way, feeling that they can get a cheaper house than by building. The first outlay is certainly less, but it has the same relative value in building that the ready-made garments have in clothing; you have cheaper material, poor labor, and few real comforts.

You are under constant expense for repairs that, balanced against the extra cost of the building of your own house, would leave the advantage in favor of the latter method. Your neighbor's clothing, education, and household arrangements his amusement and occupation, all bear the stamp of his individuality, but the

ence for their associations, whose flimsy pretentious ornament is a perpetual lesson of falsehood and deception. The homes of our ancestors, based on the simpler classic forms, are still dear to every American heart. We look with reverence and affection upon these homes. They builded better than they knew, for



front of his house is as like your own as the garb of a charity school. All nations and people have built homes according to the social advancement of their time, and the more advanced have built with a singular faithfulness for the generations to follow them. The children growing up in our present homes feel little rever-

time and change but add new glory to their work; each year the trees grow higher, the moss thicker, and our own memory richer as we cling to these relics of the integrity of the founders and builders.

Many of our present houses, with all their wealth of ornament, after a few

years so offend us that they are removed to make room for some equally pretentious followers, none regretting the decay of the old and few rejoicing in the advent of the new. And all either needed was a little of that careful thoughtfulness that rescues things useful from the unsightly and sets the seal of beauty upon utility. We have learned to think of our churches, with their uplifted spires, carved gables, many-tongued organ and choir, as God's house; indeed all things are his, but I have often seen some tiny houses among bursting buds and green lawn, every window giving some hint of the loveliness and

care bestowed on it by the little housewife who presides over the nest, and I have thought these are God's homes. The wail of the organ, hushed into silence by the clear notes of some gifted songster or eloquent divine, perpetuate his name. The sun casting long pools of color on the floor, caught as it fell through the many-colored windows, reflect his glory, but the wail of the tiny first-born cradled in its mother's arms, bathed in the sunshine of her love, reflect God's image, which, fitly guarded, makes each home a shrine and every hearth an altar.

*Minerva Parker.*

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