

## SUGGESTIONS ON HOUSE PLANNING.\*

By GRANT HELLIWELL.

AMONG the almost innumerable acquirements of the capable architect, none are more important than skill in the art of house-planning. There are those who will not admit that the term "art" is applicable to a subject which they consider most prosaic and commonplace. While they cannot deny that planning is a necessary part of an architect's work, they would relegate it to an inferior and subordinate place—not worthy, in fact, to engage the highest faculties of an artist.

Such views as these are not only absolutely wrong, but injurious to the best interests of architecture, tending to derogate to ordinary utilitarianism that which is an integral part of the art—the very root from which emanates the completed structure, and to which it is as indissolubly joined as the skeleton of man to the outward form of flesh. It would not be difficult to show that planning presents fully as wide a field as exterior design for the exercise of the imagination and the employment of those creative faculties which alone can produce the beautiful. Moreover, history and experience both go to prove that all structures of acknowledged architectural merit exhibit the same skilful design in that part of the work which comes directly within the scope of planning as in the mere external shell, intrinsically beautiful as the latter may be.

Another proof of the importance of planning, and especially of house-planning, is the indisputable fact that in no other study en-

appear small details, such as the arrangement of each space both in regard to itself and its relation to other parts, the position of doors, windows and fireplaces, the provision of sufficient wall space, etc., are all most important, and affect in no slight degree the comfortable and economical working of an establishment. The benediction which will descend on the head of the architect who has paid full attention to these matters will be ample reward for the time and trouble expended.

There are certain elementary axioms which apply more or less to all house planning. Although well known to every thorough student of the art, they are of such importance as to justify their repetition here. These are ASPECT—with which may be coupled PROSPECT—SIMPLICITY and ECONOMY. There have been and are planners of houses who scarcely know the meaning of the word "aspect," and yet what one of us whom circumstances may have compelled to live in houses into the living rooms of which God's blessed sunshine never penetrates, but inwardly rebels against the fate which has barred him out from that most delightful and health-giving provision of nature. Most of us are familiar with the aspect compass, a device for showing the range of the sun's rays throughout the year, enabling one to determine how many hours or parts of an hour of sunshine any window will admit to the room it lights. It is true that with city houses the question of aspect is usually more or less restricted, yet even here the skilful architect will, by such expedients as projected bays, recessed courts, etc., accomplish much; while, in the case of suburban or country

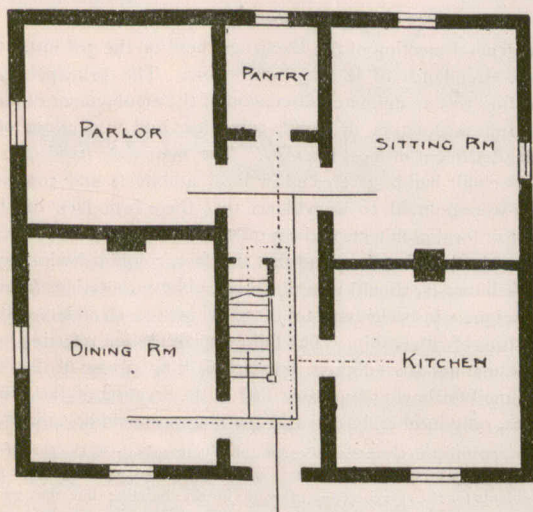
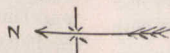


FIG 1

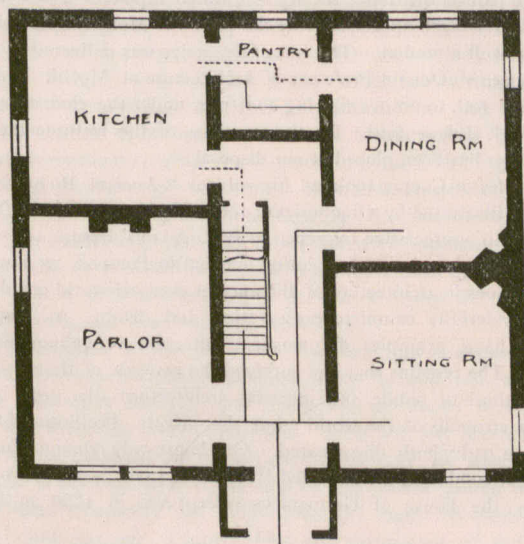


FIG 2

gaging the attention of man does the comfort, convenience and happiness of his fellow creatures so much depend.

It is true that the most notable structures, both of our own and bygone ages, have been, not the dwellings of men, but buildings devoted to purposes of worship, of business or of recreation. The fact still remains, however, that man's habitation is his first and greatest need, and that it should be the province of the architect to so construct and beautify the home that it shall afford its inmates not only needful shelter for the body, but also contribute largely to the enjoyment of man's intellectual, social and æsthetic functions.

Planning, we thus see, enters into vital consideration with every class of building, but the scope of this paper does not go beyond that of the house, and even here the field is so broad that it would be impossible within its necessarily brief limits to attempt to cover all the ground. Hence the subject House-Planning has been qualified by the word "suggestions."

In his study to obtain the best results, in overcoming difficulties, many of which at first sight appear insurmountable, in arranging and re-arranging, the architect finds one of the most charming occupations of his professional life. Let it be laid down as an unmovable principle that no plan shall be allowed to pass until the best possible arrangement has been obtained. As a mistake here is fatal to success, the architect should not begrudge any amount of care and study on this part of his work; and as an encouragement thereto it may be said that there is scarcely any difficulty which will not yield to such treatment. Moreover, what may

houses, every room may and should have some direct sunlight. While studying the problem of aspect the thoughtful architect will be fully alive to the advantages and possibilities of prospect—by no means a small factor in the pleasure of the house's inmates. In the country fine prospects are nearly always attainable, and not infrequently even in the city.

In the designing of every plan, no rule is more important to observe than that of simplicity. It is an unerring test of excellence. True, a plan may be simple without being good, but it is not too much to assert that no plan can be good without being simple. This point we shall endeavor to illustrate more clearly when going into the analysis of a plan.

Again, all planning should be based on the sound principles of economy, both as regards space and material. Rooms, halls, pantries, it matters not what—each has a proper size—to go beyond which involves, not only unnecessary and useless outlay at the start, but is a perpetual source of pecuniary loss, as well, perhaps, as of physical strength.

Houses are of two broad types—town and suburban. The chief difference between these, so far as plan is concerned, is that in the town house there are usually certain limitations of site which necessitate a plan of more or less rectangular outline and which admit of windows and doors on only certain sides. With the exception of possibly greater freedom from social restrictions and the use of verandahs and such like, the domestic habits of people living in the country are almost identical with those of the inmates of town houses. The main principles of house planning will, therefore, apply in both cases. We shall first consider these principles and then seek to apply them by way of illustration to a few plans of houses of either type.

\* Paper read before the Toronto Chapter of Architects.

Explanatory Note:

----- Public Family Passage. .... Servants' Service Passage.  
----- Private " " ..... Private "