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# For The Home Builder

By Robert J. Lewis

Real Estate Editor of The Star

**M**OST of us firmly believe in the American dream—and that an inalienable part of it is a dream house. We believe that to own your own home is to be in tune with the Founding Fathers, the free enterprise system and the United States Constitution. We believe that the seeds of repugnant political doctrines do not thrive on a medium-sized lot inclosed by a white picket fence.

It hasn't taken a housing shortage to make us home conscious. Planning a home has always been a fascinating hobby with us. Along with baseball and football, it is one of our favorite national sports.

To a man, we are suckers for the latest thing in floor plans. Young and old, we gaze at small houses and big houses, charmed alike by Cape Cod Colonial, French Provincial and the zaniest version of prefabricated Modern.

We like to dream—and this year the Nation's publishers have entered into the spirit of the game as never before. Book stores' shelves tell the story. The 1946 crop of books on homes and home building covers acres and acres.

### Books on Homes In Great Variety

Varieties range from a penetrating analysis of what has been wrong with housing in the past to a light-hearted treatise on how to build a home with your own as-yet-uncalloused hands. Inbetween those two extremes you can find books of floor plans, books on general planning, books on construction details, books on furnishing and decorating.

The most ambitious volume to come from a publisher during the year in the home building field was Robert Lasch's "Breaking the Building Blockade." This highly controversial book deals with what might be roughly described as the politics of housing. It cuffs the building industry about the head unmercifully and pleads for permanent Government controls.

### Books on How to Get Your Money's Worth

Mr. Lasch insists that housing as we have known it has been pretty dismal, and that the road to home ownership has been largely a primrose path lined with regrets. He says housing is "the stepchild of modern civilization" and that at present we have "a low standard of shelter in relation to what modern technology can provide." He is also somewhat angry over what he maintains is the insistence of the industry on the horse-and-buggy approach to building new homes.

Mr. Lasch makes a good many points and ably details the argument for Government controls. But I think that when he rails at the results in the past he is inclined to discount the complexity of builders' problems, understate the effect of supply and demand on the housing market, ignore the impact of the general economy on home building, and generally to exaggerate the beneficent possibilities of the

well-intentioned nostrums he prescribes.

Turning from the political aspects of housing, you find yourself on the more familiar ground of what to build and how to get your money's worth.

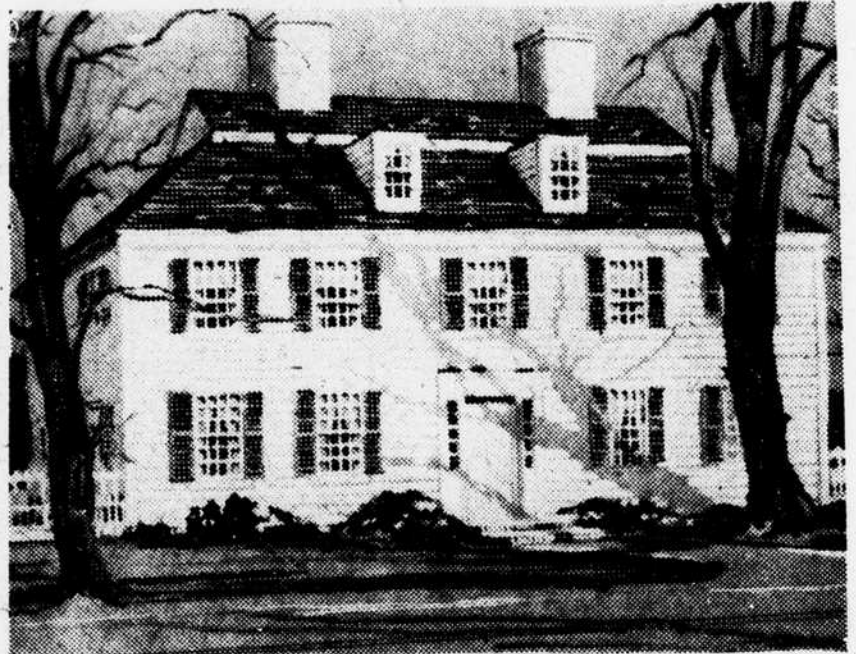
To me, the most provocative book of the year in this category was "If You Want to Build a House," by Elizabeth B. Mock. It combined a photographic survey of modern residential architecture with a simply written analysis of home planning, designing and construction. Without being a fanatic about it, the author contends there is much to be gained by throwing overboard all your preconceived notions and prejudices on how a house should look—both inside and out.

Firmly in possession of a beligerently fresh approach, she

she believes. "Pans and egg beaters are as beautiful as they are useful," says she, "why not hang them within easy reach, like tools above a workbench"? Sounds like a good point, but I think we should leave it up to the ladies.

Among other books along the same line is "That New Home of Yours—Build It Right," by Martin and Vivian Reade. This slim little book tells you a lot about financing, site selection, types of houses and the things to guard against when you build.

One of the most valuable chapters, incidentally, is a check list to help you decide exactly what you want, and a glossary of building terms to help you take an intelligent interest in the



Two-story Colonial house from "Planning Your Home Wisely," by Royal Barry Wills. (Franklin Watts, Inc.)

contends, for instance, that the "modern kitchen" is so completely streamlined that it is inefficient. It could be much improved, she maintains, by going back to some of the forthright features of kitchens in grandma's day.

Hiding everything inside white enamel cabinets, for example, only complicates kitchen chores,

operations when—and if—they get under way.

For those interested in the small home—and today you can't become interested in anything else if you want to build under present restrictions—Royal Barry Wills' new book deserves careful reading.

Mr. Wills, one of America's most prominent architects of small houses, is of the liberal-traditionalist school. In this book, "Planning Your House Wisely," he gives the advice of an architectural "middle-of-the-roader" on home space and its uses. His book is illustrated with 243 drawings.

Supplementing general books of this type is one which will have particular interest here, "Alexandria Houses," by Ralph Cole Hall, Deering Davis and Stephen P. Dorsey. Well printed and arranged, it is bound to offer you some interesting ideas when you plan your own home.

If you want to be your own decorator, you'll get a lot of help from "Inside Your Home" by Dan Cooper. Mr. Cooper seems to be a down-to-earth decorator with an uncommonly reasonable outlook. His book entertains at the same time it informs.

### Recommended

IF YOU WANT TO BUILD A HOUSE, by Elizabeth B. Mock. (Simon & Schuster: \$2.)

THAT NEW HOME OF YOURS—BUILD IT RIGHT, by Martin & Vivian Reade. (Procyon Press: \$1.)

PLANNING YOUR HOUSE WISELY, by Royal Barry Wills. (Franklin Watts, Inc.: \$1.)

INSIDE YOUR HOME, by Dan Cooper. (Farrar, Strauss & Co.: \$3.75.)

ALEXANDRIA HOUSES, by Ralph Cole Hall, Deering Davis and Stephen P. Dorsey. (Architectural Book Publishing Co.: \$5.)



From "Under the Window"

A Kate Greenaway Book for Children

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