



Rural Architecture (Being a Complete Description of Farm Houses, Cottages, and Out Buildings)

Lewis Falley Allen

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From the PREFATORY: This work owes its appearance to the absence of any cheap and popular book on the subject of Rural Architecture, exclusively intended for the farming or agricultural interest of the United States. Why it is, that nothing of the kind has been heretofore attempted for the chief benefit of so large and important a class of our community as our farmers comprise, is not easy to say, unless it be that they themselves have indicated but little wish for instruction in a branch of domestic economy which is, in reality, one of great importance, not only to their domestic enjoyment, but their pecuniary welfare. It is, too, perhaps, among the category of neglects, and in the lack of fidelity to their own interests which pervades the agricultural community of this country, beyond those of any other profession—for we insist that agriculture, in its true and extended sense, is as much a profession as any other pursuit whatever. To the reality of such neglects they have but of late awaked, and indeed are now far too slowly wheeling into line for more x active progress in the knowledge pertaining to their own advancement. As an accessory to their labors in such advancement, the present work is intended. It is an opinion far too prevalent among those engaged in the more active occupations of our people,—fortified indeed in such opinion, by the too frequent example of the farmer himself—that everything connected with agriculture and agricultural life is of a rustic and uncouth character; that it is a profession in which ignorance, as they understand the term, is entirely consistent, and one with which no aspirations of a high or an elevated character should, or at least need be connected. It is a reflection upon the integrity of the great agricultural interest of the country, that any such opinion should prevail; and discreditable to that interest, that its condition or example should for a moment justify, or even tolerate it. Without going into any extended course of remark, we shall find ample reason for the indifference which has prevailed among our rural population, on the subject of their own domestic architecture, in the absence of familiar and practical works on the subject, by such as have given any considerable degree of thought to it; and, what little thought has been devoted to this branch of building, has been incidentally rather than directly thrown off by those professionally engaged in the finer architectural studies appertaining to luxury and taste, instead of the every-day wants of a strictly agricultural population, and, of consequence, understanding but imperfectly the wants and conveniences of the farm house in its connection with the every-day labors and necessities of farm life. It is not intended, in these remarks, to depreciate the efforts of those who have attempted to instruct our farmers in this interesting branch of agricultural economy. We owe them a debt of gratitude for what they have accomplished in the introduction of their designs to our notice; and when it is remarked that they are insufficient for the purposes intended, it may be also taken as an admission of our own neglect, that we have so far disregarded the subject ourselves, as to force upon others the duty of essaying to instruct us in a work of which we ourselves should long ago have been the masters.

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