

Esther Gould's Book Corner

Are You Interested in books of Fiction, Biography, Travel, or History? For lists write to ESTHER GOULD care your local paper.

The Jewish Family Saga

"THE MATRIARCH"

By G. B. Stern. Alfred A. Knopf.

G. B. Stern is a rather tall young woman, a Jewess, with an unusually small head, and addicted to the wearing of very large hats. She has extraordinarily expressive blue eyes and a reputation to maintain as an unusually witty conversationalist.

Her latest book, "The Matriarch," which is one of the most interesting of 1925's books thus far, is undoubtedly partly autobiographical. It is the story of a Jewish family, the house of Rakonitz, a powerful strongly knit family which for more than one hundred years grew and spread to the great cities of Europe—Vienna, Paris, London, Budapest, Munich. It intermarried principally with the strong but not equally strong houses of Bettelheim and Czelovar.

Grandchild of the original Simon Rakonitz, who reared his ten children in the house by the Danube, is Anastasia, the first Matriarch of the family. She marries her first cousin and in consequence four of her five children—"all but Truda" as we are often told, are of somewhat weakened stock. But even before this the Rakonitz males have always been charming, plausible, but weak and fundamentally unstable. Even "The Uncles" a united embodiment of the family's authority, permanence and power, under the first breath of adversity disappear as a puff of smoke upon a summer's day. It is the women who bear the burden.

It would be impossible to unravel the intricacies of the story in a hundred words—it is better merely to say that Miss Stern has treated a broad and difficult subject with remarkable firmness, conviction and skill. This family saga has more width and depth than most of those with which it will be compared.

Should Married Women Work?

"WOMEN AND LEISURE"

By Lorine Pruette, Ph. D. E. P. Dutton & Co.

"Women and Leisure!" Many women will wonder how a book could be made out of things which have so little to do with one another! Yet in Dr. Pruette's book the criterion of leisure is necessarily non-wage earning. And four-fifths of the women of the United States over ten years of age are of this class. Of this four-fifths, taking into consideration young girls in school, mothers with young children, active housewives, and the infirm, there is still represented a large social waste. Can society afford, Dr. Pruette questions, to continue to allow and by its attitude to encourage this waste?

The Industrial Revolution both limited woman's activity outside the home and by the increased labor saving devices and efficiency methods of all kinds decreased her work within it. It is logical to conclude then, with the added factor of the smaller family, that the "woman in the home" has often actually more energy than she has the opportunity to employ purposefully.

Dr. Pruette goes on to show that on the one hand society cannot afford the wastage of woman's effort while on the other many women are unsatisfied with their present opportunities.

Since society will only advance with the "average man" there is an illuminating study of his ideas concerning the entry of women, particularly of married women into wage earning occupations.

There is also an exhaustive study, most illuminating for mothers, of the real ambitions of a large group of young girls.

There are many thought and discussion provoking statements. Sometimes Dr. Pruette strikes at our fondest sentimentalisms. As for example that the average factory worker is not torn by the monotony of his job, but

rather likes it. And that the average person is not breathlessly striving after a career. Even that "It is possible that we may some day discover that the career-motif appears only in the lives of individuals who possess a peculiar combination of intellectual and emotional qualities."

Dr. Pruette has written clearly, sanely, with knowledge, and with great care never to proceed too far on the premise established.

There are numerous things in her book that it would be interesting to quote, and there are analyses and conclusions which will be of great value to women interested in making for themselves and for future generations of women the fullest life possible.

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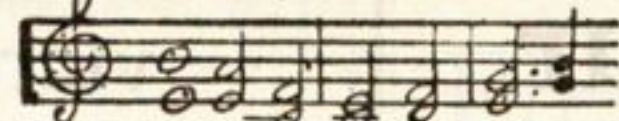
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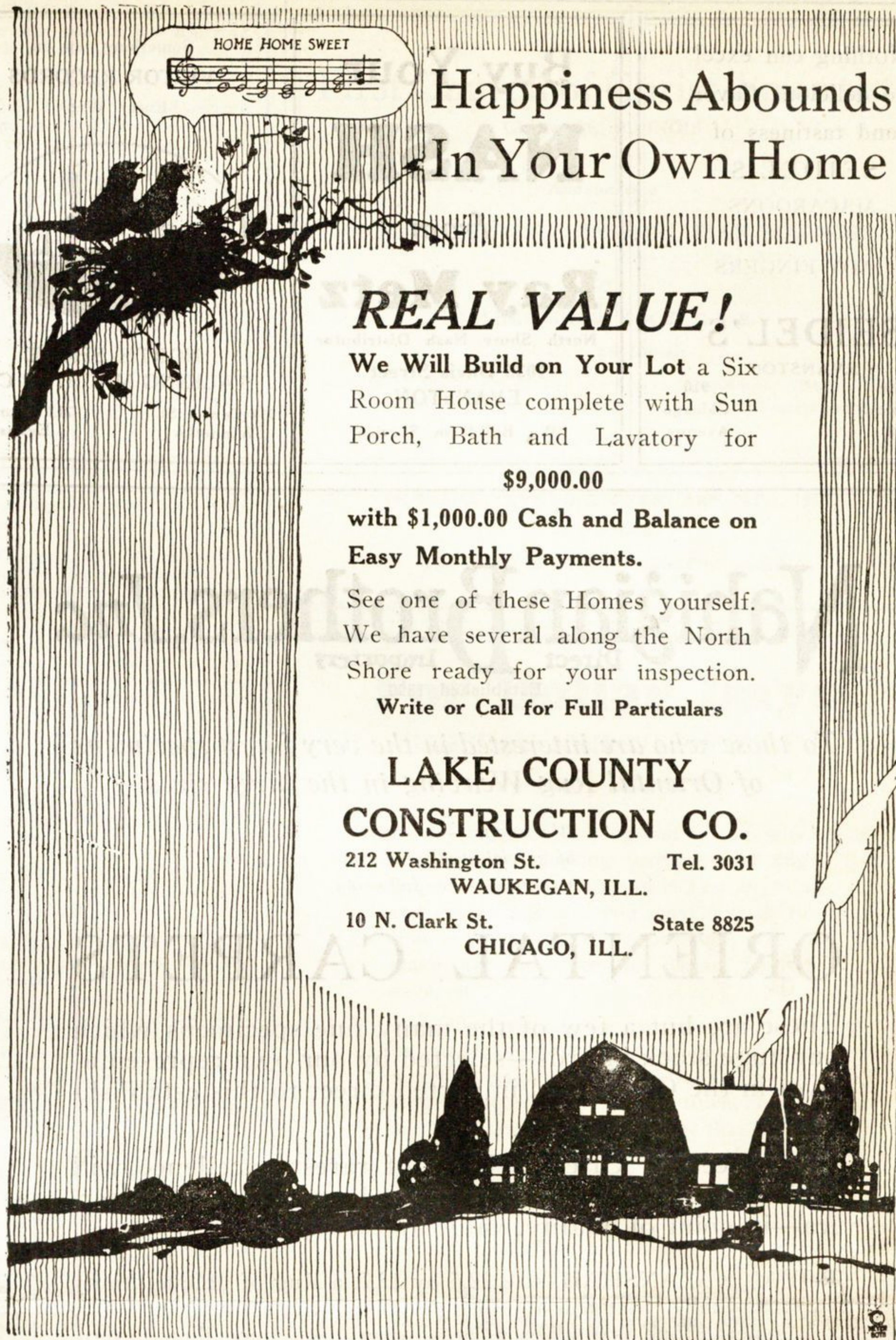
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