

Houses and People

MARJORIE W. GREGG.

Miss Gregg, as a community worker, had an opportunity of studying the housing conditions in Toronto, and the following study is interesting as giving the impressions of a young mind starting on the road of unselfish work for the advancement of her fellow citizens.

The home is an institution of vital importance. If it is a place where each member of the family can find satisfying nourishment and recreation for the body; ("an habitually undisturbed standing ground or sleeping place") a sense of security and restful mental quiet, as well as stimulating intercourse with kindred minds, and a healthy atmosphere for spiritual growth; he will be apt to become able and willing to "do his bit" as a worthy citizen of the world.

The importance of "The Housing Problem" arises from its relation to the home. It is possible to find a good home in an unhealthy and overcrowded slum dwelling. It may be even less difficult to discover a bad home in a well built up-town residence. But it cannot be denied that unpleasant and unsanitary surroundings are a serious handicap to home life, and make its establishment and maintenance exceedingly difficult.

A healthy, normal child may be born and reared in a squalid, damp room in a tenement basement. It may live upon scanty and unwholesome food, find its education and amusements in the streets of a city without ever entering a school or a church, daily hear profane language and witness street fights and a variety of crimes, begin at an early age to run a heavy factory machine, and yet to remain sound in body, mind and character. But he stands a poor chance of escaping disease and ignorance and moral contamination. For his home, in spite of earnest endeavor on the part of well-meaning parents, is a weak and fettered competitor with the attractive clamour and gaudy coloring of the street. "And will not children growing up with little home life create homes with less?" Thorough study of the subject has proved beyond a doubt that slums result in untold evils for the entire municipality in which they are permitted to remain.

The existence in every Canadian city of houses that are unfit for human habitation, together with the fact that the authorities allow these places to continue to be the so-called homes of men, women and children, constitute a difficult and perplexing problem, which is two-fold. Bad living conditions not only indicate a low level of human attainments and human ideals, but also tend to make that level still lower. The housing problem involves two factors, the houses and the people, and both must be changed."

Primitive dwellings, in which men first sought shelter from the elements and from the ravages of wild beasts were very rude structures, the product of undeveloped minds and hands that had not yet learned their cunning. But modern, up-to-date houses represent an output of human energies and skill that is varied and remarkable. The production of an ideal abiding place for families demands that municipal legislators enforce regulations for the use and development of land for building purposes; that men of science shall have spent long years of experiment and research to discover the laws of civics, economics, sanitation and construction that business men exercise all their faculties to secure capital; that architects and artisans of many trades combine their knowledge and industry in planning and manufacturing and skilfully assembling the various parts of the buildings; and, finally, that the occupants of the houses produce and maintain in them a healthy and happy atmosphere.

Old as is the housing problem, the problem of people is still more ancient, for they are ven more complicated than houses. The alderman and the scientist the architect and the carpenter, each is a unit in a very complex society, and each possesses a marvellously formed body, an unfathomable mind, and a mysterious something called a soul. Each is a person with thoughts and prejudices, aims and ideals.

There is no excuse to-day on the ground of ignorance, for the erection of improper dwellings or for the steady and unhindered deterioration of houses built by former and less enlisted generations. But there continues in Canada a lack of interest in the enforcement of existing laws, and in the application of available knowledge, with the result that bad housing conditions are being created afresh by careless, avaricious and inefficient people, and if housing conditions are wrong it is people alone who

have the power to right them. But if the will to bring about the reform is lacking there arises the difficult question of the transformation of the attitude of the individual and of society. It is a problem which the physician, the professor, the preacher and the political reformer will do well to study more.

The subject of houses and people is not only important and many sided. It is also universal, for it exists everywhere and concerns everybody. The responsibility for its solution in our Dominion rests upon all the citizens of all the municipalities in the land, for each man and woman can do his or her share in forming public opinion, in demolishing things that are a disgrace to Canadian life, and in bringing about a desirable state of affairs if not in a whole city or in a whole town at least in one home.



EX-MAYOR PETER McARA, REGINA.

We congratulate Mr. Peter McAra, who has served as Alderman and Mayor of the City of Regina, on his appointment by the Government on the board of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad. Some years ago he was president of the Saskatchewan Union of Municipalities, and a vice-president for the province on the executive of the Union of Canadian Municipalities, and to-day is a member of the Regina Board of Trade, of which he was once president. Born of Scottish parents in India, in 1862, and educated in Edinburgh, he came to Canada to enter the insurance business. He is now head of the firm of McAra Bros. and Wallace, Financial Brokers, Regina.

AN EASY METHOD OF PURIFYING WATER.

The following method of purifying small quantities of water was worked out by Dr. G. G. Nasmith and Dr. R. R. Graham. It was originally designed for prospectors, campers and for use at summer cottages, and has been copied all over the world. It is essentially the same method that is being used to protect the water supplies of our soldiers in France.

Take a level teaspoonful of Chloride of Lime and rub it up in a teacup with a little water to a thin paste free from lumps. This should be made up to a cupful and diluted with three more cupfuls of water and poured into a bottle and tightly corked. This is a stock solution and it will keep for a week if tightly corked.

A teaspoonful of this stock solution should be added to each two gallon pail of drinking water, thoroughly mixed, and allowed to stand for a few minutes. This will give about one-half part of free chlorine to a million parts of water, which will destroy all typhoid or dysentery producing germs in 10 minutes.

With most Ontario waters this quantity will not make the water taste.

If it does in your case use a little less, otherwise not.

Get Chloride of Lime in the pound size, metallic cases. Chloride of Lime packed in cardboard cases is usually weak, and this method is worked out for chloride of lime of proper strength.—Toronto Health Bulletin.