



DADO DESIGN BASED ON LILIES. FROM "PLANT FORM AND DESIGN."

APARTMENT LIFE.

The growth of the apartment idea is not an unmixed gain. There are few more important words in the English language than the word "home," and it is about to acquire but a modified meaning to those persons who intend to adopt a life in the apartment houses that are beginning to rise in our big cities.

Home is a place which shuts off the world at the street door; a place must be separate, self-contained, and in some sense our own to give properly the feeling of home; and an apartment is these things only in a modified sense. It is little more separate or self-contained than a suite of rooms in a boarding house would be; and proprietorship in an apartment, even if held by purchase, cannot compare with the proprietorship which extends down to the ground and includes some portion of it. A lodging in the air is not perfectly a home "barring you're a bird."

In the second place, though home to be home must shut its inmates off from the world, it must also, for people of refinement, provide for their separation from one another. The essence of house planning is in the effort to keep functions and people apart. The upstairs and downstairs arrangement of a house gives a definiteness for this purpose which one never realizes so clearly as when looking over a "flat." On a level, particularly when, as so often happens, it is made necessary to pass all the bedrooms on the way from the entrance to the living rooms—privacy is more difficult. A delicate woman, who wishes to lie down during the day, imposes restraint on all the inmates; or else becomes accustomed to less consideration than she would receive in a house. There is too great nearness of the inmates as a matter of feet and inches, and this is likely to result in too little distance in the matter of relations with one another. A delicate woman is apt to become an indelicate woman in the matter of appearances in dishabille, which the comparative privacy given by the different levels of a house should prevent.

The ideas of home and family are closely connected, but what is to be done with children in a flat? There is no upper room where they can play and make as much noise as they like; nor is there likely to be any ground outside, and if there is it is public ground.

This is not the same thing as ground, however small, apart from the rest of the world, where children can have room for their own numerous private affairs. A very simple habitation, if it has room for these, will, to a family of children, be dignified by all the sentiments which home inspires; sentiments which make childhood a memory and prepare the way for the domestic and patriotic ideas with which it is so important that the manhood and womanhood of a nation should be possessed. Large families are in themselves the making of a home; but what is to be done with a large family in a flat? What was always a troublesome joy is likely to preponderate so much on the side of trouble as to cease altogether to be a joy; and then there is danger of its ceasing to be at all. The happiness of a woman does not seem to consist now as it did in the early days of the world, in being the mother of children. Domestic life has ceased to be to her her necessary field of work. Men, much as they hate work, do seem to acquire a sort of enthusiasm for the proper fulfillment of it; it is their life. But women seem not to regard domestic duties as their life, but as an irksome addition to their life. Their confabulations about it have a tone of discontent. They incite one another continually to desire greater freedom from care. The woman who is most envied is she who has the least care. Not only is pride in their families vanishing but pride in their housekeeping as well; and apartment life will complete the process. With no families and almost no housekeeping—for, with soup in paper boxes and fried potatoes in a bottle, a woman has little to think of now if she has credit and a telephone—with nothing to do at home, women may fulfil their ideal; but will they not also fulfil the warning of St. Paul and "learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

It is pertinent to enquire whether the solution of the housing question, most suited to our national traditions and character, does not lie in radial railways, that will enable us to keep touch with the town while spread over the country, rather than in a system of housing that will pack us, six or eight families deep, over so much land only as is comprised within the area of a concreted cellar.

The essence of the question is in reality the necessity of giving children an opportunity for outdoor life at home. Playing grounds are all very well as a remedy, but we should avoid the extremity that requires them. It has long been a subject of lamentation that the poor and the children of the poor should live and play on the street; it will be lamentable indeed if the children of the comparatively well to do are brought to the same condition. This extreme as well as the other is exemplified in New York, and should furnish a warning to aspiring cities. In New York, a long way up, in the Harlem neighborhood, the streets on which the residential flats are built are full of respectably dressed children; running about in the road among the horses, sitting on the dirty sidewalk, playing ball over the heads of the passers by. One receives an impression that they have just got out of school and are lingering before going home. The discovery that they have got home, that this is their home, gives a shock when it is first realized. All the streets in the neighborhood exhibit the same state of things. A little investigation