

illustration accompanying this article. The whole lay-out in this instance seemed favorable to disaster. A store and workshop, containing a stove, occupied the ground floor from which a dark narrow stairway turned up to the floor above. This stairway—the only possible communication with the living rooms—was neither accessible from the street nor the alley in the rear. Going up or down, one had to travel through either the store and workshop, or the chaotic shed in the rear. And just at this point it might be well to call attention to what looks like a grave omission in the building by-law. There does not appear to be a stipulation governing the entrance and exit of tenants residing over stores or places of business. Such entrances or stairways should, by all means give access direct to the street or an open alley. In fact, while it is always easier to criticize than to construct, the building by-law of the city of Toronto is a very inefficient compilation. Besides stating that "All doors at the foot of stairways or passageways in buildings used as hotels, tenements, lodging, or rooming houses, shall open outwards and never be fastened but with a movable bar or bolt, readily drawn from the inside without the use of any key or combination whatever," something after the style of a corresponding clause in the Cleveland, O., ordinance might have been inserted, viz.:

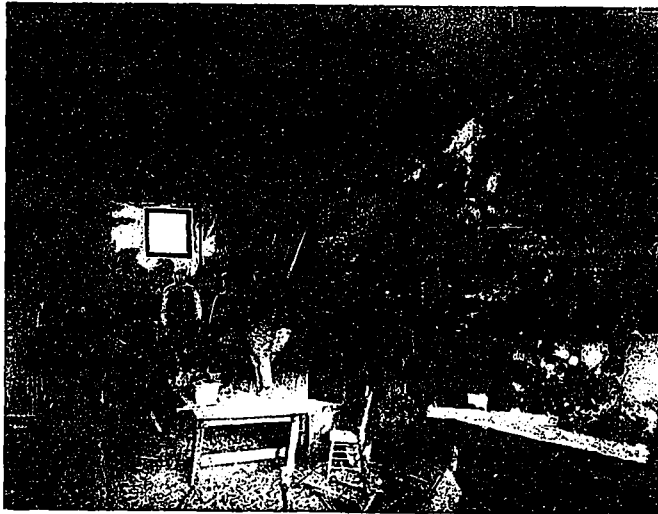
*"All entrance bells shall lead directly from a street, alley or court, or a court-way or yard connected directly with a street and shall be as short and as direct as possible between the street lines and stairways, and every flight of stairs required shall have such entrance hall on the ground floor, and when they pass through a first floor occupied for mercantile or manufacturing purposes with different tenants or grades of occupancy above them, they shall be enclosed*

*entirely with fireproof walls; in non-fireproof buildings such enclosures shall be of brick extending from the foundation up to the top level of the second tier of joists. There shall be no openings into the first floor or basement of such enclosures, and no opening from the first floor to the basement shall be underneath such a stairs unless the street entrance floor and the soffits of the first flight of stairs and the ceilings are made fireproof and completely cut off from the well holes, but no passenger elevator in such an entrance or stair hall shall extend to the basement."*

This clause is designed to rectify just such a condition as that which we have been referring to, while in the Toronto by-law it appears to have been overlooked. A speedy amendment along lines suggested in the Cleveland code might save the city no end of trouble in the future. This should be considered very carefully not only in order to arm the Building Inspector with authority to take wise action in the proper direction some time when he happens to feel a bit industrious, but in order to force miserly

landlords to maintain structures that insurance companies will not be likely to shun in holy horror. Is there any just reason why a man who is desirous of protecting himself against being reduced to absolute insolvency, in case of accident, by placing a little insurance upon his earthly goods, should be denied this privilege, simply because his landlord's building is too big a risk for any sane corporation to take a chance on? No! Not if the building by-laws are properly framed and assiduously enforced. And yet the unfortunate tailor, Aaron Ornstein, whose wife and daughter were sacrificed to the ravages of the York street flames, was a victim of just such luck. A short time prior to the fire, there was a small blaze near-by caused by the ignition of a box of matches. The owner of the house made a claim which was settled, but the insurance companies concerned, it is said, followed up the matter by cancelling all their policies in the neighborhood, and Ornstein's was included. Three days before his place was burned Mr. Ornstein had put in \$800 worth of stock—a total loss.

At the present writing the building is undergoing repairs; in fact it is almost ready for re-occupancy, but there is still no sign of a fire escape. It would be interesting to know if the owner has really taken the trouble to acquire a permit for the operations.



INTERIOR VIEW SHOWING POSITION OF STAIRS, THE ONLY AVENUE OF ESCAPE WHICH NEITHER GAVE ACCESS TO THE STREET NOR REAR ALLEY. REPAIRS ARE BEING MADE WITHOUT ALTERING THIS ARRANGEMENT.

There is still one grave fault in connection with the structure which has formed the subject of this article and that is its deplorable, flimsy and highly combustible construction. Of course it was in all probability erected at a time when comparatively little thought was given to so-called fire-proof construction; but it furnishes a splendid example of the shortsighted mistakes in the building operations of fifteen, twenty or twenty-five years ago—mistakes that were positively criminal.

Since the Iroquois theatre disaster cities have busied themselves amending ordinances and compelling really fine construction in theatres. Apartment houses, tenements and hotels are just as important, yet they seem to receive the minimum of attention, though a greater number of lives are more constantly exposed in them than in any other type of building.

Cities vie with one another in improving their fire departments and acquiring new apparatus, things looking to the cure of a long established evil. Past experience with smallpox, yellow fever, etc., ought to teach us that the mere caring for, or a tempted cure of the afflicted patients never amounted to much, in spite of the superhuman efforts spent in that direction; real benefits only began to accrue when we became sensible enough to take steps to prevent the disease. So it is with fire. We have to learn and our authorities have to insist and compel that all buildings be well built, of non-combustible materials and put together in an intelligent, fireproof manner so as to prevent fire. The only thing to do is to construct our new buildings better and re-camp our old ones just as quickly and as well as we can.