

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,663.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1920.

Vol. LXIV

EDITORIAL.

IDEAL HOMES.

We are a home-loving people, and the pity is that this national characteristic is so often discouraged and suppressed by the initial difficulty of finding houses which can be transformed into ideal homes. It requires much determination in the face of adverse circumstances to convert unpromising material into convenient and attractive homes.

We are, therefore, indebted to the *Daily Mail*, which is demonstrating at the Ideal Home Exhibition at Olympia, how convenient houses can be quickly erected to meet the present shortage, and purchased at moderate cost, and how they can be fitted with labour-saving appliances so that the difficulty of service is reduced to a minimum.

But it is not only in houses where servants are employed that labour-saving appliances are needed. We are apt to blame dwellers in the slums for their shiftless, slatternly, and sometimes drinking habits. A man and woman hopeful of a happy future may start married life with the aspiration to "get a little home together," but, owing to exorbitant rents, and the difficulty of finding anywhere to live—a difficulty by no means confined to towns—they may have to begin life in two rooms. All water must be carried from the basement, and boiled on a fire in an open grate; cooking and washing must be done in the living room, and many a trim and capable maid, as a working man's wife loses heart, and succumbs to circumstances. In an ideal home she might have been an ideal wife; in a slum she too often ceases to struggle against the sordidness, inconvenience, and dirt of her environment. Her husband, after his day's work, finding his home uncared for, his wife unkempt, and his children querulous, often gravitates to the public-house for

company and brightness. Although many a man and woman, all honour to them, rise superior to their surroundings, it is a national disgrace that they should be compelled to live in insanitary and unsuitable houses.

The Ministry of Health has shown that it appreciates the fundamental importance of the housing question by its official exhibits of town planning, and ideal cottages for both urban and rural districts, at the Exhibition at Olympia, and because the ideal home has a garden, the Ministry of Agriculture also demonstrates what can be done in this direction in relation to modern allotments.

Moreover, in an ideal home there are children, and therefore there is an exhibition of nurseries carried out from the designs of the Queens of Holland, Spain, and the Belgians, the Crown Princess of Sweden, Princess Alice (Countess of Athlone), and our own Princess Mary. The diverse national characteristics of each are very interesting. But these are sumptuous nurseries for the well-to-do, and in our opinion are, for the most part, overcrowded with furniture. The simplest, and the one which appealed to us most, is that designed by Princess Mary. There is also on view an Infant Welfare Clinic, arranged by Middlesex Hospital in conjunction with the St. Marylebone Health Society.

As for labour-saving appliances, the crowd that surges through the section of the Exhibition where these are demonstrated makes it obvious that there is a great demand for these on the part of the public. "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." It is the place to which the thoughts of many whom duty calls to service in far distant parts of the Empire turn with affection and longing, and it is the ambition of every home-maker to secure appliances which will add to its efficiency and attraction.

The Exhibition at Olympia remains open until February 24th, and is well worth a visit.

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