THE SLUM PROBLEM

HOLLAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOLUTION

2 April 1929

THE STAR

Housing schemes are afoot. The authorities are desirous of doing away with slums and creating surroundings and existing dwellings that will convert the hitherto slack slum dwellers into a tidy, self-respecting member of the community. Princess Alice has graciously interested herself in the question and has turned for some inspiration to a model American settlement. Royal Highness could scarcely have chosen a more suitable country. Holland is, to all appearances, succeeding in solving the slum question by erecting very efficient workmen's dwelling places.

A BUILDING IN UTRECHT.

During a recent visit to Europe, it was my good fortune to meet one of Holland's prominent architects, who was very kindly showed me over one of these buildings, which had been designed by his firm. The keynote was efficiency, this object being attained by rigid simplicity of design—nothing except of effect—and good planning. The buildings are mostly four to six-storied, built round a courtyard which is entered by archways on two or three sides. The buildings are divided into flats or apartments of different sizes, to meet the requirements of various tenants.

"ONLY SATISFACTORY WAY"

This housing method, though considered undesirable by some sentimental persons, who object to what they term "the absence of a separate home," is the only solution of the slum problem. It has proved to be the best, in fact, the only satisfactory way of housing people, even left to the dictates of their own choice, drift into the most undesirable and meanest parts of the cities. These people must be put into surroundings in which they cannot turn into slums. After they have been removed, we have to improve the surroundings in which and the recreation spaces provided round these big buildings, then perhaps we shall begin to see the possibilities which are of necessity placed upon the people who live in garden suburbs, and who are supposed to benefit from the advantages of suburban life.

The slum dweller will gain at the opportunity to live in a more healthful environment, and the problem is one of the first steps in the creation of a new social order.

RECREATION SPACES

The recreation spaces and playgrounds for children which a park and a garden provide will soon prove a very strong attraction. Even the simplest man and woman like a spot of green and a little nature. The slabby wall will gain at the opportunity to live in a more healthful environment, and the problem is one of the first steps in the creation of a new social order.

A caretaker for the whole concern, who would be able to do all minor repairs, and another man to keep the place tidy, are all that is needed of service expenditure required. Worked on as a business, it should prove a good business investment, besides removing the stigma of slums which still clings to many a man's business from putting money into dwelling houses for the time is that we came down to tin tents, and began to consider these dwellings as a temporary point of view. Our age is termed the "material age," in other words, the age of materialism. We are not expected to have houses which are not materialistic in the things we don't want. We are being steadily surrounded with materialism which is most ably and economically possible schemes for housing the better.

GERARD MOREYDK.