

Many Innovations in Apartment Houses.

Not so very long ago the comforts of flats and apartment houses were extolled by jokesters in equal measure of sincerity with the sweet and lovable dispositions of mothers-in-law. All that is now past, and this Fall Manhattanites, Harlemites, and Bronx dwellers will be able to move into flats and apartments that have, in very fact, "all the comforts of home." Even the children who, in the old days, were, with lap-dogs, excluded, will find the apartment houses places to live in freely and naturally, with special provision made for their own sport and recreation. And as for modern improvements and conveniences, even the cheaper flats will be so full of them that, contrary to the sentiment enter-

found to be the case even in the cheaper apartments renting at from \$28 to \$40 a month. Instead of the old mantels and consols running the length or height of the wall with their mirrors, we are now putting in bookcases with desks built in them! Out of 489 apartments constructed by us in the last six months, only in two cases have we been asked to substitute mantels for the bookcases. Interior decorating also now tends to simplicity and comfort, the bedroom walls now being in many cases painted instead of papered, in order to provide more cleanliness and sanitation and easier purification of rooms after contagious sickness." In the largest apartment houses there has been a tendency to eliminate dumb-waiters, substituting in their stead service elevators. These in some cases run through from basement to roof, often

The separation of living rooms from the service part of the apartment is almost complete, even in cheaper apartments, private rooms with toilet and bath facilities being provided apart from the main apartment. Special attention is now being paid to the designing of the apartment kitchen, which is provided with broom closets, bread shelves, dressers, and garbage closets built in the wall and well ventilated from outside, while completely locked off from the kitchen itself. The general substitution of gas for coal ranges in apartments has made impossible the burning of waste and rubbish, thus making necessary the construction of such closets.

There is a general demand for more closet room in the rest of the apartment also; and builders are taking this fact into consideration in most of the more recent buildings.

Aside from the greater amount of attention paid to the planning of kitchens there has been noticed an increase in the installation of kitchenettes with two or three rooms, instead of the former four-room apartment. In some cases the kitchenette, built along one wall of the living room, is only nine feet long and five feet deep and is partitioned off into separate spaces, one containing a range, another a dresser, and the remaining space a refrigerator, sink, and garbage closet. Three-room apartments with such kitchenettes are renting at \$32.

"We have rented a large number of one-room apartments with kitchenettes in the Morningside district," said Dr. C. V. Paterno, of Paterno Brothers. "These are being used by single men or women who live alone in the city and prefer to cook for themselves in a partial following out of the 'simple life.' Some such kitchenette apartments are renting at \$25."

Mail chutes, vacuum cleaners, and mail delivery systems are devices which have already lost much of their novelty. The chutes are seldom put into buildings accommodating less than fifty families, and the mail delivery systems, which carry letters up to the various apartments, are not in very general use.

WALL SAFES AND MILK SAFES.

The providing of wall safes in each apartment has become very popular. These safes, measuring for the most part about 8 by 10 inches, are set into bedroom walls when the house is being built. They are used to keep jewelry or valuables of little bulk, and are easily concealed behind some small picture on the wall. The safes are either put in by the landlord or by a safe company, which leases them to tenants at \$6 a year.

One of the most recent improvements has been the equipment of apartment houses with milk-safes, whereby the safe delivery of the morning's milk supply is insured automatically as soon as the milkman places the bottles in compartments in the dumb waiter. The weight of the bottles locks the compartments, which can be opened only by the tenants to whom they belong.

An innovation in the way of providing space for amusement and recreation is furnished by the Hunt's Point and several other apartment houses in the Bronx. Here a vacant plot, 176 feet by 225, adjoining the apartment house, has been set aside permanently for use as a recreation-ground for the tenants. On it have been placed tennis courts, sand-piles, and swings for the children. At the Hunt's Point apartment house, 100 families enjoy the use of the space.

Altogether, according to architects and builders, the tenants of apartment houses are getting more and better service for their money than at any time in the last ten years.

"The tendency is overwhelmingly in favor of fireproof apartment buildings," said Thomas P. Neville of Neville & Bagge, "with the ten and twelve story apartment house in the upper west side and Washington Heights growing increasingly popular. Despite the great increase in cost attendant upon this and the greater care given to the tenants' comfort, there has been no corresponding increase in rent."



Netherland Apartments, Recently Completed on Eighty-sixth Street, Near Riverside Drive.

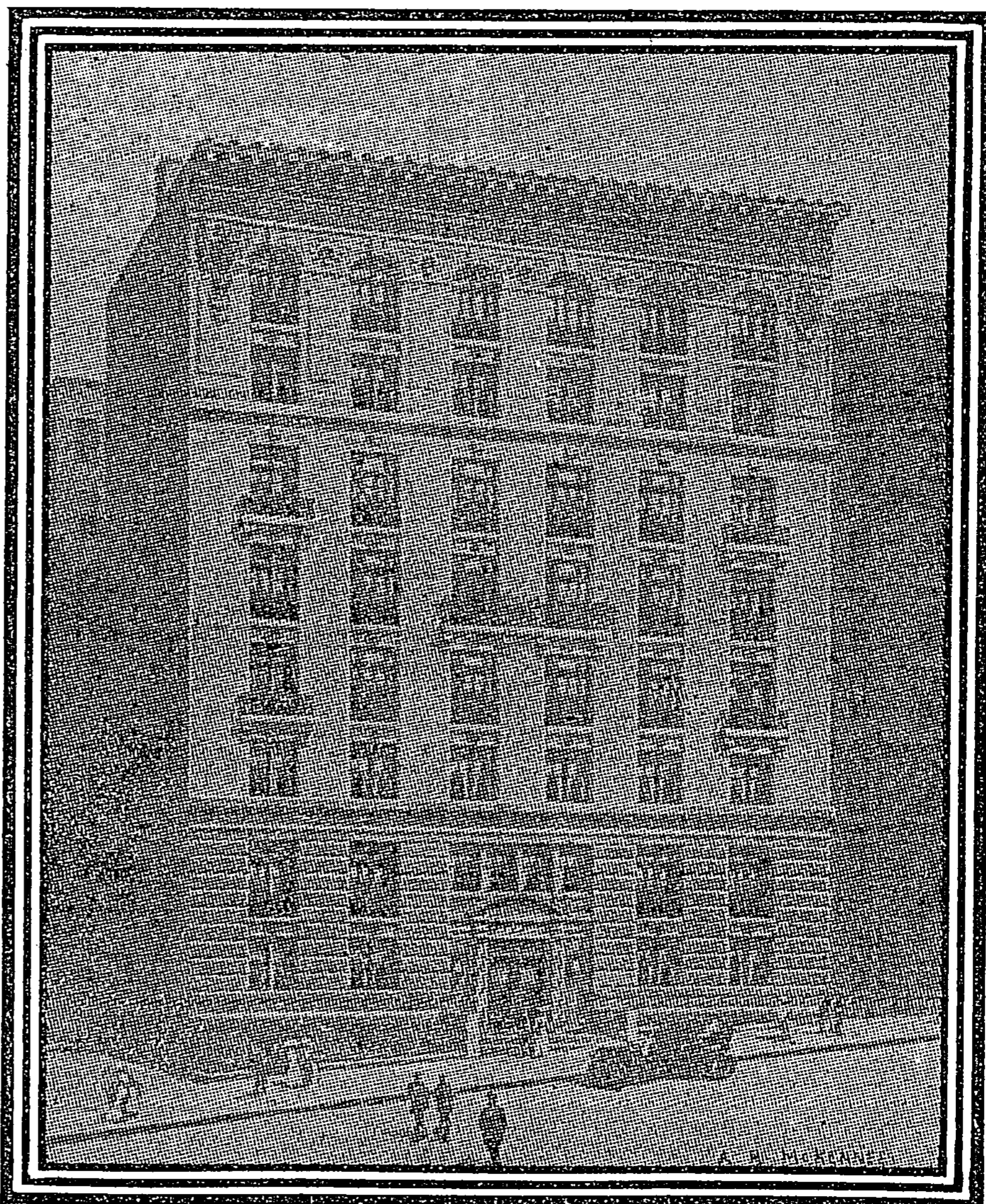
tained in a sometime popular ballad, no one in the family will have to work except father.

The change for the better has been wrought by the policy of builders of late to erect apartment houses with a view more toward the comfort of tenants and less toward ornate and luxurious decoration. There has been a marked tendency toward the planning of apartments of fewer rooms with larger space in each room, giving greater comfort, more air, and better light. This same tendency has resulted in the elimination, in many cases, of the time-honored parlor, with its littering of fine ornaments and bric-a-brac, its ornate and impossible chairs, and its general "showy" air. That room is gradually changing from a "show-room" full of vanity to a real sitting-room and comfortable living-room.

The lapse of the parlor into a place of secondary importance to the living and bed rooms has been due, even as have most of the other changes in apartment house building, to the recrudescence in homeseekers of the "simple life" and "fresh air" craze. The air courts required by the present tenement house law have come to be looked upon as matters of course, and tenants have come to demand ever better accommodations. It has for some time been the policy of architects and builders to separate as much as possible the living rooms and the bedrooms, this tendency finding its highest point of development, of course, in the duplex apartments. Now, however, it is coming to be the custom, elsewhere, too, to break the traditional order of arrangement, wherein the parlor was placed at the front of the building, the drawing-room next, and thereafter the other living and bed rooms; and it is a very common plan to locate the bedrooms at the front of the building, with the parlor and living rooms on the exterior courts or elsewhere near the entrance of apartments.

"This tendency," said Robert E. Simon of the Henry Morgenthau Company, "is due to a large extent to the fact that people have grown better educated and more cultured, and can find better employment for the time they spend in their parlors than that of looking out of the windows upon the happenings in the street. The old three-mirrored 'busy-body' which was formerly affixed to many windows to enable the lady of the house to command a view of the street in all directions at the same time represented this idle tendency at its worst. Now people spend far less time in their parlors and feel that the bedrooms and living rooms are more important because more used. The tendency is, therefore, to make these rooms cheerful and comfortable in every way, and to transform the parlor into a drawing room or library. The ease and cheapness with which good books and fine pictures can now be acquired have helped to bring about this change, drawing the people out of the habit of purchasing the old chromos and gold-and-gingerbread furniture of the old-time conventional parlor. This is

connecting the laundry in the former with the drying space on the roof. In many cases, however, the apartment houses are equipped with power drying machines in the basement. Some of the more recent apartment houses in the Bronx have been equipped with sidewalk elevators as well as service elevators, thus obviating the necessity of carrying heavy baggage and pieces of furniture from the street through the main hall,



Another of the Structures Nearing Completion in Riverside District.—Holland Court, on 98th St., Near the Drive.