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# Housing Conditions *in* Main Line Towns

*An Investigation made by*

MARION BOSWORTH

*Under the Direction of the Committee on Investigation  
Main Line Housing Association*



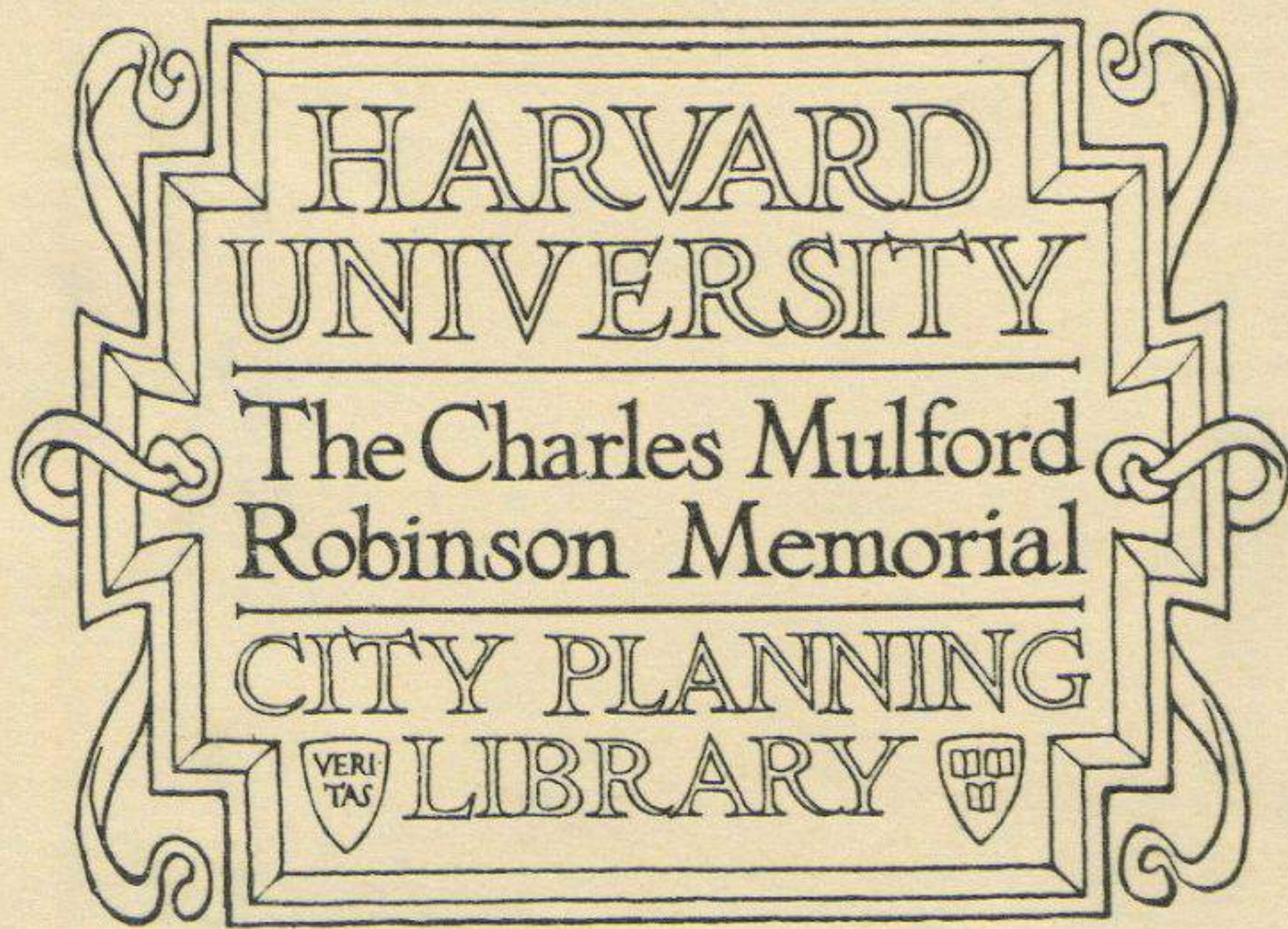
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THE TOWNS INCLUDED IN THIS SURVEY WERE SELECTED BECAUSE THEY MAKE UP THE DISTRICT FROM WHICH THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE HOUSING ASSOCIATION IS DRAWN. THE CONDITIONS ARE NOT PECULIAR TO THESE TOWNS, BUT SIMILAR ONES CAN BE UNCOVERED IN EVERY COMMUNITY.

SYMPATHETIC INTEREST AND HEARTY CO-OPERATION IN THIS INVESTIGATION WAS RECEIVED FROM THE LOCAL HEALTH BOARDS WHO REALIZED ITS IMPORTANCE BECAUSE THEY ARE THEMSELVES HANDICAPPED BY A LACK OF AUTHORITY TO MAKE ORIGINAL SANITARY INSPECTIONS, AND BECAUSE FURTHER THE PUBLIC, NOT HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRESENCE OF UNSANITARY CONDITIONS, MANIFEST ALL TOO OFTEN TOO LITTLE INTEREST IN THE WORK OF THEIR ABATEMENT.

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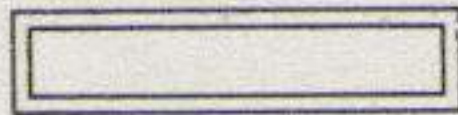


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AN ARDMORE SLUM.



# REPORT

OF

## A Survey of the Main Line District

By MARION BOSWORTH

INVESTIGATOR

**A** LONG the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, where the stations come so close that it is frequently difficult to distinguish the outskirts of one town from another, lies the popular suburban residence district of Philadelphia. Exceptional train service has caused the territory to be built up rapidly with the houses of the well-to-do and wealthy who, finding commutation possible, can have their business in the city and residence in the country. From Overbrook on out, town after town is made up of beautiful houses in large grounds with winding, well-kept roads, through woodland and private parks all well kept and attractive; each town an ideal appearing town in which to live. Driving through these towns one gains the same impression. Fine old trees, lawns, gardens and mansions make up the landscape over the valleys and hills for mile after mile.

It would seem, indeed, an incongruous place in which to seek for housing reform. Here surely reform would mean "revision downward" rather than upward. Ardmore, surrounded by fine estates, has, to be sure, a business street, and many unpretentious houses; Haverford, the Quaker town with its beautiful and dignified old college, seems only divided by fine roads leading among fine old and new houses; Bryn Mawr, a suburb famous for its wealthy families, its college and boarding schools of high standing, seems to have accumulated some of the dignity of age; and Wayne, further out, and only included in this study because of certain peculiarities in its housing totally unlike the other four towns, seems perhaps less suburban and more a small business center by itself than do the towns closer to Philadelphia. But all these five towns share in common the characteristics of being made up largely of the country homes of city men. It is a fact which will not be disputed, it may be supposed, that human needs and human desires are, generally speaking, alike and only differ



in the degree to which fortune permits them to be satisfied. Hence it may be assumed that if the country is good for the rich it is also good for the poor, and if the country is desired by the rich it may likewise be desired by the poor. But the well-to-do are able to live in the country and work in the city only because they are well-to-do and can afford to commute, while the poor must perforce live beside their work, as close as may be. It occurs here that the rich are, because of their wealth, to a large extent dependent on the services of the poor. Large possessions necessitate much work and care. These large houses and extensive grounds mean large numbers of workers. As we have said, the poor cannot afford to commute, so, theoretically, in a large community of large establishments there should be a correspondingly large group of working people nearby.

With these three reasons:—health and desire, and the proximity to work, drawing the poor to the country, and the expulsive power of bad living conditions and insufficient work in the city, the most logical place in the world to look for poor houses would be in a wealthy community. Ideally, of course, this would not be so, for the wealthy in planning their own houses would recognize the necessary sequel to populating a district with the service living classes and provide for it at least to such an extent that bad housing and disease-breeding sanitary conditions near them should not be a menace to their own life and health. They must recognize the fact that a section built up with expensive houses is commercially desirable and brings a sufficiently higher price per acre than unfashionable districts to make exploitation of the living necessities of the working classes (legal restrictions being nil) almost inevitable, so that the tendency would be to make a small land area house as many people and pay as large a return in rentals as a corresponding area in the city. This, however, unhappily, is not the case. If in the city the well housed are uninterested in the badly housed because the juxtaposition is so obvious that they have become accustomed to it, in the country a more dangerous situation rises by which the proximity is so concealed by large grounds shutting off all immediate surroundings, and out of the way districts, nearby, yet off the ordinary road of travel in which the poor are only too often packed in with all the worst evils of city conditions existing in the middle of wide fields and woodlands.

It is true, of course, that in all inequality of society that indifference and neglect of the suffering of our neighbors has a direct retributive effect on those having the power to help and not helping. We see this in clear relief in the intensified effect of



city contrasts. In the country the interrelation of rich and poor and their reciprocal effect upon each other is no less strong because it is not seen, as it were, through a magnifying glass, and is prone to be overlooked. The very thing which makes it possible for slums to exist in the country, the demand for workers, brings the connection between these two extremes of society very close.

In perhaps the majority of the houses of the colored people touched in the investigation, laundry work was being done, oftentimes under such conditions and in such places as would have made the wearers of the clothes shudder. In this connection, we are reminded of an experience which, though it did not happen on the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, yet, may well happen not infrequently, and well illustrates the ignorance of those hiring service of the adventures of their property while it is out of their hands. A lady and her daughter, sending their clothes out of the house to be washed, protested to their laundress at having to wait so long for their return. "Why, ma'am," explained the laundress, "them clothes aint dirty enough to wash when we get them." She and her family receiving apparently clean clothes to be washed, proceeded to wear them until they reached a fit condition for the tub. This story, of course, proves nothing on the effect of bad housing on the occupants of good houses, but it does illustrate the point which should be emphasized, that the widespread ignorance on the part of the well-to-do of everything which is beyond their immediate vision, and yet which, nevertheless, effects most nearly and vitally every part of life. Laundry then is one means of close connection between bad sanitation and well-to-do people.

Workers living in places where filth and squalor and disease are more prominent even than country air and sunshine, and laboring in the country by day where the very words filth and squalor seem anomalies, are another means of contact between the poorly housed and the well-to-do. The men work largely out of doors, as gardeners, stable men, and on the roads, though house men, too, are not infrequent; but the women, especially the colored and Irish, do cleaning and cooking, sewing and washing, etc., by the day.

The less obvious messengers carrying the effects of bad sanitation abroad are animals and insects passing from one house into another. Chief among these, of course, is the house fly whose presence is almost universal, and whose disease carrying capacity is so great that it has been rechristened quite recently the typhoid fly. Late in summer and fall direct and close contact with flies can hardly be avoided by those at least who use the common roads and trains, even if they are so fortunate as to live in well



screened houses Mosquitoes, rats and mice have ways of traveling about and means of ingress which are quite closed to dogs and cats, and yet all these, as well as other points of contact which easily come to mind, are almost as great levelers of humankind physically as the common drinking cup ever was. And so the old lesson of the interrelation of all mankind is relearned and the more intelligent realize more and more that creating a small hygienic spot to go and live in is ridiculously futile unless that spot can be hermetically sealed off from the unhygienic area surrounding it, from which unhygienic messengers are continually passing in and out.

We can afford, perhaps, to be indifferent as to the sanitary conditions of Mars, we cannot, if we value our health, afford to be equally indifferent to the sanitary conditions of the earth, so long as we are all, rich and poor, inhabiting it together. So, in developing a beautiful residence district like that of Ardmore, Haverford, Bryn Mawr and Rosemont, it should be considered first that a working population is the first necessity; for working on the roads, for building houses, for caring for the grounds and homes, and for personal service to the people who can afford to hire them. This assured, it must also be recognized that there must be shelter for these workers. "Why!" one landlord bitterly exclaimed, "they won't let a sewer be put in on the street though we've all signed for it, because they want to crowd out the poor section by making conditions too bad to live in. They want the work done all right, but they expect the workers to roost in trees like birds."

Recognizing the need of cheap houses one can easily see the temptation of the less scrupulous to exploit that need, forcing a small bit of land to yield a large return in rentals by overcrowding it with houses and people. And in a community where there is no legal regulation of building, insufficient laws relating to sanitation and sewage, and the provisions existing disregarded and unenforced because there is inadequate provision for enforcing them, it must be seen that those landlords who are exploiting the imperative need of the working people will not be spending extra money in well drained cellars, adequate plumbing, tight partitions and decent repairs. There are not enough cheap houses to fill the need, the demand for houses is imperative and widespread, the tenant cannot stipulate as to sanitary conditions, the law does not, the result is obvious. "The last time the landlady came around for her rent," said one woman, "I told her I'd pay her when she had the roof fixed so it wouldn't leak on my son's bed. I says what's the use of paying for a roof over your head when it ain't all there, but she says if I don't hand out that rent she'll give me notice to get



out, and now I'm scared she'll do it anyway. The chimney won't work now, but I don't say nothing to her. We pay \$12.00 because we've lived here 20 years. All the rest pays \$13.00, and now they're putting them up to \$14.00 whenever a new tenant comes in." The woman's husband earned \$40.00 a month and at \$12.00 the rent was more than a quarter of his income.

In many cases the tenants seemed thoroughly anxious, where bad conditions were noted, lest the landlord should think they had been complaining and give them "notice." As a consequence the Board of Health, which is not able with the fund at its disposal to hire inspectors to do more than investigate the complaints sent in to it, has no means of learning where bad conditions exist, for tenants do not dare complain and no one else has any particular interest in doing so. It may be noted, however, that out of 123 complaints in the town of Ardmore alone, sent in by this Association to the Board of Health of Lower Merion Township, 28 were found by the Board Investigator to be so bad that a 48-hour notice was served on the owners of these properties.

Each town has its distinct housing problems different from the others. In Ardmore there is much water in the cellars; in Haverford, the extremely bad condition of surface drainage; Bryn Mawr has the only old tenement houses we encountered; Rosemont, on Garrett Hill, has a real section devoted to workingmen's houses; and in Wayne are the "chicken-coop" type of houses, built of boards and boxes covered with building paper. In all these towns the condition of overflowing vaults and filthy old privies is common, as well as lack of decent repair of the houses in which the poor live.

### ARDMORE.

Ardmore, generally speaking, may be divided into two parts, the finer houses being mainly on the north of the railroad tracks, although some beautiful homes with large grounds are scattered about the southern outskirts. There is, quite unlike Haverford, a business section to the town with stores stretching out along the Turnpike. Behind the stores the streets run through a thickly built area consisting of attractive residence streets, toward the east, but merging between "Vinegar Hill" and West Spring Avenue, into a poorer and poorer section, culminating at the edge of the Haverford College campus into one of the genuine slums along the main line. There is a single block on Spring Avenue, shunted off, as it were, from the rest of the street, or, from the rest of its own length through a stable yard at the lower end of



Holland Avenue. Holland Avenue itself ends abruptly at the edge of some low land, flooded in wet weather, and soggy in dry. From this low land part, at least, of W. Spring Avenue has been reclaimed for building purposes and certain of its houses, walled up from the swamp, have their cellars below its level. In the newest and best of these the Investigator was able to see daylight through the brick foundation wall, so cheaply and loosely was it built. Through this wall the water seeps, especially in wet weather.

As has been intimated, this little section of a street is off the main highway and is, indeed, so tucked away that it would never be seen excepting by those having definite errands to the neighborhood. To these the casual effect of the street is not as bad as it might be because it has recently been macadamized and very good cement sidewalks laid, both of which give a fairly neat appearance. But the houses themselves are a sad sight for a suburban town with unoccupied land lying close about. On one side, indeed, the shabby old frame buildings have good sized yards more or less fenced in with gardens or at least space for gardens, and trees. On the other side, however, for about 500 feet frontage, are built thirty-two houses, most of them on 13 and 14 feet lots, set a few feet back from the street, a long, forlorn red brick row. The tiny square dooryards were once fenced, but few vestiges of this fencing now remains. One or two have attempted little flower plots, but in general a square of black, packed dirt constitutes the front yard. Forlorn on the street side as is this row of houses built in two sections with only thin party wall between them, the backyard side is immeasurably worse. At the end of the street a narrow alley leads in around the side and back of the row. This alley is on the banks of a small stream coming from the Haverford College grounds and that is dammed here and there in its course by the carcasses of cats or dogs and chickens mingled with other refuse. Its further bank is used as a dump heap for such rubbish and garbage as is not left in the rear yards.

The land is so low that through the fall these yards were only accessible by wading through heavy mud and standing water covering the filth thrown there. It would indeed be a discouraging task to attempt to keep these yards in good condition, and the Italians and Negroes peopling these houses, it is safe to say, attempt little. Hanging out and taking in clothes and other necessary usage, it would seem must too, make cleanliness inside almost equally impossible. Rubbish of all descriptions, bits of garbage, old sheds and chicken coops, all of a most dilapidated description, and in the first row of houses, a water closet, furnish in almost every





REAR HOUSES BUILT IN THE BACK YARDS OF HOUSES FACING THE STREET.  
ARDMORE.



case a description of the contents of these yards. Further down to the east stables, also ramshackle, become frequent until at the extreme eastern end a second row of red brick, flat-roofed houses in the back yards of those on the street and facing out over the swampland, has been erected. In this little section of land thus doubly occupied, there are 43 persons housed on 8,415 square feet of land, which includes half the street and alleyway, or about 209 to the acre, a high average for city housing, and a disgraceful proportion in the country. This may be called the last word in housing in Ardmore, and indicates not so much what has been done, for these figures stand for but one small section, but what has been started and what, unless the influence of the better element induces some building restriction, will continue to develop to such an extent that it will, at some future day, require herculean efforts to clear away slums which are now in only the formative stage. The beginning of a system of rear houses, utilizing more or less roomy back yards for new buildings is a menace which may not be overlooked. It has been seen that these houses on West Spring Avenue, built as they are in long unbroken rows with no space between and little in front, are, in the condition of their rear yards, dangerous to the health of the entire community. The Professor's house and the college campus, but a stone's throw away, the occasional large estates lying near by, and the close connection of one part of a community with another make it obvious that the entire town must be affected even now by the filth and insanitary conditions here. How much worse will it be when the rear row already started is continued up the banks of the creek to the end of the street. Only the intervention of Haverford College, by purchasing the land, has prevented a small section of the swamp being built up in this same fashion. At present the only means of preventing the establishment of real slum districts in good neighborhoods is the purchase of the land at exorbitant prices. In neighborhoods less mainly connected, slums may grow unchecked to any extent to which the money-getting instincts of the landlord may carry them.

The inside repair of these houses is not incongruous with the back yards. In most of the cellars there is water, sometimes only small pools, sometimes after rains, complete flooding. Water in one cellar usually means at least dampness if not water in the next. Two of these houses in the row were vacant, because, the neighbors said, of this persistent condition. It was noticed, however, that they did not stay empty very long. In one an Italian woman, who spoke little English, indicated by hollow coughs, during the performance of which, she pointed into the cellar, the disease





AN ARDMORE ROW.

A City Type of Houses Erected in the Suburban Towns Along the Main Line. Acres of Unoccupied Land All Around.



which has attacked several members of the family. Her husband says she will die unless they can find another place to live. One man tiled his yard to the stream, but the drain soon became closed. Another dug a pit in one end of the floor from which to dip out the water. In some the odors were foul enough, but whether from the stagnant standing water alone or from a leaking water closet pipe was difficult to determine.

In the older row of houses long hopper water closets are beside the kitchen door in the back yards, the roof sometimes being used as a window shelf on which to keep pots, pans and food—these were invariably in a filthy condition. The flow of water was weak, the valves for flushing had to be turned on by hand and were often out of order, with the bowl consequently filthy, and sending foul odors up into the kitchens. The seats were broken, floor saturated, and general conditions bad in the extreme. In the next row of houses the water closets are placed directly on the house drain pipe, where it leads out into the sewer, in the extreme front of the cellar. In one house, for which the Italian occupants pay \$18.00 a month, the Investigator could not get to the closet at all because the cellar floor was completely inundated by sewage which had backed up and overflowed, the water closet bowl wet and shining in the light of the front window. Solid matter and all, it lay sufficiently deep over the entire surface to make it necessary to wade in order to reach the closet at all. The tenant stated that repeated complaints to the landlord had been ignored. Some two weeks after, however, the condition was partially repaired, though it is doubtful if the repair was permanent. Few of these cellar water closets were in good repair and working order. In some the flush wouldn't work, in others the partition was broken away, leaving no privacy. In seven of the newest houses, on the south side of the street, including the rear row, and five on the east, a small rear bedroom over the kitchen is fitted up as a bath room with a tub and very good water closet. This does not, however, interfere with its use as a bed room in cases of large families, although its possession seemed valued. These houses rent for \$16.00, as against \$13.00 and \$14.00 for most of the others. Houses in which the front two rooms have been thrown into one for use as stores bring \$18.00. The new houses even on the higher land on the north side of the street have water in the cellars, and one in which household goods had been stored was a sad looking sight; coal was wet, wood floating around in some cases having to be dried out laboriously in the oven before it could be used. The water closets in these houses being on the second floor there is no problem of sewage overflowing. It has however, overflowed the



fresh air inlet in the front yard so that matter passing from the water closet to the sewer has been forced up over the yard and sidewalk, poisoning the air all around with its odors.

The interior general repair is likewise bad. Paper is dirty and torn, plastering fallen in great pieces, sink drains stopped, traps leaking, so that in some cases buckets had to be kept under the sinks. The roofs were frequently leaking, and in rooms overfull with cots there was no space to move the beds away from the leaks. The stairs were, in general, in good condition, but the cellar stairs were not only crowded to the limit with all kinds of articles but were in one or two cases missing at the lower end whence one had to jump into the dark place where there was rarely light enough to see whether the jump would be into water or not.

The population of this section is almost entirely Italian and Negroes, the Italians railing against the "niggers" and the latter resenting as neighbors the "dagoes." The few Irish still left here are vanishing as circumstances permit and are now only a scattered two or three. The Haverford College boys have been doing some work with the Italians and have evening classes in English for them. Beyond this, however, it is doubtful if much interest is taken in their manner of living. The large number of Italians brings the overcrowding up into high figures, for each family serves as a nucleus for a large group of Italian laborers. The dining room and tiny kitchen are kept for general use and the other rooms filled up with beds. The family has one bed room to itself, furnished with a double bed and a crib or cradle for the children, the parlor and two other bed rooms are filled with as many cot beds as will go in. In one of these six-room houses a family of 19 lived, cooked, slept and played the accordion. In cases where there was more than one woman around, the wife, sister, or mother, privacy was difficult to imagine. Of course, through such walls as these, vermin must travel with ease from house to house, though the Italian houses were scrubbed and cleaned remarkably well considering the numbers they sheltered. The kitchens and dining rooms were often filthy, but in the bed rooms an attempt was usually made, often successfully, at cleanliness. The women, of course, have all the labor of this. The "boarders" pay in \$3.00 a week apiece which pays for rent, washing and cooking. The grocery bills are divided up among them. The Italians were in general impatient with the insanitation and lack of repair. They wanted things in order. The colored were mainly impatient with the "Dagoes." While several of the Negro houses on this street were models of neatness, cleanliness and attractiveness, the most disgusting sort of dirt was in the others. Carpets unswept for a long,

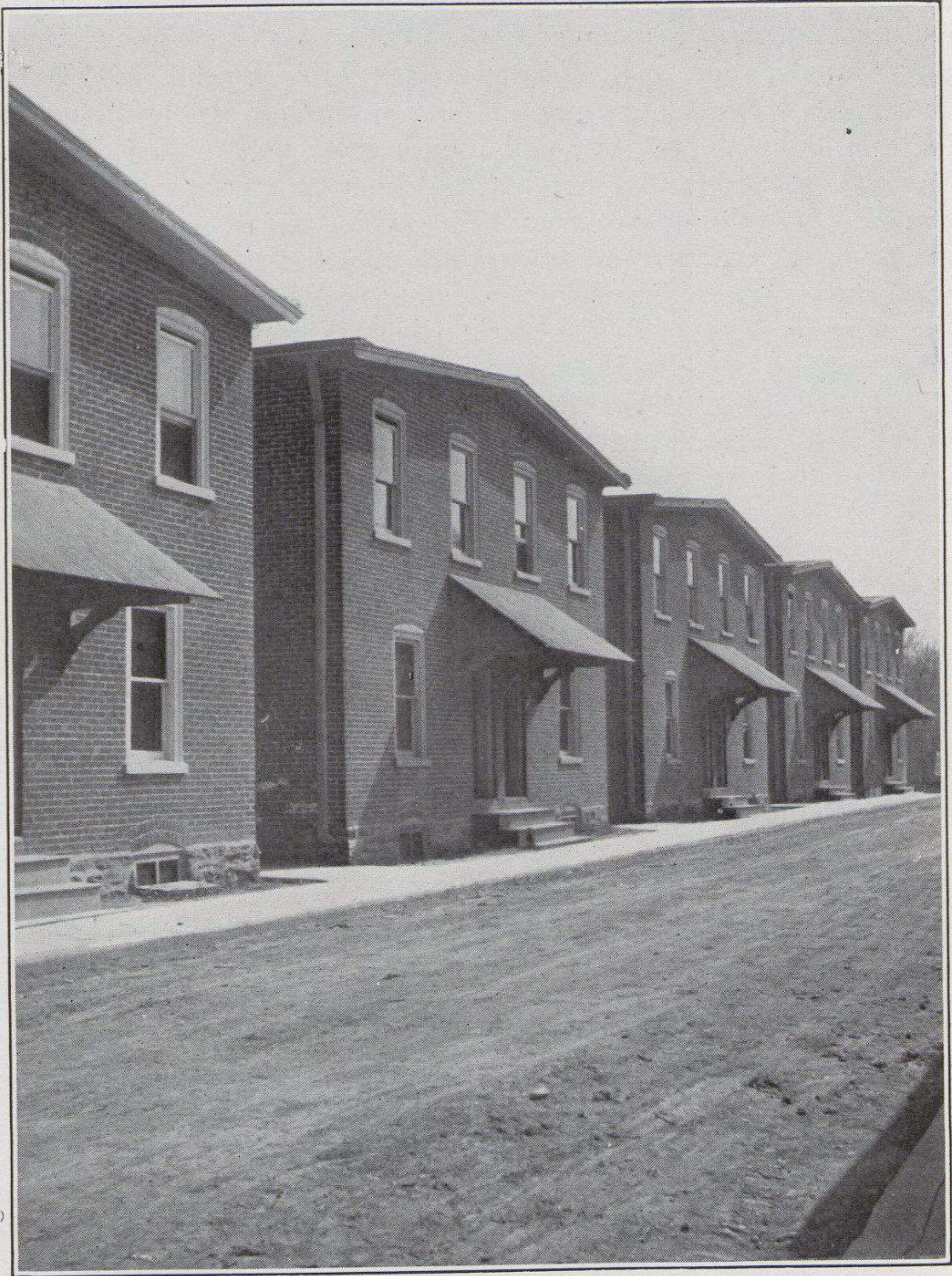


long time, filthy tumbled bed clothing, rubbish on the floors, and ricketyness of furniture was very different from the bare floors and neatly made beds of the Italians. Some of the colored women on this street have been rather high-class servants, and feel keenly the necessity of living in a neighborhood of such squalor. But rents are high and houses few, so the better class must perforce live with the poorer.

On "Vinegar Hill" Chestnut Avenue has on one side a long row of red brick, six-roomed houses, more comfortable than those on W. Spring Avenue in that they are built in pairs with side yards and have attics which must make them very much more livable in the hot summer weather than the unsheltered flat roofs of the newer houses. The cellars, too, are deeper, and free from water excepting in a few instances where rain leaders in bad order sends water against the foundation walls. The problems here are more individual. The yards are ample and there are trees and plenty of space for gardens. They have been and still are mostly fenced, though the fencing is frequently tumble-down or lacking entirely. The only rear house is an old shed used as a dwelling by an old Irish woman whose only income is from the house in front of it, which she rents. There were formerly for this row of houses privies in the rear yard and wells on the rear porch with the slope toward the well. Now, however, most of the houses have sinks and hydrants in the kitchen or on the back porch and many have long hopper water closets also on the back porch. One or two have closets of a better type. The privies still left, however, and there are many, were in an almost uniform state of overflow. In one the tenant said she only got the landlord to have hers emptied by appealing to the Board of Health. The privy of a house occupied by one of the few Italian families in this Irish neighborhood, was overflowing in ill-smelling streams over the garden and adjoining yard. The only two houses boasting bath tubs on this street are occupied and owned by two colored families who have fitted up very nice bath rooms. The old wells under the rear porches had been used in doubtless more cases than was discovered as garbage and rubbish depositories. One new tenant complaining to the landlady of the amount of dirt and rubbish left in the cellar by the old tenant was told to shovel it out into the old well. Another tenant pulled up the flooring over the source of bad smells and disclosed the old well full of decaying garbage, etc.

The rents on these houses are advanced from the original \$12.00 up to \$13.00 and \$14.00 for new tenants. There are many leaking roofs and some cases of stopped up plumbing. Some of the yards are filthy and full of rubbish and others nicely kept. The





KITTERING AVENUE.

Houses with Side Yards, but no Back Yards—An Example of Building Congestion Unjustifiable Even in a Large City.



average number of persons per house is much less than on West Spring Avenue, and conditions though often bad, much less uniformly so than in the lower slum.

In the rear of these houses a new, narrow, little "blind" street has been opened and built up solidly with small red brick houses in pairs, on narrow cramped little lots, having no rear yard at all and only a very small side space for hanging clothes. These houses show the tendency in building new houses, generally noted, of crowding as many as possible on a small plot of land. So, in general, we find in Ardmore the tendency to overcrowd the land; we find cheaply built houses with leaking foundation walls and water in the cellars; we find overflowing privy vaults in juxtaposition to wells supplying drinking water; we find in general disease-breeding conditions as the result of no original sanitary inspection and lastly, we find people, many of whom came into the country for the sake of healthful living, compelled to endure as bad conditions as in the city and paying for these bad living conditions exorbitant rents.

#### HAVERFORD.

Haverford has no business section and only a few scattered stores in various neighborhoods. Most of the residences are ample and dignified, and there is no extensive building of rows of paired houses for medium rentals or streets of cheap working men's houses as in Ardmore. The newer developments here are mainly on an entirely higher scale and yet there is probably no worse spot along the main line than one existing on the main Turnpike in Haverford, of which we shall speak later. The poorer houses of Haverford are in very limited and well-defined sections. The chief of these is a neighborhood known as Preston Village, consisting of Preston Avenue and Buck Lane between Railroad Avenue and Old Haverford Road, and those sections of the latter streets lying between the former. Here are Irish in the majority, colored and a few Italians. Buck Lane is the better of the two, though on both streets many own their own homes and the houses are in the main in fairly good repair. Nearly all have good sized yards and there is none of the land crowding of Ardmore. The most obvious problem is filthy surface drainage. On both Buck Lane and Preston Avenue sink and other waste water from the houses empties into open drains, sometimes paved with brick or stone and sometimes only dirt ditches running through the side yards, under the sidewalk and into the gutter where, on its way down the hill, it increases in size and smell until it seems quite





AN ARDMORE YARD.

The Common Carriers of Disease, Flies, Fleas, Mosquitoes and Other Insects Make Every Refuse Pile a Menace to Public Health.



a solid stream of filth at the bottom, remaining until a good rain comes and clears it out. In several instances this trough leading under the sidewalk has rotted away or become displaced so that the contents flow over the footway which is often of earth and very rough and uneven without this added feature. At the end of the two streets, this sewage collects in a large ditch along the Haverford Road, concealed somewhat by long grasses from the eye but not from the nose. This ditch extends down past Preston Avenue where it turns toward the electric right of way and eventually empties into a stream by the side of the railroad. It is a noxious thing poisoning the neighborhood for the flow is sluggish and the scum gathers thick on the surface, while now and then the remains of a cat or two may be observed adding strength to the pollution. It must be a breeding place for mosquitoes in summer and for diseases that affect the children playing about it. A row of houses face on this ditch and must reap the full injury of its presence there during the hot weather.

This row of houses on the Old Haverford Road consists of samples of good and bad repair, of clean and filthy yards, of each of our three most numerous nationalities. There is a clean, attractive little pair of houses, renting for \$14.00, and occupied by Irish-Americans. The houses are in nice repair, clean and fresh, but the yards are dirty with waste water. There are no hydrants in the houses or the waste water condition might be worse. Those living on the lower end of Preston Avenue complain that conditions are much worse there since hydrants were put in and more water used making more waste. Here, however, all the water is from pumps on the rear porches, and all the waste empties into a wooden trough passing under the rear windows of both houses to the alleyway at the side where it goes to the main ditch on the street. This trough is, as may be imagined, foul and bad smelling. In fact, all these houses in the whole neighborhood seem each to be hemmed in by little moats of sink water, for the drains all begin in the back and go along one side to the street, and across the front is the gutter. The fourth side may be supplied by a neighbor's ditch so that there are smells all around. Next to this pair of good houses an Italian family live, with many in the family, a filthy old stable, and yard full of rubbish. A colored family over beyond them have a tiny little yard cluttered with privies and sheds about the kitchen door. Here an attempt is made to keep clean and homelike in spite of the leaking roof and dark hole of a cellar with four feet high ceiling, to get into which one must bend down or go on hands and knees.

Another bad condition is that of the privies. Most of these





Haverford Road. Surface Drainage from the Surrounding Streets and Houses. A Breeding Place for Mosquitoes. Gutter Very Foul and Filthy with House Sewage.



houses have both wells and privies and too many of them are in bad relation to each other. Most of the vaults were overflowing; one had been ordered cleaned by the Board of Health on complaint of the district nurse, a sanitary lesson it seemed, for an anxious owner hovered about the Investigator here, and great respect for our opinion on the subject of privies was shown all the way down the street.

Perhaps the greater number of houses on Preston Avenue are built in pairs so that each has on one side a neighbor directly adjoining. Many have, instead of an attic, a third story giving extra bedroom space. In several instances an owner lived in one side of the house, renting the other half and living on the rent. One or two even owned several houses or half-houses on this street. One such house sheltered an Irish owner in one side and two colored families in the other. The rear yard is used in common and is indescribably filthy with an almost unapproachable old stable by the alley in the rear, two privies heaped clear to the seats, and a pump in the middle draining out by a filthy garbage-strewn ditch through the soggy yard to the alley. The colored man is employed in carting off rubbish and evidently carts much of it to his own premises for heaps of riff-raff are everywhere. In another case nearby a shed does double duty as storage house for old furniture and rubbish and chicken coop. Its condition may be imagined. Farther up the hill is a house in forlorn repair. The tenants are Italian and speak brokenly and can get little satisfaction from the landlord. The pump has been out of commission for a week, which necessitated carrying all water; the cellar windows were gone, letting in rain and cold air beneath the floors, and the shutters were broken and hanging. The drain from the pump was troughed partly with old rotten wood or with nothing, and the slope was so slight that it seemed probable that much of the water ran back into the well. The privy vault was unlined and the well not far away.

Around the corner is another pair of houses occupied by two Irish women who wash for a living. Their well, used in common, had been out of repair for six or eight weeks, apparently stopped up with a dead animal, for the women said the water tasted queer for some time until one of them sickened of it and found it impossible to use. Soon after that something like whitened skin began coming up, but they tied a bag over the spout and continued using it until the water stopped coming entirely. A man was sent to fix it, but was overcome by the stench in the well and had to be hauled out. After that nothing was done. The women, who depended on their earnings for their own and their children's living, had to haul all the water for washing, as well as household use, from Preston





LANCASTER PIKE—STABLE MANURE PILE—PRIVIES FOUL AND FULL. SURFACE DRAINAGE FROM DWELLINGS.



Avenue, a heavy task for women who do hard work over the tub all day. The condition continued for some eight weeks before the old wooden pump was removed entirely and an iron one put in. Even after this an evil odor was very noticeable to one standing near the well. There was no arrangement for carrying off wash water from this well, but a tub upright in the ground beside it into which the trough emptied, and which must have carried it directly back again into the well.

All these things seemed sufficiently unwholesome except for those living with them and those more prosperous living nearby in the beautiful old Haverford houses. These do, however, fade into comparative unimportance beside the state of sanitation or insanitation in a little group of houses on Lancaster Turnpike near the corner of Penn Street. Here, by itself, stands one tiny wooden, flat-roofed building about 14 feet wide by 34 feet long, and only one story, cellarless and partly windowless, occupied by a Polish cobbler, his wife and two sons. For these three unplastered, wood-ceiled rooms, a mere apology for a house they pay \$12.00. The front room, used as a shop, is lighted by the front window and door. Some boards in the single plank partition between this and the kitchen, the middle room, have been removed beside the stove so the heat may go through. With this light wood partition in close juxtaposition to the stove the damage of fire is imminent. No door separates these two rooms, but there is one to the bed room in the rear, which has evidently been added to the original house, for light and wind as well come through the cracks at the joining of the walls. This may partly account for the fact that the middle room, used as kitchen, has no outside windows whatever but depends for its twilight and air on the doors into the shop and bed room and what was originally an outside window opening now into the bed-room. It can only partly account, however, for lack of outside ventilation in an unplastered, wooden-walled building standing with four sides to the sun and air. Dark rooms in such a place are one of the most inexcusable things which the indifference of a community like this can permit. The family living here have occupied this house for eight years. The man was threatened with tuberculosis in the city and forced to move into the country. This is their place of established business such as it is, and they feel that making a living is too precarious a thing for a tubercular man to dare change, though they feel bitterly resentful at having to live as they do. The father and son, last winter, rented a room in the city for the mother and little son, paying \$5.00 a month for it, but when they are here the oldest son sleeps on the heaps of boots and pieces of leather on the shop floor. "Poor people



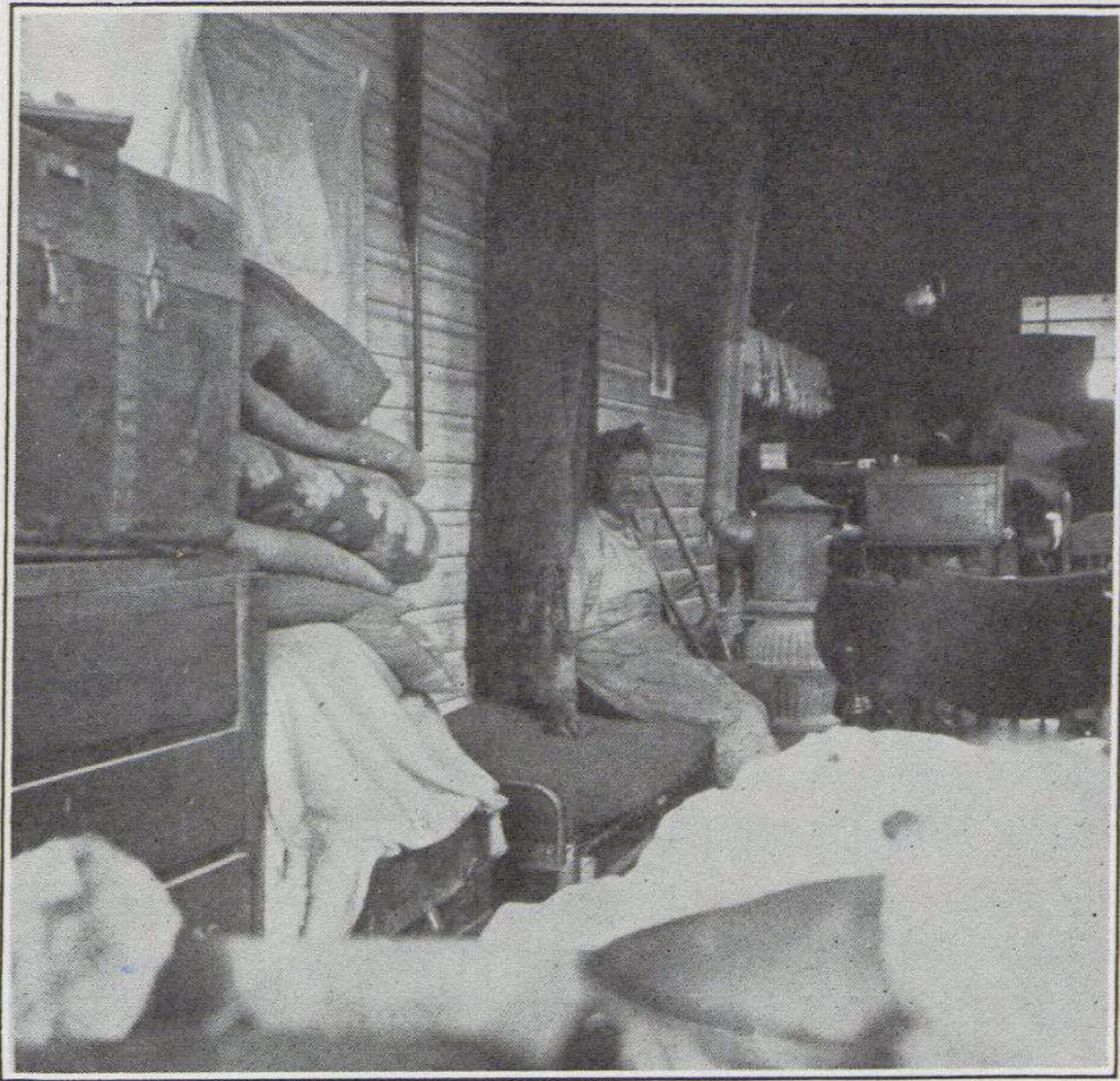
can't sleep in beds," he said. Next door is a row of wooden houses built again as slices of a single long wooden building. Here there is such utter filth and stagnation of all kinds of refuse both indoors and out that the rear yards resemble nothing so much as one decaying garbage dump. The Polish cobbler and his son say that in summer it is a frightful place. The smells sometimes make it impossible for them to eat or for the father to retain his food, so sickening is it. There are no cellars to these one-story three-room houses, but a space partly closed and partly open which serves as a dog house, chicken coop, and storage place for a stock of dishes, and into which the sinks all drain. It is filled partly with pools of stagnant, green-scummed water, and a long dirt ditch leads from it to the swampy meadow in the rear. There is not enough slope to the ditch, however, to add much to the moisture of the meadow, and enough water stands around in the yard to make that, too, a mass of green scum in which various sorts of rubbish and decayed refuse lies soaking. In one corner of the yard is a tumble-down stable with manure heaps adjacent, in the center on each side of the drainage canal is a privy. One is a double arrangement, one side of which could be opened with difficulty for the sagging, unhinged door was settled in the mud. This compartment has evidently been closed up for it was full to the seat. The other half of this privy was in use as a chicken coop. Nests for the chickens were under the seat, and old clothes and dishes stored on a shelf on the roof. The other privy was evidently the one used by all the families. The first house was occupied by a Russian tailor, his wife and five children. There were three rooms through which cats, chickens and children ranged at will. The kitchen in the rear was used in part as a bed room, one single bed being here, though the bulk of the family of seven used the other bed room. There was but one double bed and two single, so that evidently unless there was overmuch overcrowding of beds, some of these "poor people" too had to sleep on the floor. The bed room was but little better than windowless, for its one outside window was a narrow slit only a foot and a half wide. This, with a hole in the wall into the front shop, supplied light and ventilation. The front room was used as a very empty little shop, the stock being so slight as to be barely discernable. The man's main occupation was that of a tailor and his tailor shop was directly across the street. He said he only lived in such a hole because now he was established in business in this place and every time he spoke of moving the landlord threatened if he did to rent the place to another tailor who would take away his business. He believed implicitly that this would happen, but finally, evidently,



did decide to move, for, in February, the house was seen to be empty. The next house, directly adjoining this by a party wall, was occupied by an old Hebrew couple repulsively ill-kept and sickly. The front room here was used as a huckster's shop with vegetables about in boxes; a refrigerator drained on the floor which was saturated. Opening from this was a windowless bed and dining room, completely filled by a large double bed, dining table, sideboard, table and chairs, so that only a narrow passage through was left. Its light and ventilation came from the door into the other rooms and a small hole in the wood partition into the shop. Over the floor was scattered chicken feed for the chickens to pick up and rubbish of all sorts filled up the corners. The kitchen in the rear was in as filthy condition as the rest. The stove pipe was rusted out and unjointed at the bottom and leaning directly against the wall at the elbow. The roof of the whole was leaking and the sink drain pipe leading the water out to the ditch just outside the house had rusted out, so that the green scum had collected on the water under the house. Between these two damp areas, roof and cellar, the old woman had a bad cough which she exercised vigorously by way of showing the effect of the dampness. The chickens in the boxes and privy and under the house belong to this couple. This house is about the worst of the row. A colored man lives by himself in the next. The front room is used as a neat little tobacco shop, the middle room, only partially partitioned off, is a cigar manufactory, and in the rear room the man cooks and sleeps in as clean a fashion as could be in such surroundings. The last house is one long room seven feet wide and 40 feet long, built as an addition to the original row, in which a crippled negro lives and makes his living by cobbling. A curtain here and there divides the long room, like nothing so much as a dismantled passenger coach, into areas, one containing a counter, another work bench and tools, a third a bed and stove and the rear a sink and refrigerator. It is all one clutter of odds and ends of furniture and materials and is, of course, dirty and untidy in the extreme. The old cobbler pays \$9.00 rent. In all the landlord collects \$51.00 a month in rent for this wretched old building, a real plague-spot in the community apparently never cleaned or repaired but allowed to soak in its green scum and filth year after year so that the stench from the premises on hot days makes it difficult for the Polish neighbor with tuberculosis to eat his meals.

In the rear of these buildings approached by no street nor regular passage way, but standing by itself in the swampy meadow is another house owned by the same landlord. It was formerly a respectable house, or seemed so, but when the Penn House stable





LANCASTER PIKE.  
Interior Room, 7'x40'. Sleeping, Cooking and Cobbling.



REAR OF PENN STREET.  
Rear House—Low, Wet Soil—Cellar Water-Soaked.



was built, was moved back into the low land where it now stands. It brings \$13.00 rent, and is occupied by a colored family. The approach is usually made through the yard of the houses just described and is a soggy path growing soggy as it goes on. As much of the sink waste of the old wooden row as finds its way into the swamp empties in the rear of this house, and directly behind it on a higher elevation manure piles send their seepage through to stand about the dwelling in disclosed pools. On the further side a ditch a foot or two wide and deep carries drainage for the higher yard and stable past its windows, and into this ditch its own sink drains. Inside the cellar stairs are rickety and high water mark shows on the walls four feet from the floor. A pump is kept here all the time with one end in a drain pit in the dirt floor, the other out a window. Upstairs the rooms were indescribably filthy. A leaking roof had stained walls and ceiling, beds were dirty and liquor bottles, some partly filled, lay under the bed. The whole impression given by the house was one of great dinginess, unwholesomeness and general forlornness. On Penn Street, with their rear yards next this house, is another pair owned by the same man. One of these is empty, the other occupied by a family who do much to keep good order in spite of a family of 11 in the six rooms. The houses are, however, in only fair repair and the privies are so bad that one is almost roofless, and both have overflowing vaults. These houses bring \$15.00 apiece, making a total rental for these adjoining properties, all owned by one landlord and all excepting the last two in such wretched condition as to be quite unfit for human habitation, of \$94.00 a month.

On the opposite side of the Turnpike, in the rear of the little shops there, in the triangle of land between two streets, is another one-story, cellarless building divided by partitions into five two-room houses. One on the end has a second story and is said to rent for \$14.00; the other four bring \$7.00 apiece. Colored families live here; one or two of the rooms were overcrowded with people and in bad condition, others fairly clean. A common hydrant supplies water to all the families and is underdrained to the sewer. A yard water closet with four compartments stands at one side. The whole place is like a temporary shack in frontier towns put up by persons getting a large return for small investment out of the needs of the towns. It is reported that moral conditions too are bad here.

This covers, we believe, the worst of the housing in Haverford. The bad spots are not numerous nor especially extensive, but they make up for this in badness. Out of the streets touched in this study of Haverford many were surface-drained. The





LANCASTER PIKE.  
House Drain Discharging. Water Flows Beneath House  
and Causes Stagnant Pool.



HOUSE SEWAGE DRAIN.  
Rear of a Row of Shacks on Lancaster Pike.

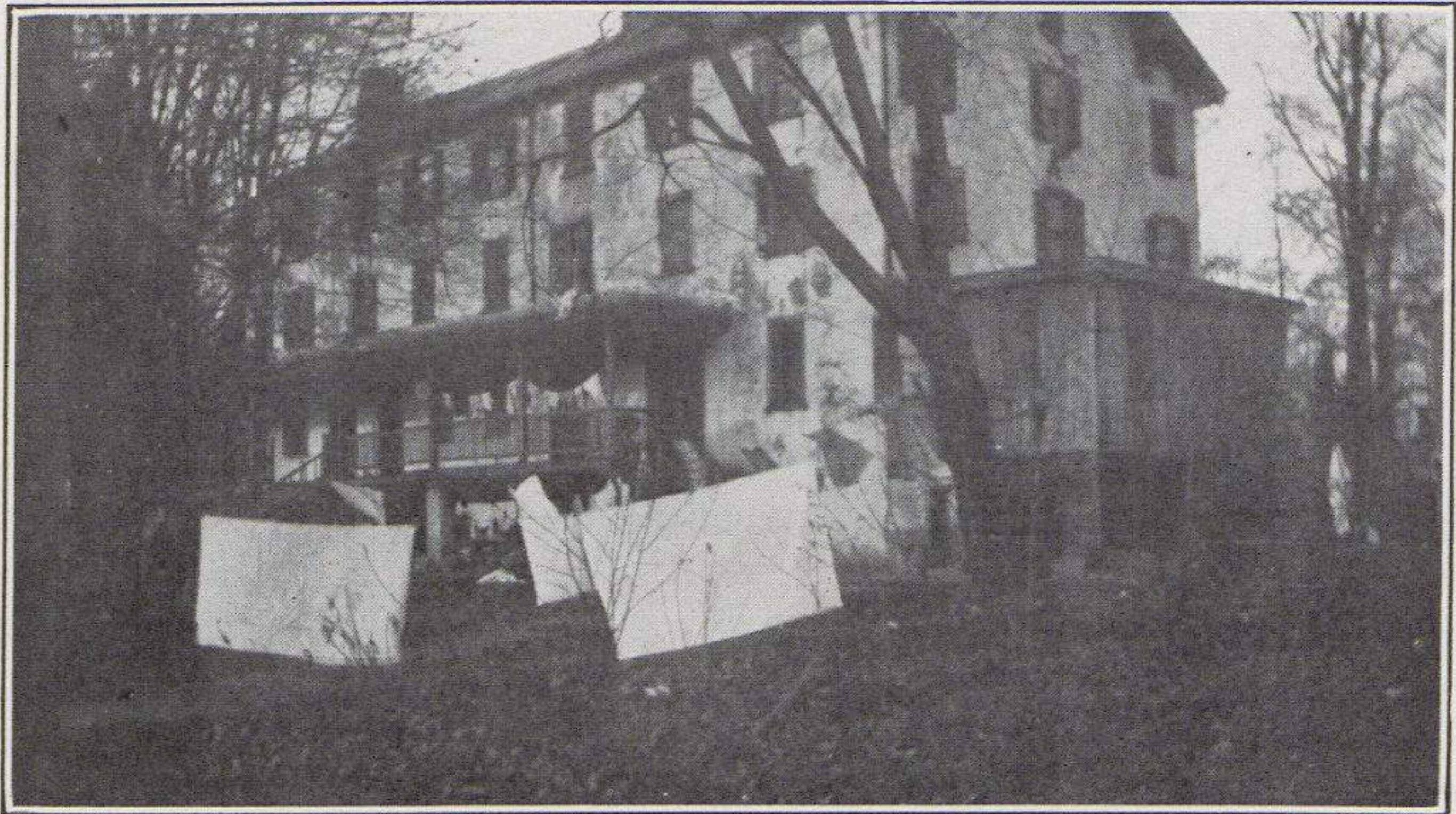


township lines have much to do with this, many of the streets lying in what has not been up to this fall a first-class township. Now that this has been changed, we may expect to see some of the evils resulting from open drain ditches disposed of, but it will not be likely to have much effect as the individual landlord who, without any sanitary inspection held over his head, allows his property to become as wretched as these described.

### BRYN MAWR.

Probably the most famous, and, therefore, least understandable slum spot of all the main line is the old Whitehall Hotel property in Bryn Mawr. At the junction of three important streets it stands, in the midst of beautiful homes and valuable estates, directly across from the Bryn Mawr Hospital. A valued neighbor, indeed, it must have been to all these to have stood so long so obviously all that it is. One suspects that the painful duty of looking at it must have carefully ignored or it would have been uprooted long ago. Surely a more incongruous grouping than this town's main hospital and this old building in a suburban town where there would seem to be sufficient space for everything and everything in its place, can hardly be imagined. Not that it should be implied that there should be a place for the old Whitehall Hotel as it is now. In its palmyest days it could hardly have been more crowded than it is to-day in its worst. The number of entire families housed here at the particular time our study touched it was 29, or about 80 people in 49 rooms. The entire fourth floor of the hotel building has been abandoned, for the windows which are, one to a room, small skylights in the roof, leak at such a rate that many of the third floor rooms below have had to be vacated as well. In the front room there are wide cracks through to the outside about the chimney and the rain has come in through the roof and these until the floor is rotting away and the ceiling partly fallen in. Up to this year there has been but one faucet for all the families in the building, but there are now one sink to each of the first three floors. The old rooms on the main floor, the one-time hotel parlors, still have a good deal of dignity of proportion and give, with their fire places and panelling, and wide old folding doors, permanently closed and sealed as they are, quite a sense of the spaciousness which once belonged to them. They rent, a room to a family, for \$5.00 apiece, a month, and the smaller and more numerous rooms on the upper floors bring \$2.50 each. These have connecting doors so a family may rent at this rate as many rooms adjoining or separated, as they wish. Thus a





TENEMENT IN BRYN MAWR—29 FAMILIES IN 49 ROOMS.

two-room apartment costs \$5.00 a month, a three-room \$7.50, etc. There are no rules against overcrowding here so it is rare that a kitchen stove is not crowded into cramped quarters by a large double bed, or that a bed room is not filled to its capacity. Several rooms occupied by single men or women or couples keep the average down, however, to somewhat less than two persons per room including the kitchens of each family, for, indeed, many have only one room for kitchen, bed room, dining and living room. There are in Whitehall a family of four living entirely in one room which is kept neat and fairly clean. There is a family of three in a crowded kitchen and bed room where the stove and the bed are close together and the rooms both cluttered with rubbish. Another family of mother, father, and daughter 20 years old live in a single room. One family of four have three rooms on the third floor in one of which the ceiling has fallen with dampness, and in a second eleven vessels were counted dispersed around the room to catch the leaks. Only two of these rooms could be lived in. There are other cases of three in one room and four in two, and others in which a single person rents two or three rooms.

In all the families interviewed here about \$71.00 a month was collected in rents for 28 rooms rented to 16 families, totaling 42 people. There were a few instances of locked rooms which could not be examined. In this four-story building with so many makeshift kitchens and stoves and furniture all crowded in together there is no fire escape of any description, and none but the one main staircase. In the rear of the main building is a small frame



house in a state of just holding together in which an Irish family of seven, the only white family on the premises, live. The house consists of two bed rooms upstairs and a kitchen on the ground floor. It was formerly the storehouse of the hotel and an underground passage which leads from it to the ice house is now a depository for rubbish from the kitchen. The flight of steps leading down into the passage are barely discernable and the place, which occupies one end of the ground floor is unsafe to venture into. The whole house is in unspeakably wretched condition. The bed rooms were filthy in every respect, roof leaking in, windows and doors mere apologies and generally miserable. The family are supposed to pay \$7.00 rent, but are thoroughly pauperized and probably seldom pay.

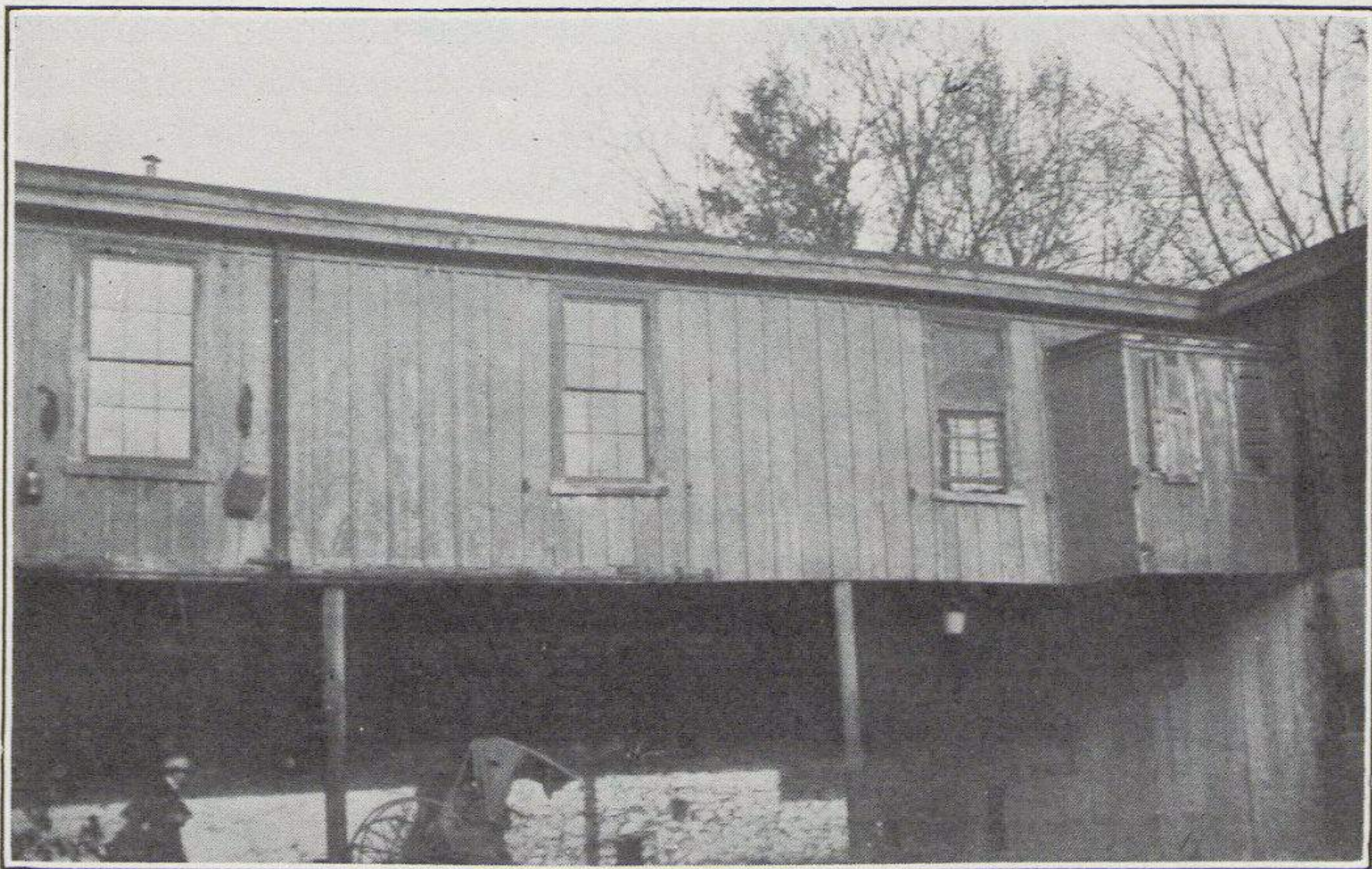
Facing on old Haverford Road are the old stables, now housing new families. This is the worst place on the premises and is frankly immoral. One colored woman living here remarked that she had a husband down South, but would rather live up here with different men. The dark faces here peer out at intruders from behind window casings like curious animals, and indeed the whole place is more like a kennel than a habitation for human beings. It is built in the form of a hollow square, stone foundation to the height of the first story and a wooden second floor above. The courtyard in the center is the common dump heap, and here are chicken heads and entrails, old kitchen utensils, cans, garbage, bed springs, mattings, refuse of every description evidently being simply disposed of by pitching it out these inner windows. Below the living rooms are the former stalls, closed on three sides and open toward the court. These are quite obviously used as toilets by the families who have, indeed, nothing else to use. The eight privy compartments placed over a single dirt trench beside the stables are each kept locked by some family for its own use, so that for those who have not a padlock of their own, signifying proprietorship, there is nothing else to use but the ground. In the entrance to this court is a hydrant which is the sole water supply of ten families.

There are rooms for two or three families on the first floor, and here in an apartment a family of nine was living in two rooms. The entire nine sleep in the bed room which is tightly shuttered and dark and full of bed clothing all over the floor. There is one bed, the others sleep on the floor, the blankets and pillows being laid out in the form of beds completely covering the floor space of the unventilated, ill-smelling room. A second family of father, grown daughter and "unidentified" woman, who intimates vaguely that she is another daughter, live in a single room





FORMER STABLE—BRYN MAWR. NOW A TENEMENT. NINE PERSONS SLEEP IN ONE ROOM—FRANKLY IMMORAL CONDITIONS.



REAR OF STABLE-TENEMENT.

No Protection from the Cold. 12 Rooms so Poorly Ceiled That the Outer Court Can be Seen Through the Cracks. Filthy Conditions in Former Stalls.



opening through into the court. The second floor is reached by three or four little stair cases apparently in the thickness of the wall, leading up to a long inner corridor having windows on the court. There are 12 rooms up here, all in such repair that one can look through the floor into the open stables with their filth below, and out through the cracks in the walls into the yard around. The people seem to live about more or less promiscuously and it was difficult in some cases to decide just who belonged to the various rooms, to one or two of which admission was refused. The rents were about the same as in the main building, totaling, so far as was reported, about \$43.00 a month for the eighteen rooms occupied, in which 9 families, or 28 persons were living.

The last of the old buildings is on County Line Road and is in its state not incongruous with the rest. It has water perpetually under it, and perpetually, too, leaking through it. Its windows in its main room are almost entirely boarded up because of broken panes so the family lives in two front rooms and one up stairs. The whole place is a disgrace no less to the owners but to the community which allows it to exist, as it is and must be, with its lack of toilets and its quite indescribable condition of filth and degradation a fertile source of contagion both physically and morally to the whole vicinity. Developments are "developing," however, and 14 new houses, shoulder to shoulder, drawn up, as it were, in close marching array, have already appeared on the unoccupied corner of the ground, the first installment, it is said, of 72 already planned for. These houses, cheaply put up as they are with dirt floors to the cellars, foundation walls tumbled in sections here and there, and open spaces between foundations and house for cold air to suck through, are, of course, nevertheless, improvements on the older buildings. They have bath rooms, hot-air heaters and are most of all fresh and new. But if the row of paired houses is continued placed as these are with but four foot spaces between every two, around the triangle replacing the old buildings the result in twenty years may very well be a slum as bad in all respects as the present one and much more extensive and difficult to deal with. With no building restrictions and the sort of spirit shown so far in handling this property, that of money-getting regardless of decencies, there is nothing to prevent the inside of this triangle being filled up with more houses thus making an inside group where congestion would make for the worst conditions existing out of sight of the thoroughfares surrounding it. Whitehall being "improved," without any building restrictions or sanitary requirements bids fair to be a more menacing thing than the existing slum, bad as it is. Out of the 14 new houses, most



of them nearly finished, the cellars of nine, in dry weather, were completely covered with water several inches deep. The rest had water over most of the surface in pools. Only two were only wet without standing water. Not all the houses were finished and with all the cellar windows in, a better report could probably be made, but with foundation walls as loosely built as these, earth floors, and yards below the level of the street, it is probable that these cellars will never be dry. These houses consist of six rooms each and bath room, and are to rent for \$17.00 or \$18.00—a prohibitive price for the present denizens of Whitehall.

In the neighborhood of Whitehall are more houses in bad condition. Some are alive with vermin, one, with a provision store in the front room, has its walls upstairs completely covered with nits and bugs. Another on the corner of the three streets converging here, also across the road from the hospital, has no provision for the waste water from the sink beyond merely getting it out of the house. The yard has been so covered with green scum and stagnating pools that the family could not well get to the privy, so the colored tenant himself laid a pipe two or three yards from the house and dug a ditch to the fence and drained the water to the sidewalk. Next door the cesspool is overflowing and is, when emptied, simply pumped out on the ground. The water closet vault is used as a cesspool for the next houses, and in one the waste pipe from the sink into the cesspool is broken and obstructed underground so the sink has to be emptied mainly by hand, and the yard is continually wet with water leaking up from the broken pipe below.

Beside the electric right of way is Miller Street, where there is the old combination of wells and privies. The houses are all frame, some single, some in pairs, and drained into the electric right of way. One house stands here with its sink emptying under the kitchen in the rear, and several have filthy, ill-drained yards. The street itself is unpaved, irregular, with only a dirt sidewalk. None of it is in good repair. This is also true of the streets in Whitehall village across the tracks. Here Brook Street is irregular, full of deep mud and the refuse of the houses, with no sidewalk in particular and in general bad repair. The neighborhood has colored, Italian and Irish families and many of the houses are owned in the neighborhood. The privies are in uniformly bad condition, with vaults overflowing and repairs unmade. One very odorous one stands only a yard away from the kitchen door. The tenant says it is particularly disagreeable in summer. There are several wet cellars on this street, cesspools overflowing and with dirty drains, much garbage about the yards and much lack of



proper repair both in house and outbuildings. Two houses have no windows in their kitchens, but only the door to give air and its 2' x 3' glass panels to give light. Moore Street also has much trouble in the neighborhood from overrunning cesspools from which filthy waste overflows the neighboring yards. The remedy the landlord proposes is to run an overflow pipe from the cesspool to the well, which is no longer used, as hydrants have recently been put in, but which is directly under the kitchen. The cesspool smells very badly and is covered only by loose boards. It is said that only a short time ago a child fell in. Both here and on Bryn Mawr Avenue are privies in such bad repair as to afford little privacy. One directly beside the electric tracks has but little of its roof left, only part of a seat, and the sides are parting company at the corners. It, too, is heaped up to the seat. For the house next to this which is owned by a poor family having apparently nothing else, and is occupied by twenty-one Italians, men, women and children, it would be difficult to keep the privy vault clean.

There are too many poor sections of Bryn Mawr for this study to touch them all, but these conditions seemed typical of the older parts of this town. On Lancaster Avenue different problems, those of the tenement, are developing. The old Sargeant house is the most conspicuous example of this, and possesses the one fire escape met with in this investigation, totally inadequate, it is true, in that complicated old building with its windings and turnings and rooms sandwiched in here and there, and additions enclosed over porches and club rooms, stores and kitchens. The roof leaks like a sieve and one third floor tenant keeps the empty rooms on the top floor fairly paved with pitchers and vessels to keep the rain out of her bed room below. One tenant has an odorous water closet enclosed from her kitchen into which it opens. Another has a bath room for the tenant below her built out of the middle of her kitchen with frosted glass windows into it for light, as it is entirely "inside." The rest, except one, all use a bath room on the third floor, which also gives access to all these to the fire escape through the window. The last tenant has a bath room which consists of the end of the ground floor hall in the rear of his store, including the outside door opening directly on the sidewalk, which serves the bath room as window, and the family as entrance to their apartment. Part of the store they have partitioned off for dining room and kitchen, into which light and air come only over the partition. Some of the original old rooms in this jumble of a building are spacious and beautiful still, but the numberless additions, some lived in though still unfinished, and the helter-skelter



way in which it has been pieced together make it a singular and curious place. There are, with the top floor unoccupied, eight families, totaling 29 persons, living here, paying \$126.00 per month in rentals for the 27 rooms and two stores. One apartment on the third floor has a windowless bed room with outer rooms or hall way entirely surrounding it. A family of three sleep here. Every apartment in a building such as this, built of all sorts of material and used for all sorts of purposes, should have direct access to a fire escape. In case of fire here the stairways would be most difficult to find even if they did not act as flues for the fire.

Further down the street is a building owned by the same landlord, where one tenant complains that the common toilet for the four families in the building empties its contents in part into her kitchen and pantry. They have tied up the chain so it cannot be pulled and empty into the closet without flushing so no more will come through than can be helped. The kitchen ceiling is soaked under the water closet but in the pantry the plastering under the pipe is quite off and the tenant keeps a washtub under it, into which she claims matter from the toilet comes down directly from the bowl. The premises are in filthy condition and the cellar windows are so arranged below the surface of the ground as to act as drains to carry water from melting snows, or heavy rains directly into the cellar.

There are doubtless many instances on the Turnpike of bad sanitary conditions besides these. The demand for stores along this thoroughfare is directly contributive to the dark, windowless, airless room evil. Stores are built directly against the fronts of the old houses closing off their windows and doors on the front of the house. Instances of these came to the attention of the Investigator and doubtless other instances exist or will exist as this line of stores is further extended.

Behind what is known as the old store, on the corner of old Lancaster Road and Roberts Road, is an old brown group of wooden buildings which are so far advanced in the process of decay as to be hopeless of repair. For lack of the primary qualities of good housing, that is mere shelter from the elements, these houses are more than anything else touched in this study. There are five houses here, all but one occupied by colored families. In the two adjoining ones on the corner, a family of seven live in the first which has two bedrooms, a living room and basement kitchen. Here an old Southern mammy, dazed with old age and feebleness, was caring for a sick grandchild while the parents were out at work. Over the stove she sat crooning camp meeting songs, while the wind blew through the cracks of the sagging door which



wouldn't shut. The floor was of earth covered with bits of old matting and was below the street level so that in rainy weather the family are driven up by the rain which pours in under the door. The ladder-like little flight of stairs ascends directly from the end wall, and is so steep that the steps slant forward and one must go up on all fours. The tiny bed rooms upstairs are all but entirely filled with the two double beds. One of the seven probably sleeps on a sofa in the living room. In the next house a sick woman sat wedged in the corner behind the stove very ill with dropsy and heart disease and "nervousness." The house with its loose windows and doors and stuffed panes was cold and draughty, and the roof was leaking into both houses, so that the paper wouldn't stay on the walls because of the dampness. There were only two rooms to this house for a family of six, the kitchen and a bedroom up stairs. The people seemed forlorn and wretched and dumb, almost like animals, in the misery in which they lived. The first family pays \$7.50 per month, and this family \$5.50. The water must, of course, all be carried from a pump three doors up the street which supplies these five families, and the privies, as wretched as the houses, stand in the immediate rear, almost under the windows of the next group of three. These are as bad externally as the first, but in hardly as bad condition inside. The first one consists of four rooms, two on each floor. There is also an attic where the broken windows are stuffed with old pillows rather to no purpose since the shingles had rotted almost off the roof and patches of sky were visible everywhere. The family have papered themselves, but the walls are too damp and mouldy to hold the paper. The next, the middle house, has only two livable rooms. The rear rooms both down stairs and up were beyond use and closed. A man and his wife and two little children live here and pay \$7.00. In the last house an Irish woman lives with her husband and son in four rooms which cost them \$7.00. The stairs into the cellar are almost entirely rotted away and, as in the other houses, the window is boarded up if there is one in the dark hole. The houses are all but falling to pieces and on the outside green with mould. The yards are full of standing pools of waste water and refuse. Directly across the road is one of the large and elaborate estates of Bryn Mawr with the house not far away, and nearby a neighborhood of good houses, yet this old place which is unfit for animals to live in and unsafe for humans, has stood here for years and years, falling into such decay that before long it will be not only unfit but actually impossible to live in.



## ROSEMONT.

There is on Garrett Hill a large number of working men's houses, mainly frame, with ample yards, though the long brick rows of more recent development have crept in here too to quite an extent. These have the usual six rooms, with a long hopper water closet on the rear porch, and rent for \$13.00. In one row of five houses there were 23 persons in four houses, the fifth being empty. This would not seem to indicate overcrowding, but they were distributed in families of 9, 8, 3 and 3, and then each family used the three small bedrooms for sleeping quarters so in the case of the large families there was distinct overcrowding. The empty house, examined carefully, proved to be full of bedbugs. The family which had vacated it had moved into the adjoining house on the end of the row, so with the thin, loose partitions built in these houses it is safe to assume that the whole row was infested. The middle bed room of all these houses is usually lighted with but one rather small window and has, in case of this row, about 792 cubic feet of air space which with the usual standard of 400 cubic feet per adult person, would make this bedroom overcrowded with more than one grown person sleeping in it.

There are several rear houses on Garrett Avenue. One group is approached by an alley running down from the main street. Here a group of four houses has been evolved from some old stables. They are mere boxes, two consisting of a room down stairs and two very small bed rooms up stairs, one approached through the other. The other two have more rooms and more definite yards which contain in the rear, privies, a hydrant, and cesspool full to the brim and roughly covered with boards. Only one house has a cellar. This one is difficult to get into, almost impossible to get out of and is only a hole in the ground under the house, with rough, irregular earth walls and floor, and one window boarded up and unused. A pump at the back of the Garrett Avenue houses in front supplies water for this little neighborhood and the privies for four or five houses are all together between the fronts of one pair of houses and the backs of the others. The roofs of all are leaking and they are all a poor sort of shelter. Italian families live in all four.

In front, on Garrett Avenue is a row of three little wooden houses much the same though probably originally planned for houses and so better adapted to that purpose. The houses on Garrett Avenue are all of much the same sort, though some are more prosperous than others, with nice gardens and lawns, and nicely kept. As in the other towns the poorer section is immedi-



ately surrounded by the finer homes of the community, and one sees the filthy yard and garbage-strewn surroundings of houses like this little group in the alley only a stone's throw from beautiful houses with spacious lawns and grounds which alone separate the one from the other.

The more crowded section of the town lies nearer the railroad tracks, and here are occasional houses tucked away at the end of a blind street or in the rear of other houses where unsanitary conditions run riot. Such a little group is at the end of Franklin Avenue, on the north of the tracks, and directly below the high railroad embankment. Here live three Italian families with their hordes of lodgers, most of whom work for the railroad. Filthy, odorous water closets with badly-working flushes, and obstructed drain so that the sewage overflows the yard, and unused cesspool partly filled with rubbish and dangerously open, and a wealth of chickens with the freedom of the premises makes this spot squalid indeed. Inside there is the usual water in the cellar, leaking roofs, and overcrowded bed rooms full of cots and dirty, with one hard-working woman of each house tending babies, cooking for her family of 8, 13, and 14, and doing all the washing and cleaning as well.

Rosemont differs from the other towns mainly in that it has a section devoted to the homes of working people, well-placed on high land and in a natural placing well adapted toward making a model and much-needed community for such homes. It is like the other towns in that no effort is made to prevent such housing evils as are bound to arise in such a community, overcrowding, bad sewage disposal, water closets in bad repair, and nuisances of garbage and filthy yards and wet cellars and leaking roofs which are bound to breed disease wherever they go unchecked.

#### WAYNE.

In the neighborhood of the quarries, beside the electric right of way, in Wayne there is a remarkable settlement, apparently, from the nature of its constitution purely temporary, and yet which has been in existence for at least 20 or 30 years. The nucleus, or what might be called the backbone of one group of dwellings which bear numbers up to 50, is a long two-story wooden shack divided into 17 houses, each consisting of an up stairs and a down stairs room, and with an opening through the first story in the middle, which serves as entrance to the houses inside the inclosure. This place is called Fritz Street, though it bears about as much resemblance to a street as its dwellings do to houses.





OVER 30 SUCH SHACKS IN REAR OF "BROOKLYN BRIDGE," WAYNE. ONE HUT 11'x8', SHELTERS FIVE PERSONS. "BROOKLYN BRIDGE" HAS 17 APARTMENTS—MANY GROSSLY OVERCROWDED. ONE SPIGOT SUPPLIES WATER FOR ALL.



These seem like nothing so much as like chicken coops, which is what some of the occupants call them. Their one merit is that they are cheap, costing per month \$2.00 per room, although one man states that for enclosing the porch of his little shack, boarding it up behind with his own lumber, he has to pay \$2.00 additional per month on the ground that he has an extra room. Here are housed about 70 people, Italian and colored, in single little shacks composed of boards and building paper. There are no yards of any definiteness, but the refuse-strewn enclosure is common ground. One hydrant supplies water to the whole population, and two privies each with eight compartments in filthy or decently clean condition according to the care with which those to whom they are apportioned keep them locked, are divided up among the families, while the men have a separate enclosure which boasts no seat and is in quite indescribable condition. One house has an old privy to itself in its own yard. This house, which is occupied by the man who acts as rent collector for the group, is the largest of the shacks and has three or four rooms with a shed at the extreme end, for it was formerly two houses. In some of the houses single men live, boarding with a neighboring family. In others there are large families which have been born and raised in these same old houses which do not look capable of surviving a really hard storm. A family of five live in one measuring about eleven feet by eight, with a roof which slopes from six to nine feet high. Two windows two feet square and the door give light and air. There is one double bed for the five and the place is alive with vermin. The walls are papered with newspapers, wrapping paper and scraps of anything which will paste up to keep out the wind. It is about as crude a shelter as the Investigator could picture. The long shack has clapboard walls and is plastered inside on the outer walls though not on the partitions between houses. Hence doors have been cut through as some tenants wish to add a room to their dwelling upstairs or down, and in one case a down stairs partition was removed to make a living room 14 feet square instead of only seven wide. The lower floor of the whole building has no windows whatever the entire length of its rear side, though the bedrooms above have a very tiny little window one foot by two in under the roof. The full size windows are one to a room on the entrance side. The place is swarming with vermin. An ironing board removed from the wall disclosed a dozen roaches running for shelter. What affects one family here must necessarily affect all for it is but little better in many respects than all living in one long room. It seems remarkable that fire has not before this swept the whole place, for stoves are crowded in with the furniture and





SHEET IRON HOUSES IN WAYNE. HOT IN SUMMER. COLD IN WINTER. OVERFLOWING PRIVIES DRAIN TO THE FRONT DOORS. RENT FOR \$2 A ROOM A MONTH.



little care taken to guard against conflagration. The interior of these rooms looks very much like patch work quilts for they are papered with scraps of wall paper of every conceivable size, shape and hue pieced out with newspapers when the scraps ran short. The whole place seems, in its squalor, filth and general state of being about to tumble down, so unstable that one would feel inclined to employ a strong means to clear off the spot if it were not that shelter for these people is so difficult for them to find at rentals within their means, that one can hardly think where they could go if they were deprived of their shelters poor as they are.

The Fritz Street group is in the rear of the Highland Avenue houses; farther down the avenue is another row of rear houses, fronting on the electric right of way, occupied as are the others by Italians and negroes. These are metal houses, made of sheet metal sides and roof on a wooden frame, with cement floors. They consist of two rooms, but are built in pairs with doors between so a pair may be used as a single four-room house. Each pair has a hydrant beside the door, and a privy in front. The windows are, one to a room, only about two feet square so that in case of such overcrowding as was found in one of the houses where a family of thirteen Italians lived in a four-room house, five lodgers sleeping in a single bed room, and the father and mother and six children in the other two bed rooms, the ventilation is inadequate indeed. These houses must be, at most seasons of the year almost unbearable to live in. There is no shade and only space for irregular garden patches in front of the houses. The backs are directly against the back fence and outbuildings of the houses on Highland Avenue. The summer sun beating in must make these places like metallic ovens, with their small windows and unprotected walls. In winter the cement floors and single sheeted sides must be equally hard to endure. The only advantage to these houses is that they are cleaner than the old wooden buildings about, and are fireproof, although one or two have wooden partitions inside. One room opens directly from another in a box like fashion. They measure about 10 x 11 x 8, forming the standard minimum sleeping space for two persons. The rent is at the rate of \$2.00 per room, or \$8.00 for four rooms. In most of these the roofs are leaking, in some into every room. In places, too, the metal partitions between rooms have rusted through. Without, the yards are hard tramped dirt, with no grass or trees. The hydrants drain across the fronts of the houses in a shallow bricked ditch which is foul and bad smelling in places, and empties on a neighbor's land. Some of the drains are in fairly good repair, others hold the foul water and are in a filthy condition. The privies are out of repair and offensive.



One which stands a few feet from the front of the house is on a raised bit of land and is overflowing across the yard. Another has filth scattered on the ground all about it. The whole place is extremely dirty and has much rubbish packed in between the houses and about the yards. Some of the tenants have built sheds and chicken coops for themselves in front of their houses. It is in general a forlorn spot and the houses are merely shelters, inadequate in every respect.

Next to this row is an old wooden building, occupied by 14 Italians, in such filthy condition inside and out as to be difficult to inspect. The two old privies in the yard were in dreadful condition, one having only half a seat, the yard is strewn with filth, the shed is a mass of rubbish, and the cesspool, in the middle of the street, is overflowing. Inside conditions were as bad. The dark cellar seemed to have coal in one part, the other was a dark pit of water. Its windows were merely holes knocked in the foundation walls and boarded up. The foul smell of stagnant water makes it an evil place to get into. In the kitchen the sink is enclosed and smells offensively, one window is partly covered by the roof of the shed, and much plastering has disappeared. The bed rooms were fairly alive with bedbugs crawling over beds, walls and ceilings. The beds for nine lodgers were packed in thick. Across the street is another pair of houses occupied by nine and ten Italians, where the general repair is much better, but sanitary conditions almost as bad. The sinks are untrapped and odorous, the yards are masses of slop water and refuse, and a cesspool in the center of the sidewalk is crossed only by a loose slab of stone. These houses are built directly against a high bank to the height of the second story which has been hollowed out to make a place for the building.

Across the street from the Fritz Street property is another metal house of a better sort. This has two rooms and rents for \$8.00. It is plastered and papered and in neat order and good repair. Behind it is another row of shacks of the "chicken coop" variety, and beside it, a few yards away, are two large vats or cesspools about 12 feet in diameter, covered with boards and used to empty contents of privy vaults into. The owner of the property states that this is an almost unendurable nuisance in summer, but is necessary because there is no sewer on the street and nothing to do with overflowing cesspools and privy vaults but disposal of this sort, since the law forbids emptying anywhere on the ground. He states that the street as a whole has been petitioning the Board of Health for a sewer for two or three years, but that they have been unable to obtain it and the problem of sewage disposal is an



impossible one for him to solve satisfactorily for this property and the Fritz Street houses.

Be this as it may these large loosely covered depositories must be a serious menace to the health of the community, though it is doubtful if they are very much worse than the condition of the houses and yards across the street on Fritz street. The whole problem of this section is a difficult one. It is distinctly a working men's neighborhood and practically certain to remain so. As it is, it is a really serious evil in the community, and yet it seems to be the only place where the quarry men and laborers can find shelter at a price within any possible means they may have. Here they can rent only a single room for \$2.00 adding to it as they can afford more space. A new tenement house being built by the owner of this property, on Highland Avenue, may provide more decent quarters, though it is doubtful if the rentals will be low enough to come within the reach of all the people now living in the shanties. It is sure that these laborers are here and that they must have shelter even so poor shelter as these "chicken houses" are since, as the owner said, "They can't roost in trees."

Respectfully submitted,

MARION BOSWORTH.

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#### CONCLUSION.

The Committee on Investigation believes this study of areas in five Main Line Towns clearly demonstrates the presence of slums hitherto unsuspected. As laws now read there is no check upon the growth of these slums. Social conditions, acting upon them tend to make them more ugly. Ignorant or unscrupulous builders, for their personal gain, contribute still further to their growth. Without legislation and supervision they are bound to be a menace to the health and morals of their residents and to the public. It is no answer to say that the Main Line is not a place for working people. Wherever communities are built, the day laborers and the mechanics are needed. It is a matter of public health and civic pride that they be provided with decent homes in sanitary environments. Other communities have faced this problem with success. Either it must be faced here with broad vision or the consequences will become increasingly apparent. Every year's delay adds to the cost of correction. Bad housing in town or city always tends toward low standards of health, character and morals; sickness, con-





A WAYNE TENEMENT—3 STORIES HIGH—4 FAMILIES ON EACH FLOOR. NO FIRE ESCAPE. THIS BUILDING COULD NOT BE BUILT IN A CITY, BUT THERE ARE NO BUILDING REGULATIONS FOR THE SUBURBAN AREAS.



tagious disease, and death. It means increased expenses for police and jails and reformatories, for free hospitals, dispensaries and district nurses, for charity agents and numerous demands upon public and private philanthropies; higher tax rates and decreasing property values, without one iota of gain to the community.

Fortunately the slum areas found have not developed so that they cannot be corrected, but to correct them and to prevent further developments like them each Township must have larger appropriations for its Health Board, original sanitary inspection by a sanitary inspector under the Board of Health, regulative building laws, protective town plans, and finally, model housing developments to care for the small wage earning classes. All these are feasible in the Main Line Towns.

The Committee takes this occasion to express its appreciation of the co-operation it has received from the Township Commissioners and Boards of Health in the endeavor to abate these nuisances.















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Philadelphia