

Capital city to be an example to the Nation. The alleys have been paved, sewers and water mains have been laid in them, they are lighted and cleaned as are the streets. Yet they keep their old lead over the streets when it comes to totaling the figures for disease and death.

In this, Washington's experience has been like that of Liverpool and other European cities which tried unsuccessfully to make badly situated dwellings wholesome by cleaning and fumigating. After thirty-three years of unavailing effort to improve that which was fundamentally bad, Liverpool finally decided that the only hope lay in wiping out its insanitary areas. It demolished the old houses by the acre and in place of them built new houses. Where dwellings have been crowded so close together that there was scarcely passage room for a stout man to squeeze his way to one of the old rear houses, it built new dwellings opening upon wide spaces which provided light and air. Immediately sickness and death decreased—and with them vice and crime. What had seemed a hopeless struggle for more than a generation was won.

Other cities in Europe have done the same and with the same results; but what makes Liverpool's figures of unusual value is that the new houses are occupied by the same people who occupied the old ones. In some places the population on a given area in the new dwellings is 99 per cent the same as that which lived on the area in the old buildings. So here the effect of housing is not complicated by questions of different occupants, of better food or clothing or a generally higher standard of living. The housing has only been changed and the results are striking.

Washington is attempting much the same work, though in a less dramatic manner. Congress has enacted a law which goes into effect on July 1, 1918, according to which all the alley dwellings in the District of Columbia must cease to be used for dwelling purposes. Meanwhile, in order that there may be accommodation for those who will be forced to seek new homes in street houses, there has been organized a limited dividend company which is to build houses that will be not only sanitary, that will provide not only abundance of light and air, but houses attractive architecturally, homelike in their arrangements and containing bath rooms and provisions for hot water in place of the old out-door closets and hydrants.

Such houses as these cannot, of course, yield the return upon the investment that old houses did. In fact Congress in its act incorporating the Ellen Wilson Homes, limited its dividends to five per cent net, but they will yield to their stockholders a dividend in the form of satisfaction because of needed work well done. To their tenants they will give relief from preventable sickness and death and an increase in the joy of living.