

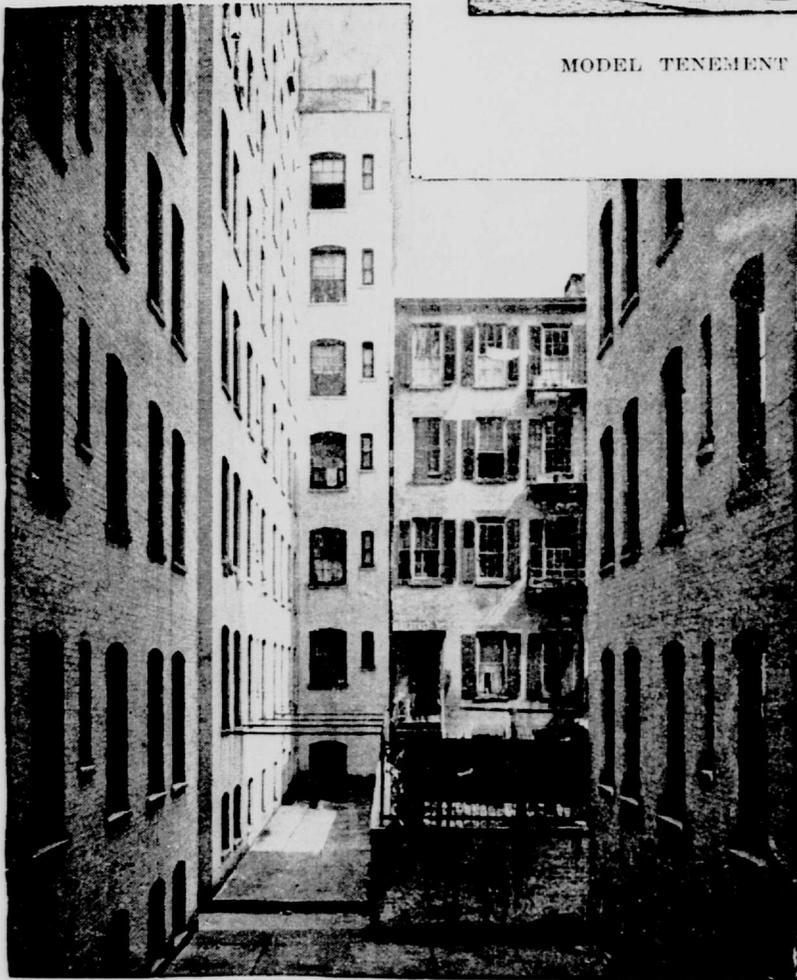
TENEMENT HOUSES.

THE NEW LAW REQUIRES STRUCTURES OF A GREATLY IMPROVED TYPE.

The tenement house question, which has had the attention of the lawmaking bodies of the State and city since 1834, has been the subject of much discussion before the legislature this year, and the enactments which have resulted will probably be productive of much good. According to the report of the Tenement House Commission, more than two-thirds of the population of the city of New-York live in tenement houses, of which there are 82,652. Of these 42,700 are in Manhattan, 33,771 in the Borough of Brooklyn, 4,365 in the Borough of The Bronx, 1,338 in the Borough of Queens and 418 in the Borough of Richmond. This enumeration includes not only the buildings in the most crowded districts, but the hundreds of more pretentious buildings in all parts of the city which are usually called apartment houses. In the eyes of the law the palatial building in which an apartment of sixteen rooms rents for \$10,000 a year is a tenement house as well as the narrow, ill lighted, badly ventilated and overcrowded 25-foot front building in Hester-st. The willingness on the part of the people who occupy the large apartment houses to pay



MODEL TENEMENT HOUSES IN TENTH AVE. BETWEEN FORTY-FIRST AND FORTY-SECOND STS.
Ernest Flagg, architect.

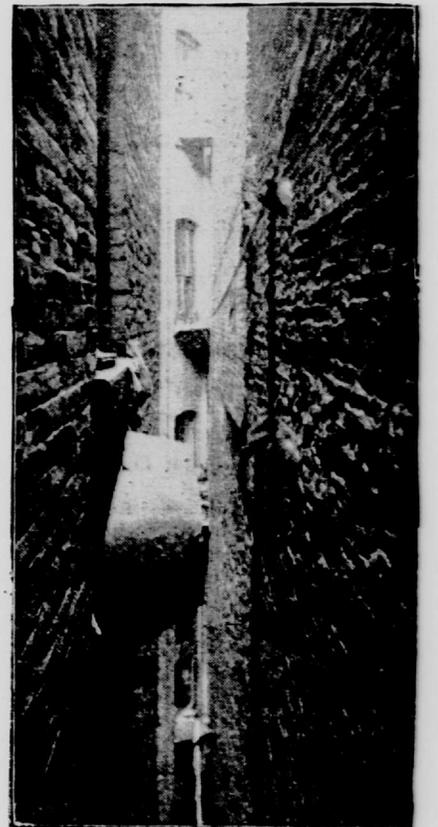


INTERIOR COURT OF TENTH AVE. TENEMENTS.

ample room for a 24-foot court, as required by law. If a court is open to the street or to a rear yard it must be at least six feet wide. If the court is only on the edge of the lot it must be at least twelve feet wide and twenty-five feet long. That handicaps the 25-foot lot. At the first glance it appears as though this was a hardship upon the builder, but as a matter of fact the new style house, which will cover only 70 per cent of the lot, will have just as many rooms and will cost less to build than the old, unsanitary, ugly and unsafe tenement house."

The plans drawn by Mr. Flagg show rooms larger than those in the old style tenement houses, and this result is accomplished by eliminating the dark hallways. According to the new law all sleeping rooms must contain at least 70 square feet of floor space and all living rooms at least 120 square feet. These requirements have been met in the plans. The stairs lead direct to the apartments, good light, perfect ventilation and privacy are secured, and the returns in rent will be larger, because the cost of the building will be less.

Before the law was passed some capitalists recognized the fact that superior tenement houses would be a good investment, and model tenement houses have been erected in many parts of the city which are ornaments to the streets and bring the owners a handsome return, besides giving the people who occupy them clean, cheerful and healthful living apartments. Notable among these new structures are those built and owned by the City and Suburban Homes Company. The tenement houses fronting in Sixty-eighth and Sixty-ninth sts., between Tenth and Eleventh aves., cover nineteen city lots. The block is divided into houses with nine separate entrances from the street, and every division has two stairways



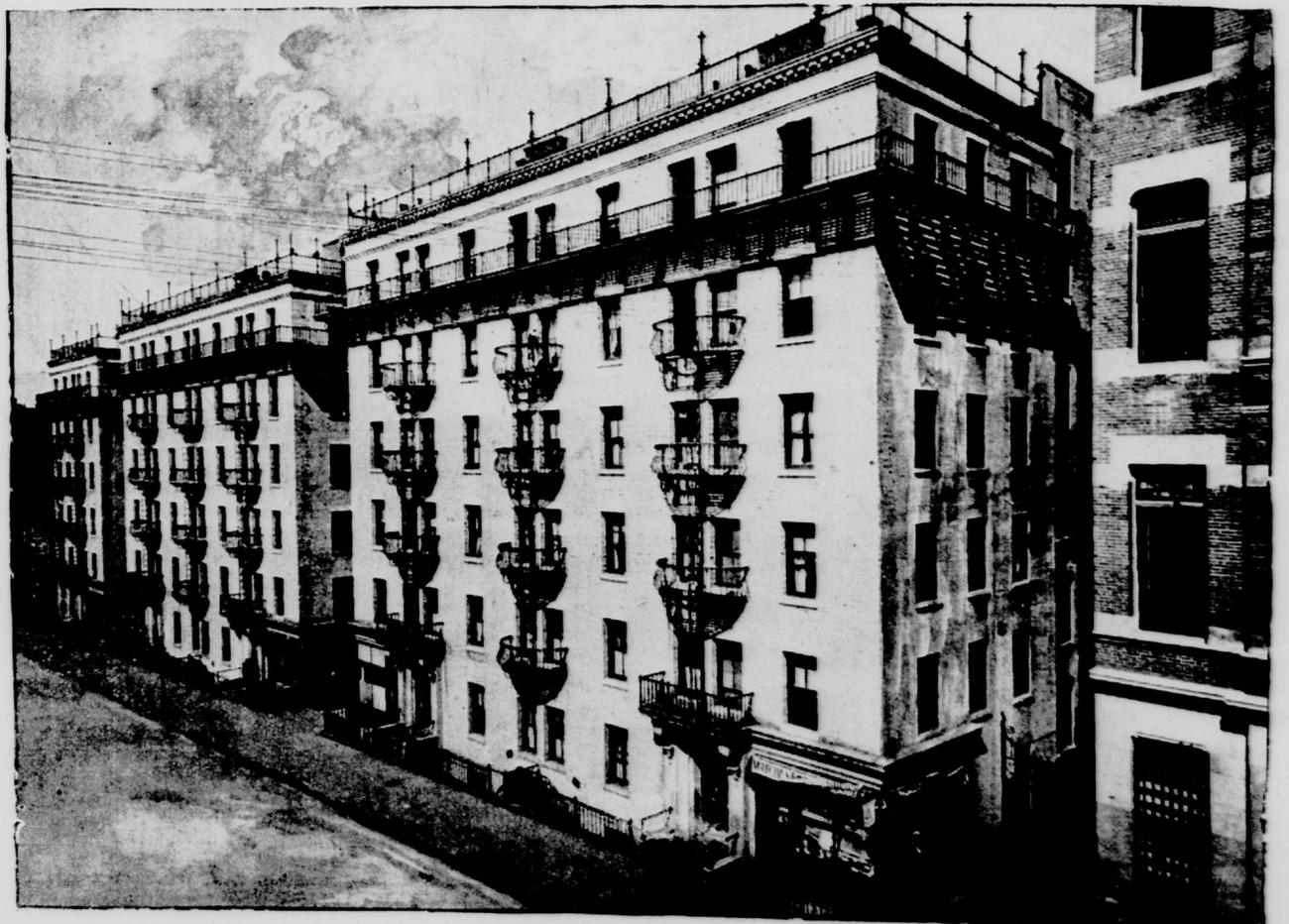
AIRSHAFT OF A TENEMENT IN HENRY ST.
Twenty-eight inches wide, 72 feet high and 48 feet long; 42 windows look out upon it.

for comfort and good sanitary arrangements has caused a steady improvement in that class of tenement houses, but the habitation of the poor man is shockingly bad.

The first 25-foot tenement houses were not new buildings, but old houses remodelled. These houses paid a handsome return on the investment, and new houses were built on the same general plan. The popular tenement house which was evolved from this beginning is now known as the "double decker." It is built to house from one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons in its six or seven stories; its rooms are dark and unventilated, and the average tenement house is a breeder of moral and physical disease. It is built upon an ordinary city lot 25 feet wide and 100 feet deep, and this lot is usually covered by the building, with the exception of a 10-foot space at the rear for light and air. There are usually two shops on the ground floor, with living rooms back of them. A narrow hallway extends through the centre of the building. On the upper floors there are four sets of apartments on each floor. A seven story building of this kind, the ground floor of which is occupied by shops, would have eighty-four rooms, of which only twenty-four receive direct light. But there is an "air shaft" also. This is an indentation in the wall to the depth of about twenty-eight inches. This shaft is provided for light and air, but men who have given the subject attention agree that it should be called the "foul air shaft."

The typical tenement houses have been described by the commission as "centres of disease, poverty, vice and crime, where it is a marvel, not that some children grow up to be thieves and drunkards, but that so many should ever grow up to be decent and self-respecting."

"This condition," said Ernest Flagg, "is the result of the 25-foot front tenement house. The new law puts a stop to this style of architecture, and the builder will find it to his advantage to build upon a 50-foot lot. Then there will be



MODEL TENEMENT HOUSES BETWEEN TENTH AND ELEVENTH AVES., IN SIXTY-EIGHTH AND SIXTY-NINTH STS.
Ernest Flagg, architect.