

## ONE OF BROADWAY'S POPULAR COMPOSERS FINDS INSPIRATION IN COUNTRY LIFE

### Jerome D. Kern Says He Has Done Best Work When Influenced by His Home Surroundings at Bronxville

There is no stronger advocate of suburban living than Jerome D. Kern, well known musical comedy author, whose clever wit and fanciful harmony have pleased thousands of theatergoers in recent years. Having lived a good many years in New York city dwellings and apartment houses, Mr. Kern is well qualified to draw comparisons between urban and suburban living. Two years ago he took to the country, and now he declares that he will remain in the hills and leave the city with its miles and miles of brick walls and hard paved streets to those who cannot find time to go over the border and see what living on the other side of the line is like. He is ardent in his admiration of the hills and dales and the wide open country that he has recommended the suburbs to his friends as a sure cure for all ills.

Mr. Kern does not hesitate to claim the credit for saving to the American public one of the gifted musical writers of the time. Almost broken in health from overwork and sedentary life which is encouraged by urban living, he took his friend, whose name he refused to give, up in the far hills of Westchester, near Brewster, and made him buy a farm. Mr. Kern's friend is a much improved man as a consequence.

Mr. Kern does not know how he came by the desire for the suburbs, since he was so closely identified with life in the city. Fearing that the yearnings for the fields and trees and hills might play him false and develop into nothing more substantial than a passing fancy, he rented a place at first. He found Bronxville a most convenient and attractive suburb from every standpoint. It was the kind of a place he had in mind, but he did not expect to find his ideal so close to Broadway. He decided that two years ought to be sufficient time for experiment with his inclinations, so he rented a house for that period in the Cedar Knolls section, which is toward the west of the attractive little colony of fine homes just over the north line of the city of New York.

The urging of his conscience seems to have been a disguised blessing in more than one way for Mr. Kern and the public too, because he has turned out more musical shows and of greater popularity than ever he did while living in the city.

Eight musical hits of last year's season were written by Mr. Kern and in Bronxville. Among those which the public will not forget for a long time are "Lady Laddie," "Oh, Boy," "Love or Mike," "Leave It to Jane," "Have a Heart" and "Rockaby Baby." Quality and quantity seem to have been the result of his moving away from New York and into the attractive hills of Westchester. Now that Mr. Kern has found that his experiment with suburban living has been a most profitable one in many ways, health, wealth and happiness, he has concluded to remain a long time in Bronxville, so a few weeks ago he signed a contract for the purchase of a house at Cedar Knolls. He is changing the exterior here and there that it may resemble a comfortable farmhouse like those of old England, a country which is particularly attractive to Mr. Kern, since it was there that he met and won his wife.

The house is on the west side, or rather on the north side of Sagamore road at the point where it turns the northeast and just a little way off of the main highway leading from the Bronxville station to the westward. Straight ahead, framed in the opening in the heavy stone wall, around the house, is an inviting doorway which bespeaks hospitality and comfort. Mr. Kern calls his house the "The Nook." Why such a name should have been given to such a pretty house is answered by Mr. Kern, who said that the name went back to England to a boat he had on the Thames and which was associated with many of his most pleasant memories. Although he did not tell more about "The Nook" the story is that the boat figure, who perished from drowning of Mrs. Kern at the time was Miss Eva Beale.

The house contains about fourteen rooms, six of which are bedrooms.

They are on two floors, there being four floors to the house. Every room is a feature in itself, being large and well proportioned and arranged with care. On a level with the front garden, which is to be like the quaint floral patches in front of English farmhouses, is the living section of the Kern establishment. To the south is the living room and the sun parlor, both of which are pictured here. To the north or northeast is the dining room and the breakfast porch, which is right in the path of the morning sun as it rises above Sagamore road.

To the west of the dining room are the pantry and kitchen. The kitchen is a model of perfection. A cozy foyer separates the living part of this floor from the dining room. The living room is built across the south end of the house and is connected at each end with the sun parlor. Old furniture of Dutch, English and Italian make is to be found in this big room and the sun parlor. Of course modern pieces have not been overlooked, but they are in the minority by far. Mr. Kern calls these antique pieces old friends. Off in a corner is an old fashioned desk and near by is a piano. This might be termed the Kern workshop, a musical comedy corner. Directly over this room is the amusement section of the Kern house. At the north end of this floor are the master's bedrooms, two large rooms with French windows on two sides. Between these are more bedrooms. Off the billiard room and at the southeast end of the house is a large guest room. Off the billiard room too is a porch. There is a porch at the north end of this floor also. The billiard room is not the only amusement space in the house.

Under the sun parlor and exposed to the weather is to be the ninepin alley. It is to be laid out as in England. Next to this alley is the garage, which is spacious enough to hold two cars.

The property is on the side of a hill which slopes down gradually to a heavy growth of timber back of the house. Mr. Kern is now modelling the appearance of the exterior of his house as he would a show. Every corner and every space and every part of the facade is being analyzed and if it does not fit in with the general idea, the aim of the owner, it will be changed, since it is his purpose to make his modern house look outwardly like a farmhouse in old England.

Decorative features on the top of the porch and the second floor have been removed and flower boxes are being put in their places. Flower boxes of a blue-green color are being put in every window and the shutters are to be painted a blue green. The chimney of the big open fireplace at the south side of the house, which had an exterior facing of brick, has been covered with stucco. An example of the care which Mr. Kern is giving to the aging of this house is illustrated by his efforts to get two drain barrels of the same material as an old fashioned churn but he discovered that New York did not have coopers and he would have to go out to Minnesota for them. There he found that they were sold by the thousands only. He had to have two barrels to carry out the architectural effect, so the trunk of a tree was cut and shaped into tall, graceful barrels, which will be fitted to the drain. The barrels are solid blocks, but to the eye they look like the real thing.

The wall, which is of irregular shaped stones, around the property has cost Mr. Kern upward of \$1,500. But it is essential in his plans for an English farmhouse. The path leading to the house, which has boulders and stones, has been replaced with irregular flagging which might be termed stepping stones. There is to be nothing formal about the place. Even the gardens are being laid out without regard to ideas of professional gardeners.

**R. E. GOLF TOURNAMENT.**  
The spring golf tournament of the Westchester Country Club will be held at the Green's Country Club, Greenwich, Conn., on Sunday, May 16.



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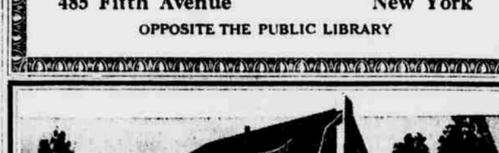
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