

F. A. KAUFFMANN

GERMAN
HOMES



German Homes

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German Homes

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The Climate and the Home

In Germany, as everywhere else in the world, the manner in which homes are built depends primarily on the climate, on the form of life the people lead, and on their particular characteristics. A German can only lead the outdoor life of the south for a very few months in the year. He needs a shelter which will adequately protect him against rain, storm and cold. As very few Germans have unlimited means at their disposal, the majority of their homes must be erected without any luxury or extravagance. The expense of heating necessarily determines the size of the rooms, and they must be arranged close together so that they can be kept warm easily. A mere protective shelter, however, is of course not enough. German families spend so many hours of the year in their homes that it is their natural desire to make this little world of their own really ideal. They wish to feel absolutely secure within their own four walls and, on returning home after a hard day's work, they like to look forward to a place of rest and peaceful reunion. If they have to foregather indoors, they at least want their rooms to get as much air and light and sun as possible.

Everyone longs for nature and a strip of land directly in front of his door. They flock to the settlements on the outskirts of the cities where little houses for one or two families with pleasant gardens are being built in steadily increasing numbers. A sheltered balcony or an arbour where fresh air may be enjoyed even on rainy days is now to be found almost everywhere.

Healthy Homes for Everybody

The creation of a simple home for the peasant, the worker and the industrious citizen is the task most willingly undertaken by all responsible persons in National Socialist Germany. Pure air and healthy living conditions are to produce capable generations of people of a positive turn of mind; tidiness, cleanliness, and freshness are to be their determining impressions from an early age. As many people as possible are to benefit from improved modern living conditions. As most homes only have limited means at their disposal, this great ideal of a fully awakened social consciousness and of a new interpretation of what is meant by a strong and vigorous people can only be obtained by the systematic use of all the technical possibilities at our disposal, and by a careful survey of actual requirements. Consequently every effort has been made to further this during the past twenty years or more. Using the outstanding reconstructive work of the "Deutscher Werkbund" as a basis, architects, artisans,

industrialists, and in particular the housing authorities are doing their utmost to provide homes and furniture of the best type for everybody — that is, at a very low price. A recent exhibition in Germany of household furniture of good workmanship at prices of “under RM 500” per suite points to the success of these efforts. In housebuilding also, a high level of organization and economy was reached after the Great War and especially so since the National-Socialist revolution. Meanwhile every German is being enlightened on these matters particularly by the press, in order that his taste may be trained and his feeling for artistic form, technical thoroughness and proper workmanship developed. This will help him to have a clear conception of the type of home which will conform to his ideals, his purse and his practical requirements.

The New Simple Style of Furniture

In those homes which are becoming more and more general in Germany today, a really modern spirit is characteristically combined with all that is best in German tradition. The urgent desire to bring about healthy reforms and to reconstruct life on a new and a healthy basis has paved the way for simpler forms. The large part played in our lives by technical science compels the designers of homes and furniture to compete with the precision of technical products. However, their leanings towards a purely technical style are successfully checked by the realization that the true sources

of the life of every nation are to be found in a healthy peasant stock. Man's close link with the soil on which he lives is today so much a part of everyone's creed that even the best normal German city homes have a touch of rustic simplicity about them, which connects them tangibly with that part of the country in which they happen to be situated. This rustic element is supported by two further factors, by the ever increasing respect felt for old German craftsmanship with its unassuming ability and skill, on the one hand, and on the other hand by the sportsmanlike and martial spirit of modern Germany which has no use for anything which is not simple, generous, or practical. — Each of the determining factors enumerated above has its own ethical value. Therefore the contribution which Germany offers to European home culture today is a happy synthesis arising out of these ethical qualities; it consists of furniture and rooms having genuine and unassuming characteristics.

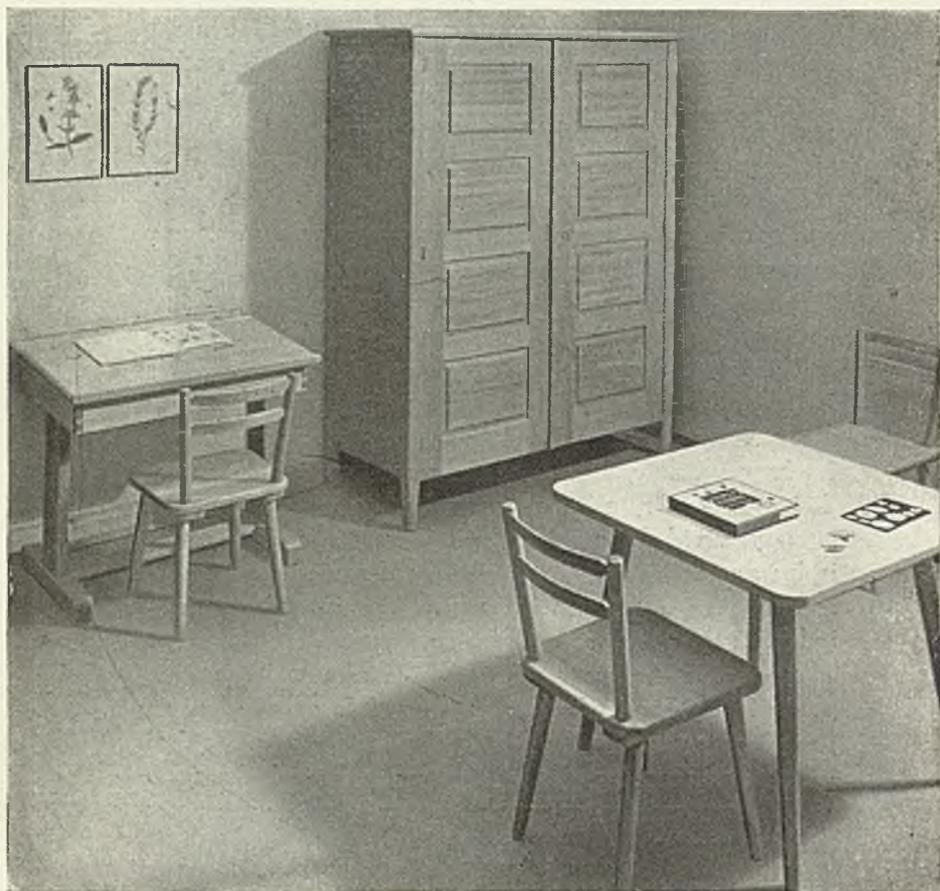
The Home as Environment

The revival of German national life on a completely new basis, and its passionate devotion to great political and social ideals led also to a more marked contrast between the eternal opposites in nature; the man became more manly, the woman more womanly; the rights of leadership and followers became more pronounced; work and leisure became more clearly defined and, in proportion as increased might and a

desire for adequate representation was reflected in the new governmental buildings, so the home itself became simpler and cosier. Its ancient sanctity had been restored by the recognition that the family is the nucleus of the nation; despite the raw political atmosphere in the world outside, the home became a place of seclusion and personal intimacy. This tendency was of course supported by the special home-making faculties of the German mother and father, as well as by the architect and furniture designer. By choosing good proportions and colours, by a careful division of the available space and a due consideration for light, architects are now designing homes fitted to be the ideal surroundings for happy family life — at the same time the furniture designers supply all that is required to make the rooms homely, vivid, harmonious and easy to run. The result is by no means only a tastefully designed interior — it is rather a place with which the inhabitants can identify themselves and become intimately familiar. The room is the environment which almost becomes a part of ourselves, which adapts itself to us, renders us practical service and makes us feel as we want to feel — at the same time it is the medium and the echo of all those good impulses which are to guide ourselves and our family.

Nothing Unnecessary

An orderly furnishing of small rooms presents its problems, therefore certain well-known principles will always have to be observed. The dining-table with its



Nursery

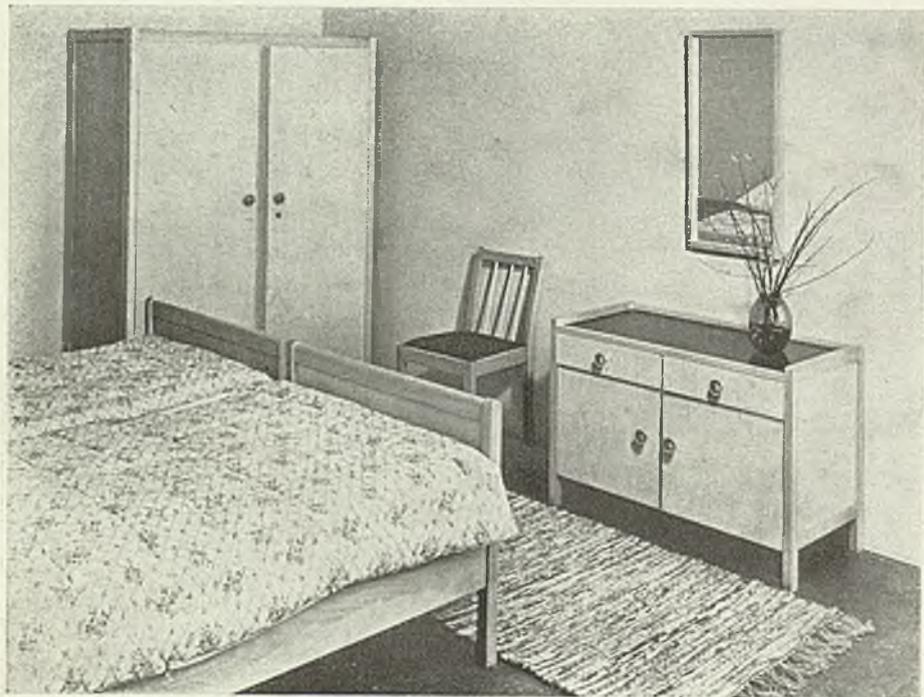
Prof. H. Gretsch, Stuttgart



Living-room in a settlement

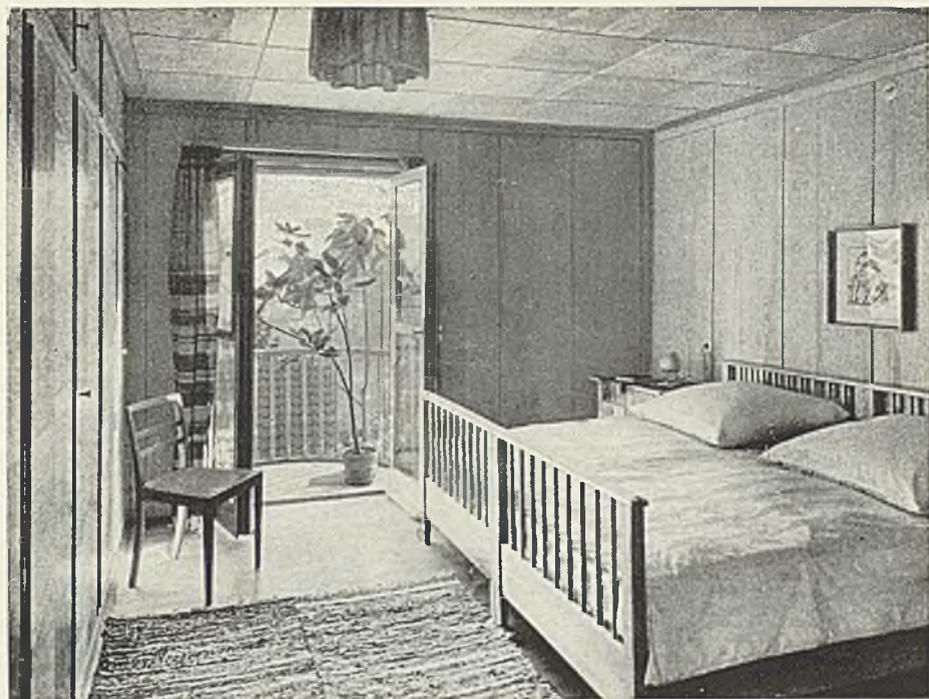
H. Maier, Stuttgart





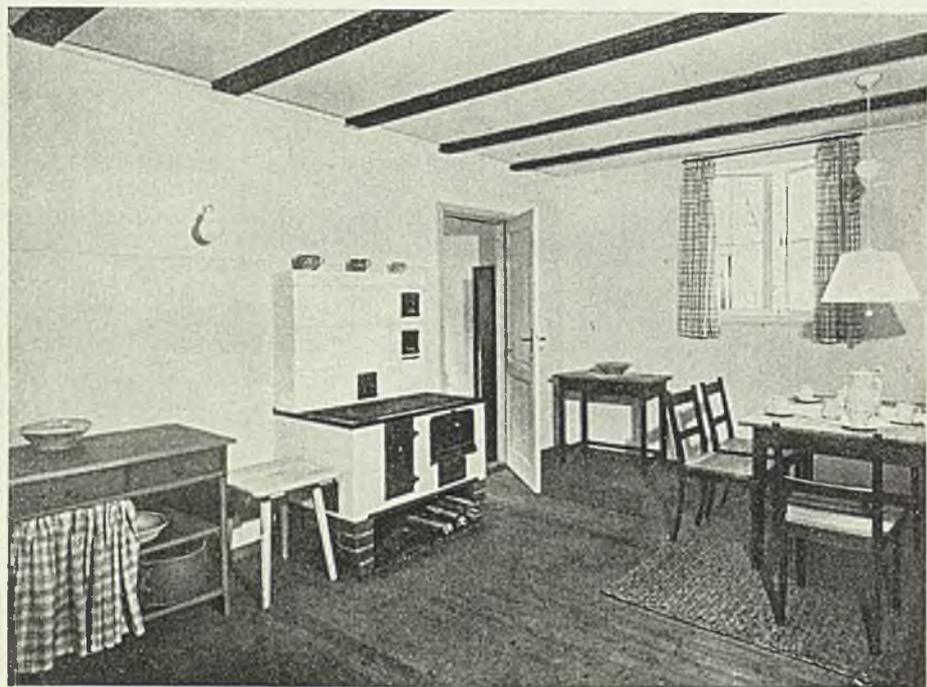
Bedroom

Architekt Hartl, Frankfurt



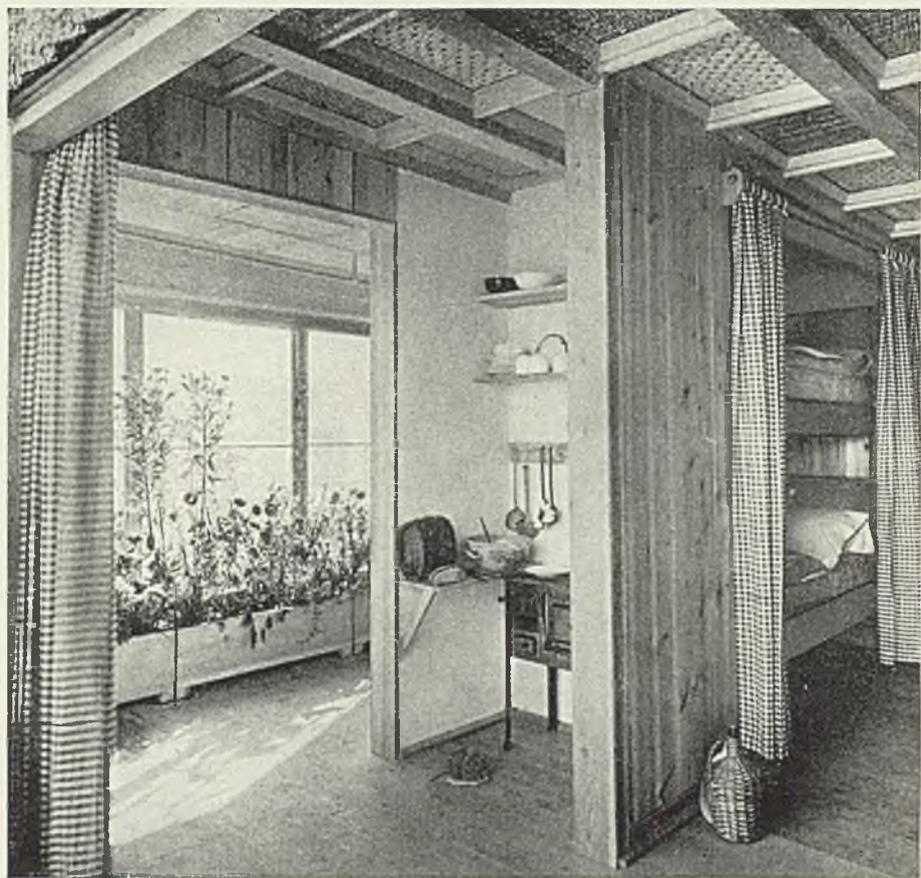
Bedroom

E. Krüger, Stuttgart



Combined kitchen and living-room

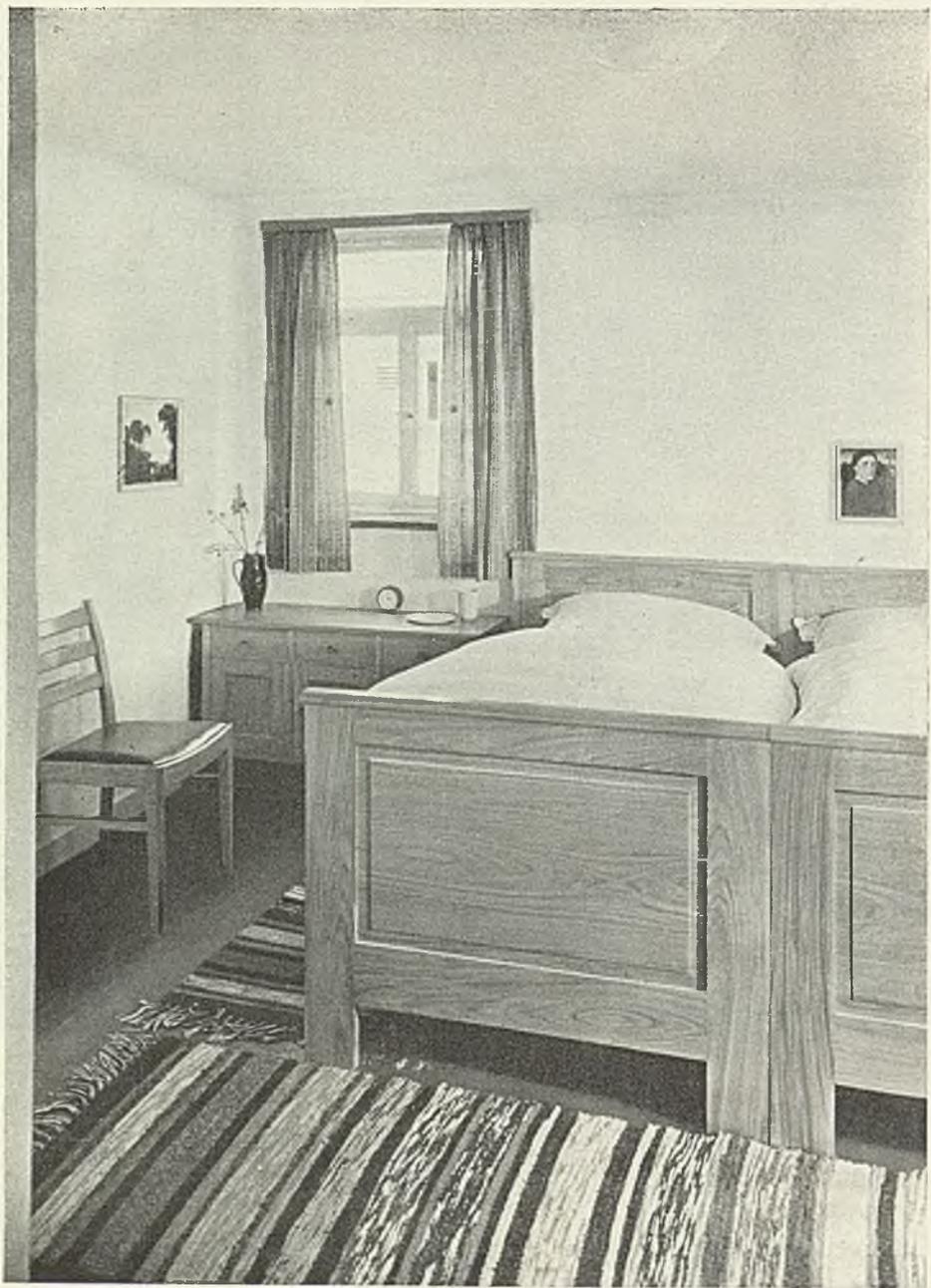
Reichsheimstättenamt, Berlin



Interior of a week-end house

F. Krüger, Stuttgart

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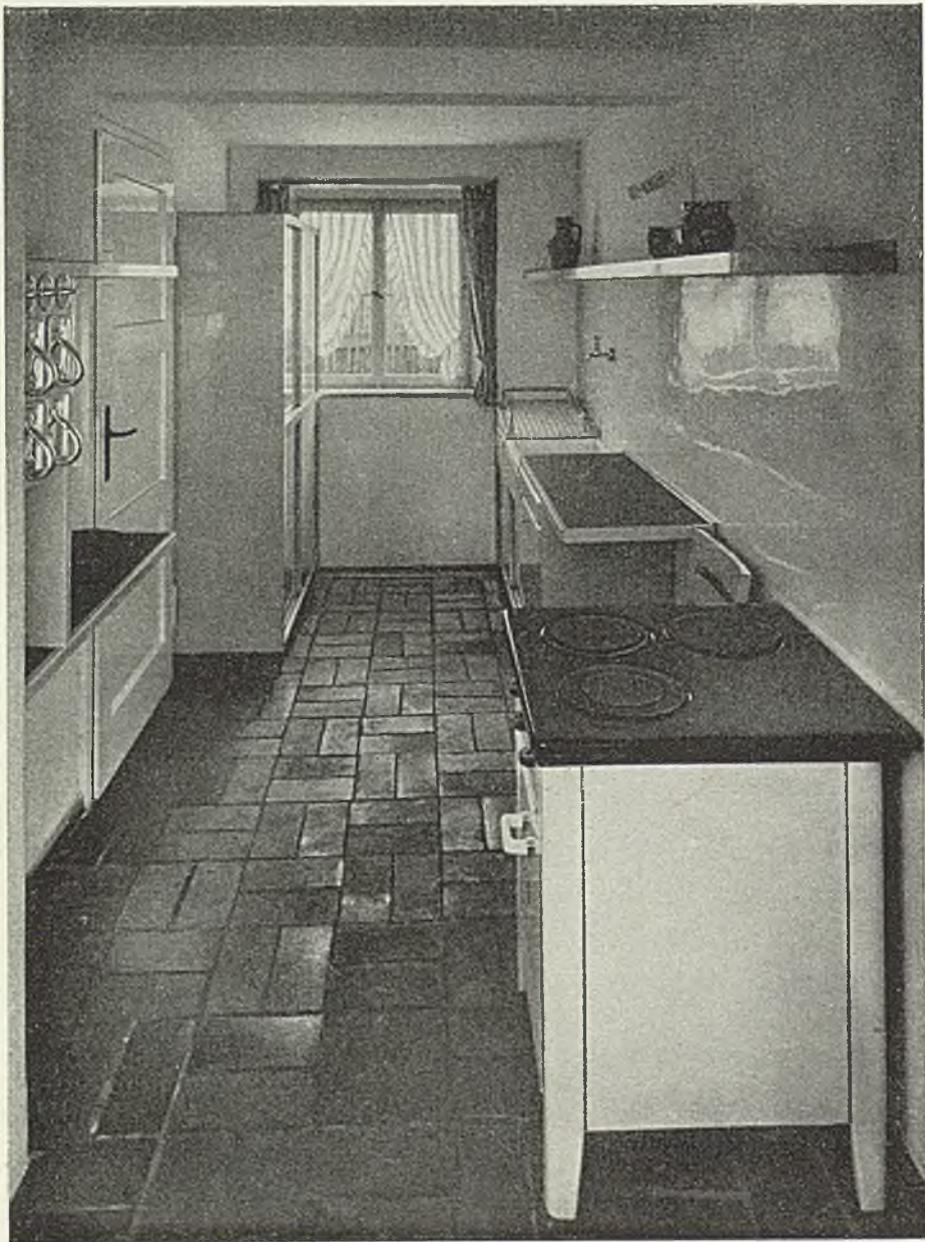
Bedroom

Bauberatungsstelle. Stuttgart



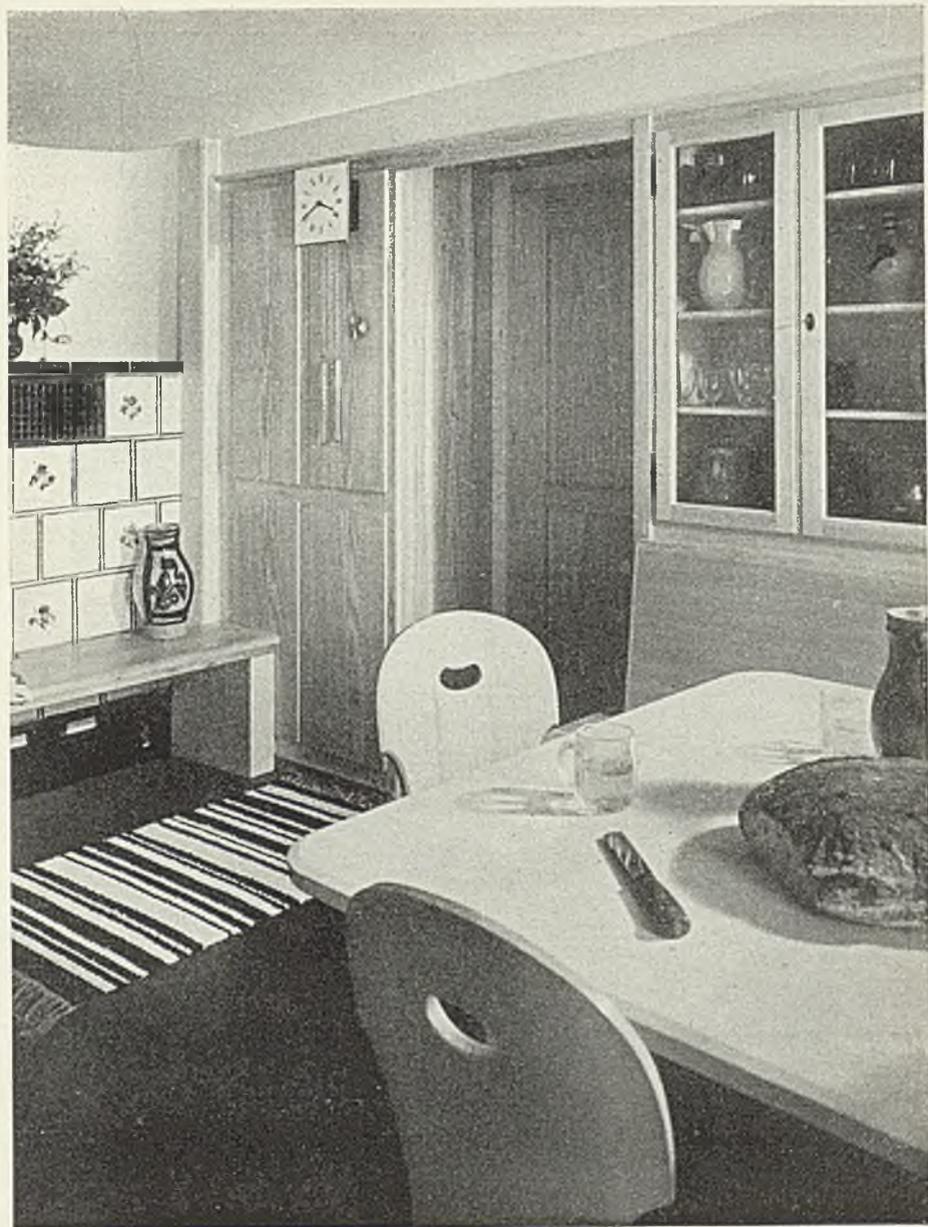
Part of a peasant room

Bauberatungsstelle, Stuttgart



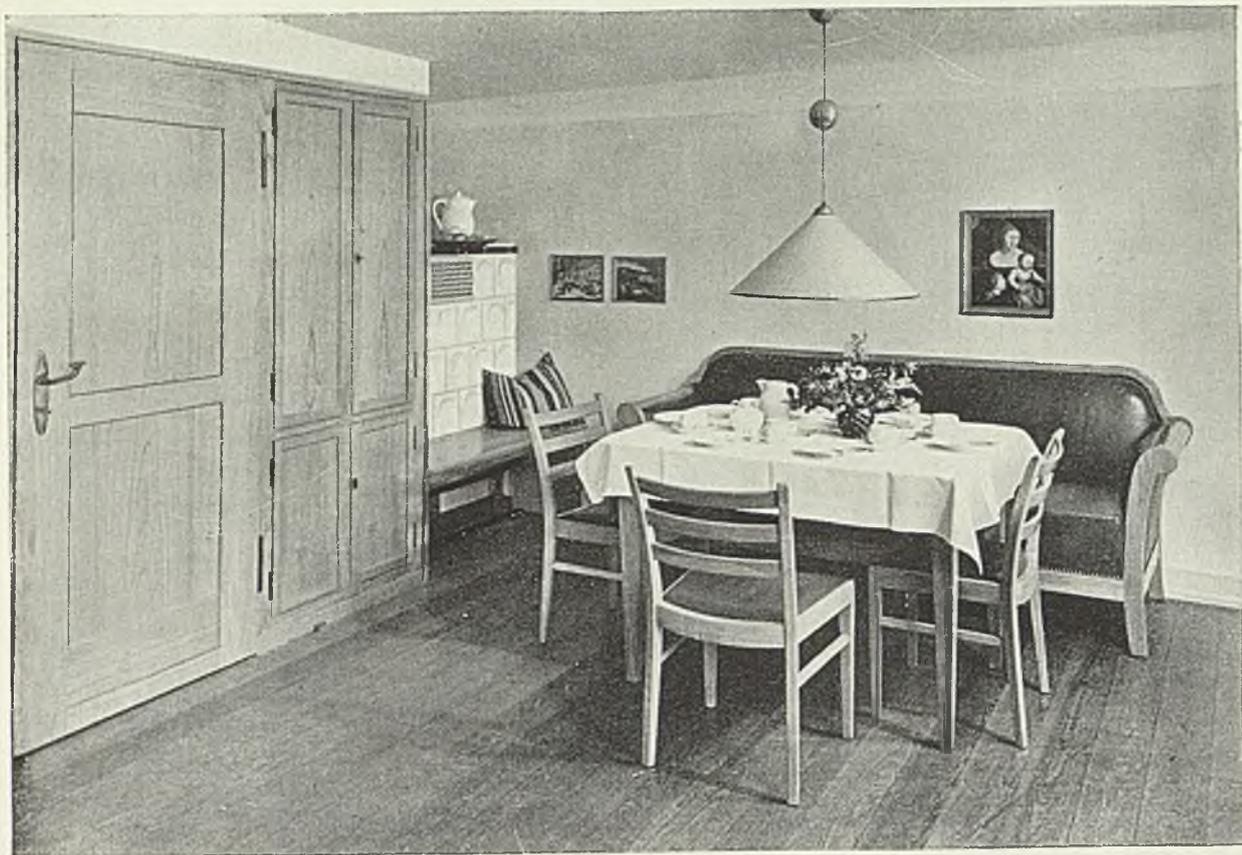
Kitchen in a worker's settlement

H. A. Burgardt, Düsseldorf



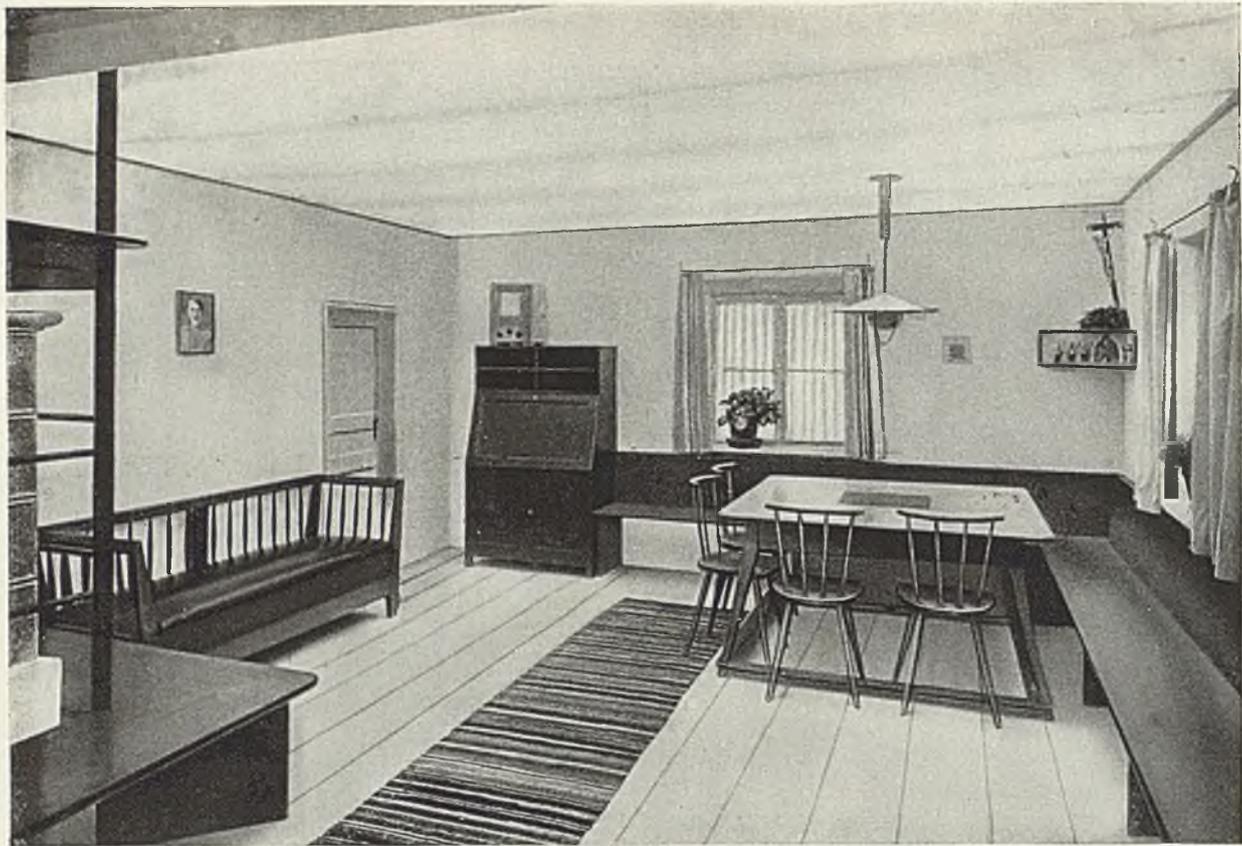
A peasant room

Bauberatungsstelle, Stuttgart



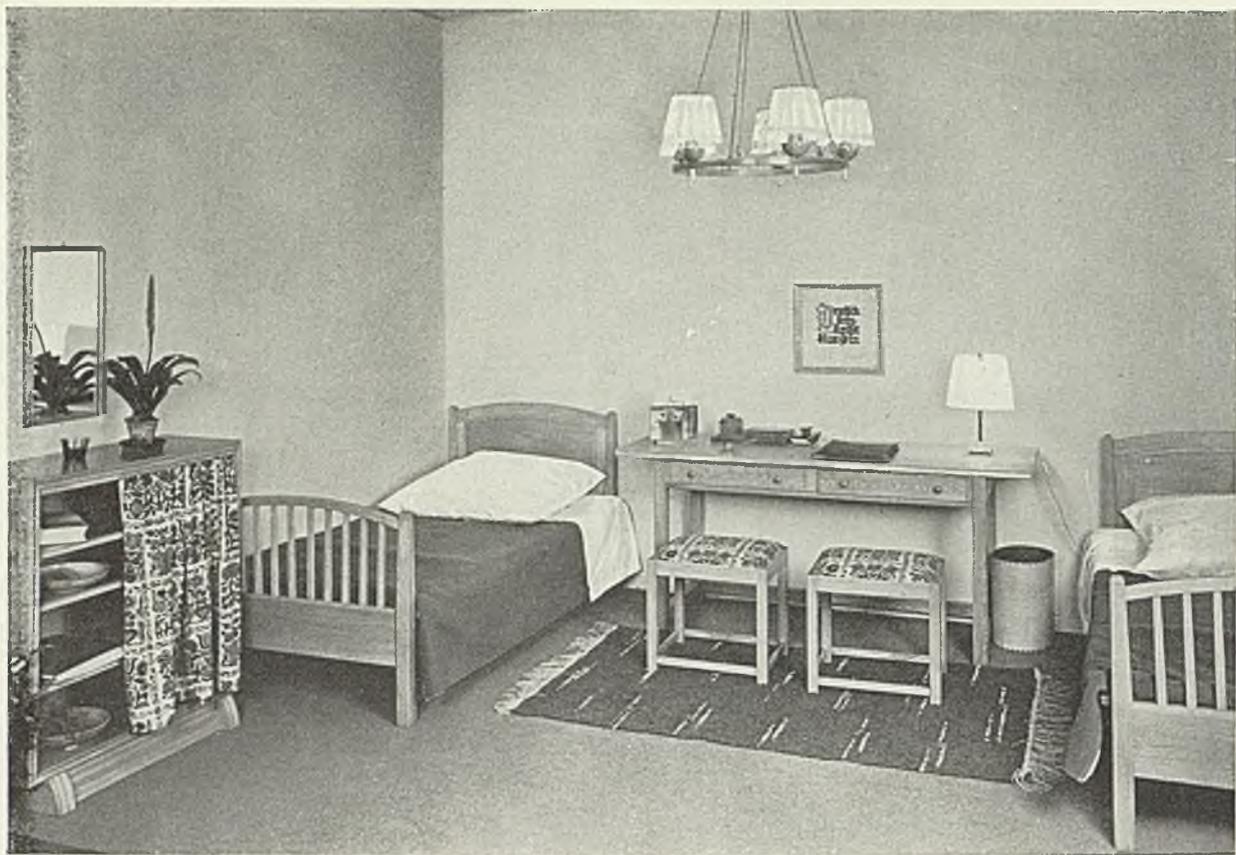
Living-room.

Bauberatungsstelle. Stuttgart



A peasant room.

Architekt Holzhammer and Architekt Zeitler



Boy's room

Architekt Wilkesmann, Berlin

chairs will always tend to be placed under the hanging lamp in the centre of the room, or in front of the sofa, or in the corner by the window; the sideboard will generally be somewhere near the door of the room. The natural place for the chest of drawers is against a short wall, and the two beds in the principal bedroom will generally occupy a main wall. As all this leaves little scope for a creative imagination, German architects are particularly anxious to avoid overcrowding the rooms. They have taken up arms against everything that is unnecessary and against the gigantic pieces of furniture which almost crushed life itself out of their owners, and made the room appear as if it were designed for the furniture alone. Nothing in the room is allowed to occupy more space than is strictly necessary. Cupboards are made as shallow as possible and thus have pleasing lines, their inside space is planned with the greatest care so that each shelf has its special purpose. No unnecessary money is spent on materials so that furniture prices may be kept low, while approved methods of construction guarantee durability. Austere primary forms are chosen which provide scope for imagination and good taste. Light-coloured furniture is preferred in a plain and simple style in order to avoid dark shadows in the rooms. Great attention is paid to its utility and its suitability for community life, since furniture must always be the servant of man. Such furniture as we now have has been dubbed "the comrade of the home" in Germany. The home is furnished with a number of good pieces of furniture belonging to no definite period but

yet designed for their original function. They are therefore easily rearranged when wanted, or in case of removal to a new home. At the same time, the addition of any furniture of a similar style is a simple matter.

Careful Utilization of Available Space

As the normal home might still appear small in actual space and the number of its rooms, Germany is also systematically following up other possibilities of extending the modest four walls of the home. Important progress has been made in two directions, although both involved a considerable change in the customary manner of living. On the one hand, the drawing-room, which had never had any real significance in the average home and was only required for social entertainment on a large scale, was abandoned and, on the other hand, the architects definitely took into consideration the use of rooms for a double purpose, a use to which they had already been put in practice. This double use applied principally to the bedrooms and the kitchen. The kitchen was turned into a combined living-room and kitchen, a "kitchen-living-room," with a comfortable place where meals could be served, and pleasing furniture; the bedroom had to become a room which was also available during the day. A number of similar solutions are common everywhere today. A corner where the mother can work is very often found in the parents' bedroom,

whilst the bedroom of the children offers opportunities for work and play. In order to save space, the beds are often arranged in sleeping-car fashion one above the other, or they are of the folding type that can be hidden in a recess or behind a curtain. Such a solution is often preferred today by unmarried business people who are out all day. If possible, the bed is arranged in an alcove and some suitable corner is utilized as a miniature kitchen. For the same reason the sofa in the living-room is often replaced by a flat couch. It may serve as a spare bed for visitors, and saves an extra bed. Wherever the bedrooms and the kitchen are used for their original purpose only, they are designed on a small cabin-like scale. In the case of the kitchen this requires a careful study of the different working processes, but the co-operation of housewives, architects, plumbers and furniture designers has led to final and happy solutions in this respect also.

The Large Living-Room and the Home of the Peasant

All this carefully planned economy centres in the intention of providing even the most modest home with at least one room of a more pronounced character, that is, the actual living-room. This room, which should always be airy and suitably warm, is the principal feature and in many instances now an established fact in the design of German homes. It is the room in which

the family meets. Its size in itself makes it the true centre of the home and indicates that it is meant for large families. It shows that the large family, the family with many children, has become the great wish and desire of most people in modern Germany. At the same time it expresses the wishes of people who will not be satisfied for ever with cramped conditions, but who are willing to save in order to secure at least something of that breathing space and freedom of movement which is theirs by right.

— A large living-room had always been an established feature of a German peasant home. The question of the arrangement of its furniture was therefore solved many years ago. This room, in fact, has now become in many senses a model for the main room in the average German home. Our large peasant's room always has two centres — the first is the stove which is erected against an inside wall having its back to the kitchen from where the stove is heated, the second being the corner bench under the windows. The movable furniture of the room is grouped around these two focal points. Near the stove we find benches, couches or comfortable armchairs. The dining-table and chairs are found in the window corner round which runs the window-seat. Sometimes a cupboard or the like stands next to this seat. This arrangement of the furniture creates two distinctive units within the room which serve different purposes and only take up a fraction of the floorspace, leaving the inmates plenty of room to move, all the more so since the other equipment, such as built-in cupboards, a standing clock and the like, often form

part of the wainscoting of the walls. In view of the steadily increasing inclination to copy the style of city homes in the country, the genuine peasant room was in danger until recently of disappearing altogether — and it was for this reason that the National-Socialist movement devoted particular attention to it. The country people were taught to recognize again the particular dignity of their furniture and household equipment, and the two principal centres of their living room were made as attractive as possible. Furniture designers were encouraged to make benches, tables, cupboards and presses of solid and well-seasoned wood grown in Germany to hold the trousseau of the peasant bride; old and tested combinations of wood were chosen, and primitive forms and outlines were recalled to life. In the same way the heavy tiled stove was restored to its place of honour, as well as the old kinds of floor coverings and the multi-coloured peasant patterns for textile goods. Bright colours and healthy vigour were thus made the basis for the new home of the peasant and also for homes in smaller settlements. In the latter the beds with their gaily coloured curtains are often accommodated in recesses made by the slope of the roof. This attention paid to old peasant customs is by no means a fashionable return to the primitive, such as could be observed in the products of many countries on the occasion of the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937. The best proof of this is the fact that we have peasant furniture and peasant homes in Germany today which conform to the general style of homes and are distinguished from city homes only because they are adapted to the requirements and the particular character of the

peasant. This new style of peasant-home, which takes due account of the change in the peasant himself, is coming more and more to the fore.

Grouping

The ideas which, vice versa, the peasant home suggested for the city home arose in the first instance from the distinctive grouping of the furniture in the peasant living-room, from the arrangement of two centres round the window seat and the stove, from the built-in cupboards, and finally from the feeling of comfort which was so characteristic of the peasant home. Wherever the size of simple German living-rooms permits, it is becoming more and more general to group the principal pieces of furniture round certain points within the room. The dining table takes its place, by preference, in a corner; even when meals are usually served in the kitchen-living-room, a dining table surrounded by benches and chairs is provided for the entertainment of casual visitors. Often this part of the wall is panelled to match. The armchair at the window has book-shelves, a reading lamp, and some footstools close by to which may be added a flower stand or some decorative indoor plant. There is also a strong inclination to place a small cupboard or tea-wagon or a wireless set next to the sofa, and surprising sacrifices are made for the tiled stove and the comfortable chairs it requires. In general, such a stove is too extravagant

for a single medium-sized room, and it is therefore mostly designed to heat adjoining rooms or rooms on the first floor as well. These rooms can then do without a separate stove, which arrangement meets the general desire to save as much space as possible.

*A Sensible Standard
but no Uniformity*

There was no intention of prescribing a severe and uniform type of sofa and armchairs for the new German home and especially for the furniture grouped around the stove. In consequence of the grouping of furniture the room will always appear orderly and harmonious, therefore one may well venture to include separate pieces of furniture of distinctly different styles upholstered in various ways. The fundamental types are now so clearly defined, they are all distinguished by their expression of simple technical and human honesty, that even completely different pieces fit harmoniously into the home, while at the same time a new element of freedom and variety is exhibited. The individual note and spontaneous grouping of these separate pieces emphasize the comparatively large space which the room allows for our movement, and permit us to recognize their pleasing freshness in contrast to the otherwise more severe furniture. The absence of any attempt at conforming to a pattern permits less important features to be added, such as a shelf, a stool,

a bird-cage, a wastepaper basket of raffia work, or the like. The danger of subsequent overcrowding is effectively checked by the good taste already prevailing in most new German homes. The walls are papered in light colours or are panelled, and are hung with only a few pleasing pictures. The large windows have curtains which let in plenty of light, and attractive but simple lamps are provided. In general there is so much unconscious dignity and so much commonsense and homeliness in the home of even the simplest German family that there is often no longer any fundamental difference between the homes of thrifty families living in settlements and those of larger means. Architects and designers of homes — not unlike those in France — take a special pride in designing homes particularly suited for special ranks and professions, yet it not infrequently happens that despite their generally so successful efforts, a brain worker, for instance, may buy furniture which was originally designed for an artisan, simply because he cannot find anything else which appeals to him in the same price range. Thus the solidarity of National-Socialist Germany is expressed even in this newly acquired similarity. And yet the unmistakably similar tendency in all modern German homes is not bought at the price of uniformity. That would be wholly impossible in view of the traditional characteristics of the numerous German regions which have been even more emphasized since National Socialism came to power. The region of the Lower Rhine with its neatly tiled rooms, the North of Germany with its severe oak furniture, the snug Black Forest, where everything is made of local warm pine-

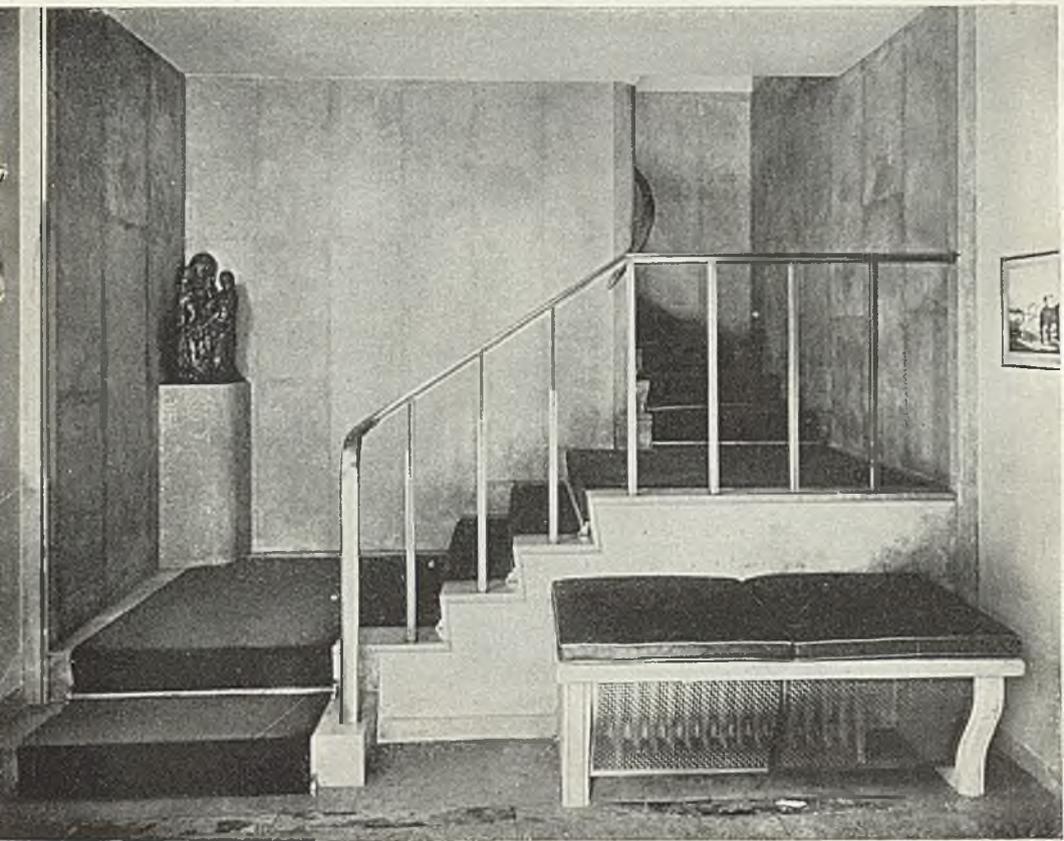
wood, Bavaria, the other large timbered region, with its gaily coloured furniture, its painted cupboards and its curved outlines of baroque design, Swabia with its clean comfort, the old culture of the Viennese district, the Tyrol with its characteristic and frugal inhabitants — all these guarantee rich variety, even when a uniform principle in the furnishing of rooms is observed, and prove again and again what a rich diversity of life a large nation is able to provide.

The refusal on the part of the German architects and designers of furniture to bow to the whims of fashion is also a point that should not be overlooked. The functionalism of a Le Corbusier, the eccentricity of so many other European designers is firmly combated by a commonsense attitude which no doubt has a future far beyond the German borders: it is not by chance that the conformity with Sweden is so unmistakable, that country which is a master in the designing of homes. The German attitude is unobtrusive and large-hearted, it has nothing programmatical about it, such as the work of Victor Bourgeois, the Belgian. Occasionally it resembles rather the practical comfort of the American furniture of Howe & Lescaze and others. As plain and good furniture is now generally preferred throughout Germany, the sharp contrast between the simple and the well-to-do home has disappeared. In this respect, too, much greater uniformity has been achieved and the two types resemble each other far more than they differ. This does not, however, prevent the German leading class from pointing

the way in the creation of model homes in this style, it only emphasizes the fact that they are doing so.

The Example set by the Homes of the Leading Classes

Wherever upper classes properly fulfil the responsibilities which are theirs in the nation to which they belong, they do not only take the lead in politics, science and industry but they must also visibly reflect the highest form of their nation's culture in the social side of their private lives. They should create surroundings for themselves which reflect the wide range and the influence of the spheres which they administer and should secure for themselves the necessary conditions for a perfect execution of their exceptional mission -- a place for their social entertainments where they can have that exchange of ideas which is a vital necessity for them, a fitting background for their work and a distinguished home for the few hours of relaxation left to them in their intimate family circle. It is a matter of course that, at the same time, they should set an example and lead the way in the general standard of living. Their courage and their wide outlook cause them to demand more of the artist and the artisan, just as they demand more of themselves and, since they are accustomed to bringing large projects to a successful issue and have the necessary means at their disposal, they are able to realize their wishes. Accordingly they are the first to adapt their homes to modern



Entrance

Prof. F. A. Breuhäus



A spacious room

H. Eitel, Stuttgart



Dining-room

Prof. Bruno Paul, Berlin



Music-room

Prof. Nothelfer, Berlin



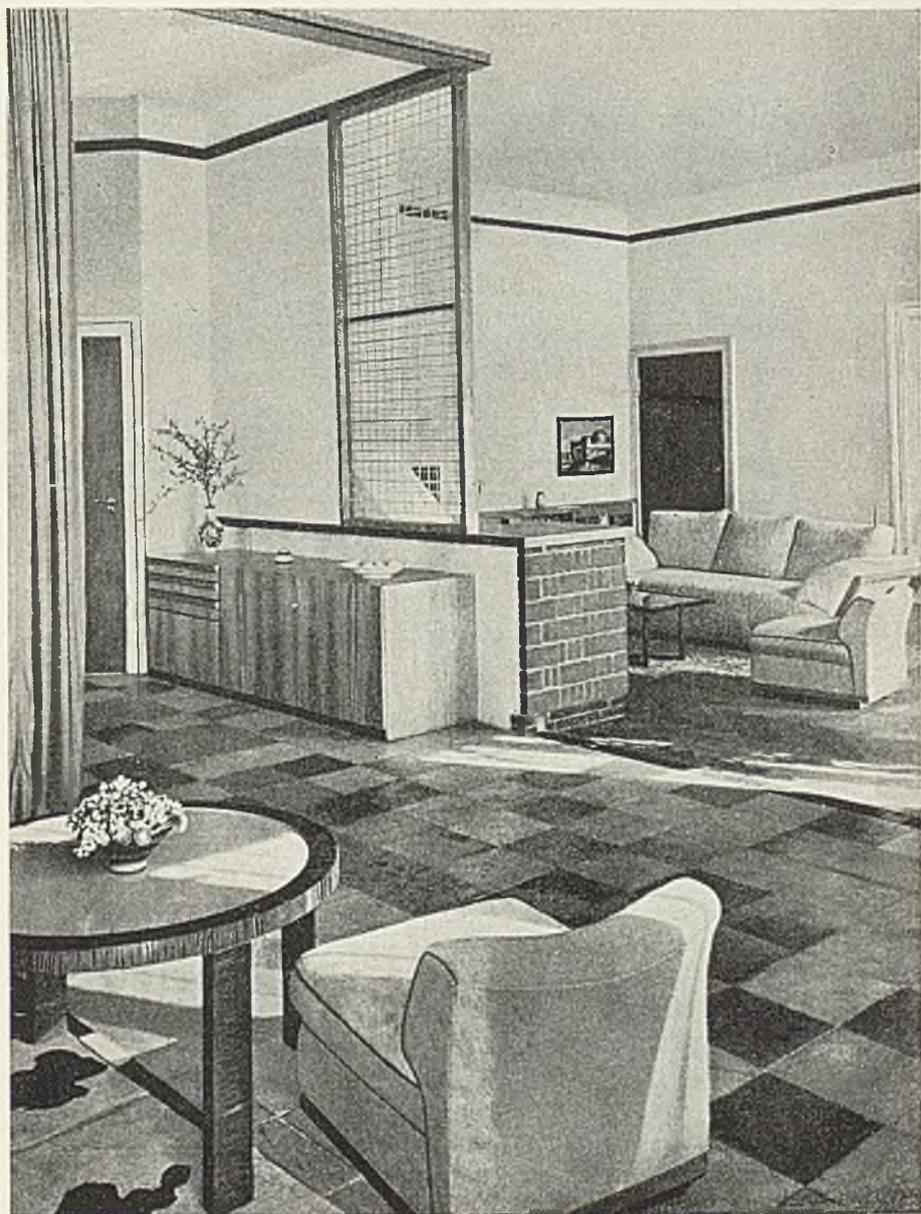
Corner by a window

H. Pommer, Nürnberg



Bedroom

J. Behringer, Schwaigern



Room divided into sections

R. von Steinbüchel, Berlin

conditions; here these conditions find an expression which, within reasonable limits, may serve as an example for the rest of the community.

Technical Progress and the Elimination of the Unsuitable

The part played by the leading classes in the reform of homes in general can hardly be over-estimated in Germany. In close co-operation with architects and technical engineers, the well-to-do classes have persistently trained craftsmen and industry in the comfortable equipment of a home, and have urged them to adhere to a standard of the highest quality. The large German town house, the suburban villa and the country house have, since the turn of the century, been the scenes of countless experiments in the most suitable form of living and have thus fulfilled an important social task. But the experience thus gained has only quite recently been placed at the disposal of the nation in general, now that the revolutionary revival of national life has caused the technical engineer and the craftsman to conform to clearly defined social laws and laws of taste. We often forget what an enormous amount of technical organization was necessary before new ideas could be introduced into the home of the small settler. We are referring in the first instance to very simple things, so important nevertheless for the beauty of a home, such as the replacing of ugly Venetian blinds by revolving shutters or more primi-

tive hinged shutters, to the invisible laying of electric cables and conduits inside the walls, to inconspicuous light switches and concealed plugs, to the improved laying of stove-pipes, the fixing of radiators underneath windows or behind decorative casings, to fitted basins in the bedrooms, to a more attractive form for all sanitary fittings and to ground plans allowing for a well-lighted but not too spacious staircase, as well as for verandahs, recesses for built-in cupboards, etc. Down to the handle on the door and the bolt on the window every little detail had to be given a new form. All this had to be planned and executed at some time or another, and Germany, whose electrical industry — to quote one instance — has always been pre-eminent, could take a leading part in this reconstructive work.

Each of these technical improvements will simplify housework. Hence they will first of all benefit the domestic workers in large households, and in the long run, too, the hard-working housewife in the smallest home. The new style of furnishing has had an equally beneficial influence. In former times when the simple man modelled his home on that of the well-to-do, he crowded it with things which meant nothing to him. Today the well-to-do German home contains mainly objects which conform to the commonsense standard and are therefore really worth imitating. All this reveals a lively sense of responsibility and an obvious desire of joining hands with the lower classes. The well-to-do German home today is designed on simpler lines than need be when we consider its traditional luxury and the means at its disposal, simply because

its owners are conscious of the fact that it will inevitably be used as a model by others. To some extent certainly they are also aware that this greater simplicity will indirectly benefit themselves and they desire it for this reason. The aim of every modern well-to-do home in Germany is to plan its rooms without an unnecessary display of splendour, at the same time allowing them to express the elevated station of their owners and to radiate the atmosphere of a cultivated home without any empty artifice.

Where a fine feeling for form exists, simplicity will always appear elegant, in fact it is the real secret of distinction. For this reason the return to the simple line in furniture and the elimination of all obtrusive technical fittings has contributed much towards perfecting the beauty of the well-to-do German home. Technical progress has simplified the planning of spaces and surfaces. By eliminating everything that is unnecessary, each room becomes more independent and more clearly defined and more scope is given to really artistic decoration. This excellent technical equipment of the well-to-do home is, of course, not a German prerogative, and is shared by all cultured nations, but Germany has made use of the advantage it offers in her own particular way. She has produced stately rooms with no jarring note, her simplifying tendency was inspired by a real love of simplicity and, since the National-Socialist revolution she has put a decided stop to any compromise with the outward attractions of technical form. Much as she respects the work of engineers, she does not wish to be reminded of it too

openly in the home circle. Of course the designers are welcome to provide large rooms with correspondingly large windows, such as are essential for the homes of the leading classes — but the rest is left to individual taste, which also has to decide whether the room shall have a monumental or a more spontaneous character.

The Sumptuous Home

When a home is really spacious, the relation between the furniture and the size of the room is generally more favourable than in homes where space is restricted. A few heavy pieces of furniture can then be included to dominate the whole room, as they often do in castles and in certain peasant rooms in the north. The large house has plenty of space to spare for the accommodation of the smaller objects of every-day use, hence they can be banished from the rooms and replaced by furniture of a more monumental type. As a feeling for authority and the art of bold planning is greatly developed in the Germany of today, the most distinguished homes in this country naturally make full use of what these qualities can offer. The dining-rooms in such homes are furnished with a long side-board that dominates one whole wall, with a broad and massive cupboard for china and glass, a large dining-table and the requisite number of chairs. In the reception room we find a decorative fireplace surrounded by roomy armchairs, next to or opposite to it stand wide couches with appropriate tables and smaller

chairs, and finally far back in the room, standing alone and outlined against the plain wall, there is the grand piano. The most effective monumental simplicity is often to be found in the large halls which are again finding favour. In many cases a dark oak chest, a heavy table, or a group of chairs upholstered in leather are the only furniture. Experience has shown that the customary severe outline of modern furniture at times appears somewhat harsh and uninviting when used for large pieces. They are therefore frequently replaced by more magnificent pieces of the best German period furniture, or a broad-minded move is made to turn for inspiration, as far as inlaid work and outward form are concerned, to fine pieces of furniture dating back to previous centuries. Such motives account for the reappearance of the polished Flemish chandelier in dining-rooms and halls and for the crystal chandelier in reception rooms. Carefully chosen colours, transparent curtains, beautiful carpets and particularly tapestries, the making of which has recently been revived as a fine art, contribute towards removing from these "state rooms" all trace of unsuitable pretentiousness and succeed in restoring to them an atmosphere of distinguished warmth.

Although this new German manner of furnishing has obviously readopted the European tradition of the grand style, the individually German note has by no means been sacrificed. Germany has recently recalled certain outstanding figures of her own past history who were very closely linked with that aristocratic tradition. It is moreover only a sign of a closer contact with

our ancestors if old-fashioned pieces of furniture are allowed to reappear side by side with modern ones and are even given a place of honour. It should be noted that even the severest of rooms is not allowed to become part of any conventional scheme. The furnishing of a large room in the grand style naturally revolves upon its main axes, but in Germany symmetry is never so strictly adhered to as it often is in the Latin countries. Occasion is always found for indicating the other type of symmetry, namely, the unconventional, and in this way an element of German freedom of movement and animation is retained even in the "state room".

Freedom from Convention in the Well-to-do Middle Class Home

A wholly unconventional arrangement of the furniture is now the rule in the richly furnished principal rooms of the well-to-do German middle class home whose chief characteristic is its comfort. Here too, space and subdued forms are the main aim, and the monumental is avoided. Accordingly the size of the rooms is confined to certain limits. Their symmetrical arrangement is rendered impossible by the fact that these rooms have to serve various purposes, such as reading, entertaining, music, etc.; therefore the larger pieces of furniture must leave room for many small accessories. The danger of a certain amount of overcrowding cannot always be avoided and this very fact induced designers

of interiors to create new and characteristic methods of furnishing. They adopted measures which on the whole are similar to the technical innovations to which we have already referred.

The characteristic feature of our more comfortable middle class homes is their attempt to reduce the number of objects standing about the rooms without dispensing with anything that is essential. The easiest way of doing this is to replace cupboards in bedrooms and living-rooms by the built-in types and by introducing shelves which are attached to the wall. If the walls are panelled, the whole wall can be used for a built-in cupboard, or shallow cupboards and bookshelves can be arranged next to doors and windows. The space round the fireplace or the radiator may be utilized in the same way. Cupboards can also be arranged to form a recess for a seat, and in the bedroom such a recess can be used for the bed itself. The front casing of such built-in cupboards is not always continuous, it may contain open or glassed-in spaces or a locked portion, behind which, say, a writing-table may be concealed. Great skill is necessary to divide up this surface in a convincing manner. A built-in cupboard that takes up the whole wall may often appear rather too monotonous. This can be relieved by allowing the bottom of the cupboard to project in the form of a long bench under which deep shelves are accommodated. The result is a long straight line -- an idea that can be repeated elsewhere in the room, particularly in the corner by the window

with its window-seat where the meals are served, or in the intentionally prolonged corner sofas in the reception room. The mantelpiece and the casing of the radiators are often so arranged as to continue this straight line. They can then be used for small figures, shells, cut-glass or other vases etc., a few of which look well when distributed on these flat surfaces.

This desire for collective arrangement results — as it does in the simple home — in placing different kinds of furniture close together, especially low shelves and seats, even in places where the wall is long enough to accommodate each piece separately. This implies a natural return to the unconventional solutions which have their origin in the main room of the German peasant's home — to the pleasant free wall spaces and the relative emptiness that characterize these rooms. Once an inconspicuous place has been found for a large number of the individual pieces of furniture that fill the main room of the middle class family or once they have been arranged in free groups along the walls, the rest of the furniture can be dealt with at will without running the risk of disorder or overcrowding. Small objects, tables and easy chairs can be accommodated near sofa or other corners, near the window-seat and particularly near the fireplace. Fireplaces, moreover, have once more become an indispensable requisite in a cultivated room, they prove that German technical skill is not always to have the last word, and they remind us of the secret of the hearth and of everything elementary, which today is honoured as seldom before.

Sectional Furnishing and Space

Groups of furniture in window corners, near the stove, in a reading corner, etc. are, as already stated, the rule in the simple German home of today, and they multiply in number as the home increases in comfort. The comfortable middle class home is now developing a new characteristic type of furnishing based on independent groups of furniture. The entire room is divided up into sections; in the various parts of it different groups of furniture are to be found, some still requiring completion. A writing-table, for instance, standing near a window and projecting into the room, or couches arranged on each side of the fireplace require some kind of finish for their bare backs. The back of the writing table is therefore often provided with open shelves for books or bric-a-brac, while the seats are backed with low shelves which again link up with another section of the room. Sectional furnishing has the additional advantage that the style of the furniture may be very varied without appearing promiscuous, since each section is an independent unit. The freedom of such sectional furnishing is often resorted to in Germany, but the sections are never severely defined. In other countries we often find a portion of a low wall or fixed projecting shelves being used to form these sections — in Germany we prefer a mere indication of the outlines and avoid every kind of fixture because we want to leave as much as possible of the spaciousness of the rooms and their connection with one another.

A broad level note running through the whole of the well-to-do middle class living-room is considered so important that everything is done to promote it. In particular, all the furniture, pedestals, seats, etc. are kept on a low level so as not to interrupt the open space above them, and to leave its full effect to the fundamental outline of the room with its clear wall surfaces. In order not to obstruct the line of sight, even the hanging lamp is often dispensed with and is replaced by a light let into the ceiling, indirect lighting and standing lamps. To increase the impression of space, pale and indefinite colours are chosen for the walls and curtains, and light-coloured wood, high polish and light-coloured covers for the furniture. Dark pictures and heavy frames are avoided, for they would only mark the limits of the room. Preference is given to delicately coloured pictures with large surfaces and narrow frames which almost merge into the wall. Only on exceptional occasions is the whole room lighted at night: in general, people foregather in the light shed by a single lamp in order to become conscious of the dim surrounding space.

The House as One Harmonious Whole

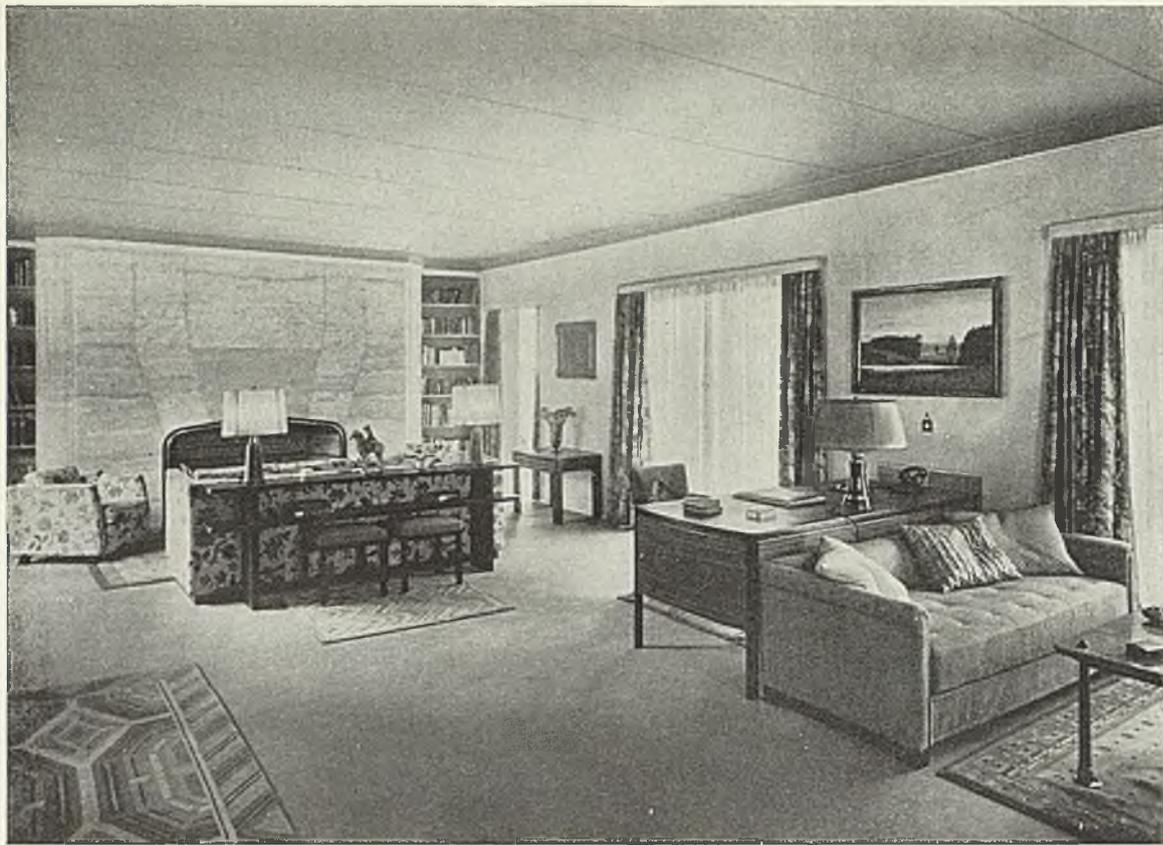
As a final expression of this desire for large open spaces, the windows of large German rooms are arranged to frame wide views of the garden or the countryside and make these part of the home. Sliding windows are used on the ground-floor, and large doors open out on to balconies, grass plots or courtyards

whose stone or brick pavement is often continued in the room or even throughout the whole house. At times even the divisions of the inside rooms are hardly defined. It is not so much a traditional range of rooms that is aimed at, but a real grouping of space, with a number of different perspectives and inexhaustible surprises. As the whole house is warmed by central heating, the vestibule, the hall and even the stairs can be included in the general scheme and the different floors are thus linked together. The whole house right up to the attics, which have also been newly discovered, gives the impression of a single unit, of a living whole with larger and smaller spaces artistically brought into harmony with one another, all giving proof of the clearly defined horizons, the steadfastness, the inner repose and the distinction of its inhabitants.



Hall arranged as a living-room

Prof. F. A. Breuhaus



Hall arranged as a living-room

Prof. F. A. Breuhaus



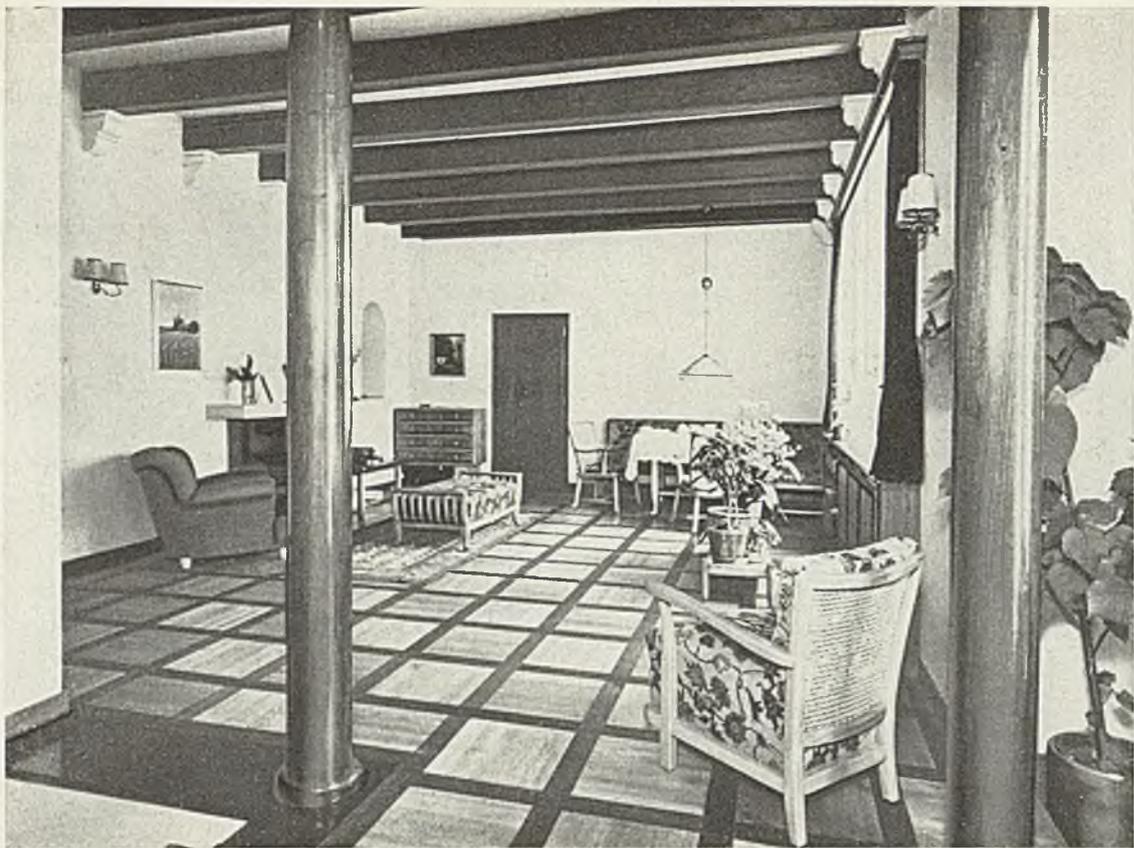
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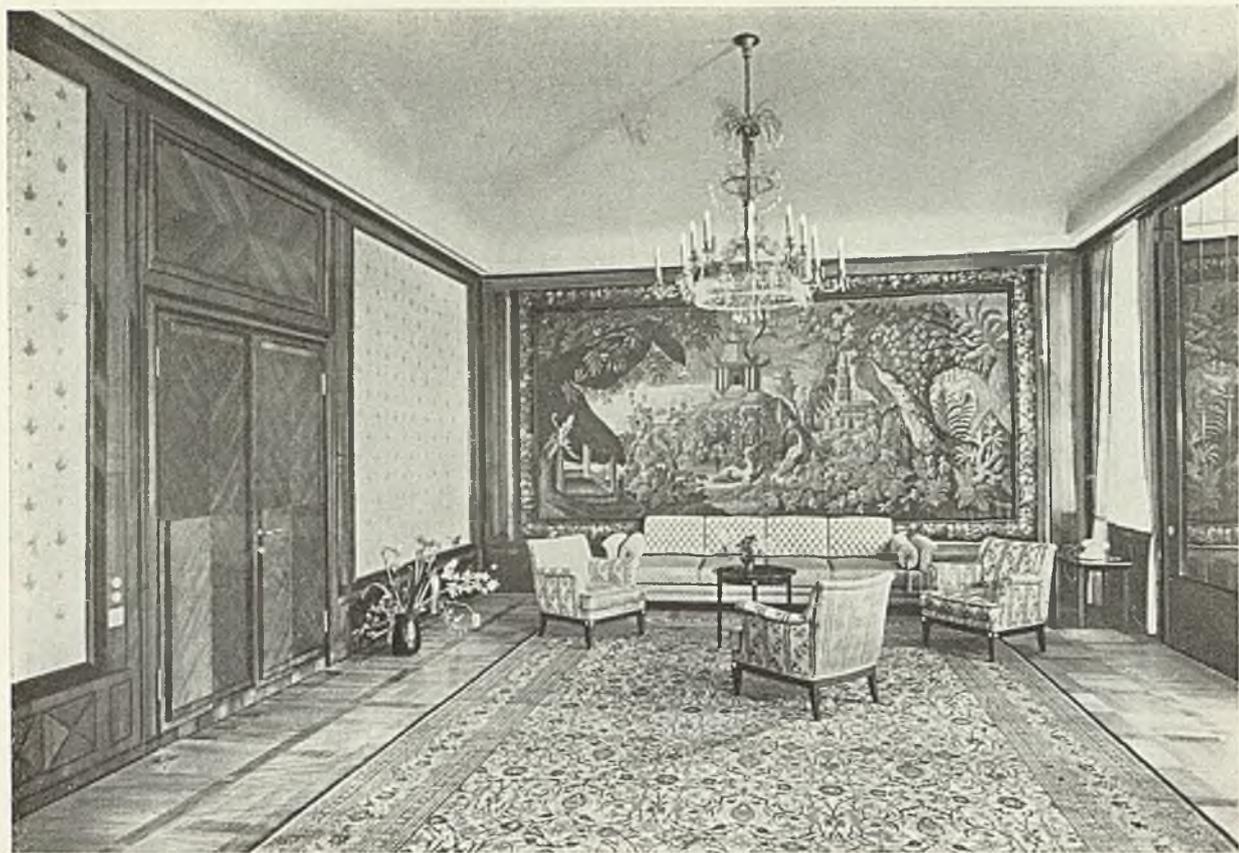
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