

THE IOWA HOMEMAKER

"A Magazine for Homemakers From a Homemaker's School"

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Der Vaterland Is Not So Different . . .

By Hedwig Neubert Maevers

Why Germany Stays at Home

LIFE in Germany is, after all, not essentially different from life in America. Manner, customs and traditions may vary in different parts of Germany just as people in Louisiana differ from those in Wyoming or Iowa.

Because of the housing shortage many families have to live in old houses which, in more prosperous times, would have been replaced by new ones, and many of the German housewives suffer from inconvenience of arrangement, particularly in the kitchen.

In a typical city apartment of the old type, there are, for example, rooms on either side of a long, narrow corridor, with the kitchen at one end and the dining room at the other, so the housewife gets a chance for a nice walk when she puts the meal on the table. There is no hot running water and the sink is low, small and without drain boards. The floor, which is tiled, looks nice but makes the feet tired and cold. Since the war a little gas stove on top of the large coal stove is used in getting the ordinary meals, for it costs too much to feed the big stove with coal. The more recently built houses, of course, have the same modern conveniences that American houses have.

The dining rooms are very much like our American dining rooms. Though smaller, the German living room is often so crowded with furniture that one has to wind his way through. There is a big table, much like that in the dining room. Sofas and easy chairs are numerous, but one seldom sees a rocking chair, that piece of furniture which seems to be characteristic of American homes. Every available bit of wall space is filled with book cases. Nearly every middle class family has a piano, and in the last few years, radio sets have been making their way into the homes, often via the small boy of the household, as in America. The "gute Stube" or "good room" has disappeared just as the "parlor" has disappeared from the American home.

There are few labor saving devices,

such as washing machines and ironers, although electric irons are used extensively. The desire of most housewives is to possess a canner. Many women manufacture their own fireless cookers.

haps this is due, among other things, to the lack of automobiles. Of course, street cars, steam boats and interurbans are available, but it is too hard to get a whole family ready for such a trip

very often. German fathers work too hard during the week to have much desire for anything except a quiet day at home.

Books provide an open door into a new world for German people, young and old. They take a genuine pride in possessing good books, and in many families books are read aloud at night and on Sundays. The book industry caters to this love for books. When an author has been dead 30 years, his works may be published in cheap editions so it is possible to get all but the newest authors in very beautiful editions for very little money. Publishers make it a point to enhance their products with fancy jackets, fine illustrations, good arrangement and form of printing so the books are really works of art.

The people are very fond of music—too fond if one happens to live in an apartment house; for a piano going to the right and left and up-

stairs and downstairs is often more than one's nerves seem to be able to stand. The children are given lessons, and are trained in school to tell good music from worthless. There are a large number of the people who enjoy hearing good music even if they can't perform. Popular concerts which help to cultivate this love for music are held in all the larger cities.

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A Typical German Scene

Human labor is cheap, but few people, since the war, can afford to hire a girl. In most families the children are trained to help. As is the case with all children, the duties are often distasteful, but they soon become daily routine and in time prove profitable and of practical use in domestic difficulty.

German people seem to enjoy their home much more than Americans. Per-

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Downtown

ters to remember in arranging a kitchen are:

1. Have separate working centers for each type of work.
2. Work from right to left in a logical manner.
3. Have your equipment regulated to the proper working height.
4. Group your small equipment around the center where it is to be used.

Home Life in "Das Land"

(Continued from page 1)

A love of the fine arts is also inculcated in the German race. School children are taught how to look at great masterpieces, photographs of sculptural pieces of art, and every once in a while, on a rainy Sunday, a domestic exhibition is given with criticism and discussion following. If there is an art gallery near, it is visited at least a few times during the year. Walks through the town or city and its vicinity, with older people along to tell stories about the places of interest arouse historic and community interest in the children.

Cards do not constitute the social diversion of Germany. The men play cards some, but women seldom do, more from lack of interest than for any other reason. Instead, they like to have their friends in to discuss political or cultural problems or to listen to a home concert.

Germans make more fuss over their festivals than do Americans. Church holidays and birthdays are most important. About the first of December the streets begin to fill with Christmas trees. One room in the house is often set aside and all preparations, including the trimming of the Christmas tree, go on behind locked doors. Weeks before Christmas, preparations for the baking are begun. Then on the 24th when everything is ready, the doors of the Christmas room are thrown open, all sing a Christmas carol together and the children make a mad dash to see what the Christ Child or the "Christmas Man", as they call Santa Claus has brought them. Afterwards there is a supper of carp, or a lunch of coffee and cake. And there are two full days of merry making, for Christmas in Germany lasts until the 26th.

German customs and ways of living seem odd to Americans, but undoubtedly American life and traditions often seem foolish and funny to Germans. Oh, for a magic mirror to "see ourselves as others see us."

Give the Tooth Paste a Break

Here's something new! You needn't be bothered by unsightly collapsed cold cream tubes. Some sympathizing person has invented a non-collapsible tube for cold cream. After the cream is pressed out, the tube pops right back into shape. What a "break" that would be for our tooth paste tubes!

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