

There was colossal strength in land speculation. It could crowd houses together beyond all reason and force them high into the air. Napoleon III and Haussmann harnessed it to their Paris plans. In Vienna it created vast districts of one-room flats along dark corridors in rear buildings, often with a second and even a third building behind it. Berlin was also provided with enormous working-class neighbourhoods with one-room flats as the normal type of dwelling.

In Copenhagen the two-room flat predominated. By building bylaws an attempt was made to put a stop to the worst types of dwelling. One-room flats in rows along narrow, dark corridors, of which there were forbidding examples in older parts of the town, were banned. To avoid the erection of those extremely undesirable rear houses, the depth of building plots was reduced by laying the streets of new districts closer together. New regulations were also made to assure sufficient daylight in new buildings. But the by-laws were still inadequate. The men who made the laws, like most others, were so convinced that closely built tenements were a natural phenomenon of large cities that it simply did not enter their minds to suggest legislation which would revolutionize building. Above all, it was against the entire spirit of the age to interfere radically with the owner's right to dispose of his property as he wished, even when it was a question of public health. Indeed, the new by-laws served, rather, to further the building of tenement houses instead of hindering it. As all paragraphs pre-supposed the construction of multiple dwellings, the demands they made were reasonable enough for these but raised the construction costs of one-family houses considerably and made their erection difficult by an unwieldy and costly administration.

In other words, the free play of economic forces could not provide cheap land for low-rent dwellings. Nor could building legislation help the humbler members of society. Landowners and their backers formed an unofficial cartel with a monopoly that had the poor in search of homes completely in its power. Their only chance was to become landlords, themselves. And though they did not have much money, they were in the majority. By joining forces, by co-operation, they could become an economic factor of importance. This was



*Courtyard dwellings, Gam-  
melholm, Copenhagen.*