

To my Tuend Mancy Elnora Scott from her admirer Caroline Bartlett France Ralamazoo, April 4, 1927

# **EVERYMAN'S HOUSE**

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# **EVERYMAN'S HOUSE**

BY

CAROLINE BARTLETT CRANE

WITH A FOREWORD BY HERBERT HOOVER 7120 . C76 (RHC)



ILLUSTRATED

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1925

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES
AT
THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

First Edition



Living room of Every-man's House, seen from vestibule. Davenport faces freplace.

## To the People of My Home Town, Kalamazoo, Michigan

whose inspiring coöperation made possible the erection and demonstration of EVERYMAN'S HOUSE

Awarded First Prize by Better Homes in America

To Our Business Men who gave their indespensable financial support;

and to

Beula M. Wadsworth whose direction of Decoration and Furnishing and of School Exhibits was a vital factor

> This Book Is Gratefully Dedicated

# EVERYMAN'S HOUSE

## **FOREWORD**

Mrs. Bartlett Crane has ably demonstrated that relief is available to overburdened mothers who have to keep house and bring up children. "Everyman's House" is her account of how practical good sense in arranging the house and its equipment was used for this purpose in the Kalamazoo 1924 Better Homes Demonstration. It is a most convincing argument for more such efforts.

President, Better Homes in America.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington July 5, 1924.

MY DEAR DR. CRANE:

I have been much impressed during the past three years with the widespread interest and cooperation in the educational movement for Better Homes in America. The home has been and ever must be a source of profound influence and inspiration in the lives of all citizens. It plays a chief rôle in the development of the children of our nation for stability and uprightness. Participation by communities in this campaign to raise the standards of the American home is therefore a substantial contribution to national well-being.

I take great pleasure in sending to you and the Better Homes in America Committee for Kalamazoo my sincere congratulations for the notable contribution which you have made in the general campaign for Better Homes. The award of the first prize is indicative of the outstanding merit of the worthy enterprise in which the citizens of your

community so loyally participated.

Very truly yours, CALVIN COOLIDGE.

Dr. Caroline Bartlett Crane, 1425 Hillcrest Avenue, Kalamazoo, Mich.

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## **EVERYMAN'S HOUSE**

#### CHAPTER I

#### A WORD ON THE FRONT STOOP

HERE is a house built around a mother and her baby. True, we early discovered that it was an eminently satisfactory house for Father and the older children. Nevertheless, Everyman's House was designed, built, furnished, and exhibited to nearly twenty thousand people as a modest-cost plan of comfort and convenience for a mother of several children, including a baby; a mother who does all her own work—as 90 per cent. of American women do.

This book is written to the thousands of people who long to build a home of their own but fear they cannot afford to. Also, it is written to those who cannot make up their minds as to just what kind of a house they want. If you, reader, belong in one or both

of these categories, we want to explain to you the possibilities of comfort, of convenience, and of beauty in our space-saving, step-saving, time-saving, money-saving small house which, as I have said, is built around the mother and baby of an average American family.

But if you have no baby; if you have, not one, but two or three babies; if your children are half grown; if you have no children; if your "child" is an invalid relative; or if you are one of a group of women bachelors wedded only to your several occupations—whoever you may be who longs for a little home of your own—be careful not to put this book aside until you have read the chapter on "The Adaptable House." For in that chapter you are likely to be convinced that this house was designed especially for you.

Or are you simply looking for ways in which to improve and adapt to present needs the house you already have? We believe Everyman's House will help you to do that.

Should you inquire how Everyman's House happened to be built, I reply that it did not happen. Building it was the premeditated act of a town of 60,000 people, responding to the

idea that nothing can prosper if the home does not prosper; and that it would be a valuable public service for our community to unite in demonstrating the best possibilities in homebuilding and home-equipment at a cost within the reach of a large number of non-homeowning people.

We did not think up this idea ourselves. The suggestion arrived in the form of a letter to the author from Mr. Herbert Hoover, Secretary of the United States Department of Commerce, and president of "Better Homes in America." However, Mr. Hoover also would disclaim originality. "Better Homes in America" originated with Mrs. William Brown Meloney, editor of the Delineator. For two years it was successfully developed under her leadership. Then Mr. Hoover and others upon the Advisory Council saw in this private enterprise something so nationally significant that, with the consent of the founder, it was incorporated into the national "Better Homes" organization, which in 1924 sponsored local Better Homes demonstrations in more than fifteen hundred communities in the United States.

Mr. Hoover, with all of the commerce problems of the United States in his portfolio, finds time to lead in a national movement for more and better homes. The housing shortage in our own rapidly growing town, and the difficulties of financing house-building, are common topics of conversation, of editorials, and of resolutions by the Chamber of Commerce. These premises led us to a very practical deduction. We chose our Better Homes Committee and set to work.

We paid out the sum of twenty-five dollars in building Everyman's House. This was our mistake. Kalamazoo is "no mean city" and would have trusted us for that water permit—just as everybody trusted us for everything—if we had only thought to ask! For our Better Homes Committee built, decorated, furnished, equipped, landscaped Everyman's House in magical coöperation with the public-spirited business men of Kalamazoo, who cheerfully agreed to furnish anything and everything we wanted, charge it up to us at the regular retail price, and wait for their pay until the house should be used in demonstration and then sold. There might be a loss? All right;

### A WORD ON THE FRONT STOOP 5

they would take it, pro rata. The Realtors' Association agreed to provide a building site. A general contractor, very busy with big jobs, nevertheless consented to build our little house for us and pay all the labour as he went along. An architect, G. G. Worden, turned the design of the writer into working plans for the contractor's guidance. The building material firms of the city furnished all the construction materials. A plumbing contractor, a heating contractor, and an electrician furnished both materials and labour. A decorator and a landscape artist, carrying out the designs of our special committees, made our house beautiful within and without. The merchants of the city unhesitatingly honoured our every requisition in the way of furniture and equipment.

And not one item of direct advertising did any of these men get, or expect, out of their generous contributions. Not even the name of the general contractor was posted on the premises. However, there is no doubt that real-estate transfers and building operations—and artistic furnishing, as well—have been much stimulated through the erection and exhibition of Everyman's House.

On March 13th the ground for the erection of Everyman's House was ceremoniously broken. On March 24th we laid the corner stone, depositing therein Mr. Hoover's letter, a copy of the "Better Homes in America" Guidebook, and a copy of the speeches we all made on that occasion! On May 12th, the first week day of National "Better Homes" Week, the foreman drove the last nail at our housewarming ceremonies, and the contractor formally delivered to the Committee the keys of Everyman's House, which were in turn delivered to the Mayor. With joy the great throng entered, to find every detail complete, from the toilet articles on the chiffoniers to the refrigerator in the kitchen entry. And, crowning all, there was the fire ready laid for our dedicatory Lighting of the Hearth.

And it lacked yet a day of being two months from that turning the first spadeful of sod!

—Everyman's House! Child of a Fixed Date, wedded to a Fixed Idea!

And the Book: It is Child of the House, and bears its parent's name. I started out to write a treatise on the anatomy and physiology, as

#### A WORD ON THE FRONT STOOP 7

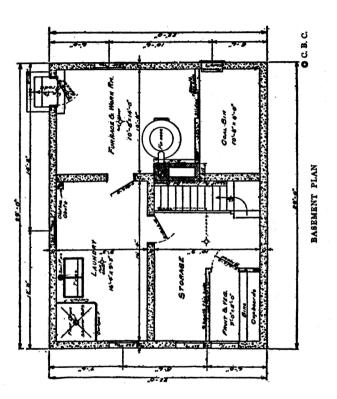
it were, of Everyman's House. But somewhere about the fifth chapter, the Everymans unceremoniously moved in! I can't help it; I didn't invite them. I have to put up with them. And so, dear reader, will you? As a matter of fact, you will find that they are always explaining things to you which I never in the world would have thought of all by myself. So (it was for your sake) I decided to stop eviction proceedings and let them stay on to The End.

# FLOOR PLANS AND ELEVATIONS OF EVERYMAN'S HOUSE

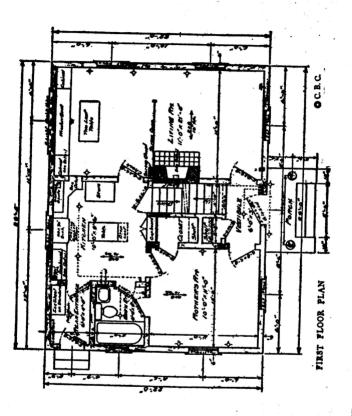
GILBERT WORDEN, Architect

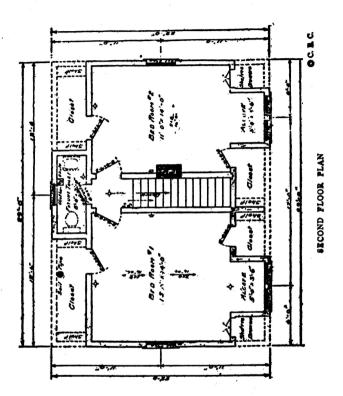
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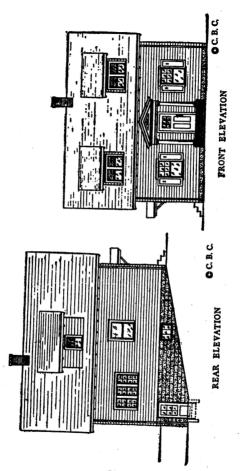
CAROLINE BARTLETT CRANE

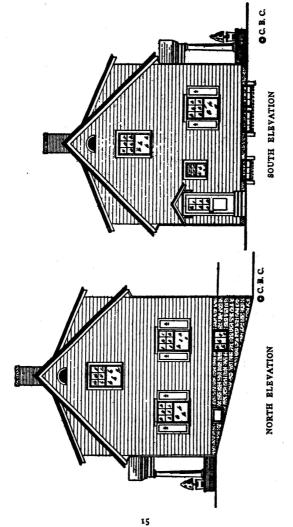


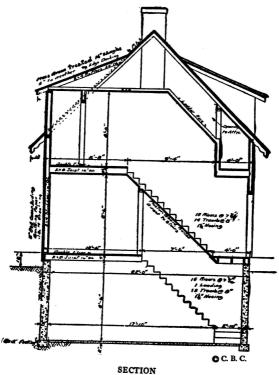
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#### CHAPTER II

## "so big" a little house!

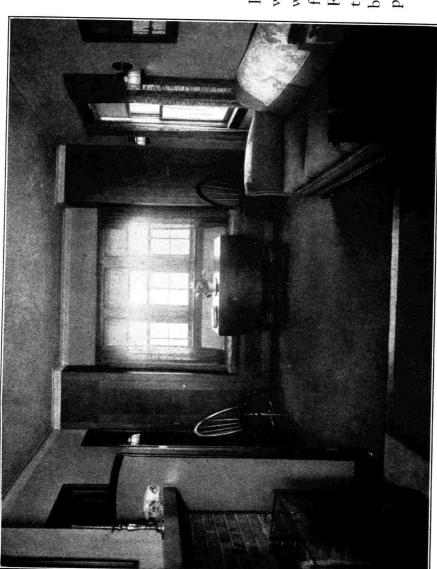
↑ DAY or so before our housewarming, chronicled in the preceding chapter, was due to take place, I was speeding up beautiful Westnedge Avenue in a trolley car, my mind filled with anxious premonition of finding four bodies-carpenters, finishers, decorators, furnishers-still occupying the same space at the same time, and gloomily convinced that our May Twelfth house would be ready sometime in June. It must have been this sad preoccupation which caused me to succumb to the name with which the general public had promptly christened our Demonstration House; for I said, "Please let me off at the Model Home." As he slowed down his car, the conductor looked at me quizzically. "'Model Home'," he repeated with relish. "You know, I think that would make a fine model home for-a bachelor!"

I turned upon him as a mother might whose precious baby had been called a brat. "Why, the very idea!" I exclaimed. "I'd have you know, sir, that this is a home for a father and mother and six children." (I admit I extemporaneously tucked another bed into the chamber being furnished for only two boys, but—who wouldn't?)

The embarrassed conductor, perhaps scenting something personal in the warmth of my defence, began to apologize. The best I could do was to say I'd forgive him, if he'd promise to come during Demonstration Week and see for himself.

It does look small—our little Colonial cottage in its formal planting—a prim little tailor-made affair; deep cream clapboarded walls with moss-green roof, and blinds whose openings repeat the pattern of the dwarf arbor-vitæ either side of the brick-paved stoop. A neighbouring garden club planted them there, whose guerdon is to be the lighting of these baby trees each Christmas Eve. It certainly does look small.

Of course, our house is small, for that matter, only  $22' \times 29'$  on the foundation, and a



Living-room window -seat, withleaf-table for dining. Folded partition - screen between fireplace and door to kitchen.

story-and-a-half. But this may be truthfully said—and one real-estate man said it for us, with an air of discovery and conviction: "It's the biggest little house I ever saw!" That seems to be the impression gained by all who visit it.

This is doubtless because, first, the house is compact to the last degree. The plan eliminates halls, either for communication between rooms, or to reach the stairs. A second important element of "bigness" consists in there not being an inch of waste space anywhere. All the room under the attic eaves, for example, is utilized by four closets, and two storerooms each 3'6" x 12'.

Again, the bathroom, so much admired that we feared having it carried off, is only  $5' \times 6'$ . And the kitchen is  $10' \times 9'6''$ , and could well be no more than half that size, if it were not for considerations of air space in a room where a woman spends much of her day. All actual work, as will be seen in a later chapter, is done in a space of  $5' \times 8'$ .

A strictly logical order of chaptering this book would perhaps demand that I proceed at once to verify the introductory statement that this is a house built around a mother and her baby. However, it is very far from demanding a mother and a baby in order to function normally. To make this perfectly clear, I shall first describe the general features of the house on their merits in relation to any imaginable family combination—yes, even as a "model home for a bachelor."

Here, then, is the first-floor plan of Everyman's House. Please enter the front door with me. You will find yourself in a small vestibule whose only blank wall space is on either side of the front door. Room for the electric switches on one side; for a mirror with two or three hooks below on the other. Directly before you, comfortable stairs ascend under a graceful arch to the second floor. At the left side of the stairs is a roomy coat closet.

On the right, a door from the vestibule leads into the living-dining room; on the left is a door into the Mother's Room—if there is a mother with a baby; otherwise, into the dining room or library or den, or whatever you choose to make of this room. Thus, communication with the street, the second story, the living-dining room, the Mother's Room and the

closet for outdoor wraps is accomplished by a vestibule 6' x 3'6". The vestibule has several other functions, to be spoken of later. This first trip over the house is to present the general plan, without a great deal in the way of detail

Entering now the living-dining room at the right one may see at a glance that it is so planned as naturally to distribute the family and thus make it in effect a larger room than its actual dimensions. There are windows on three sides of this room, and a really superb view from every one of them. Everyman's House, we may state incidentally, faces the loveliest of our city parks. The two windows on the long side of the room look down the beautiful Kalamazoo valley. From the window seat at the far end (also from the kitchen window) one looks out over miles upon miles of wooded hills and slopes thick-dotted with town and suburban homes. This window seat is seven feet long. The lid is divided so that the halves may be opened separately. There's much more of significance in and around that window seat than can be elucidated just now.

The fireplace is in the middle of the one unwindowed wall. The photographs show a davenport facing it from between the windows of the opposite wall. A large family can sit around the fireplace without crowding or moving cumbrous furniture. The easy chairs are naturally disposed to face that way. The fire can be enjoyed from the window seat at right angles to it. The bookcase is set between the fire and the reading lamp. A good-sized family can be happy and comfortable together in this big little room, II' x 2I'.

It appears, does it not? that we all prefer little rooms for our own personal use. Even in the "grand houses," aren't the big rooms really for entertaining? You will find the family and the family intimates drifting into the little room, or into the cozy alcove off the library, or—into Father's den! If Father is at all weak-kneed about it—if he relaxes discipline by ever so little—he will presently find his claim jumped on one pretext or another, the real, though unconscious, reason being that it's the smallest room in the house.

Since the kitchen is to have three chapters

to itself, we will pause here only to notice the roomy kitchen entry, which accommodates the refrigerator and several other adjuncts of kitchen service, and also serves as a vestibule for the children and a lodging place for their overshoes and everyday wraps. We will now pass to the basement stairs through a door on the east wall of the kitchen. The utter convenience of this basement adds much of bigness to our little house. You will note the thoroughly equipped laundry, with its set tubs, automatic water-heater and watersoftener, the shower bath in one corner, and the clothes chute with the ventilated receiver beneath it; the furnace room with its grade entrance; the fuel room with the metal coal chute; the ventilated cold room with the large storage alcove beside it; and the open storage space under the stairs. The high ceiling and the cement partition walls are most unusual features in the cellar of so small a house.

Returning to the vestibule, we enter, through the door opposite the living room, the Mother's Room, which is the key room of the house. For the present we will notice only the windows to the east and south, the large clothes closet, the wall plug for a light above the bed, and the two doors, one opening directly into the bathroom, and the other into the kitchen. The Mother's Room, the kitchen, and the bathroom constitute together what we have called the Mother's Suite, to be described in a subsequent chapter. Please observe, also, that the first floor constitutes a complete flat for house-keeping.

Returning to the vestibule, we visit the second floor. At the head of the stairs is a passage the width of the stairs and just deep enough to afford space for the doors, on either side, opening into the bedchambers. The door in front of you opens into the lavatory-toilet of the future. The plumbing fixtures have only to be connected to the pipes already there. A metal clothes chute descends from this room to the kitchen and basement.

Now, as you open the door leading into either of the chambers, be prepared to exclaim, as they all do, "Why, I had no *idea* these rooms could be so big and beautiful!" (Doubtless that is how our street-car conductor was so sadly misled.) The height of these chambers is 8'2". One room is 13' wide; the other

11'. The length of each room is 14', besides a dormered alcove  $5' \times 3'6''$ , which makes each room 17'6'' long in the centre. Each room has two good closets, one of them fitted with drawers and shelves; also a storeroom, 3'6'' wide, running across the width of the room. In our "Better Homes" Demonstration we fitted up the larger chamber for two boys, and the hostess was instructed to show where a bed could be placed for a third boy. The other chamber was furnished for two girls.

"How big is my little house?" its fond mother asks, senselessly, if you like. And the little house smiles and twinkles and stretches out its arms—"S-o-o-o big!"—Big enough for Father and Mother and six children!

There! didn't I tell you?

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT IT COST US TO BUILD

HOW much will it cost?" is the crucial question with practically every man and woman planning to build a home. We have more or less definite ideas of what we want if we can afford it. Whether the peak of our hopes be a roof garden or a kitchen entry, the question is the same—Can we afford it? If we are "comfortably off," Mother thinks that what she must have is plate-glass windows and an inglenook fireplace and a panelled dining room and a little sun parlour and a back stairs and a built-in ironing board. The Man wants but little here below: a shower bath, a window where he can see to shave, and a place for a work bench. Then the architect suggests a few features: an artistic cornice, an ornamental doorway, a pergola here at the He draws a little free-hand sketch. Baby is toddling down that viny pergola. Perfectly charming! Draw up the plans and specifications!

And then come the contractors' bids. Horrors! This little house will cost us twice as much as we can possibly afford, even if we borrow to the limit! We simply can't build at all! It's perfectly outrageous! Why, Uncle Alfred's house, bigger and better than this, cost only \$4,500!

"That was in the spring of 1914," the architect reminds you. "One of my very last houses, before the war!" (That horrible war! Its full atrocity comes home to you for the first time!)

Now unless at this point you definitely renounce the idea of building a home, there are just three things to do—not one of three things, but all three:

- 1. List all the features of your plan which you feel you simply cannot do without, if you are going to build at all. Get down to the irreducible-minimum plan.
- 2. Go over the remaining features of your original plan and make a list of the features which it would be practical to add to your house after it is wholly or partly paid for.

Would the house, with the hoped-for additions, reasonably satisfy your chastened expectations? If so:

3. Ascertain what it will cost to build that irreducible-minimum house now, and whether you can negotiate the necessary building loan on terms which you dare undertake to fulfil.

In case you can't do all three of these things, and still want your home, the obvious plan is to begin at once to save your money until you have accumulated the amount necessary (about one third of the combined cost of house and lot) in order to borrow the remainder.

People who won't condescend to these details are the people who presently come to feel that they have a man-eating white elephant on their hands in place of a home. And wives must be merciful, nor forget that in this instance it is "the man who pays."

We could hardly claim that cost was the crucial question in the case of Everyman's House, since, trusting to the good judgment of our committee, the business men of our city had given us carte blanche in the matter of materials and labour. And yet it was crucial, in a way. We must build our Demonstration

Better Home in such a manner and at such a cost as would commend it to "Better Homes in America" whose Guidebook advised the cities participating in the campaign to keep the cost of the house (exclusive of the building site) down to the neighbourhood of five thousand dollars.

Our first thought was to hold ourselves strictly to a five-thousand-dollar limit, doing the best possible within that sum. But, in that case, what was going to become of our resolve to build conscientiously, with the most suitable materials and the best workmanship, and to embody all practical conveniences and labour-saving devices in our home? This was our golden opportunity to demonstrate these values, as well as money value, in homebuilding; we simply could not sacrifice it. We finally decided upon the following course:

r. We would build and equip our house around a working mother and her baby, according to our best ideas of what such a house should be and should contain; and we would keep and publish an accurate account of what each of the various items—lumber, cement, brick, plumbing, construction work, etc.—

cost at the prevailing local retail prices for these things. This we did, fully and frankly, notwithstanding a promised final discount of 10 per cent. on materials and fixtures in the waiver signed by the material men. We could not run the risk of misleading any one into an attempt to duplicate our house, or any feature of it, for less than he would actually have to pay.

2. We would keep and publish as accurate an account as possible of the difference in cost between the quality of certain fundamental features in our house, and a quality which would serve the purpose if one were forced to strict economy in building. To give but one

example: pine floors instead of oak.

3. We would reckon and publish the cost of features and equipment in our house which a prospective builder could either eliminate from consideration altogether, or else plan to add to his home at a later date. Examples: An extra lavatory-toilet; an automatic water-heater.

Now, let me tell you our pros and cons over, first, the fundamental things in Everyman's House.

I have already mentioned oak floors for pine. The quality and condition of the floors are without doubt the most immediately noticeable feature in a room. Said a man who had been "batching it" until he had reduced the process to a science: "I have learned that if the floor is clean and polished, people don't notice other things."

However, we chose oak, not so much because of its appearance, but because it is so much more serviceable, and, in ten years or so, will have proved itself the cheaper floor. A pine floor, under the feet of children, mars easily—sometimes even splinters—and looks so bad, notwithstanding frequent re-finishing, that you find yourself laying rugs to cover as much of it as possible—which is quite the reverse of economy. An oak floor is something you never care to hide. Its distinction is enhanced by a sparing use of rugs. Our oak floors were of the very highest quality of straight clear oak. We estimated that to lay and finish these floors in all the rooms and closets, except bathroom, kitchen entry, and upper lavatory, cost \$150 more than good pine floors. (In the market at that time we found oak to be as cheap as hard, but much less handsome, maple.)

Of course, a compromise is possible. Oak for lower floor and stairs; pine above stairs; though nothing will suffer more than the floors in the children's rooms. And of course it is possible to lay oak floors, some day, on top of the pine, though the total cost will seem like a great waste of money. If, however, oak is wholly out of the question, for such a house (as in the Southern pine region and in California), matters can be greatly helped by the best quality of workmanship and varnish for a pine floor.

The cost of floors is but one item of our lumber bill that might be reduced for the sake of lowering building costs. Our Chairman of Finance sets the possible deductions in the lumber bill at \$568.47. This includes the saving on the substitution of pine floors for oak, already mentioned, and on the following: The use of an ordinary quality of unstained shingles, at a saving of \$49.87, for the best stained shingles; of a cheaper, narrow material in place of clear white Pine Bungalow, at a saving of \$45 a thousand and the lower cost

of thinner window and door frames than those required by the heavy bungalow type of siding; also the saving on the use of cheaper lumber and finish for fewer cupboards and drawers.

Our house cost more because, as one expert builder said, after going over it critically, "I find that this is no play-house or makebelieve, but an honest-to-goodness effort to build a really model house."

Next to the large possible saving in lumber came that in plumbing, though the more expensive of these items fall under the head of features that can be omitted at time of building and added afterward at one's convenience. However, the bathtub needs to be mentioned here. One of the most back-breaking of women's household tasks is cleaning under and around and back of the ordinary bathtub. We felt that our built-in, recessed tub. illustrating this great convenience to the housewife, was well worth the extra cost of \$45. The other bathroom fixtures, as well as the kitchen sink, of a quality above the ordinary, will, we believe, save many plumber's bills and prevent grief over lustreless faucets

and chipped enamel. Here should be mentioned the "roughing in" of all pipes and traps for the second-story lavatory, and the extra drain for the shower bath. When the family can afford to purchase an extra lavatory or toilet, these fixtures have only to be attached to the pipes already there. The extra cost of the above-mentioned features, exclusive of the built-in bathtub, was about \$100.

Among other features of house construction which cannot very well be changed after the house is once built comes the basement. Our basement walls, and partitions also, are of concrete blocks. After six months, not one crack has appeared in any of the walls. That is due in part to good workmanship and good construction timber. It is without doubt largely due to the solid basement foundation of the partition walls of the house.

We wanted our basement high enough to give good head room under all furnace pipes. Frankly, I think we got it unnecessarily high, but that is an excellent fault in basements. We estimate that the extra basement height and cement-block partition walls of our base-

ment cost us \$100 more than would be required for ordinarily good basement architecture.

The metal clothes chute from second story to cellar cost \$21.50. The metal window frames for basement, the metal coal chute, the steel embedded in all exposed corners of plaster, cost us, we estimate, \$35 above the ordinary construction.

The plaster in Everyman's House confers beauty because of the simplest fundamentals of good workmanship. A builder of beautiful homes once told me a secret about this source of beauty worth remembering. "Haven't vou gone into rooms," he said, "which, in spite of beautiful proportions and appointments, gave you an indefinite sense of something lacking, restless, defeated—a wrong expression on the room's face? And haven't you, on the other hand, gone into rooms which gave you a sense of satisfaction quite aside from anything you could name or describe? If, in this latter kind of room, you were to take a straight-edge and square and lay them here and there against the walls and the angles of that room, you might discover that every right angle is

truly right, and every wall is floated up to a true surface. Then, as your eye follows the joining line of plaster with base and jamb and picture moulding, that line is true as a drawn thread. The electric and plumbing fixtures go flat and tight against the wall. That room is 'four-square to every wind that blows.' If you are not in the building business, the chances are that you do not notice these details at all, but only the pleasing general effect. The room has 'line' as the artists say. It has simplicity and candour and self-composure, to a degree. You 'like its expression,' as you do that of some stranger you meet on the street, and for the same undefined but sound reason." When the rooms of Everyman's House, while still devoid of furniture, looked at me with "that pleasant expression," I knew the reason why. Each was an honest room with no peccadillos or irregularities to conceal.

And honest, too, in a rather unusual way. Some beauty may be only skin deep; but not so the beauty of our fine sand-finish plaster. Its tint is a cream that can't be skimmed off; it goes down to the very lath-bones. You

need not fear to scrub that surface, thoughand this is to me truly inexplicable—after the many thousands of people who inspected Everyman's House from top to bottom, not one spot of soil could I find, even along the stairway, upon those walls. The extra cost of this dyed-in-the-wool plaster is not worth recording. The same may be said of the tilefinished Keene's cement in the kitchen, kitchen entry, and bathroom.

The hardware trim of Everyman's Housedoor knobs, escutcheons, hinges and stops, sash locks and lifts-is of dull sanded brass in the living room and bedrooms, and of nickel in bathroom and kitchen. It is of excellent appearance and of durable quality and finish. We estimate that, together with the heat registers, it cost \$25 or \$30 more than the less tasteful and less durable quality usually selected for small homes.

The painting and finishing, inside and out, were of a superior quality, estimated to cost about \$100 above the usual amount for a house of that size.

The electric wiring could have been cheaper had we been content with central lighting.

However, we believe that central lighting, along with other of its obvious faults, inevitably concentrates the occupants of a room; whereas one of our aims was toward decentralization, in order that all parts of the room, especially the living room, might be used by a big family. Wall openings for reading lamps are a part of this scheme. They also serve for the convenient attachment of electrical appliances. There are two wallswitch ceiling lights in the kitchen instead of the one central light which makes a housewife work always in her own shadow. There is a wall plug for an electric iron or other device. The kitchen entry has its separate light. Every part of the basement is well lighted, and there are wall connections for electric iron and electric washer. The two attractive lanterns on the stoop, like the brass knocker, we confess, are pure luxury. The three pieces cost \$21. A wall plug for a reading lamp at the head of the parents' bed is surely a luxury that hard-working people deserve. There are special connections for study lamps in the children's rooms. Our wiring bill might have

been cut some \$40 by central lighting and other questionable economies.

Our fireplace of brick might have been eliminated at a saving of some \$200. However, as we would almost as soon have left off the roof, we did not list this among possible excisions

The cuts in cost cited above are on elements of the house so fundamental that they would hardly be omitted wholly from any house at the time of building. No strict line can be drawn here. Of course, the fireplace, complete, and most plumbing and electric fixtures could be postponed to a later date, provided they were planned for at the time of building.

Now we come to consider the items of Everyman's House which could easily be postponed, and thus eliminated from the original cost of building. I shall first mention items not usually included at all in building costs. However, we had to incur these expenses in order to be fitted for Demonstration Week. One was our landscaping—an item of \$190.55. Another was the best quality window shades, which cost \$33.02. The third item was the best cork linoleum, cemented above felt, on the floors of kitchen, kitchen entry, bathroom, and the toilet-lavatory on the second floor. This cost, laid, \$71.93. The electric fixtures and bulbs, necessary to have in place and operation for Demonstration Week, cost just \$100; and we count that \$50 of that sum could have been eliminated by postponing the installation of some of the fixtures and connections. We also insured the house for three years at a cost of \$21.

Then come the outside blinds, which one could omit or add afterward. They cost, before painting, \$33.75.

The largest items, however, in the list of features which could have been entirely eliminated in building Everyman's House came under the head of plumbing. Our basement shower bath, with white duck curtain, cost \$35. The automatic water-heater, located in the basement and operated by opening a faucet anywhere in the house, cost \$115. The water-softener cost \$210. We deemed this especially important for a large family under a small roof which could not begin to supply a cistern with

# WHAT IT COST US TO BUILD 41

the soft water needed for laundry and bathing purposes. We did not want that beauteous built-in bath to be a mere Saturday night affair!

Set tubs in the laundry, which were deemed to be an immediate necessity, were not counted among possible deductions from the plan.

On leaving the subject of possible future additions to the comfort or beauty of a home, I will say that some people have a pleasant custom of giving birthday and Christmas presents to their home. That knocker and those lanterns on the stoop would be lovely presents to almost any little house, unless a water-heater or a basement shower were more in the real line of the family need.

The final revised report of our Chairman of Finance showed that our house, exclusive of the lot, actually cost us \$7,249.51, and that by the deduction allowances cited, or referred to, above, the cost could have been brought down to \$5,434.51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>This does not include architect's fees. The designer has given the plans to "Better Homes in America." Blue-prints may be obtained at a nomina, price.

It is fair to consider that, from the time excavation was completed, this house was built and equipped in less than seven weeks; also, that, near the last, we paid extra for overtime work and night work. We had no time to be economical, with that Fixed Date ever staring us out of countenance. We felt like the combined army and navy in the spring of 1917. Also, one is to keep in mind that the actual cost of the house included not only the best in workmanship and material, but also many features not usually provided with a new-built house. For example, landscaping, sodding, and planting grounds; cement walks to both doors; water, sewer, and gas connection; window shades throughout; best cork linoleum on kitchen, entry, and bathroom floors; even the mail box at the door; in fact, the house complete, ready to move in, and insured for three years.

I believe, and so does the Chairman of Finance, that, if one had the usual four or six months in which to build, and were willing to make most of the deductions and excisions detailed in this chapter, he could duplicate

Everyman's House in Kalamazoo and most other parts of the country for \$5,000.

And a closing word about being forced to leave out things we want. It is curiously hard to renounce perfection in a house we are about to build, even though we put up comfortably enough with recognized defects in our own persons and character. Yet we must begin by recognizing the fact that it is not always possible for people to embody the most suitable materials and the best workmanship in creating a house, any more than in creating a costume-or a physique-or a character. We have to work with what we have to work with. Compromises, painful sacrifices, even, may have to be made in order to build a home at all.

And the greater the number of holes that have to be punched in our enthusiastic scheme, the more imperative it is that we "punch with care," to preserve the ground work of our plan. together with the roots of the future buried in it. And then our little house—sunned by prosperity and watered by patience and economy -may sometime grow and blossom into a truly better home for better folks.

## CHAPTER IV

#### EVERYMAN AND HIS RESOURCES

Let the grand houses prosper as they can; We sing the little house of Everyman.

AND who is Everyman? He is the man who cannot have the "grand house," but should be able to have the decent, attractive, convenient "little house."

"The wage-earner," at once said the newspapers and the general public. "They are building a 'model house' for the wage-earner and his family."

"You're right," we said. "But not any more for the wage-earner than for the grocer, or the photographer, or the doctor, or the lawyer. We are building that house to help any family in which the father finds it none too easy to make both ends meet, and the mother does all her own work."

The idea of the wage-earner being in special need of our philanthropic assistance causes a

smile as I look out of my study window. Lined up at the curb are four automobiles belonging to the plumbers, carpenters, and electricians who, with their own skilful hands and understanding, are building an addition to our house. Every one of these cars is a more expensive one than that driven by the professional man who will pay them. This suggested that if I were a man and wanted to lead a literary life, I would finish college and then learn a good trade, like the carpenter's trade. I would earn my bread, and perhaps think up my "situations," in my regular forty-four hours a week. Then I would have another forty-four hours, more or less, for writing my books-with some eighty hours left for sleeping and eating and the other concerns of life. Also, I wouldn't have anybody continually exhorting me to "take exercise." My exercise would be "velvet" from my carpentering, with no waste of literary time. And some day I would up with hammer and—and ax and build me that Little House I'd always wanted: and then I would sit down in it and write a perfectly lovely book about it.

We did not, then, build our house especially

as an example for the wage-earner, forgetting the difficulties and struggles of the business man and the professional man who has no day's wages or fixed income to count upon.

"But," says someone, "you have, after all, built a home far past the possibilities of the great masses of the people. The unskilled day-labourer could never hope to achieve a home like that."

To this we do not in the least agree, if what is meant is, that the fundamental plan of Everyman's House is beyond the reach of a healthy, ordinarily intelligent, industrious, frugal day-labourer who has a wife with the same qualities and the same desires for a home. Why, it is only a five-room-and-bath-story-and-a-half house! It is absurd to pronounce that beyond the possibilities of such a man. Oak floors, choice lumber, built-in bathtub, perhaps. Perhaps, indeed, none but the most necessary of plumbing fixtures, at first. Perhaps no built-in cupboards now, but just the place for them—and temporary shelves.

But you may have noted already that these things are not essential to our plan. The essentials of the plan are: the arrangement and relation of the rooms, one to the other; and the utilization to the best possible advantage of every inch of space under that roof. If a day-labourer can ever hope to own any kind of a five-room house—and hosts of them do now own five-room houses—then Everyman's House is a plan for him, as much as it is for the man with an assured income of \$3,000 or more.

But a day-labourer thus aspiring must not be casual or peripatetic. He must be both able and willing to anchor in a home of some sort and become a part of the community. When he wants a building loan, he must have, not only some savings to begin with, but a record of personal character and sustained industry. He can build up this record in Kalamazoo or any other place; but he can't build it up in short shifts in a half-dozen places in succession. If it is his own fault that he is a "casual" and wanderer, then it is the plan of him, and not of the house, that needs to be revised. If it is owing to industrial or other conditions over which he has no control. then society must find a way out. We must never rest satisfied with any scheme of things which

assumes that there is any class or crosssection of our people who "of course" cannot hope to be "home-owners"—at least, not owners of decent, attractive, convenient little homes!

So the Everymans mean about 90 per cent. of all of us; folks who aren't concerned with the "grand houses," but who are vitally interested in the little home they have—or hope to have.

How dear that hope is to the hearts of people we were made to feel from the questions showered upon us during Demonstration Week. "How much would it cost to build such a house?" and "How can we get the money to build?" That is indeed the crucial question. For if a man had money enough to pay for a home out-of-hand, he would hardly answer to the name of "Everyman."

We were greatly surprised at the lack of information along this line displayed by hundreds of people who consulted us during "Better Homes" Week. Thinking this lack probably not local, I shall here repeat some of the things that were told to applicants for information. I realize, however, that popular methods of financing home-building differ

somewhat in different localities, though the chief agency, the building and loan association, is a fairly nation-wide institution. I am informed that its principles and methods have a similarity, whether it be the Michigan Plan or the Ohio Plan or the Pennsylvania Plan—to name those I have heard most about.

Here is an anxious questioner who is meditating a loan from another source, and upon difficult terms; for not only interest, but also a bonus, is charged. We would say to him:

"Let us suppose that the lot for this prospective house of yours cost \$1,000, as ours did, because of the singularly fine location already described. (Your own lot may perhaps cost only half that.) But suppose you have paid \$1,000 for a lot and you want to build a \$5,000 house. Well, the answer to your crucial question is the building and loan association.

To this man and to many others our committee explained how it was possible (if their building plans and personal credentials proved satisfactory) to borrow two thirds of the prospective value of the house and lot combined,<sup>1</sup>

Sixty per cent. if beyond the city limits.

securing the loan by first mortgage on the property. That would mean, in their case, a loan of \$4,000. They would have about twelve years (140 months) in which to pay this back in monthly instalments with interest at 6.96 per cent. This, I am informed, is about the average over the country.

But he would also acquire stock in the association. (The Michigan law requires a borrower to be a stockholder.) This stock is acquired through the monthly instalments paid back by him as a borrowing member, and this money (in our leading building and loan association here) draws interest at the same rate he is paying on his four-thousand-dollar loan. These monthly payments are continued till the stock matures, and at that time the shares are cancelled, and the mortgage also, and his home is his, free of debt; though, to be sure, he and his family have been enjoying that home as theirs during all this twelve or thirteen years. They have paid for their own home instead of merely paying rent.

But suppose the prospective home-builder has not the necessary one third in order to borrow the other two thirds for building a home? The answer to that, in Kalamazoo, is the new Home Owning Clubs which were formed during the progress of our campaign by our leading building and loan association. People are invited to deposit weekly or monthly amounts on a savings account with the building and loan association, on which they receive interest of from 5 to 6 per cent.

If, for example, a man paid twenty dollars a month for five years, he would then find himself in possession, principal and interest, of about fourteen hundred dollars toward building a home—or for any other purpose, for that matter. You don't have to use it for building. It is a splendid investment, anyhow.

This last fact was one that we urged upon the people of our city and vicinity who had no need to borrow. Invest your money in the building and loan association. It will pay you handsomely, and it will provide the association with the needed capital to lend to people who want to build homes. In fact, we are still telling people that to buy investment shares in the building and loan association is one of the best public services they can render. Also, it is an indirect but valuable service to their own prosperity. It helps powerfully to make up that deficit of 500,000 homes in America with which "Better Homes in America" is struggling. The greatest need of almost every city is to increase the precious quota of its steady, responsible, home-owning citizens. So we entreat citizens of good public spirit to become investment share-holders in their local building and loan associations.

The National Retail Lumber Dealer for May, 1924, contained an article on "The Second Mortgage Plan" which interested our committee. Briefly, it is this: In order to enable home-builders to borrow a sum additional to that which will be loaned upon the prospective value of house and lot, the business men of a city subscribe a fund to secure the private notes of these borrowers at the bank. These notes are paid off, in monthly instalments, in from five to nine years. Schenectady, New York, Davenport, Iowa, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>However, be sure that your local building and loan association is under adequate state control, and that it does not lend money at a distance from its base of operations. Many associations which do that have failed. The World's Work of October, 1924, has this warning for both borrowing and investment shareholders, in an article entitled "Investing in Building and Loan Associations."

Gardner, Massachusetts, are named as the cities which have done most in this line. In Gardner, the local endorsement committee can go on bankable paper to the extent of \$102,000, each of 102 men having assumed a liability of \$1,000, which, however, is not binding upon their heirs or estate. In Gardner, during the three years the plan has been in operation under auspices of the Chamber of Commerce, home-building to the value of more than two hundred and fifty thousand dollars has been thus financed, and not a penny has been lost, according to the manager of the Gardner Chamber of Commerce. He adds:

"We believe that by encouraging people to own their own homes, and having a plan by which we can assist them, we have been responsible for one of the biggest building booms this community has ever seen."

I wrote those pages about interest and stock and dividends and mortgages and things yesterday. I find I don't understand them very well this morning. I have a way of looking highly intelligent while the thing is being explained to me and promptly forgetting it overnight. But let that not shake your confidence. I submitted these pages to an expert of the building and loan association and he gave them his unqualified O. K. And, furthermore, this is all highly important—as important, indeed, as the family budget, without which you may never be able to save enough to build your house at all!

That, too, is a dark subject I evade whenever possible. However, as I was lecturing recently upon some household topic, I came without any premonition, plump upon the budget in such a manner that it couldn't be decently dodged. So I discoursed upon it, extemporaneously but eloquently, I am sure—for my serious-faced audience hung upon my words. Then, in the middle of my most inflated period, I caught the amused eye of my husband. *Plunk*—my soaring Zeppelin crashed to earth! But with this parachute I rescued my self-respect:

"Now, I may say that, personally, I'd rather go to the poor house than keep any kind of a budget at all. Or any kind of an expense account, either, beyond bank stubs—when I don't forget to fill 'em out. All the same, what I am telling you is for your own good. And, for that matter"—with a haughty stare toward a certain auditor in the third row—"I've even known physicians who balked at taking their own medicine!"

There! I feel less like a hypocrite in putting forth this financial chapter.

### CHAPTER V

#### THE HUB OF THE HOUSE

TOTHING domestic has changed so radically in the last generation or so as the size, general aspect, and working arrangements of our kitchens. This is largely because men have capitalized, in the factory, bakery, creamery, laundry, so much of what was once the lonesome household drudgery of women. This is good for the home, good for women provided they have a housekeeping eye out to see how the work is done. For that matter, food factories can be more sanitary-many of them are—than the average kitchen is likely to be. Also, they can be vilely, incredibly filthy. The housekeepers of any town can control these matters if they care to. (I once wrote an essay on this subject, entitled "The Folly of 'Minding Your Own Business.'")

But other things, besides the happily depleted tasks of domesticity, have shrunk and changed the kitchen almost beyond recognition. For example: There's the long trail a-winding from the hearth oven, past the wood stove, the coal stove, the kerosene stove, to the gas range and the electric grill. From the old oaken bucket and dishwater thrown on the grass to the sink faucet and sanitary plumbing. From ventilated "safes" and spring houses to ice (and iceless) refrigerators. From cruel white deal floors to be kept unspotted from the world to merciful and much better-looking linoleum. From flour barrels, vinegar barrels, molasses barrels, sugar barrels, to the trim little packages that to-day take their place and a minute fraction of their room. It is, indeed, a long, long trail between the erstwhile kitchen-the scene of every household operation, from Monday morning's wash to Saturday night's baths-and the kitchen of to-day, dedicated normally to just three uses: preparing food; cooking; clearing up after meals.

The wheels of the old family carryall didn't lose a hub when, amid the general transfiguration, they shrank in diameter and acquired grease cups and pneumatic tires.

Likewise, the kitchen, notwithstanding all domestic metamorphoses, still remains the Hub of the House. Father still comes home to meals. As of yore, the children's first question is, "When's dinner ready?"

Three-meals-a-day remains woman's most exacting job, which can't be bunched or differently spaced. They tie her to the stove and the clock, at the hub of the house and of the household circle. Between these fixed engagements she makes brief excursions—duty calls—upon each of the rooms, the front door, the back door, the furnace, the telephone. The daily round, we call it! Around the Hub.

This is her life that a woman is thus living—millions on millions of American women. Then isn't it supremely worth while to concentrate in the kitchen all of convenience and labour-saving invention we can lay hands on? Isn't it proper to spend money more freely here than elsewhere? Aren't wheels always greased at the hub?

A person merely peeping into our kitchen would know that it realized its dynamic importance to Everyman's House. Our kitchen is pronounced by the Michigan State



K i t c h e n , showing dishwarming cupbo a rd a n d 4-storied passway to livingdining room in relation to gas range, table, sink, etc.

Home Demonstration leader a model of compactness and convenience—and, I think she would permit me to add, of beauty. And surely the place where some woman—be it mistress or maid—spends a large share of her time ought to be made at least reasonably attractive in appearance.

The kitchen of Everyman's House, as may be seen from the floor plan, is at the rear centre of the house, and is 10' x 9'6" in size. It has doors communicating with the Mother's Room. the kitchen entry, the basement stairs, the living-dining room, and the bathroom. The last two doors are equipped with inexpensive devices for keeping them closed. They will not close to pinch small fingers; they ooze shut. In the middle of the outside wall, above the sink, is a two-sash window reaching nearly to the ceiling, to afford sky-light, which is the best light. This window is so situated as to light the whole room well, especially the sink, stove, and work table. The inside and outside entry doors on the south are also glazed, to give additional light. Cross ventilation is accomplished between the window and entry door, and from the door to the cellar stairs,

also, if desired. A wall space leading from above the range to the outside wall allows for possible special ventilation at this point.

Artificial lighting of the kitchen is accomplished, not by a central light always causing one to work in one's own shadow, but by two properly spaced ceiling lights controlled from a wall switch. The entry has a separate light. Near the kitchen window is a wall opening for connecting an iron or fan or other electrical convenience.

On either side of the sink are work counters eighteen inches in width and running across the room. In order to have the best possible service here, it was specified that these counters should be of clear white maple treated with hot paraffin, to make them waterproof, non-absorbent, easily cleaned, and good-looking. The housewife herself can renew this paraffin surface from time to time. At the back of the right-hand counter is a narrow shelf raised a couple of inches and boxed in below. This gives a place for various small containers—scouring soap, silver polish, etc.—which do not have to be moved every time the counter is washed. Above the sink, suspended on

hooks, are the various things commonly needed at this point—soap dish, soap shaker, milk-bottle opener (that tops may be washed before caps are removed), sink and vegetable brushes, metal dish cloth, scissors, etc. Dish towels and dish cloths are kept in one of the drawers at the right.

At the ends of the cupboards, at right angles to the sink, are to be found a hook for a hand towel on one side, and, on the other, a narrow high shelf for alkaline substances used in cleaning. Few people seem to realize the great danger of keeping these virulent poisons within the reach of little children. They are just as dangerous as the acids from which we guard our children so carefully. Dr. Chevalier Jackson of Philadelphia, the celebrated throat specialist, declares that all such substances should be labelled "Poison" and treated as such. He tells of many operations for stricture of the esophagus performed on little children who have swallowed some of these substances commonly found within a child's reach in kitchen or bathroom. This shelf should be as high as the worker can well reach, and should have a rail in front of it, to make it difficult for a child to extricate a can or bottle, even if he manages in any way to climb up to it.

Beneath the right-hand counter, and extending to the floor, are a cupboard of shelves, a tier of three drawers, and a draw-leaf meat board. Below the left-hand counter are a shelf cupboard, a two-parted flour bin, and a pastry board. It will be seen in the next chapter that all bread and pastry are to be made on one side of the window; all other kinds of food prepared for cooking on the other side. My personal preference is for this division of function, partly because it favours the idea of a growing child helping Mother without being in her way.

Above each work counter is a two-storied cupboard, the top story with separate doors reaching to the ceiling. The sink-side doors of all the cupboards are hinged on a strip down the middle of the opening, so that no door opens over the sink or against the light.

At the farther end of the right-hand cupboard is a door opening into the metal clothes chute. In a small recess by this door stands the telephone, which can be reached from the living room, also, by opening the passway door. The clock can stand in a corresponding recess of the shelf above.

The east wall, opposite the sink and working counters, is taken by a deep cupboard, drawers below, enclosed shelves above. This is situated between the door to the basement stairs and the door to the Mother's Room. One shelf of this cupboard is designed for extra-tall things-that non-conforming vinegar bottle and breakfast-food carton, for example. Other shelves hold general supplies purchased in quantity, and seldom-used utensils. The pan covers are on edge in a rack attached to the inside of this door. The cook books, the electric iron and the coffee percolator, besides the ground coffee, find room in this closet. The three drawers below are for whatever the individual housewife finds most convenient; perhaps an extra supply of towels and holders, her kitchen aprons, and, in the bottom drawer, clean rags and dusters.

On the south wall, in the space between the doors, is a shallow partition cupboard for spices and other small packages, which are given no room to hide behind each other. An

enamelled metal table with drawers stands in the centre of the room, a comfortable chair beneath it. This is on casters and can be drawn to one side, to give room for an assistant worker.

The sink, being thirty-three inches high, at the top, instead of the usual thirty inches, gives space underneath for using a work stool twenty-four inches in height. The front legs of this stool are shortened by half an inch, which gives the right inclination of the body in sitting at one's work. This stool, if one half be turned over the other, becomes a dependable step-ladder for washing windows or reaching top cupboards. On the wall, at one side of the stool, hangs the dishpan (or pans, one over the other). On the other side stands a small waste basket.

We hear of wheels within wheels. If there is also such a thing as a hub within a hub, it is found in the farther right-hand corner of the kitchen of Everyman's House, where are located, in close formation, the work table and counter, the main supply cupboard, the gas range, and the passway between kitchen and living-dining room. This beneficent aggre-

gation is the chief topic of the next chapter.

A word now about the roomy kitchen entry. I have already described its use as a place for children's wraps and overshoes. It is, of course, still more valuable as an adjunct to the kitchen. Near the floor is a shelf wide enough to hold a row of covered jars or baskets for small quantities of vegetables and fruits that one doesn't want to run to the basement for every day-though our cold room is really a joy to visit. This shelf clears the floor, so that containers do not have to be moved in sweeping or mopping. Above the refrigerator are two wide shelves for extra-large utensils roaster, preserving kettles, etc.; also for ammonia and other cleaning agents that ought not to be kept near food or within possible reach of children. Here is room, also, for tinned goods and for that pile of ever-useful old newspapers. Covered dishes of food may be set on the high shelves in the winter.

The upper panel of both the outside and inside entry door is glazed. One of the lower panels of the outside door is designed to slide up, to admit milk and small parcels to a shelf on the inner side. It is still more useful as a

means of regulating temperature at times of the year when ice is not needed to preserve food.

A frequent question asked of our kitchen hostess was, "Where is the broom closet?" To which the hostess would reply, "You noticed the one in the living room for broom, carpet sweeper, dust mop, and vacuum cleaner, etc? There's no need for one here. The broom hangs right on the inside of this door to the basement stairs. The long-handled dustpan hangs on the wall just beside it."

"But where is the built-in ironing board?"

"It isn't built in. It stands on a ledge here at the head of the basement stairs. We think our laundry is so very nice that much of the ironing would be done there, especially in summer; but of course there is a wall opening for an electric iron here in the kitchen, too."

"But I thought a built-in ironing board was the thing."

"Nothing is 'the thing' unless it serves a useful purpose, we think; especially nothing as expensive as a needless cupboard," smiles the Home Economics lady.

The dialogue above fairly illustrates the

attitude of Everyman's House. We won't have a relatively useless dining room, or a built-in ironing board, or anything else because it is "the thing." We won't do without our many cupboards and closets, and our lovely fireplace, and our high, light basement, and many other godsends because other people manage to do without them. We build our house around a mother and her baby and see what is really needed as we go along.

The floor dimensions of our kitchen, as I have said, are 10' x 9'6". The ceiling has a height of 8'8". This gives an air space of 800 cubic feet in a room commonly occupied by but one person. This space is allowed for health of the worker, even though, as in our kitchen, all kitchen operations are performed in a space 5'x 8'.

A noticeable tendency, in the present high cost of building, is to contract the kitchen over-much. A medical friend told me recently of being called to attend a woman who had fainted while cooking dinner. Lacking room to fall, she had slid down between the stove and sink, had sat down on her arm and broken it. When revived she was entirely at a loss

to account for her curious physical lapse. "Why, there wasn't enough oxygen in that room to support an able-bodied fly," declared the scandalized doctor. "I wonder the gas stove could manage to function. And here, in this mere closet, this woman admitted that she does all the cooking and dishwashing for a good-sized family. And they invent pet diminutives for this sort of thing. 'Kitchenette,' indeed! 'Lethal chamber,' I call it!"

One does not object to the apartment kitchenette of even quite diminutive proportions for the woman whose cooking consists of a light breakfast and an occasional luncheon for a couple of people or so. Such especially constructed kitchenettes are usually not only models in convenience, but also in ventilation. In fact, if I were going to make over the first floor of Everyman's House into a model city flat—"no children allowed"—I would cut the kitchen to half its size and put in a hall, and a dressing room and closet for the person sentenced to sleep on the davenport.

However, many "flats" improvised inside of old buildings are singularly at fault in their kitchen arrangements. Any closet big enough to hold simultaneously a gas stove, a sink, a a table, and a fashionably thin woman, will do. A real family kitchen is quite another affair. It is the place where a woman spends a large share of the day, doing work which naturally overheats and vitiates the atmosphere. Reasonable air space and good crossventilation are a prime necessity.

To revert to the matter of kitchen beauty. The first beauty element of a kitchen, as of a woman, is immaculateness. A colour scheme designed "not to show the dirt" does not enhance the charms of a woman or a kitchen. "Salt," as defined by the schoolboy, "is what makes potatoes taste bad when you don't put any on." Dirt is what makes a kitchen beautiful when you can see there isn't any on.

The woodwork of Everyman's House is white enamelled, at once to show dirt and to make its removal easy. The four-foot dado of tile-finished Keene's cement is also white enamelled. Pure white—not cream or ivory; because certain places around the sink and on edges of cupboard doors always need repainting first. The Man of the House (or the boy) can retouch them himself, if we eliminate the

delicate matter of matching shades. The walls and ceiling are oil-painted in a light sunny yellow. Do you know the trick of starching your painted walls and ceilings? It takes off the shine, giving a softer and more artistic tone. When the surfaces become grimy, just wash off the starch and apply a new coat. Yes, just the plain laundry variety of starch.

The floor of our kitchen is covered with tan-coloured cork linoleum cemented above felt. It is in colour harmony with the walls. The electric fixtures show nothing but porcelain. The cupboard doors have glass knobs. The plain, handsome hardware trim is of a quality not to suffer from condensation of steam upon its surface. Any room, other than kitchen and bath, can better afford to be cheap in this detail.

A kitchen has other natural elements of beauty, even though the glory of copper and brass and heirloom pewter are scarcely to be found any more, outside Mr. and Mrs. Ford's Wayside Inn. If "cabbages is beautiful," so are silvery aluminum and blue and white china jars and checked gingham curtains and the

glistening porcelain and nickel of sink and table, and the richly contrasting ebony and white of a well-groomed range. Above our stove is a ten-inch shelf for good-looking saucepans and kettles, upside down, to keep them clean, and extending a handle, like a helping hand, toward the cook. This for convenience.

Also, for appearance. For my part, I'll have none of your tight-lipped, poker-faced kitchens —an expanse of expressionless blank walls and cupboard doors with no hint of what is hidden behind. I once had a housewife, in such a kitchen, point out to me with pride "the cupboard for dirty dishes"! Anyway, though everything be immaculate within, such a kitchen gives me the same feeling as a bookcase with plate-glass mirrors for doors-a monstrosity I once actually encountered! It is all right to put seldom-used utensils in cupboards; but the things of your everyday partnership should be close at hand; and, besides, they have a jolly, companionable look. However, we do concede a less conspicuous place, on the special tray under the burner rack, for honest but unornamental

spiders and such. The fireless cooker is handy, yet neatly out of the way, under the range. The rack for pan covers, to keep them out of the dust, is just inside a near cupboard door.

Framed pictures in the kitchen are a somewhat doubtful asset, but cuts and verses taken from current literature, placed under a simply bound sheet of glass, and hung flat against the wall are sources of good cheer, amusement, and sound inspiration. This is my favourite:

Sometimes when things turn upside down And inside out and look dark brown, I rush outdoors and gaze into The topless sky's eternal blue, So calm and cool, so still and deep, With soft contented clouds like sheep. I shade my eyes and stare and stare, Then go back in the house, and there, Begin to wonder and to doubt What I was in a stew about!

-Nancy Byrd Turner1

There's something about a well-considered kitchen—when you come down alone in the morning, say—a bland and cheerful peace, which speaks to you in a different language

In the Youth's Companion, July 31, 1924.

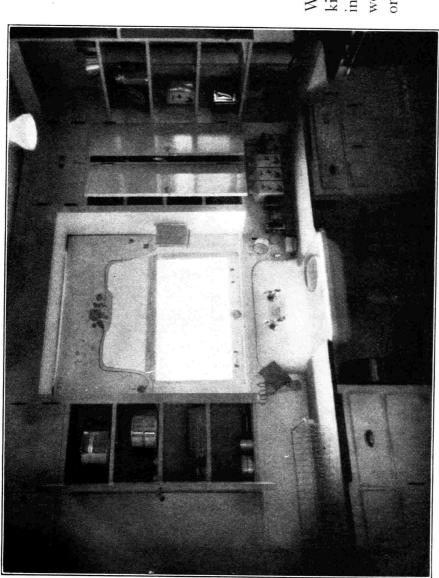
from that of any other room. It seems to say to a woman, "Come, now, you know I am your oldest friend. Remember the joy of your first taffy-making? What, besides that, was your first piano lesson or your first hemmed towel? I'm the oldest friend of the family—of the human family, for that matter. All these other rooms are newfangled things you could get along without, if you had to. But me! Why, the most they know about these Magdalenians and Lake Dwellers and other such, is from the 'kitchen middens' which tell us what they had to eat!

"And listen: I'm going to be your last friend. When you are old and feeble, and 'they' think you aren't able to do anything at all around the house, you can steal out here to me, and putter about and fix up little forgotten dishes that you know 'they' are going to eat delightedly while they scold you for 'overdoing.' And, as you move about, you'll find yourself humming 'Suannee Ribber,' and 'When You and I Were Young'; and you'll be useful and rested and happy again—all because of Me!"

## CHAPTER VI

## SEEING THE WHEELS GO ROUND

THE wheels of industry were started by the hand of woman in the home. While the exigencies of savage life still held men to hunting and fighting-women, kept at home by the duties of motherhood, applied themselves to developing the industrial side of their primitive shelter as men developed the defensive side. Woman, we are told, was apparently the inventor of the kitchen, the oven, and the chimney. She was not only the first cook, but the first farmer, miller, butcher, and general food-bringer of the race; the first potter, cutler, basket maker, spinner, weaver, tailor, dressmaker, hatter, shoemaker, tanner, furrier, clothier, et cetera. In fact, woman was the primitive and supreme Jack-of-alltrades and the first creature to be appropriated as a beast of burden in the transportation



West wall of kitchen, showing separate working unit on either side of sink.

systems of the world. We are even tempted to infer that Atlas was a woman, and would have been so handed down if the author of the legend hadn't happened to be a man.

However, in the age-long process of becoming civilized, men turned their attention more and more from the hunt and forcible seizure of other men's possessions to the business of supplying other men's needs for a valuable consideration. Indeed, we no longer rear even a picket fence between ourselves and a hostile world. War to the knife is now waged in the field of business. And these lines of business are very largely the ones that wo men created, and long carried on, in the home. The work thus taken away from women has been specialized, capitalized, systematized, performed with all the resources of invention, and no babies underfoot.

However, there are thousands of women who, if told how civilization had lifted grievous housekeeping burdens off their shoulders, would declare in astonishment that they hadn't missed a thing! The standards and

<sup>1&</sup>quot;Woman's Share in Primitive Culture," by Otis T. Mason, Curator of Ethnology in the U. S. National Museum.

fashions of housekeeping have risen to fill the reservoir of their day's duties as fast as the numerous runlets of household invention can lower it. Recall how the beneficence of the sewing machine threatened at first to be drowned in a swirling surf of tucks and ruffles.

But even the most common-sensible woman who mothers a family and does her own housework has handicaps unrealized by the business or labouring man. For one thing, she works in isolation and yet in the midst of constant and unforseeable interruptions. Few women thus situated have the time, the energy, and the initiative to analyze and reconstruct their methods; to invent, or go out of their way to hunt up, new helps in their old tasks.

It is, therefore, a good thing that business is constantly calling the attention of woman to this and that labour-saving device. (I suppose that even the revolutionary gas stove made its way into our kitchens solely because men wanted to sell gas and other men wanted to sell stoves.) It surely marks a new and most significant advance, when an entirely disinterested National Committee succeeds in inducing thousands of local communities to

feature a week's demonstration of "Better Home" building and "Better Home" management, purely for the sake of better home life.

The demonstrations sponsored yearly by "Better Homes in America" interest me particularly because they are directed toward improvement of the single-family home where. at best, housekeeping operations can be systematized only in approximation. I, for one, am not looking hopefully toward the day when we shall all live in continuous rows of houses around a hollow square, with not only a central heating plant and laundry and playgroundwhich one must admit would be desirablebut also a central kitchen and dining room and nursery, with help furnished at so much an hour, to come in and make beds, and dust, and feed the cat. I am for elimination and simplification to a degree; however, I am prepared to strike as viciously for my own kitchen as for my altars and my fires. But if the individual family kitchen is to stay with us. we need—oh! how we need!—a Better Kitchen as the drive-wheel hub of our Better Home! Here was one of the chief incentives for staging our demonstration.

The County Home Demonstration Agent accepted our invitation to preside in the kitchen of Everyman's House throughout the whole of "Better Homes" Week, and to choose her own corps of trained assistants. Please imagine, now, one of these young women impersonating Mother, for the purpose of letting you see the wheels go round.<sup>1</sup>

We will suppose it is time to get dinner. Mother's menu is: Broiled steak, mashed potatoes and gravy (here's to the observing M. Enrico Blanco, who discovered our national dish to us), green peas from the garden or can; hot baking-powder biscuit; tomato salad and celery, with tapioca pudding for dessert. Also, Mother will stir up a cake for supper while she is about it. She has already set the table, unless one of her helpful children has done that for her.

Mother goes into the kitchen, puts on her apron and the belt with the pretty holders

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Please understand that I do not claim originality for any individual feature of the kitchen plan or method of procedure. It is a composite of the various things read upon the subject, and of a design worked out for my own kitchen on planning our home some years ago. The Committee on Equipment also contributed useful suggestions,

hanging from it, and washes her hands under the hot water faucet at the sink. She goes then to the kitchen entry for the vegetables. and especially to the refrigerator for the steak, tomatoes, and celery, and the milk and eggs and shortening. Note that, as she stands in the entry door, she takes all the things out of the refrigerator and, without a step, places them on a tray always standing on the work counter which extends from the sink to the entry door. First, she will prepare her vegetables and celery—while sitting comfortably on the sink stool, let us hope. The kitchen knives are in the divisioned drawer of the table close by, with the forks and spoons, the apple corer, and can opener.

Then she will make the biscuit and stir up the cake. The tray holding all the ingredients from the refrigerator is now immediately above the mixing board. The flour is beneath in its sack in the two-parted tilting bin, with the rolling pin and flour sifter beside it. The measuring cup and spoons and biscuit cutter are on a rack in the inside of the cupboard door just in front of her; also, on a hook, are the little squares of soft paper for use in greas-

ing tins. The baking tins are on a shelf in this cupboard. When she wants the baking powder and salt, they are in the little spice cupboard just at her left hand, the shelves so narrow that nothing can hide behind anything else. So she may notice and set out the salad dressing, too, at this time.

She will want to wash the top of her milk bottle before removing the cap; for milkmen are prone to carry them by the head. The cap opener is at her right hand on a hook over the sink. She cuts out the biscuit and puts them in the tin.

Then the cake. Her cake flour comes from the other side of the bin partition; eggs, etc., are on the tray before her. Her sugar, mixing bowl, egg-beater, and baking tins are in the cupboard above. Flavouring essences, raisins, chocolate, powdered sugar, spices, or what you will, are close by in the little spice cupboard at the left. Really, hardly a step is required in making biscuit and cake.

And now for the steak. Mother passes the sink to the work counter on the opposite side. She takes that trayful of things with her, which

is the reason for setting them on a tray instead of on the counter itself. Drawing out the meat board and taking a meat cloth from the drawer below, she wipes and trims the steak and gives it whatever attention the particular cut may require. She turns without a linear step, opens the broiler door, draws out the pan, and lays the steak upon the broiling rack. There is time to wash and slice tomatoes while the steak is broiling. The dishes for tomatoes and celery and butter, the water pitcher, and the milk pitcher are in the cupboard in front of her, immediately by the sink. The cupboards and drawers, above or below, hold chopping bowl, meat-pounder, meat-grinder, potato-masher, and all the more frequently used utensils for every kind of cooking, except cakes and desserts, which are to be made on the opposite side of the window. Some of the more common ingredients, as sugar and salt, are kept in both cupboards.

The potatoes and peas have been put on to boil sometime before, in stewpans taken from the shelf above the stove. Mother also fills the lower part of her double boiler with hot water from the faucet, and puts her minute tapioca on to cook. She gets ready the ingredients to be added to this pudding.

We will imagine that the vegetables and steak are now done. The potatoes are drained in the sink and shaken and whitened over the fire, preparatory to mashing. Milk and seasoning are added to the peas. The steak is salted and peppered from the shakers kept with the covered salt bowl and the flour dredge on the little raised shelf on the right-hand counter. Our imaginary steak, buttered, is ready to take up. So are the vegetables. Biscuits and cake are now in the oven. The pudding is done.

But Mother has forgotten to warm her platter. This having to warm platters and vegetable dishes and soup plates and dinner plates—what a nuisance it is, just as one is hurrying to take up a meal! Of course, with a hot oven, Mother could have set the dishes on top—and had them too hot to handle, and,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>This had to be an imaginary demonstration. There were as many as 2,700 people a day during "Better Homes" Demonstration Week—all passing through our little kitchen. Few, indeed, could have lingered from soup to nuts, as it were.

possibly, "crackled" into the bargain. But this wouldn't work if it were a cold morning, with nothing baking but pancakes. Or, she could have heated them under the hot-water faucet and then dried them, which is a terrible nuisance when one is in a hurry. But Mother does neither. She warmed all her dishes that needed to be warmed when she drew the hot water for washing her hands, or for the double-boiler for the pudding.

Who that cooks has not wished for a device that will automatically and unfailingly furnish warm plates and vegetable dishes, warm platters for meat, etc.? Well, we have a device in the kitchen of Everyman's House guaranteed to furnish warm dishes whenever a warm meal is being prepared, or even when the hands are washed before beginning operations. It consists of a cupboard close by the stove and immediately beneath the passway counter through which food is served in the living-dining room. At the precise strategic point for service, is it not? Nothing in our kitchen attracted more instant attention than this trig little two-shelf cupboard, with its door ajar, disclosing a white-enamelled

interior and an array of platters on edge, above which were arranged dinner plates, biscuit tray, soup plates, gravy bowls, etc. In my original plan of this warming cupboard, the hot water coil operated only when the furnace was in use. However, the architect who translated my design into builders' drawings had a better idea; namely, to put, inside the cupboard, two coils of the pipe which carries hot water from the automatic heater immediately below in the basement to the kitchen sink. When you open the kitchen faucet and the hot water comes forth, you would never guess the gay whirl it has taken with that cute little china cupboard by the way. I must mention, also, the great convenience of this cupboard when somebody's dinner must be kept warm. Crackers and breakfast foods regain their crispness here. Refractory salt shakers will "give down" after a few hours' solitary confinement in this neat little cell.

All kitchen work, as I have said before, is naturally divided into three parts—preparing food, cooking it, and clearing up after meals. As Mother places in the passway the platter

of steak, the vegetables, the salad, the biscuit from the oven, the water from the faucet, the children's milk, and the dinner plates—the pudding, too, where it can be reached from the other room—we have witnessed in imagination two of the three processes. Before the official demonstration began, to make sure of myself on all points, I "went through the motions" of this demonstration in the presence of a few friends. "Gosh!" exclaimed one astonished man. "The woman who wears a pedometer in your kitchen will have to take it out for exercise!"

## CHAPTER VII

## WHERE DO WE EAT?

IT WOULD be too much to expect that Everyman's House could escape criticism. I well remember the impressive lady who stood in the middle of our living room, windowed on three sides, and demanded a sun parlour and—something else, I've forgotten what. Perhaps it was a ballroom. Also. there was the less unreasonable lady who wished our chimney on the outside wall, because chimneys are such a feature of beauty on a house. We conceded that, but defended the location of ours on the ground that an outside chimney costs more to build and radiates a considerable percentage of heat into outer space, where it isn't needed nearly so much as in our stairway and the bedroom above.

However, these criticisms were as compliments of the day beside that which was pro-

nounced by a disgusted man as he shook our dust off his feet at the basement exit. He said: "It's a hell of a house, without any place to eat!"

Note that this indignant man didn't say a word about "no place to read." He would have agreed that a little house like that couldn't be expected to have a library or study. You read in the living room, of course. Nor did this man miss a parlour. Nowadays we welcome visitors without embarrassment into the living room. Nor did he voice the need of a nursery. "Oh, the kids can be around wherever their mother is," I fancy him saying. "But a house without a dining room—that's a hell of a place!"

Why? As a matter of fact, Everyman's House has a perfectly good room for a dining room, if you want to use it for that. If he had listened to our hostess, or read the printed description he held in his hand, our withering critic would have grasped that fact. Then it would have been for him to decide whether, with the kind and size of family our house was especially designed for, he would want to see that precious room devoted to any purpose

that utilized it but two hours or less out of the twenty-four.

"But where is the man who can live without dining?" Where, then, do we eat? Not in the kitchen, I hasten to say. The kitchenalcove idea may do very well for the woman who keeps help. For the woman who does her own work, it steals her little bit of respite from the scene of her tiresome and monotonous labours. If it were only breakfast, it wouldn't be so bad. However, where help is not hired, the breakfast nook has a marked tendency to appropriate luncheon, and even dinner, as well. This is bad for the mother's health and outlook; bad for the family comfort, manners, and self-respect. A place of heat and odours, and usually, of culinary dish-abille, as it were; a place to "eat and run." It is better to have a room devoted solely to eating, and do the extra work made necessary thereby. if the kitchen alcove is the only alternative. However, it is not.

If we eat to live—the insistence of some people on a dining room at all costs suggests the opposite—but if we eat to live, why not eat in the living room? Let us see how it

would work out in a house especially planned for it as is Everyman's House.

The preceding chapters have described the close organic connection of the working corner of the kitchen with the window-seat end of the living room. Let us now proceed to convert this end of this room.

We first remove from the drop-leaf table in front of the window seat the vase of flowers and the few books or magazines. They may be placed on the desk by the davenport. We then raise the table leaves, lay the table pad and cloth, or the set of doilies, from the tall cupboard at the left of the window seat. restore the vase of flowers to its place, take out the china and silver from the cupboard just mentioned, and set our table. One of the children could be doing this while the mother is in the kitchen, preparing to serve the dinner. As we have seen, she takes the platter and vegetable dishes from the warming closet by the stove, places the cooked food therein, and sets it on a shelf of the four-storied passway; she takes out the warm dinner plates and places them in the passway; gets the bread and the things from the refrigerator and the

drinking water from the faucet, and places them in the passway. Having thus conveyed to the dining room everything needed, she then goes into the dining room herself and places all the food from the passway upon the table.

The meal being served, two of the children seat themselves on the window seat, two (or three) more opposite. Mother, with baby in the high chair, sits at the passway end; Father opposite. You can see, in the picture opposite this page, that nobody is crowded. And how cheerful and pleasant the surroundings—much more interesting and provocative of good talk, don't you think? than a room devoted solely to the mundane business of eating!

"But suppose somebody comes!" you exclaim. Suppose somebody does come? It would be a good thing for us all to live so that we can look any man in the eye and tell him to sit down and have a bite with us. However, Everyman's House reduces you to no such necessity. One of the several functions of our little vestibule is as a place to dispose of miscellaneous business calls without intrusion



The Everymans at dinner.

upon family privacy. It isn't often that real visitors ring the bell during meal time.

Family privacy need not suffer in any case.<sup>1</sup> The beautiful tall screen standing on casters by the fireplace is the solution of that problem. As you go to answer the bell, you easily and quickly draw out the screen so as to hide completely the table from the sight of any one entering the front part of the room, yet allowing space to pass back to the table by the farther wing of the screen. The passway and the door to the kitchen being also hidden, the table may be cleared and the room fully restored to its sitting-room character before the screen is again folded.

Or suppose the family is entertaining at dinner or luncheon: the table may be set with the screen drawn. Then you fold it back, and find that, in this space, eight or ten persons may be seated uncrowdedly at table: three on the perfectly comfortable window seat seven feet in length, three opposite, and two or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>This point needs to be much emphasized. A well-known writer on domestic topics has recently published an article deploring the fact that the much-to-be-desired living-dining room can only be realized at the price of family privacy.

three at each end. And there are the cheerful hearth fire and books and pictures and all the pleasantest, coziest surroundings your house affords, in which to break bread with your friends!

Numerous small criticisms of our livingdining room plan were made to hostesses. "Children are always dropping food on the rug," one woman suggested.

"Yes, but the carpet sweeper is so handy in this cupboard. And, besides, you see, this is a small rug under this table. It can be cleaned oftener than the others."

"Don't you have to move the table, to sit in the window seat?"

"Oh, dear, no! You see, the window seat is seven feet long; the table only four. You easily pass in from the end."

"I shouldn't think that window seat would

be comfortable to sit on."

"Oh, but it is. Try it. It's just the height, with the cushion, of an ordinary dining chair.

. . . No, the windows don't open into your back. They look like casement windows, but they shove up."

"But I'd want a regular dining room, with arrangements for an electric toaster and grill."

"Certainly. There is the wall connection right by the window seat. You see you can use it as well here as anywhere. Also, that connection can be used with a vacuum cleaner or a reading lamp. Big Brother can lounge and read there if Father is spread out on the davenport."

"O-o-oh!"

"Plan your house to fit your everyday needs," a wise woman advised me when I was planning our first home. "For the sake of this everyday convenience, be willing to go to some occasional inconvenience, as in the exceptional case of company." So here is offered another possibility in the way of entertaining in Everyman's House.

If Mother wants, once or twice a year, to give a card party with a luncheon of small tables, why not take down the bed in the Mother's Room and stow it in the closet and thus have two rooms for her purpose?

The fact is that the separate dining room is a survival of the time when we could build a

very comfortable house for \$2,500, and hired help was no rarity in even the modest home. It has no rightful place to-day in a small house with a big family and a strained income. It will be forced, at no distant time, to join the procession of the reception hall, the parlour, the library, and the den, and go on into the living room and sit down and be good.

And consider this: The general uses of the living room interfere quite a bit with its use as a library by someone who wants to read in peace. Its use as a parlour usually drives out the members of the family not being called upon. But the use of the living room for dining doesn't interfere with anybody or anything. For the room would be simply deserted if the family filed out of it to find a "place to eat" in another room.

Thus, in a house which supports a living room and a dining room the latter is useless twenty-two hours of the day, and the former, the other two hours; which amounts to your supporting in idleness one able-bodied, expensively furnished, heated, and taxed room constantly, from year's end to year's end, in

your home! People should ask themselves whether they can afford it. Dozens of families can, for thousands who cannot—and yet do. It is surely a question worth considering.

The caster-footed screen which shields the dining table on occasion has many uses. If Mother's darning is littering table or window seat when the doorbell rings, she can draw the screen as she pauses to admit her visitor. Or perhaps Daughter is reading or studying. Or again if Daughter shows in a caller, Mother has the opportunity to make an exit behind the screen through the kitchen into the nursery. It is needless to multiply examples of household exigencies which yield so naturally to this simple arrangement.

Haven't you noticed how the living room (sitting room we used to call it) has "looked up," since it incorporated the parlour into its precincts? Better furniture is worth considering, and we have it now in everyday use. Comfortable, homey furniture—overstuffed, rattaned, or chintzed, as the family taste may dictate. Who, indeed—if condemned to daily living with it—would ever have

tolerated black horsehair or frail spindlelegged chairs that crash down if you give them a hard look?

Again, haven't you noticed how the living room has benefited by the incorporation of the library? Good books and magazines are the best of furnishings. "Who hath a book hath friends at hand." That culture which depends on "fifteen minutes a day" is to be obtained from the book "at hand" in the living room.

And lastly, have you noticed how the living room has improved with the incorporation of the nursery? You have not. I haven't. Nobody has. Which is one of several reasons for the chapter to come, on "The Mother's Suite."

#### CHAPTER VIII

## THE KITCHEN "IN REVERSE"

If IT were done when "tis done!" I hear that silent exclamation of the heart from countless women, rising at the conclusion of the dinner they have cooked and served. For the rest of the family, 'tis done. The "assassination" of her viands has "trammelled up the consequence" for them. The group rises and gracefully dissipates itself, each member feeling "with his surcease success." However, "we still have judgment here," but with no "even-handed justice" about it. For the ghost of the beneficent banquet rises "to plague the inventor thereof." It is embodied in that dreadful, dreary, stupid anti-climax—the Dishes!

Now I strive to show in this chapter that Dishes can be so greatly ameliorated as to lose their bad reputation. But first, let me remark that there is no earthly reason why any

woman with an able-bodied child past four should do all the after-dinner work unaided. provided the house is so planned and the details of work so routed that it is safe for children to help. Of course, if there is no particular place in the kitchen to set anything, and if something spilled on the floor is a real labour to clean up, and if swinging doors are going to bang on fingers, and collisions therethrough are liable to lay low one's child and one's china, then the children can't be of much assistance. One of the reasons-by-theway for the design of Everyman's House is the conviction of the designer that children should be taught from a very early age that it is their privilege and their duty to give help about the house; and that the house, therefore, should be so planned that it is practical for them to do so. More of this in Chapter XIV.

However, we shall suppose that, this time, Mother has the after-dinner work to do quite alone. And we shall cut back to the moment when the table is to be cleared for dessert. Just as the food-laden service dishes were set from the kitchen into the passway when dinner was about to be served, so now they go back to the kitchen, not by being carried through the door, please notice, but by being set into the passway again. And for this there is abundant room. Not only is the passway a four-story affair, but its lower shelf is continuous with the counter board extending to the sink. Thus, dishes may be set through as far as the arm can reach. Also, there is an extension shelf which can be drawn out above the warming cupboard and over to the stovemaking within easy reach a continuous passway of some nine square feet, with the three passway shelves above, each adding a space sixteen inches square. This passway is left open on the kitchen side, but is closed off by a small door, sixteen inches by four feet, on the living-room side. Furnished with pressure catches, the door opens easily from either side.

The plates, etc., being removed and the dining table cleared of crumbs, Mother reaches the pudding from the passway near the stove and duly serves the dessert. After which, placing the dessert dishes and the crumb tray in the passway, Mother folds the tablecloth and pad and lays them on a shelf in the cup-

board at the left. She lets down the table leaves, replaces the vase of flowers, and, taking the carpet sweeper from the broom closet at the right of the window seat, she sweeps the rug. The room is now restored to its living-room character.

Not until now, when all the dishes are already in the kitchen, does she have occasion to pass back into the kitchen herself, where we are presently to see the wheels go round in reverse gear.

Mother finds the dishes precisely where she wants them—on the counter shelf extending to the sink. Butter, milk, and remnants of the meal which are to go to the refrigerator are arranged on that useful counter tray, and all are taken in one trip to the end of the left-hand counter by the entry door. Here, observe, she stands within easy reach of both the counter and the refrigerator, into which one thing after another can be placed. Never any occasion to make two or three trips across the kitchen, carrying only two things at a time, with no place but the floor to set them, while she rearranges the refrigerator contents to receive additions.

Remnants of food from plates are scraped into the triangular perforated basin in one corner of the sink. The dishes are prepared for washing, are washed, rinsed in hot water, and arranged in the drier, whence some of them go into the warming cupboard, some into the adjacent kitchen cupboards; while others, with the towel-wiped silver and glass, go through the passway to the china closet on the left of the window seat-if you wish. However, there seems to be no reason why, with a clean white towel spread over them, they should not remain in the drier rack on a shelf of the passway, awaiting the next meal.

Why is dishwashing at the nadir of woman's respect in both the domestic and commercial kitchen? The only flavour of romance surrounding it is when the bridegroom wipes the dishes for his little bride. (However, should this not be interpreted as obedience to the vow to cling to her in prosperity and adversitv?)

A woman of refinement who is undertaking to run a small but smart tearoom tells me of her difficulties in the matter of dishwashing. She doesn't find the patent washers wholly

satisfactory for china (nor do I). And, anyway, there are the cooking dishes.

"When I advertise for cooks or waitresses," she said, "I get applications from comfortable-looking women and trim, well-groomed girls. When I advertise for a dishwasher, I am confounded by the very off-scourings of female service: grimy, unkempt, bedraggled, hopeless old women who seem to be confessing their pitiful, self-despising condition by merely offering to wash dishes!" (I was reminded of the culprit who, confronted with china unpleasantly reminiscent of past meals, said in mingled confession and self-defense: "I owns up to that applesass and that beef gravy; but that there egg was already on when I come.")

"Now, what is there about dishes, I wonder," said the tearoom proprietress, "that seems to be so beneath the imagination of the average wage-earning woman?"

"Does the average home-keeping woman like it much better?" I inquired.

Woman's repugnance to this task is partly to be accounted for by the fact that, after the pleasant respite of the mea, it comes as such an anti-climax. Anti-climaxes are seldom

thrilling, particularly one that bids us be up and doing at the moment we would find it singularly agreeable to sit or lie down.

Notwithstanding all of which, I, for my part, like dishwashing the best of any kind of housework. In fact, I can see nothing essentially unpleasant about it, except as the plumber and the woman's own predilection for martyrdom make it so. One of the seventeen wonders of house-construction is-the height of the sink. Our sink is thirty-three inches high at the edge, instead of the usual thirty. The first intention was to have it an even vard high, but after trying that on various of our acquaintances, we decided thirty-three inches to be the right average; especially since it is good form in Everyman's House for a woman not to be a martyr but to wash her dishes sitting down.

"Sit down!" thundered "The Fighting Coward" (in the movies) to his former persecutors, and-they sat down! "When you can make a man sit down," he confided to his comrade, "you've got him tamed." Would that I could thunder effectually to women to sit down when they should! What a taming of formidable tasks! What surcease to aching backs and fallen arches; and strained tempers, too! However, I have known women who thought it fairly scandalous to sit down to peel potatoes, though we all sit down, do we not? to shell peas.

Right under our sink in Everyman's House is that most convenient stool, its two front legs fore-shortened just enough to incline the worker's body at a convenient angle to her work. "Sit down!" we gently entreat our guests. Have your sink high enough to let the knees under. You wash dishes in your lap, as it were. Sit at your ironing, too, as much as vou possibly can. Don't stand when you can sit. If you will sit, dishwashing, particularly, can be transformed into rather pleasant work than otherwise. And this is important, for one reason, because skimping on dishes defeats all dignity and daintiness in table service. Dishwashing is warm and pleasantly sudsy, and has this advantage, that you can think of something else meanwhile. Cooking I find very exacting. One who is not doing it regularly is apt to forget essentials—even forget to use the holders, until scorchingly reminded.

But one can drop naturally into dishwashing any day. And I insist that dishwashing is quite the reverse of a "dirty job" except in the hands of those horrid persons who put the dishes in, scraps and all. Bits of soft paper, such as orange wrappers, go into a corner of a drawer by the sink in Everyman's House, for wiping off grease, etc., from dishes; or it may be rinsed off under the automatic hot-water faucet ever at your service.

Now, here is the way I would wash dishes, if I lived in Everyman's House. I would take a seat unashamed on that kitchen stool, from which everything needful for the operation is in easy reach, on the wall or in the drawers. I would not wear rubber gloves. With good soap or soap flakes, dishwashing is rather improving for the hands than otherwise. I would wipe or rinse off the especially soiled dishes; assemble them all in proper order on the drain counter; wash them (glass and silver first, of course), and turn them all upside down on the opposite counter to drain off the dish water. I would wash the cooking dishes and treat them in the same way. Then I would wash and scald my one nice bright pan and

clean the sink. After which, I would place not too many dishes at a time in the pan, and pour boiling water over them out of the teakettle—unless it comes practically boiling from the faucet. (Already hot faucet water boils almost at once upon the stove.) I would completely immerse the dishes in boiling water and let them stand for a minute or so while I clean the stove and dry the cooking dishes over a sterilizing blaze, and take care of the garbage and other matters. Then I would fish those dishes out of the hot water and arrange them in the drier, and put in some more dishes, adding some more boiling water, and so on, till they are all done. Then I would wash and scald cloth and towels and pour the hot rinse water down the sink as a chaser to a bit of washing soda. There's absolutely nothing repulsive, that I can see, about dishwashing done right. On the contrary, I call it dainty work. I have tried using a large, square drain pan, to hold water deep enough to cover the dishes in the drier; then lifting drier rack and dishes out to dry off. However, I will have to put a drain in the bottom and draw the water off before that can be pronounced a success. Even then it requires an extravagant amount of hot water.

On hiring help the one thing about which I am invariably specific is my way of washing dishes. Will she do it just that way? That kills the germs, you know. It is really not a fad, but a matter of health and safety—for her as much as for any of us. Will she do it? "Certainly." In fact, that's the way she always does do it. She does it that way once or twice, under observation and some discreet prompting. However, it appears that of all hard words of tongue or pen, my words are the hardest specimen; and on this rock the ways have split, of me and maids who'd rather quit!

Why, oh, why do some mistresses, as well as maids, pour more-or-less-hot water over the bowed and huddled backs of a trough of dishes, and call that "rinsing?" One maid explained the matter thus: "You see, it makes them easier to wipe!" Even manufacturers of patent dish driers picture lovely ladies in the daintiest of evening frocks, simply revelling in this same performance! For my part, I'll have none of dish driers without the boiling-

hot bath as a condition precedent—after which, the drier is doubtless more sanitary than a towel. It is indeed a pity that silver and glass must be wiped and polished.

"Dishwashing de luxe," someone called the method explained at Everyman's House. Hardly "of luxury" but certainly no backbreaking, repulsive process which gives you just cause to hate and despise it. I can seldom view the results of any housewifely labour of mine with the unmixed pride with which I eye a trayful of freshly laundered dishes. I then recall a pronouncement I once saw somewhere: "It takes a lady to wash dishes." With this sentiment I agree. Pleasant, anywhere, to see one! At the sink I'm bound to be one!

Something more about taking thine ease in thy kitchen. Not only sit when you can, but be sure, when you build, to consider what you have to look at—outside as well as in—some hours of every day. Don't focus the kitchen, as a matter of course, upon the ugliest or most uninteresting view available. Perhaps no good view is to be had like our long, lovely view over hills and valleys. (One young wife ex-

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claimed, "I'd enjoy to sit and wash dishes with a view like that!") Then, if lacking a land-scape, we especially recommend, as a source of recreation on the other side of your window, a "better home" for bluebirds or wrens. Everyman's House has both. And in winter, a bird-feeding station at the sill. So easy; so good for you and for the birds and for the children!

#### CHAPTER IX

#### WHAT EVERY WOMAN WANTS

I CAN think of no more intriguing sentence with which to begin this chapter than the plain statement that Everyman's House has eight closets, ten cupboards (besides a dishwarming cupboard), twelve built-in drawers, a seven-foot two-parted window-seat box; two closed and ventilated storerooms each 3' 6" x 12'; accessible space in the attic peak for a quantity of things including all the window screens of the second story, and a storage alcove 5' x 7' in the basement, with a ventilated cold room of the same size by its side. A woman who could not keep this house in order would create chaos in a vacuum.

Men will give women love and money and raiment and jewels and palaces and yachts, and so following, but they simply will not give them closets. Not willingly. Only at the point of much insistence. And the defect

## WHAT EVERY WOMAN WANTS III

with us is that, if the fireplace promises to be elegant and the dining room severely stately, we usually fail to insist on closets at the time, and spend our wretched lives repenting.

How should men know closets? Who wrestles with the table leaves, and the carpet sweeper, and the ironing board, and must find safe place for the extra vases and candlesticks, and the company table linen that has to be wound on a four-foot stick? Who retires the winter blankets and the voluminous down quilts and the extra pillows and the window draperies He hates to see around in summer? Who moth-balls and stows the winter coats and furs, and finds a place for the sleds and skates and skis of the family? Who gets out the B. V. D.'s and knickers and golf clubs and baseball mitts and tennis racquets and pup tents and folding canoes and fishing tackle and waders and trunks and suitcases and lunch baskets and thermos bottles of approaching summer?

How can a man vicariously suffer the indignity of being bumped on the head by that stuffed skeleton in the closet—the mattress you're saving till you can afford to build on an extra room and—you vow—a good million closets? Who picks up and pairs up the shoes and rubbers and galoshes of a ten or twelve-footed family? Not the member who pleads to keep all his old clothes and artlessly wonders on each occasion for its use, "Now, where can that dress suit be, do you suppose?"

Above all—and beyond all enduring—who is expected to know at any moment of day or night the precise habitat of each and every item of the family's possessions?

I appeal to an unprejudiced jury of my countrywomen. What this country needs may be rain, as Candidate Will Rogers declares. But what it also needs is closets. And if I get to Congress along with Will, "I'm going to see to it personally" that you get them.

On this sore point of closets, I was going to cite by name a great woman's college, built—by men, of course—without a single one! But I haven't verified it. However, here is a more modern instance:

The last time I was East an elderly friend of mine, preparing for permanent residence in a new apartment de luxe, gave me a letter she

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once received from a very famous woman, now dead. "I'll have no room for it up there," she explained. "There's no storage except a gorgeous hat box and a row of hooks behind a folding-bed. I've had to strip down to the last ounce of 'things.' Why, I feel as if I were moving up into an airplane to live. Also, I've discovered the true definition of 'a-partment'; 'meant to part you from your most cherished possessions.'"

Doubtless there are instances in which the apartment house serves as a valuable ally to the beneficent rummage sale. For I am by no means advocating closets for the purpose of keeping useless things. Nevertheless, who, in either a luxurious flat or a little one-family house, wants to feel that she is now reduced to the bare necessities of life?

Well, Everyman's House has enough closets to rejoice any woman and dismay any man. And that means a marvellous simplification of household work. It is likewise the first essential in teaching orderliness and helpfulness to children.

Our four closets and two storerooms opening off the chambers of the second floor carry flues into the ventilated attic peak. They all match the rooms they adjoin; waxed oak floors, finished doors and casings, hardware trim, and tinted walls. When a door is opened, it does not disclose a skimped and ugly interior.

However, a closet isn't just four walls any more than a home is. A little thought and planning will work wonders. For instance, a closet without a pole running its length is just four walls that miss the heart of convenience. But with a metal or wooden rod, and an appropriate supply of coat and skirt hangers, even the clothes presses of a tabloid flat will hold an astonishing amount of apparel. Indeed, shallow clothes closets are a decided economy and an advantage to orderliness. Hanging there in sagless and uncrumpled condition, each garment presents a shoulder for identification. There's always corner room. also, to spare for nightie, dressing gown, and such matters. It is a good thing to keep one's best gowns and wraps at the farther end of the closet, with a chintz curtain protecting them.

A closet should have two shelves above, spaced so as to accommodate the articles to

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be stored. It should have these shelves unless, as in some old houses, the ceilings are so high that a second pole can be freighted with seldom-used garments and pulleyed to the ceiling. Closets, more than any other item of the house, can be solid comfort to the woman who knows how to utilize them.

Then closets and storerooms need artificial light, unless they can be fully illuminated from the room. I have found a closet light a great convenience to a sickroom. The door, serving as a screen, may be opened far enough to light the room or narrowed to the width of the medicine stand. It is a convenience, too, when one comes from the bath, to be able, by a mere strip of closet light, to open bed and windows for the night without having to draw down the shades.

The inside of the closet door presents possibilities often neglected. We need not consider extreme measures, such as converting the upper half into a dressing screen with mirror and rack for toilet articles, etc. But a real convenience is a projecting hook which will take a half-dozen hangers for children's suits and frocks. A shoe rack or a canvas

shoe case across the lower half of the door will handily hold shoes and other small articles.

Coming downstairs, still on the subject of closets, please note the convenience of the roomy coat closet off the vestibule, with its pole for coat hangers, with two shelves above for hats in use and hats in storage. On the inside of the closet door, near the bottom, is a rack for rubbers. Above this, and also on the walls of the closet, are hooks for hanging more wraps. One strip of hooks, for the children's wraps, is placed four feet from the floor. I may mention here that the kitchen entry has a low strip of hooks for children's everyday wraps and hats, and a shelf for their overshoes.

The strategic position for closets and cupboards is too often neglected. You notice that Everyman's House has a closet for broom, carpet sweeper, vacuum cleaner, dust mop, etc., not off the kitchen, but off the livingdining room, where they are most often needed. It is the one at the right of the window seat.

Above the broom closet is a set of shelves for

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the various necessary small articles which. unless kept rigidly in bounds, do so much to litter a house. Room for wrapping paper, pasteboard, tissue paper, express tags, paste, glue, twine, rubber bands—all right by the table where you want to use them. Here is a space for vases, candles, candlesticks, and electric bulbs, and a special shelf for the odds and ends that are always turning up to be relocated by Mother. The unidentified bunch of keys, the precious nondescripts which escape from children's pockets, the nail files which, perhaps accidentally, wander from bedrooms into oblivion, where Mother picks them "John, if you can't find your knife, look on the Lost-and-Found shelf." Then there is the little emergency work basket, for busted-off buttons and that last-momentbefore-school tear in the stocking knee.

On the inside of this door belongs the family "date sheet." Not Mary's date with Ned, which she isn't likely to forget, anyway; but her date with the dentist; the date on which books are due at the library; the date of the caucus and the primary; of the food sale or

the rummage sale to which you have promised a cake or a cast-off suit, or of some birthday that's liable to be forgotten. These are pegs for your mental closet. They save much clutter of the inner dwelling of each of us.

On the left side of the window seat is the china closet, with room for the best table linen and a bottom shelf for things due for departure from the house. "On approvals" for return; shoes for half-soling; books going back to the library; the bundle for the charity organization; things "to be called for" at request of any member of the family. Whoever answers the door knows where to look. Also, if one cultivates the habit of looking on this shelf before "going down town," it saves many special trips.

The inside of the seven-foot window seat, with its convenient two-parted lid and cushion, is something I would advise Father to preempt—and padlock if he has growing boys. He probably knows better than I do what he will want to put therein. And whatever he does put away is so much easement to Mother. More of this in the chapter on "Suiting Father, Too."

The Mother's Room has a commodious

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closet fitted with pole, shelves, and wall hooks. The bathroom has the usual medicine cupboard. The light and dry storage alcove in the basement,  $5' \times 7'$ , will hold all the furloughed furniture of a large room. The open space under the cellar stairs will accommodate all of the door and window screens from the first floor.

The cold room in the cellar,  $5' \times 7'$ , is separated from the furnace by a cement wall, a wood wall, and a distance of ten feet. It has its own window for light and ventilation. The cold room is furnished with stout broad shelves reaching from three feet above the floor to the ceiling. Beneath these shelves is a partitioned slat bin running the length of the room. The slats serve to ventilate fruits and vegetables and keep them from rotting. The dirt from rough vegetables falls through the slats to the floor. The bins are raised a few inches from the floor, so that it can be easily swept or scrubbed. The wall opposite the bins afford hanging space for cured meats, etc. The cold room is perfectly lighted at night by the electric bulb just outside the door. The gas and electric meters are on the wall.

and on a man's eyeline, just outside the cold-room door.

It is the hidden helps to convenience and orderliness, of the kind described in this chapter, which are most often overlooked or seriously stinted when we come to build a home. Yet—to say nothing of convenience to Mother -any one would rate orderliness as among the very first requisites of peace and comfort, and a condition absolutely precedent to teaching good housekeeping principles to children. If **you** haven't a place for everything, how are you undertaking to teach them to keep everything in its place? The woman who is eternally picking up after her family is a slave to their carelessness. Yes, but carelessness naturally exists in a home where order hasn't seemed important enough to make any special provisions for it. Even the little house can spare space for this. In fact, the smaller the house and the larger the family, the more vital the matter becomes. Yet people of pinched resources continue to build dining rooms for use a couple of hours a day, and ignore the howling need of closets to sweeten life continually.

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Is this, after all, a somewhat trivial chapter? Reading it over, I feared so until I looked up at my husband and asked:

"In building a house, now, what would you say it is that every woman wants?"

"Closets," he replied, with no hesitation at all.

Discerning man! Would thou wert an architect instead of a physician! Together we would revolutionize the home.

And yet perhaps he said "closets," just like that, because at this very time, with his gallant concurrence, I am engaged in building on two lovely closets at the rear of our house. Incidentally a room or two, of course. But he knows perfectly well it was closets that started the trouble.

Anyway, closets it is that every woman wants.—I let this chapter stand.

#### CHAPTER X

# "OCCUPATION, NONE"

IT WAS a wistful-looking mother who stood by the kitchen sink of Everyman's House. A mother, since she held her baby in her arms—and oh! such a tired one! I smiled at her from the doorway, and, as her eyes rather clung, I threaded my way through the crowd that always filled that little kitchen of ours and was about to make friends through the baby. But immediately she said:

"Did you ever read that story about the farm woman who moved her family into her

husband's new barn?"

Why, yes, I believed I had. "Mary E. Wilkins wrote it, didn't she?"

"I don't know; I guess so," she said, evidently deeming the creature of more consequence than its creator. For she added, with slow emphasis:

"Well, that's the best story I ever read.

And since I've seen this house of yours, I've wondered why lots and lots of us farm women don't do that very thing."

"Bring your husband to see this house, and you won't need his barn," I said. "How many children have you?"

"Five—two girls and two boys, besides this baby. Just the sized family this house seems intended for. And not one single thing have I got that this house has got—things to help, you know—though my house is as big as two of this."

"Well, be sure to bring your husband to see this house, won't you? And be sure to see that wonderful baby's bed in the Mother's Room before you go. We have helps for tired mothers by day and by night."

As this woman moved away, I tried to recall the details of that "best story" she had so feelingly referred to. It was something like this.

For many years the farmer's wife had pleaded with her husband to build a new house in place of the poor dilapidated thing they had inherited. He had put her off from year to year, while she watched the proceeds

of bumper crops go successively into better barns and silos and hog houses and chicken houses and more "better barns." At last, the long-suffering wife, resigning hope of ever building the cozy little home of her dreams, took advantage of a brief absence of her lord to move the family into the most magnificent brand-new barn in the township. The astounded husband returned to find a housewarming in progress—that is to say, a cheerful fire in the kitchen stove whose pipe now negotiated a patent feed chute. His wife was filling the teakettle from the windmill spout running water at last! The parlour furniture adorned one end of the long open space. Supper was set in the other end, where the surrey and the buggy had fondly thought to be at home. In the harness room hung the best clothes of the family. And—chief horror of the situation—the children's beds were set up in the luxurious box stalls built especially for his pedigreed mares and their colts!

I have forgotten the dénouement, but of this I am sure: that the husband and father who drove the long-suffering wife to this delicious piece of mutiny had no intention of being

cruel or unusual. He must have patiently explained to that wife of his, over and over again, that barns and chicken houses and hog houses are productive enterprises, and as such they handsomely pay for themselves. Therefore, it is "good business" to spend money on them. And how could she fail to agree with that? All the petty cash she ever handled was "egg money" and "butter money." Of course it was good business to keep up buildings for the sake of the paying stock and crops. Husband was right; and yet . . .

At last this good woman appears to have been the subject of a grand illumination. She may not have put it in these words, but this, I think, was the general idea!

Home-making is a productive business, too. Indeed, it is the productive business which alone makes barns and stock and factories and mines and railroads and churches and schools and governments and all other human institutions worth anything at all. Therefore, she was determined to have a better place for her part of the firm's business: raising and cultivating their crop of children.

Now the rest of this chapter is less about

Everyman's House or any man's house than it is about the attitude of people in general toward their homes. But I earnestly hope you will read this chapter, because I shall approach the intimate study of the Mother's Suite from the point of view of the preceding paragraph.

I readily admit that the declaration of rights I have put into the mouth of that farm woman would seem very implausible coming from the lips of the average housewife. Perhaps she knows these things, but she does not feel them. Least of all does the average woman give evidence of feeling them, in relation to her own work, in her own home. How vividly this fact was forced upon those of us who, in 1917, had the responsibility in the several states of taking the official registration of women for war-time service. One of our Michigan posters, designed especially to appeal to the home woman, read:

ARE YOU busy in your home rearing patriotic citizens for our country's future need? Surely you will REGISTER for that! It

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The writer was State Chairman for Michigan of the Woman's Committee, Council of National Defence.

explains why you may not be able to register for other work. It will make you a better mother and citizen to feel that your country understands and appreciates this sacred service.

We officially registered more than nine hundred thousand women in the State of Michigan. In many counties we achieved an actual 100-per-cent. registration of all women over sixteen, proving that we had reached the home women, as well as other women, with the Government's appeal. In fact, the service offering of women, in our state as in other states, was tremendous, spontaneous, eager-hearted, wonderfully varied, and revealingly capable of carrying on most of the processes of everyday life, had the war demanded the prolonged absence of great numbers of men.

However, a very large majority of adult registrants were (as we anticipated) unable to register to "take the place of a man" in any line of work. They very properly registered their regular occupation as "care of children in the home," adding proffers of part-time service in one or several of 118 choices indi-

cated on the card. But here is the pathetic thing that happened.

In nine cases out of ten, when a home woman sat down in privacy opposite our registrar, she would say in an embarrassed and apologetic manner, "Well, I am just a housewife!" Then it became the business of our trained registrar to make that woman feel that being a housewife marked her an important person in the eyes of her government, as one able to give highly valuable specialized service in this crisis of world war. We believe now that no war work of women has proved more permanently worth while than those private talks with the great hosts of women whose lives had become confused and inarticulate to them, and who, in this orderly review of their past experiences and present capabilities, found themselves and their life opportunities anew, and went away rejoicing, with a great uplift of self-respect. Their household knack at canning or gardening or sewing or knitting or "making over" could really be made to serve their country! Their daily tasks and sacrifices in child care were actually a part of what was going to be the wealth and salvation of America in the next generation! And so they registered proudly, perhaps to do only the things they had always been doing—but with what a different spirit, and with how much wider and happier an outlook!

And that was the spirit and outlook achieved by our then unfranchised women—through war. It is the spirit and outlook that the home needs in our women citizens to-day.

Indeed, I think it is high time for a new declaration of woman's rights. It must be based upon some such premise as that uttered by the Kalamazoo architect who was converted to our plan for Everyman's House "because," he said, "I see it as a plant for the manufacture of good citizens."

But here is one trouble. The home woman, the housewife and mother, finds herself doing such an astonishing number and variety of things, all chopped and mixed up in the day's grind, that she simply can't see and catalogue them by herself as they were catalogued on that wonderful registration card. And then the census taker calls on her, and begins to

question her, just as that woman registrar did during the war. He asks her what she is and does, and she stammers, "I am just a housewife," and waits to hear what he will ask next; perhaps it will clear this thing up a bit in her own mind. But he doesn't ask anything next. He pulls out his card and registers her:

"Housewife; Occupation, None."

Do we need another war?

No, we need a peaceful penetration of a stimulating, saving idea: A mother's body is the productive plant from which issues the most precious of all things—a human being! Out of a Mother! Into a Home, that was first created because mothers must have a place to produce and to care for their product. And by the necessity of providing and guarding this place, ruthless savages have been turned into tender, self-sacrificing fathers and husbands, whose instinctive utterance in the hour of any peril is: "Women and children first!"

We need, then, a saving spiritual vision on the part of parents as to what that wonderful creation, the Home, is really for.

I once knew a marble-cutter, who, finding his overhead too great, decided to sell the downtown shop and transfer his business to an unused garage on his back lot. On moving in he found the garage not light enough, and wisely cut another window. He fitted up the walls with racks to receive his tools. His patterns must be preserved: he wisely built cupboards to contain them. It got dark rather early of a winter's day: painting the walls a light colour helped. But the central electric light, all well enough for a garage, didn't suit at all for his shop. How was one to cut stone if perpetually in one's own shadow? He put in an extra light, of course. The western sun was glaring and disagreeable. An awning. No electric help here, as in his old shop, for turning the grindstone that sharpened his tools. His wife said he was wasting valuable time and strength turning the grindstone by hand; he must install a motor for this purpose. And he did.

Thirty feet away was the one undersized window of her kitchen. In it she spent more hours a day than he in his shop. There had not been one need for improvement in his shop which selfsame need, or its match, had not existed for years in her kitchen.

Was he a selfish man? Not at all. She was no better as wife and mother than was he as husband and father, struggling against odds to make a living for those he loved. He simply had respect for his position as a marble-cutter and the provider for a family. He knew that certain conditions were necessary for success in his undertaking.

But she did not really respect her position as his helpmeet and the mother of a family. She did not think or speak for efficiency in her workshop, so how was he to know? She thought it wifely, motherly devotion to "do without things" and make up for the lack of intelligent mastery of her domain by longer hours and more exhausting toil. Poor woman! Poor mother! In her own esteem, "just a housewife!" And he etched tombstones, and she—immortal souls!

<sup>&</sup>quot;Occupation, None!"

### CHAPTER XI

#### THE MOTHER'S SUITE

HAVE read somewhere the story of a new university graduate who accepted a call to fill the chair of sociology in a small college. On his arrival he found that he was expected also to teach history and political science and international relationships, and to fill in in various other capacities when faculty members were sick or on leave.

"It's all right, quite all right," he said mildly enough to the president of the institution. "Only, you know, the letter said the 'chair of sociology.' Why didn't you tell me it was going to be a settee?"

It is Mother who occupies the settee in the home, except that, commonly, she hasn't time to sit down. (I wonder, by the way, if "settee" isn't a sort of Occidental equivalent of "suttee," except that we lack a spontaneous movement to outlaw this type of self-immolation.)

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On second thought, I guess that Mother's chair will always have to be a settee; and that is the reason we shall have to upholster it and place it at the strategic point for reaching the greatest number of conveniences and making the greatest number of short cuts. And then, gently as any sucking dove, we shall roar at Mother, "Sit down!" which is, metaphorically speaking, the central idea of Everyman's House, and, more specifically, of this chapter.

Surely the first home was built around a mother and her baby. The helplessness of infancy, and the necessity for mother-nursing and care, limited the primitive woman's activities in the chase, and classified her as useless impedimenta in war. She and her offspring must be left behind in a place of safety, which, in time, became Home. And we have seen how she naturally applied herself to the creation and practice of those household arts which enhanced the human comforts of home for every member of the family.

The reason for this priority of women in useful labour is of course obvious. Woman, from the first, enjoyed the special tutoring of that most persistent and effective trainer in industrial education which the world of nature has yet produced, the human infant. Any family of children, any single child, even, can provide the four prime essentials of discipline to regular work—namely, an incentive to labour which cannot be ignored, an obvious suggestion of things to be done, a time schedule (including a self-winding alarm clock), and a satisfying reward for duty well done! The woman and the child constituted, it is clear, the first social group.<sup>1</sup>

All home-making is an elaboration—when it is not a perversion—of this primitive home idea. When even the most sophisticated bachelor girls "make a home," they ought, out of decent gratitude, to hang a mother-and-child picture over the fireplace, with some shadowy outline, in the background, of "the man."

Everyman's House is a new fashion of going back to a good old idea. It concerns itself not with what is due to a house as a house; or as an exhibit in financial rating; or as a cynosure for the appraising eyes of friends or enemies. It is just something meant to surround and protect and assist the average American mother in her twofold high calling of taking care of her baby and making a good and happy place for all the family.

<sup>1&</sup>quot;Woman's Share in Social Culture," by Anna Garlin Spencer.

Manifestly, no mother needs any handicaps in this undertaking. Yet our prevailing domestic architecture surrounds her with handicaps. Compare the average kitchen with the one in Everyman's House. Contrast the labour and expense involved in the average separate dining room, with the living-dining room of a previous chapter. Compare the paucity of closets in the usual small house and the wealth of closet and storage room in Everyman's House.

However, given all these advantages, yet no one could describe it as "a house built around a mother and her baby" if it did not contain the Mother's Suite. Let us now follow Mother in the day's duties, and find out how she is helped by the Mother's Suite. A mother's job isn't from sun to sun. The mother of a baby is on duty twenty-four hours a day of every day in the year, no Sundays or Thursday afternoons off. So let us start at the zero hour; some midnight in, say, December.

The parents and baby are asleep. In the room the heat is mostly turned off and the outside air turned on. There is no difficulty

here, because of the adjacent warm bathroom in which to dress in the morning. Mother's day is started on astronomic time by some slight outcry or restlessness of her baby. She must rise, grope for her slippers, fumble for an electric switch, and go shivering over to Baby's crib, to see what is the matter. (This is a common reason for not opening windows and for not having the restfulness of a really dark room.) But this room is healthfully chilly and restfully dark, and Baby is still fretting—and Mother doesn't get up at all! Instead, she lies there comfortably under the covers and just twiddles her foot a bit—and the chances are that Baby falls back to sleep!

How is that? Why, Baby's bed—a proper kind of bed with rigid frame and good springs and a hygienic mattress—is suspended over the foot of Mother's bed. An iron standard ascends on one side from a floor base which extends underneath the larger bed. Attached to the frame are ratchets by which the little bed can be raised or lowered at will. Mother has given that little bed a few gentle upward pats and Baby knows it's all right and falls asleep again.

Or suppose it isn't as casual as that. Suppose this is a young baby, and it is time for the nursing. The mother sits up and reaches for the back rest by the bedside (any slender chair with legs removed will do); places it behind her, and slips back upon it; throws around her shoulders a soft, warm wrap from the chair beside her bed. Probably she doesn't need a light, but if she does, she pulls the chain of the shaded reading lamp attached to the head of the bed. She lifts Baby out of his warm nest, tucks him in the folds of her wrap, and sits comfortably with him at her breast until the nursing is finished.

"Don't wake me up! don't wake me up!" I used to say on camping expeditions when the rain compelled us to move our cots from the open into the shelter of the tent. If nobody started talking or giggling, the incident could be ignored. So the mother, in Everyman's House, has scarcely been awakened by this familiar and lovely incident of the night. Neither has she imperilled the baby by lying down with it in her arms, where many a baby has been smothered by a tired mother who has fallen asleep.



Baby's bed (canopy net folded to one side), showing convenience of position and economy of space.

Now it is morning. Mother rises to wash and dress in the warm bathroom, which becomes Father's place to dress while breakfast is preparing. Mother calls the sleeping children upstairs—that metal clothes chute is a wonderful broadcaster for messages like this. Presently breakfast is ready and in the passway, with ready-warm plates for hot pancakes on a cold morning.

Breakfast over, the dishes done, Father off to work, and the older children to school, Mother must attend to her marketing. The telephone is right at hand in a little side recess of the passway shelf, and where it can be reached from either room. At the bottom of the door, on the hinge side, is a little rounded nick for the cord, so the door can be completely closed upon it. The telephone is so handy for Mother in the kitchen, yet nobody has to come into the kitchen to use it.

Now, what is it she wants to order from the store? Does she have to stand there and rack her brains, and hold a nervous clerk on the 'phone at the rush hour, with a "Let me see, now—what was that I wanted?" No. She consults the "memo-board" tacked on the

inside of the passway door. Here, from time to time, as she has thought of something needed, she has taken one of the little pegs from the row at the bottom of the board and inserted it into the hole opposite the name of that thing. There's no excuse for not remembering to do it, for the memo board is within reach from either room. And what a boon to her and to the family, and to the merchant, and the deliveryman, saved an extra trip. (I have a home-made memo board with every imaginable thing you can wish to order—including coal and the plumber.)

Now it is time to give the baby his breakfast, and, after a while, his bath. She does not have to run upstairs to feed him or to bathe him. There is, you see, a Mother's Suite. If sleeping room and bathroom were upstairs, she would have to go up to him. The telephone would ring, and she would have to hurry down to answer it. Then, when she was back upstairs, somebody would come to the back door with vegetables, and she would have to hurry down again. But not so in Everyman's House. There, it is only a step, and that step

isn't uphill or down, to the telephone or the door. Or, to consider another arrangement: If Mother sleeps with Baby downstairs, and the bathroom is upstairs, it is a great handicap to have to carry an infant up there. The Mother's Room and the bathroom need to be en suite.

But further than that, they need to be, for a working mother, en suite with the kitchen. What is the alternative? To have Baby in a crib or a pen upstairs? This is, for obvious reasons, too impractical to consider. To have him in the kitchen with her? The constant trail of news items concerning little children burned, scalded, hurt by falling objects, stepped on, cutting themselves on knives, falling down the cellar stairs, swallowing alkaline washing powders—even being electrocuted-horrid word for a most horrid thing!—should convince any father and mother that the kitchen is an extra-hazardous place for a baby. And surely a mother has enough to do in her kitchen without having to bodyguard an active and inquisitive infant in the embryonic stage of understanding.

Besides, the kitchen is too hot and steamy for a baby. Taking cold is another form of kitchen accident.

The dining room, then!—if you still cling to a dining room. But could there be any place on earth less interesting to a baby—left to wander in a forest of tall legs and hard, unsympathetic chairs? Surely your dear baby isn't going to be turned loose amid such deadly and uneducative surroundings.

The living room, then. But somebody always has to be with Baby there, to protect the "mustn't touch" objects which, I feel sure, are the chief puzzle of a baby's life. And besides, is it fair to Father, homing with the idea of a ten-minute nap on the davenport, to find his claim jumped by a baby that has all day to sleep in? Do Big Brother and Sister enjoy bringing their friends in upon the general disorder and milky atmosphere of a living room misused as a nursery, while Mother is busy in the kitchen?

The solution is the Mother's Suite. With a gate in the doorway between the Mother's Room and the kitchen, the door can be opened

or closed at will, and the mother at her work can keep constant watch over her baby or babies. Or, on the other hand, while she is in the nursery or bathroom with her baby, she can keep an eye on her baking or stewing in the kitchen. Also, she can leave the child in safety when making excursions to the telephone, the front door or back door, or the furnace, as mothers sometimes must.

I'd have nothing in this bedroom-nursery that a child could hurt, or hurt himself with. I would have some pictures interesting to a baby, and hung on his eyeline. I would have some furniture of his own size—at least a table and a couple of chairs and a little chest of shelves for his toys. How would you like to live in a house where all the tables and chairs were eight feet high?

With the Mother's Suite, all the daily work is on one floor, except when she goes upstairs once a day to put the upper chambers to rights, or perhaps only to see how the children have taken care of their own rooms. Much climbing of stairs becomes a great burden, and, when another baby is imminent, a positive

peril, to Mother. Everyman's House reduces this difficulty to a happy minimum.

In a later chapter I shall tell how nicely Mother will manage in the Mother's Suite if she has not one only, but two or three, little folks of pre-school age; also, how, in case of family illness, this Mother's Suite becomes a godsend to both the patient and the nurse.

I must say here that battles royal were fought for the Mother's Room. "So queer not to have any dining room! Couldn't there be a compromise?" someone asked. "A patent folding bed, now, could swing into that clothes closet by day, and the baby's bed could be put 'somewhere,' and this room could still be a dining room if you had a drop-leaf table that could be pushed to one side at night." I thought of Mother, with no day nursery for her baby, and no place to speak of for her clothes; and I thought of Baby, hustled out of the way in time for breakfast: and then, with a lapse into mental giddiness, I thought of the feelings of that earliest of all invented creature comforts—a bed—being pulled out at the end of a swivel chain to receive a mother's weary limbs at night, and

condemned ad interim to stand on its head in a pitch-dark closet corner.

"Alas! they drag me out at night, to not so much as candlelight! When morning comes, I have no say; I have to go to bed by day! I have to go to bed and see those old clothes hanging on their tree, and hear—where eve will plant my feet—my jailers talk and laugh—and eat!"

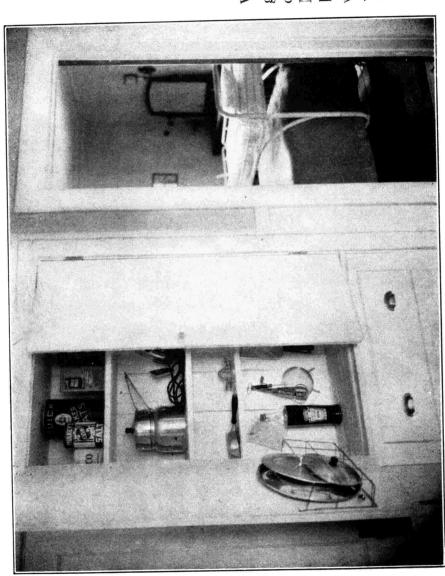
I must pause here to confess that not everybody concerned nationally with Better Homes feels as I do about that super-imposed baby's bed, which to me is a very important though not absolutely essential feature of the Mother's Suite. Indeed, I more than half suspect that our Demonstration won first prize, not because of it, but somewhat in spite of it. "A child should sleep in a room alone," some child experts say. However, the race seems to have struggled upward, somewhat, without the separate sleeping room for a baby. I haven't heard the reasons for demanding it, and, frankly, can't imagine them, unless it be a matter of too many in a room for good ventilation. If the room is to be kept warm at night, there might be a question of ventilation. But it doesn't need to be kept warm if, as in Everyman's House, there is a warm place in which to dress.

To be somewhat personal, I never have any heat at all in sleeping rooms—not even for a child after its first winter—but only warm places in which to dress. And, to be still more personal—I brought up a delicate baby in that very bed—and on a sleeping porch, after the first year. I can't imagine what would have become of me if I had had to get up and go to him in another room every time he needed attention, or I feared that he had wriggled out of covers, or got his head completely under them.

And he grew into a perfectly healthy specimen.—O Critic, spare that bed! Touch not a single part. My nights it comforted. O Critic!—have a heart!

"A little more and how much it is!
A little less—and the world away!"

I have recalled this couplet so many times in writing this chapter on the Mother's Suite. "Why, what is there so 'different' about it? A kitchen, a bathroom, and a bedroom for a



With a low gate in this doorway, Mother, at her kitchen work, can watch over her baby at play.

mother and her baby—aren't these the veriest commonplaces of home?"

Yes. And so are figures and dots and dashes the veriest commonplaces of your bank account. However, it makes a difference how they are arranged: \$981; or \$189; or \$9.81; or -\$981! There's where the cashier slaps an "O. D." to our account. "You are respectfully advised that the law does not permit overdrafts."

Alas! the overdrafts—the bankruptcies—of woman's strength, mother's patience, a tired wife's power of comradeship, when the ciphers of custom, of false pride, or of mere inertia are written before the thrifty digits of household convenience, serviceableness, economy, and peace!

# CHAPTER XII

## SUITING FATHER, TOO

TO ACHIEVE "a home of their own" for himself and his family is an honourable distinction and a cause for exalted feeling on the part of any man. President Coolidge recently said concerning human birth:

No man was ever meanly born. About his cradle is the wonderful miracle of life. He may descend into the depths . . . but he is born great.

So, I think, must every man and woman feel when first they break bread and lie down to sleep in their "ain place" upon the bosom of a suddenly more gracious Mother Earth.

It is the man who provides this body of home, trusting to his wife to animate it with a spirit worthy of something "born great" in that other "miracle," of wedded love. The desire for a home of their own is the great discipline which can transform the impossible into an accomplished fact. As the everdelightful Bill-Ding says, on the lumberman's bulletin boards:

If a salmon will jump a twenty-foot fall to the raising of her young, what can a man not do, to build his home?

A real man takes his hazards bravely, willingly, relying on his health, his job, his insurance, his borrowing capacity, and a loving and loyal wife. And taking his hazard has made a man out of some rather unpromising material.

Having achieved the home, a man begins to collect his unearned increment, not only in heart's satisfaction, but in self-respect, a social background, bettered business standing and in a sense of dignity in belonging to the social order. He has a vital stake in government. He has acquired respect for organized industry and for the law-regulated institutions of finance which furnish him the employment and insurance and credit necessary for the building of that home. Home-owning and Bolshevism are just naturally strangers.

The aim of "Better Homes in America" is,

in the words of President Coolidge, not only to help individual families to better homes, but also thereby to make "a substantial contribution to national well-being."

The man who has paid, or is paying, for his own home enjoys all these satisfactions much the more keenly if he knows that what he has built is well built, so as to stand up sturdily against the disintegrating influences of time and weather and the ingenious assaults of children. No resemblance to an affair "built of puff paste, and trimmed with vanilla icing"—as a certain popular writer described her bungalow at Hollywood. Even if the initial cost is more, he reflects that he would have to pay it ultimately in repairs on a less well-built house, or else be pained witness to the degeneration of a thing he loves.

It was considerations such as this which added hundreds of dollars to the initial cost of Everyman's House in Kalamazoo. For example, the cement-stone partitions and metal window frames in the basement; oak floors throughout instead of pine; the best quality of shingles and plumbing fixtures, and paint and hardware, and the other items of this nature

detailed in Chapter III. And no one thing will give him greater daily satisfaction than the extra money paid for modern wiring for side lights and numerous wall openings, instead of the erstwhile chandelier effect. But I must not repeat too much of what has been already said. The owner knows that it was good business to build well, and that the house will sell, if he ever wants to sell, so much the better for the extra money put into it.

The man of the house reflects that he will have some work to do around the place; caring for the lawn and garden; putting up and taking down the screens in season; stoking the furnace, and various odd jobs of tinkering that fall to the lot of home-owners. He will take satisfaction in the basement of Everyman's House that hasn't a pipe upon which he can possibly bump his head, or a dark corner in which, day or night, he must grope for anything. He will look with great satisfaction at the attic storage for second-story screens, and the basement storage for the rest of the screens. The grade entrance for bringing in his garden tools at night and for setting out

the ash cans will please him, as it pleases Mother on wash day. And as to his tinkering about the house—there, in the furnace room, and under an abundance of good north light, is just the place for a work bench and as full a complement of tools as any man can desire.

He may well look forward to the time when, discarding coal for oil as fuel, this whole room, the size of the living room above, will be one big, clean work-and-play room for him and his boys.

But I can't help worrying a bit about Father, nevertheless. Suppose everything is as convenient as possible for him. Still——

Here is a story I once heard a child-welfare lecturer tell to an audience of parents, mainly mothers.

Little Bernice had a much-loved dog, Danny. One day Danny was run over by a street car and killed. Bernice's mother, dreading the outbreak of grief which was sure to follow, nevertheless determined to have it over with as soon as possible. So, when her little daughter returned from school, she met her at the door and said:

"I'm terribly sorry, dear, to have to tell you that Danny is dead." To her astonishment, the little girl replied: "Oh, that is too bad!" Then she kissed her mother sympathetically and passed on to her own room.

A few minutes later a fearful clamour abovestairs. "Oh, Danny is dead! My Danny is dead! Oh—oh—Oh!"

"Why, Bernice!" exclaimed her mother, "whatever is the matter? I told you Danny was dead as soon as you came into the house!"

"You didn't, either!" shrieked the bereaved child. "You said 'Daddy."

The few fathers sprinkled through the assembly laughed dutifully, as is their custom at all jests and comic strips at their expense. But I wonder!

For if I were going to pick out the greatest hero and martyr type of our common, workaday world, it wouldn't be the faithful, toiling, unloved, unappreciated wife who labours for her children's welfare upon a scant allowance surlily bestowed. It's a poor, unsatisfying life, I grant you—tied to a man who doesn't love you, and accepting his support for the sake of the children. But such a woman,

nevertheless, has her children's company, and, presumably, her children's love. She is gratifying her deepest instincts in every sacrificial act for them. To them she can transfer all her personal ambitions—can live and experience—and, above all, hope vicariously in them.

No, my crown of heroism and martyrdom would go to the faithful, toiling, unloved, unappreciated husband and father who goes forth every morning to earn a living for a wife who doesn't know her duty, and for children whom she doesn't teach to love and revere him. Father, who leaves the house while his little children are still sleeping and returns as they are put to bed. How can he hope to exercise, on Sunday and holidays, a charm potent enough to hold their hearts close to him, unless, all the week, he and his labours, and his consequent absence, are continually interpreted to them in the glow of a good wife's love? Coming home in the crowded afternoon trolley, where one is ashamed to take the seat of a tired man. I often fall to wondering about the reception which will be accorded each of them at his own door. What an economic achievement for a woman marriage is, which

gives her a home and the exclusive services of one man for the support of herself and her children! And what a moral and spiritual indecency in her, what debility of brain, when she lets her children crowd him out of her heart into the status of a "mere provider"—her "meal ticket"—to use a vulgarism which but feebly matches the bald vulgarity of the fact. Yet, if a husband and father fails to get love and life satisfaction in the home, he will never get it legitimately anywhere. He must feel himself the most taken-in person in the universe. Why does he stand it? Well, there are the children—and alimony.

So, please understand that when we say that Everyman's House in Kalamazoo was designed to help a working mother to make a real home for the family, we are certainly not omitting from consideration the comfort and happiness of the husband and father.

Of course, the spirit of the home is of vastly more consequence than any combination of physical features. It is like "Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a bright student on the other" making a university. I wish I could recall some verses I read many years ago.

Perhaps some of my readers can send them to me, with the name of the author. The title is: "In a Dakota Claim Shanty," and it begins:

> Only a house thirteen by nine In the midst of the prairie wide.

Then the author described the daily toil of the husband, and their "little ones nestling warm" in this rude shelter of home and love. Then comes the one verse I remember completely:

> And I the priestess? Ah, I would The gift and the grace were mine To be the priestess that I should, In a house thirteen by nine.

Well, a house 22' x 29' is even better, if we come to it in the right spirit; and surely most homes have the right spirit; or the papers would be printing as news that "Mr. and Mrs. Smith appear to be living happily together." (Let us be thankful, in a way, for bad news.)

So we will imagine that Father, alighting form the crowded trolley, lunch pail in hand, feels sure of a glad welcome and a good dinner. As he opens the front door he hears voices in the living room. Wife has a caller. For the

thousandth time he is glad for that vestibule. In the old house you used to have to walk right into the front room, unless you went, like the rag man, around to the back door. And his collar is wilty and his clothes are dusty, and he doesn't want to see anybody just now, anyway. What he wants is a bath after a hot and hard day's work.

So, hanging his hat and coat in the vestibule closet, he makes for the basement stairs, via the nursery and kitchen. He enjoys to the full that delightful, refreshing basement shower. Without leaving any bathroom muss, mark you, for Mother to clean up. And not even a man can forget to deposit his soiled clothes in the rack-like receptacle just under the clothes chute. Or, if he does forget, they are at least in the laundry, the terminal station for soiled clothes.

Father comes up, refreshed and smiling, to meet the departing Mrs. Jones, who thinks him a singularly tidy and well-groomed man, considering the none-too-clean shop that he and Mr. Jones work in.

Father and Mother have a few precious minutes together.

"Where are the children?"

"Joe hasn't got home from the after-school ball game. Captain for the second year. What do you think of that?"

"Bobby?"

"Oh, up in his room, tinkering with that old alarm clock you gave him. It has insides enough to fill a bushel basket. But he is going to make it work. A born mechanic, like you. Judy is out 'little-mothering' the baby."

"And Mary Florence?"

"Just come here." And Mother slyly opens the passway door to the kitchen just a crack.

"Sh! She's making apple fritters. Don't

forget to be properly surprised."

She tells him that cute thing the baby did, and he tells her what the boys in the shop say about this or that and then she says.

"Mercy! It's time to get dinner!"

When it came to furnishing that Little House in Kalamazoo, our wonderful Committee on Furnishing had to decide what should go in the long wall space between windows, opposite the fireplace in the living room. Long enough for a piano, or for a davenport. "A piano," said one. "We must have music in a 'model home."

"A davenport," said another. "Father must have a place to lie down when he comes home from work."

"There's the seven-foot window seat," some replied.

"Yes, but somebody will be setting the table for dinner."

"He can lie on the bed in the Mother's Room."

"Why, that's the nursery-by-day. He couldn't rest or take a nap there."

The davenport and Father won the decision. A victrola was appointed official music-maker—with the possible assistance of a radio, or of almost any portable instrument except a saxophone.

Now, while Mother and Mary Florence are getting dinner, Father will lie on the davenport and read, if he wants to. It's a rather quiet place. If all the children were in the nursery, there are two walls and the vestibule and stairway and kitchen between. Also, there is no trouble about light. There's a

window and likewise an electric fixture at each end of the davenport. And there's always, under the pillow, a gay little blanket to cover the end where he elects to place his feet. (Yes, it is possible to train an ordinarily intelligent man to do this one thing, especially if you mention that it costs \$15 to have a davenport dry-cleaned.)

Presently dinner is ready, and Father, fresh and rested, will listen to tales of the bold exploits of his sons, and praise the girls for the way they help Mother, and have a second helping of apple fritters. After dinner he plays with the baby a minute or so, if Mother hasn't already carried him off to bed. Perhaps he has a boxing bout with Jo, "just to take the conceit out of him." Then he remembers his half-holiday to-morrow, and his favourite trout stream. In that long windowseat box-over there by the table and in a good light-are Father's waders and rods and flies or his bass-fishing outfit, his guns or golf clubs, or anything whatever that Father wants to keep where he can lay his hands on it, and the boys can't-unless he gives them the key!

We think Father is suited, or ought to be, in Everyman's House. Of course, however, the thing which suits him best is the way Mother is suited. Seated by her side, under their own roof tree, the day done and the children all in bed, he reaches over and takes Mother's hand and declares that this is a good little old world!

But just a word more about this training of husbands. Of course, I am lugging it into this chapter. That is because it needs to be said and I want to say it, connected up with certain other reactions which tend to develop under the domestic roof.

"Why mothers grow gray," "Why girls leave home," "When a feller needs a friend"—these are among the familiar captions which indicate that human beings classify to types corresponding to the blood relationship; also, that the family entente needs to be improved. But none of these familial complexes is, to my mind, so significant as that which pictures Father's effort (usually vain) to slip away of an evening to his club or whatever place of rendezvous serves in its stead.

That Father, and Mother, too, might like to

go out for an evening's recreation is understandable. But why does Father want to go off somewhere else to read his paper? What is the matter with the home when Father doesn't feel at home in it? This homeless state of a man isn't confined to the homes oppressed by meagre resources and overcrowded with children. It is quite as likely to exist where Father is perfectly able to afford membership in a club. In which case, if Mother were to invest in some burnt cork and a white duck suit and hire out as a steward in one of these same clubs, she would probably learn some things of interest to her. She would find a silent and solicitous darkey deftly removing the cigar ashes from the table and the apple cores from under the chair without Father ever knowing he had done a thing! With his feet at an elevation pleasing to him, and islanded in a surf of metropolitan newspapers, she would behold Father blissfully "at home"! Slight enough concession, it would seem, for Father's society. And yet, just such little liberties denied or frowned on may be the reason "why men leave home." Father can't take his ease in his own inn;

can't snap the window shades up to the top without a row. Can't tilt back on the hind legs of even the sturdiest chair. Can't shed his discarded apparel casually like the leaves of Vallombrosa. Can't have the dog in the house. Can't whistle. Sometimes, doubtless, can't just think why he ever let himself in for supporting an institution in which he seems to have no founder's rights; where a woman of a different culture from his own decides what shall and shall not be, and yet hotly resents his clearing out for a more congenial spot.

Where is the man who has no "ways" annoying to his mate? But, aside from the fact that we women have ways reciprocally annoying, it would seem best gracefully to acknowledge that we caught Father too late to teach him many new tricks, and concentrate on so bringing up Son as to win the plaudits and gratitude of our future Daughter-in-law. Which brings me up in good form to the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ---AND THE CHILDREN

I FEEL, momentarily, a traitor to my sex. Do I indeed think it amusing that a man should strew his things about for his poor overworked wife to pick up? I do not! And—I hasten to add—the idea never originated with me. On the contrary, it is part of the Weltschmerz which I am prescribing for when I say "Concentrate on Son." However, we shall discuss this point later.

If the child is father to the man, the child is no less mother to the home. If human beings came into the world full-grown and ablebodied, like house-flies, there would never have been need of a place of protection for mother-hood and infancy—namely, the home. Nor would there have been that "ever-lengthening period of infancy" through the ages to work unending improvement in the home itself. We have no history of the first cave woman,

with her mate, searching out a shelter for herself and the expected baby. If we had, we would doubtless find that, while the man was testing means of defence, the woman would be looking around for a natural shelf upon which to cradle her infant.

But considerations of a like sort in selecting a house or a house-plan to-day appear about as rare as a layette among wedding gifts. Even when the olive branches have already branched, the average house is purchased or planned—now isn't this true?—for grown-ups and their grown-up company?

"A house without a separate dining room? Impossible! We may be poor, but not that poor!"

"A house full of children, without a nursery? Well, things like that are for rich people, you know."

"Oh, her woman's wit will save her," says the sophisticated movie fan, as the heroine is pushed clean off a hundred-foot cliff. "Oh, mother love will find a way," we say complacently of the most impossible domestic arrangements. And it is to the credit of mother love that usually it does find a way—

a limping way of needless and senseless sacrifice! Mother brains should help find the best way.

This chapter and the one following are on the effect upon the children themselves of good domestic arrangements or the reverse.

We have already said a good deal about the blessings, day and night, of the Mother's Suite to "the infant," so unquotably characterized by the greatest of all dramatists. But Shakespeare certainly skipped one of the "ages of man" when he passed from the infant in arms to "the schoolboy creeping like a snail." For it isn't the schoolboy, but the infant old enough to be let down out of arms, that we find creeping like a snail, and presently like a centipede, all over the place. It is then that Baby has the floor.

Now the floor, to you and me, is merely the substratum of our domestic arrangements. We live above it, in mind as well as body. All our furniture is just so many contrivances for keeping us and our belongings off the floor.

But consider what the floor is to a creeping, toddling, playing child. It is his mise en scène; the one element of the room with which

he is on intimate terms. The ceiling is, relative to his size, a couple of rods afar. The walls are several rods apart. Scattered about on his landscape is a forest of tall, unsympathetic chair legs and table legs and what not, supporting plateaus of things beyond his ken. The floor is his one sure thing. When you place him in a high chair and hand him his toys, he promptly throws them on to the floor, as if to say, "I know where I belong, if you don't."

And so the floor, whereon a little child lives and moves, must not be cold; and, above all, it must be protected as much as possible from drafts. Here is one more service rendered by the vestibule in Everyman's House—a feature commented on by the "Better Homes" judges as a rare and valuable asset in so small a house.

Where a stairway ascends directly from the living room or other room, the heat is continually escaping along the ceiling, while a layer of heavier cold air is sliding down the stairs and along the floor. If the front door also opens directly into this room, the difficulty is greatly emphasized.

This is wasteful of heat. It is also poor as

ventilation, which can be much better accomplished by means of a regulating damper in the fireplace, or by opening windows at the top. But a much more important reason for interposing a vestibule approach to front door and stairs is that it protects the health of the little children of the house.

And speaking of the health of the little child, we cannot, of course, think of keeping it in the house all the time. A baby's cab can stand either on the hooded stoop of Everyman's House where Mother can watch it if she is in a front room, or by the kitchen entry, where she can see it through the glass pane of the door. And when Baby is big enough to have a little outdoor yard, there's a fine place for it out between the wrens' house and the bluebirds' house. Mother, from the kitchen window, can keep a watchful eye on her birdie, lest it fly away.

And now the rest of this chapter is going to be on childhood contentment and happiness— "suiting the children" in Everyman's House. For any mother will admit that she is not a success if home isn't, for her children, "where the heart is." Of course, we agree that it depends in the last analysis upon Mother herself. But how is a mother helped by Everyman's House in making home a pleasant place for her children?

It is curious how continually we have to return to that vestibule. I have mentioned how Father so gladly utilizes it, especially when he comes home from his work to find that Mother has company. There are times when a bashful or sensitive child-or, say, just a child with some natural personal dignity-would rather face the school bully than certain of Mamma's guests. Mrs. Blank. for example, who can be depended upon to compliment him on his curly hair and tell him how he has grown, and how much he looks like his Aunt Eliza—except that his eyes are blue aren't they? "Look up, little man, and let me see." He would, if looks could kill!-And vet through the living room, in most small houses, lies the only way to the longed-for refuge of his own room.

A boy's room! I want to know if that phrase doesn't naturally conjure up a picture of the worst room in the house? It used to be the maid's room which did that, but maids are

now too scarce and too exacting for a mere son of the family to take precedence. No, the boy's room is the worst room. It may not be a bad room at all; all the same, it is the least good room. I recall my room and my brother's. I've just been looking over my daughter's room, and my son's, and making some resolves. I've asked a dozen or more of my friends, in all walks of life-the one bond of similarity being that they have daughters and sons. And they all admitwe all admit—that where there is a difference in desirableness of rooms, the girl's room is the pleasanter room, the better-furnished room, the room with much the more conveniences for order and for daintiness of person and of clothing. This is true, even making allowances for the greater volume of a girl's wardrobe.

Well, that isn't so in Everyman's House, and I'm sure it shouldn't be so, just as a matter of course, in any man's house. Under the head of suiting a boy, I want to say that few things suit him better than a room properly fitted up—for a boy!

Be assured that the Committee on Furnishings didn't make the boys' room of Every-

man's House a replica of the dimity-be-ruffled affair you see in the picture of the girls' room. It has the same basic features, including closets and built-in shelves and drawers. But all the furniture of the boys' room is on severe lines. The window-hangings and bedspreads are cretonne of a bold and "manly" pattern. It is a room to adorn with Remington's prints, or a cut of Will Rogers roping a steer, or of Walter Johnson making his touchdown-or whatever it was he did. In a word, it is such a room as will suit a boy to live in and show off to his friends. And it is indeed a fine thing for both the girls and boys of the family (and, incidentally, for the mother, also) that a child can reach his or her room, and bring friends there, without having to pass through another room of the house.

Also, when Daughter is old enough to have a "beau," it's a fine thing that Little Brother can't find a ghost of an excuse for intruding; but that Father and Mother, giving the living room to the young couple, are themselves quite comfortable in their own room just across the vestibule.

It is a fine thing, too, for family content-

ment—isn't it, children?—to have the babies in the nursery, where it is such fun to go and play with them; but not to have them in your immediate vicinity when you have something else to do.

Indeed, one of the best things about Everyman's House is that it tends to relieve the members of the family from continual impingement and pressure upon one another's personality. This is no small matter. Family fracases usually result from the different members "getting on one another's nerves."

The family circle, drawn up to the point of strangulation around the centre table, beneath the central chandelier, should have, as its central ornament, the family jar. Here is where you get asked what you did to-day, and why; and why not? Brother Jack volunteers some corollaries to your quite adequate statement. And when you barely touch him with your toe, he loudly inquires why you are kicking him. And you tell him he makes you sick with his snuffling; and Father says you two joggle the table and get in his light. And then Mother, seeing no other way out, looks at the clock, and says it's time to go to bed, now.

And Jack hotly tells Jane it's her fault he can't stay up to finish his story. And Jane, looking over Jack's shoulder, triumphantly announces that that isn't the kind of story he should be reading, anyhow!

The whole trouble is that people, large and not so large, hate to feel themselves perpetually under observation—subject to a motion to amend—under the necessity of explaining every silly little thing they do—liable to be forcibly cheered up in a fit of the blues. People don't want somebody—even some very dear body—perpetually in the lap of personality. People want, sometimes, to be alone—or, at least, to be let alone.

Well, I wish to announce that Everyman's House has squared the family circle—a feat more useful in the humanities than in mathematics.

If you will look at the frontispiece again, you will see no central light and no centre table; but, instead: A davenport against one wall; a seven-foot window seat, with a table in front of it, against another; a well-appointed desk, with chair; a couple of easy chairs, one of them between the bookcase and the fireplace—all

perfectly lighted by windows during the day: all perfectly lighted by electric fixtures at night. It cost us some forty dollars of wellspent money to wire for side lighting and abundant wall-openings in all the rooms of Everyman's House. But probably the lower wattage of bulbs used for close-by lighting will consume no more electricity than commonly goes, through the old-fashioned central chandelier, largely for lighting the ceiling.

Everyman's House has some unusual adjuncts to cleanliness and daintiness of person. The bathroom is so convenient—and surely the family will soon manage to equip that extra lavatory-toilet upstairs. No washing (and no combing!) in the kitchen, for any member of the family.

Children are proud of any unusual interest or distinction attaching to their home. That basement shower bath would, I suspect, divide honours with the best radio set-at least in the season of greatest static and perspiration. That basement shower and the work bench, and his pleasant, spacious room, are magnets for the boy, whose mother likes to know where he is.

So much for suiting the children; especially children of the sex that mothers find the hardest to hold against the call of the wild streets and the wilder bypaths.

But, after all, no child is really suited with a home in which he has no working partnership. Hence the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV

### EVERYMAN'S ADVANTAGE

THIS chapter appears to be more about Everyman and his family than about Everyman's House. However, I assure you it is to the point; and how are you going to contradict me if you don't read it?

If in any family, of whatever station in life, we undertake to divide and apportion responsibility among its members, we should doubtless begin by saying that the father's part is to support the family; the mother's part is to care for the home and the children, and the children's part is—is—

Here, if it be a wealthy or even well-to-do family—our own, possibly—we may pause some while. For I fear that in the majority of such "fortunate" homes it is tacitly regarded as the whole duty of childhood "to get a good education and have a good time."

But, in such a family, how often do we dis-

cover that no "good time" is good enough; no money allowance generous enough; no gifts or privileges handsome enough!

Charles finds it wasn't an electric train, at all, that he wanted when he teased and pouted so for it. It was a live pony all the time! And Father, there, holding back about it and saying that he, his own son, wouldn't take care of a pony! Of course he would; or, if he didn't, George, the chauffeur, would, so what's the difference? Charles simply can't be happy at all without a pony, and he's bound to let the family realize that fact!

So Father gives in, and great is the joy for nearly a week, in which the pony is almost killed with kindness and oats. Then—George feeds the pony—and Charles has to have an increased allowance for exercising it. Presently he says, "Let George do it"—that is, exercise the pony. He'll take care of the extra allowance, himself. He needs it badly enough, goodness knows!

And, for Pete's sake! Isn't Dad going to loosen up and give him a car for Christmas? He, Charles, has hinted it often enough! Isn't he sixteen, come February? And all the boys

are getting cars-and so on and so forth.

Hostile rivalries develop, too, among the children of the family, till Father and Mother feel like nothing but grandparents to the horseleech's daughters, "crying, Give, give."

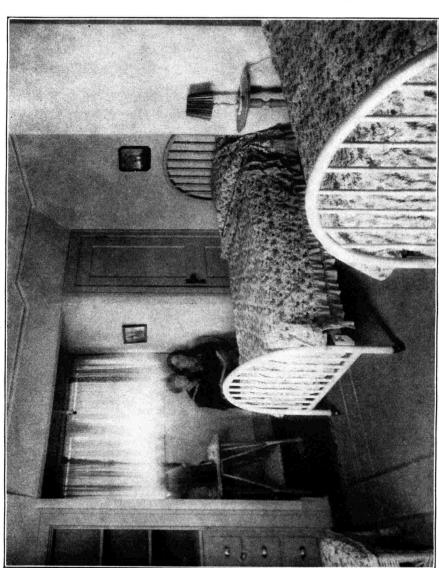
Katharine Holland Brown<sup>1</sup> has voiced the regrets of thousands of unhappy parents who see, too late, a great mistake:

We gave, and gave, and gave. We gave 'em everything on earth but the things that really count. We never gave 'em one inch of obligation, not one hour of effort.

Poor Father! Poor Mother! And poor rich children, denied the blessings that descend naturally (though by no means inevitably) upon the Little Everymans!

Of course, there is no inevitableness of result on either side. Everyman's House, with the best and wisest of parents, may produce its black sheep. Gilded homes occasionally produce golden youths who put our theories and their own parents to shame. They are simply of stuff that can't be spoiled.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Third Time's the Charm," The Christian Herald, December 15, 1923.



The Girls' Room. One of the two ample bed chambers above-stairs.

Certain it is, nevertheless, that swollen possessions tend to burst asunder the family bond. But where it takes some continual tugging to make both ends meet, and the cadets are called to the rescue—that family bond develops saving strength and stout hand-holds on the inside.

There is actual need for the children's help in a home in which the mother does all her own work and the father finds it hard to make both ends meet-which comes as near to a true description of Everyman's House as we can get. It describes about 90 per cent. of our homes. Whatever help, then, the children can rightfully give is real help—not works of supererogation, devised for their souls' good. Children are quick to perceive the difference. Who cares to wash dishes for the maid or mow the lawn for the gardener? But if a girl knows that Mother must do this if she doesn't; if a boy knows that Father must add one more task to his hard day if he comes home and finds the grass uncut, why, here is Everyman's advantage.

One trouble is that usually we do not let our children clearly into the situation. Mrs.

Haryot Holt Dey, in a delightful article, "How I Brought Up My Boys," says:

One day, when I was scrubbing the kitchen floor during this period of adversity, Big Brother came rushing in to ask for money to buy something he thought he needed—a ball, possibly, or a bat, or a catcher's glove—and he halted in his rush when he came to the kitchen, where he found me on my knees.

I stopped the merry swish of the scrubbing brush and asked him why I was scrubbing the floor. He looked puzzled, and suggested that it was because the floor was dirty.

"You've another guess," I said.

"Because you want the floor to be clean?" This

time he really guessed.

"Wrong again," said I. "I am scrubbing this floor because I have no money with which to pay someone else to scrub it." Still he saw no connection.

"Would you be willing to take money and spend it on yourself when your mother is on her knees scrubbing the

floor?"

He began to see the point. Regarding the whole situation gravely, he said simply that he would not, and that he really did not need the money at all.

Such instances from real life are worth multiplying. A now prosperous physician of our acquaintance was visited by his young

The American Magazine, November, 1924.

son at his office. The boy asked for money to buy a pair of "high-tops," because "all the boys are wearing them." Did this father refuse? No. He said:

"Well, perhaps. And, by the way, Dick, you're good at figures. I wonder if you'll foot up the bills on that spindle for me." Flattered and unsuspecting, the boy did this. Then said the father:

"Now, Dick, here's my bank statement. Will you just find out for me how much is going to be left after I've paid those monthly bills?"

The boy, having made the computation, turned and said, in some alarm: "But, Dad, where's the rest?"

"There isn't any 'rest,' Son, except as I make it, day by day."

The boy not only never referred to "hightops" again, but this was the beginning of a real working partnership between father and son which ensuing prosperity has not destroved.

Often it is the mother who can best explain the father's situation—and the father the mother's-to enlist the loving and active coöperation of the children in making both ends meet.

These qualities and duties can doubtless be inculcated in any kind of a home. We might indeed say that the worse the house, the greater the need. But we must add: the less efficient the effort of all concerned, the poorer the results in child-training.

Everyman's House, as we have seen, has fundamental features which greatly lessen and sweeten the tasks of the mother who does all her own work. But it is no less the right kind of a house for the mother with children old enough to help her.

"Oh, I'd rather do it myself than bother with the children's help!" we not infrequently hear from the lips of unconsidering mothers. (Do you remember that Murillo picture of the Angels doing the work in the convent kitchen, with the little cherub around underfoot, trying to help? There's always a time when your little cherub wants to help.) And would any mother say nay to a child helper in Everyman's kitchen? As a matter of fact, that small space is so planned that three may work simultaneously without interference. Suppose

they are getting dinner. One of the family can be making biscuits or cake or pudding or pie at the counter on the left side of the sink, while another is preparing and cooking and, later, taking up dinner at the counter and stove on the right side of the sink. There is no occasion whatever for crossing each other's tracks. And while Mother and one of her daughters are thus engaged, another daughter can be at the table (drawn upon its casters a little off-centre in the room), preparing the meat for cooking, arranging a salad, or making a dressing from the ingredients in the refrigerator and the shallow spice cupboard. And no interference with anybody else. Such working together begets comradeship; real "family feeling."

Setting the table, and putting on the dinner, or clearing it off, is no great task for even a quite small cherub, where not one thing has to be carried through a door. Dishwashing, in Everyman's House, as we have seen, naturally sheds its most repellent features.

Washing out small pieces in the adjacent bathroom with set fixtures and ever-hot and super-soft water, and ironing them from the convenient wall socket, seem not very formidable tasks to a girl who wants her best middy blouse and scarf for the Saturday picnic. But, oh! what a burden this extra-wash business is for Mother, especially when it has to be done without the conveniences of Everyman's House!

And in helping in the care of the younger children. It can be done much better in a nursery where the playthings and the child-size furniture are than in a room where half of Big Sister's attention must go into seeing that Baby doesn't wreck his surroundings.

The children who willingly help Mother release her from something like bond service, into a condition where she can be, not only a happier woman, but a real leader and a maker of happiness in the home. Children, boys or girls, who willingly help, thereby show that they have respect for the individuality of the woman whom they have the honour and the heart's joy of calling Mother. Undoubtedly, they love her the better for respecting her.

When it comes to Brother's work, all the conveniences noted for Father in the tending of furnace, lawn, and garden, serve him also.

And it is a poor education a lad is getting who doesn't take these obvious tasks off his father's hands as soon as his age and strength will let him. But there is a great deal more about Everyman's House which a boy ought to do.

For example, in homes of affluence it isn't considered "woman's work" to clean floors or wash windows, and certainly not to clean the cellar. In Everyman's House, then, by this token, it isn't work for Mother or Sister when there's a big boy around.

Then, Everyman's House is equipped with all the conveniences for a working mother which thoughtful people of wealth could provide for the use of their servants. But this equipment implies upkeep. A boy should learn how to take care of and to perform minor operations upon this equipment. In a wealthy home, one doesn't mind calling the plumber to repack a leaky faucet or open up a clogged drain pipe. This is too expensive for Everyman's House. This is a job for Brother. Also, that water-softener has to be reconditioned every two weeks or so, according to its capacity. That's another job for Brother.

I am against Mother's conveniences having to be tinkered with continually by Father. Big Brother should be Mother's "First Looey" of Engineers, as Big Sister, of the Commissary and Infantry!

And just think how delightful for him to "clean up" afterward under that basement shower! If Tom Sawyer had had such an attraction to offer, he couldn't have kept the boys from painting the whole town.

So—here is another phase of Everyman's Advantage. His children will have no difficulty in really earning an allowance—though of course no child should expect to be paid for everything he or she does around the home. (Isn't it his, her home?) However, a child must have spending money, in order to know how to spend wisely and wisely to refrain. If he earns that money by a sufficient amount of real work—well, here is what the venerable and beloved Doctor Eliot, President-Emeritus of Harvard University, says about it.<sup>1</sup>

The children of the well-to-do are likely to keep up a steady small expenditure on trivial luxuries; the children

<sup>1&</sup>quot;A Late Harvest," quoted from the Youth's Companion of November 13, 1924.

of poor men have to deny themselves silly expenditures, to their great advantage, both physical and moral. They learn to go without cheerfully; not to spend and not to waste. . . . .

Poor men's children receive a valuable training in going without superfluities and in avoiding excess; and this training comes in a perfectly natural and inevitable way and not through artificial regulation or discipline. Such experience heightens the enjoyment of necessaries and comforts not only in childhood but also all through later life. It is a grave error to suppose that luxurious living is more enjoyable than plain living. On the contrary, plain living is much the more enjoyable in the long run, besides being more wholesome.

So, we claim that the Everymans have an advantage, and that their house assists them to take full advantage of it.

The rich can create various substitutes for the disciplines of poverty; can, even as a last resort, transport the growing family to some far spot where servants are not, and he who does not work shall (theoretically) not eat. "Give me either poverty or riches!" must be the heart's petition of many perplexed "well-to-do" parents. Trouble is certainly due to any family in which the children have not been taught the duty and privilege of sharing family responsibility during the habit-forming years.

A word about one phase of helping Mother, the great importance of which is seldom appreciated in the home. Everyman's House has had hundreds of dollars spent on it to solve the problem of neatness and tidiness. But—

When Colonel Waring some twenty years ago was engaged in the herculean task of cleaning up and keeping clean the streets of New York, he at last exclaimed in despair: "Nobody can give you a clean city if you want a dirty one!" He had discovered that the people could throw things down faster than the white wings could pick them up.

It was the children of New York to whom Colonel Waring at last turned with his appeal. To the boys, quite as much as to the girls—and quite as effectually.

Why not try this in the home? Why should a woman allow herself to be elected factorum to any able-bodied member—that is to say, any able-bodied minor—of her family? Why should she thank her boy for gallantly bringing in the paper to her, and then go meekly and laboriously to wipe up his muddy tracks?

Isn't it because, from time immemorial, we

have nourished, side by side within the home, two types of juvenile education and training?

The primitive husband and his sons came from the chase, and threw down their game and hunters' accourtements—perhaps rightly leaving the rest of the business to the primitive woman and her daughters. But is this such a grand idea that it must persist when the accourtements thrown down are a soiled sport shirt and a pair of muddy boots—the only "game" being of that inedible baseball variety left on the field?

That a girl should help her mother keep the house tidy is one half of an extremely good idea. For do not imagine that there is any inherent obstacle to getting a boy to give such help as keeping his personal belongings in order. The fault is not in our stars but in ourselves—in that body-servant complex—that we are underlings.

Now, Everyman's House provides moral support and physical backing to any mother who wants to train her son to be a spoke, and not a monkey wrench, in the wheels of the household machinery.

There's a place for everything. The one

thing which doesn't go with the house is the incentive for a boy to put everything in its place. This theme would, perhaps, furnish material for another book—though I'm beginning to feel that someone who hasn't a son would be less handicapped in writing it. For there's no doubt that we women have continually to curb that atavistic impulse to pick up after our sons—especially only sons.

But—my Future Daughter-in-Law! I think of her, and it steels my heart. I will telephone him to come straight home and hang up

those pajamas.

"What exquisite table manners your children have!" a new friend remarked to me after she had had them at a party.

"What!" I fear I yelled.

"Why, yes, indeed," she added, with a sincerity I could not doubt.

It had "taken," then! All that painful effort which seemed love's labour lost. They did know how!

So, when my Future Daughter-in-Law says—if she ever says it!—"Such exquisite order-liness," etc., I shall smile and tell her, 'twas for her sweet sake I came to concentrate on Son.

# CHAPTER XV

### THE ADAPTABLE HOUSE

TAKING my young daughter to the shoe store and failing to find the sensible style of shoe to which she was accustomed, we were about to depart when the clerk, anxious to make a sale, said to me, holding up the conventional last:

"Why not try these, madam? The little girl's foot will soon adapt itself to this shoe."

Knowing this all too well, I hastened my departure.

Now all feet are used for the same purpose and have the same number of toes on the same end. To be sure, Nature has given us some variety, and there's a constant effort to improve upon Nature; to transform the bungalow type, for instance, into the Colonial. However, the shoe-fitting problem is simple beside that of fitting the family with a new house. Especially, if we do not know what we want in the way of a house, nor how we want to wear it when we get it.

And besides, shoes, ill-fitting or otherwise, wear out fast enough, and you get new ones. But a house is built for one or more lifetimes.

Do we want a small house really to suit the particular needs of our family? We have helps at hand which were unheard of a generation ago. Able architects, especially since the post-war period of high prices, have devoted themselves to developing the possibilities in small, inexpensive houses. The Architects' Small House Service Bureau broadcasts its economical, artistic, and practical designs to millions of newspaper readers all over the United States. The Division of Building and Housing of the United States Department of Commerce offers you its many valuable bulletins. The National Housing Association, and the books of its head, Lawrence Veiller, are powerful assets to good housing for all classes.

Such magazines as Country Life and the House Beautiful, and trade journals, like the Building Age, the American Builder, the National Retail Lumber Dealer, are prodigal of help to the builder of the small home.

"Better Homes in America" came into being with the one mission, to help the builder of the small home to a better home.

And yet—if you want a little home really to suit you and your needs, the only way I know of is to visualize, as well as you can, the daily life of the family in a new home, and decide very definitely about certain things before you visit the architect or begin looking over portfolios of house plans at all. And the smaller the amount of money one has to invest in a home the more vital it becomes not to be led into pitfalls by pictures of attractive houses, particularly attractive exteriors, which are really not for you and your family.

By deciding in advance about certain things, I do not mean necessarily the actual plan. I mean, for instance, whether you will, or will not, sacrifice a separate dining room for any paramount need. Whether a vestibule or some sort of hall entrance is the necessity to your little home that I think it is. With half-a-dozen "conditions precedent" well in mind (better still, written down in black and white), you are enabled to test house plans, for positive or negative reaction

to your needs. If you have no such criteria, you will find that the family must adapt itself to the house, as the child's foot to the shoe. With this difference, that, as I have said, shoes wear out and you buy new ones. But there's a sorrowful finality about a house built or purchased which is presently found to be a misfit for its inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

Everyman's House is the moral to adorn this tale. We knew accurately its possible uses and adaptations, because of thought expended in advance, not only on the house plan, but upon the art of living in that house, by our chosen hypothetical family.

We could not expect people to perceive the adaptability of Everyman's House at a glance. That is the reason we gave to each visitor a detailed printed description of the house and its special features and uses.

But we did much more than this in the way of interpreting the house. One of the most impressive features of our Demonstration Week was the corps of gracious and carefully instructed hostesses, eighty-five in number,

Though one should not despair. Read the last chapter, "You and Your House," and cheer up.

who presided, one in each room, at each period of each day and evening. They were there to explain and interpret Everyman's House to the never-ceasing throng of visitors.

Our house, for purpose of demonstration, had been furnished and equipped for a family consisting of a father and mother, two boys and two girls of school age, and a baby. This fact, and our having proudly said that it was a house built around a mother and her baby, made us a bit anxious lest some unimaginative visitors, seeing no more than they saw, would get the idea that the house required a baby in order to function satisfactorily. That would never do. For even if you start out all right, why, "Skeeks" is the only baby that doesn't grow up—and then where are you!

But our hostesses were equal to every occasion, and never showed to better advantage than when explaining about that baby.

I would like, now, with the help of the hostesses, to show you that Everyman's House, built just as it is, is a house capable of adaptation to many and various types of family. In the next chapter I wish to show

that the plan is one which, without sacrifice of its fundamental features, readily admits of enlargement or alteration to suit some quite exceptional needs, including those of the family on a small farm.

Let us listen, now, to the hostess in the Mother's Room. Here, in the crowd, is a young mother with her baby. The hostess takes the baby and lifts him to the little bed suspended over the foot of the mother's bed, and bids the mother vision herself sitting comfortably and tending her baby at night. She calls her attention to the convenience of the adjacent bathroom; of the built-in bathtub. "Consider," she says, "what this suite would mean to any family in case of illness. And note the kitchen so near at hand, so that while bathing and caring for your baby you can at the same time have an eye on the baking, and answer the front door, or back door, or the telephone, without running downstairs to do it. And how nice to have your baby so near, and yet not underfoot in the steamy kitchen where most accidents, such as scalding and burning, happen to children. And, you

see, Father and the other children don't come home to find the living room cluttered up, either." The little mother nods, convinced.

"But," says another mother in the group crowding around the demonstrator, "I have three-year-old twins and a baby besides. I don't see that your house would do for me at all."

"Oh, yes, indeed!" smiles the hostess. "It seems to be more especially for you. A mother with two or three babies needs a nursery worse than anybody. A whole room for just a nursery, I mean. There shouldn't be any bed in here except the little bed for the baby's use by day; and a couch for the twins to take their naps on. The children and you have this little suite of nursery and bathroom all day, and you keep all your clothes and all the children's clothes down here, and wash and dress and care for the children down here right next to the kitchen work. Then, when Father comes home from work at night, he will carry the children upstairs, where you will all sleep. And the most you will have to do is to carry the one baby.

that can't walk, downstairs once a day."

The mother of three babies is convinced that the house was planned especially for her.

Then a middle-aged lady remarks with considerable energy that, for her part, she'd never live in a house without a dining room; the house doesn't suit her at all!

"What is the size of your family?" sweetly inquires the hostess.

"Just myself and my husband."

"Then why shouldn't you use this room for a dining room? See how the kitchen opens off it. And your passway should be here, where the clothes closet is, instead of into the living room. In fact, this little house seems particularly suited to you and your husband; and you have a guest room, besides."

"O-o-oh!" says the enlightened lady, an unwilling smile overspreading her countenance.

Or suppose the visitor is a lady who mentions that her "child" is an aged father or mother, or an invalid aunt, or a crippled sister. Here is a wonderful opportunity which no hostess will neglect.

For have you ever thought, my reader, of the

hardships and weariness of soul of being virtually a prisoner in one room in a remote part of the house, because—you haven't strength to go up and down stairs! What countless numbers of invalids and crippled people and frail, aged people are thus shunted to one side, to loneliness, to idleness, perhaps to bitterness and desire for death—because of stairs! Perhaps you are one of these. Then, I'm glad you know that Everyman's House thinks of you. For you feel that not so very many people outside the family circle do think of you any more. At least, few enough of them take the trouble to climb those stairs to see you.

And, for that matter, you'd almost as soon they didn't. What person—what half-helpless person—can always keep one's only room presentable? But there comes Mrs. Brown to see Daughter. Surely she will come up to see you, too. You pat the pillows and put the wash cloth out of sight, and sit expect-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Bungalows are blessed things for such as these. But the onestory bungalow, with its large foundation and roof, is by no means a cheap form of building, and hence scarcely practical for a large family of small means.

antly—till you see Mrs. Brown departing. Later you learn that she sent you her love. (Like as not Daughter just made that up.) Well, "out of sight, out of mind."

Oh, they can't imagine how lonely you are—not so much to talk to anybody—you're willing to be mostly a listener, an observer. But how you long to be back in—and of—the family circle; to hear the friendly gossip about this and that and the other—matters that never seemed important until you found yourself shut out and losing track of your little world's affairs.

And how duller than a fish's eye it is to have to eat alone! No wonder if you grow irritable. "They're always forgetting the salt—or something!" And, oh! if you could just make yourself a dish of hot milk toast!

And then you think how hard it is for Daughter—so many trips upstairs in a day! She's wearing herself out for you! And then fall the most pitiable of human tears—the tears of the helpless aged who feel themselves a uselessly enduring burden on the ones they love.

On Sundays and holidays perhaps you do

get down. But the excitement and the sudden impact of a whole hilarious family are too much for you, who "have come to the quiet time of life." You creep back to your room, and they note that you "never seem to enjoy it for long downstairs."

But, oh! if you only had a room to yourself downstairs—a quiet room with a vestibule and stairway between you and the too robust living! With the bathroom adjoining. And the kitchen, where you could slip out and look around and feel at home, and do little odds and ends of things you ache to do. Wouldn't you like it? Oh, you would! To have the freedom of the house, and the children, yet be always close to the refuge of your own room. And that bell beside your bed to call Daughter, if you need her, day or night.

Oh! the joy of being able, on your "good days," to call your old friends up by 'phone. To venture little exciting walks outdoors, and sometimes to be asked to ride! To smile and nod at passing people who never used to see you wearily watching at that upper window.

And to go to the table and eat with the

family and say, as independently as the next person, "Please pass the salt."

"But," says someone to the hostess, "a woman could not have her old mother and her baby, too, in this room."

"No," the hostess replied. "But, you see, our mothers aren't apt to be old until our babies are pretty well grown up."

I think the loveliest use of all for this room—barring, of course, its use for a mother and her little baby—would be for a loving old couple together.

Remembering, Mr. and Mrs. Everyman, that to this condition do we come at last—if we live long enough—isn't it worth while (if you can spare no other downstairs room) to sacrifice that separate dining room? Not sacrifice it, but sanctify it, to the comfort and happiness of an aged parent, or whoever it is that looks to you for help along the little remnant of life's way. I think you will say, it is worth while.

And remember this, too: For your own sake, you have as much need of the Mother's Suite to care for and cheer a second childhood, as a first.

We have coined a phrase for the family invalid: the Shut-in. "Shut-in" is not half bad. Don't let them be shut out of the family life, because shut up! Up a cruel flight of stairs!

We have alluded to this Mother's Suite as a godsend in time of illnesses such as visit almost every family—especially any family with children to go through the usual roster of "children's diseases," so called because a child can hardly manage to grow up without exposure to them. Whoever the patient is, and whatever the illness, the natural isolation of this room, its connection with the bath, and nearness to the place for serving food, are conveniences which can be appreciated only by a woman who has had to struggle through her housework and take care of a case of illness above-stairs.

If it be the mother herself who is ill, she will not worry half so much if she can know how things are going on in the kitchen. Also, she will be glad if she is so situated as to resume gradually the direction of affairs during her convalescence.

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Still another point of adaptability: We have seen how Everyman's House adapts itself to the changes which time brings to a family; the changing needs of babies grown to childhood; of children grown to young manhood and womanhood, so that Father and Mother have that downstairs room quite to themselves. But there is one more point to be mentioned. Suppose all the children are grown up and gone, and the parents have the whole house to themselves; or suppose a young couple with a baby do not need the "upstairs," as yet: in either case the two floors become, if you desire, two separate flats with no necessary contacts except at the front vestibule entrance.

### CHAPTER XVI

THE ADAPTABLE HOUSE (continued)

EVERY little town has its Somebody's "Folly"—the pretentious mansion whose erection and upkeep wrought the ruin of its too-ambitious owner—or, was it a too-ambitious wife? Every little town has, too, its "never-never house"—a truncated upright with "temporary" roof; a "wing"; a mere "lean-to," perhaps. There it stands, year after year, pathetic exposure of a humble ambition which, nevertheless, overleaped itself. It cannot hide—as we hide our thwarted plans and humiliated ambitions, pretending we are all we ever set out to be!

Ah! these little half-houses, little whiteflag houses, humbly acknowledging surrender on their chosen field! What drear thoughts hide behind the unsheeted wall, with its frustrate window that was on the way to be a door —the door to comfort and beauty and social elevation for the family; the door to "respectability" for the house itself, among all those smug wood and mortar denizens of the street!

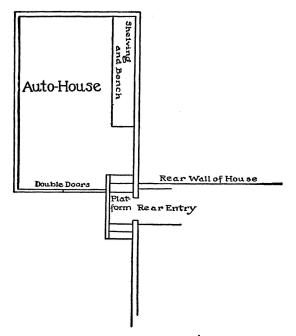
We, pitying the misadventures of others, but also instructed by them, have built our little house with its sprigs of hope all "heeled in," as the florists say. They're there, but nobody can see them till they burgeon forth into another room, or a sun parlour, or a sleeping porch, or a garage, or still another room.

For another room would go nicely, would it not? as a wing on one or both sides of Everyman's House. In either case, an existing window becomes a door. And the roofs of these rooms become naturally sleeping porches for the adjacent bedchambers. Or, the additions could well consist of a room on one side of the house and a sun parlour on the other. Or, again, the little Colonial stoop in front may give way to a larger porch—though not large enough, let us hope, to include and shade the front windows.

Or perhaps you would rather have a runabout than another room (assuming you have waited for this until you first achieved that nursery for the little runabouts at home). In fact, I imagine the first addition likely to be made to Everyman's House will be a garage. Hence, I want to indicate a particularly good place for it—just cornering on to the kitchen entry, as in the drawing on the following page. The steps to the kitchen entry, as you notice, now face the street so as not to interfere with opening the garage door. Those narrow steps inside the garage, and the door from the garage to the covered entry stoop, will be found of great convenience, especially in rainy or stormy weather. Everyman's porte-cochère!

Something must surely be said of Everyman's House as adapted to the use of industrial plants which do "model housing" for employees and their families. Following the announcement of our Kalamazoo "Better Homes" Demonstration as winner of the National First Prize, I received scores of inquiries about our house plan. At least half a dozen came from the heads of large corporations and "foundations."

However, were I ever invited to inspect the embodied results of my suggestions, it would surely break a fond mother's heart to be con-



A GOOD PLACE FOR EVERYMAN'S GARAGE ducted between phalanxes of her child-inreplica all up and down the street!

It is the fundamentals of Everyman's House that I would like to see made popular

for large families living in small houses. Even if, for economy in "mass production," the internal structure be duplicated in a large number of houses, there's no excuse for proclaiming that fact from the house tops and the house walls and windows and doors and the front stoops. Think of a man spending all his day making screws or cotter pins "just alike," and condemned to walk home between two long rows of homes just alike! I should expect him to go crazy some day, lose his count, bolt into the wrong house, and break the furniture!

However, variety in external appearance is not difficult to achieve—and it is, fortunately, the outside, not the inside, of other people's houses that we are continually seeing. Differences in building materials from foundation up; differences in roof lines and in style of porch and general trim; variety in colour of roofs, walls, blinds, and casings; with variety, also, in planting of grounds, will give something of individuality to each premises. And if, now and then, a house be interposed with its living room set broadside to the street (the house entrance being from a porch on the

side) we'll be needing witnesses to identify it. And it would break ranks for its companions up and down the street.

These are some of the ways of stripping the uniform off uniformity. The building experts will know of others. Moreover, it ought to be made a misdemeanour—punishable by a sentence to live in it—for any corporation architect basely to imagine and bring to pass—Peapod Street!

And, lastly, how would we adapt the plan of Everyman s House as a home for a farmer and his family?

First, let me remind you that I said "a small farmhouse"; meaning one in which, through a good part of the year, the farmer and his family live alone, without hired men. I was tempted into working on this problem, not from a desire to stretch the pretensions of Everyman's House to their utmost limit, but because there surely is no working mother who so sorely needs a house built around her and her baby, with all conveniences thrown in, as does the farmer's wife.

The farmer's house is in the midst of his business—is, indeed, an essential part of that

business. Though certain functions (for example, the care of milk and curing of meats) are commonly transferred to special little buildings, the home still remains the centre of varied activities, more or less seasonal in character, in which it resembles somewhat the pioneer home of the past.

For the farmer's wife, there is "the peak of the load" when she must feed, and, perhaps, lodge, a gang of threshers. There are smaller peaks scattered along through the year. But, also, there is the long winter lull when, on the small farm I am talking about, she has only her own family to care for, inside of the house. I do not know how the plan I have to suggest would work out, for I admit to being far beyond my depth of actual knowledge or experience in such matters. But never mind that. Haven't men been caught editing the "Mother's Column" in the popular magazines? Anyway, I would like to see the following scheme tried out:

A Mother's Suite, just as in Everyman's House, or, at least, as near as practicable. Almost all modern household conveniences have arrived at the farmhouse door—pressure

pumps, storage tanks, electric lighting and power, kerosene ranges; but unquestionably it costs more to install them in the isolated house. If we are talking of Farmer Everyman, who has some difficulty in making both ends meet, we must not demand the impossible.

So, if a regular bathroom in the Mother's Suite is out of the question, then a wash room with some kind of sanitary indoor toilet will do. And in the kitchen we can have a sink with a drain, and at least cold water from a faucet, for a windmill and storage tank or a gasoline engine pump will provide that. And certainly a kerosene stove for summer; and if not electric lights, then some of the substitutes now available for rural use.

My farm friends, with whom I have gone over this matter, say that Everyman's kitchen is just as convenient for a farm woman as for any other woman to cook and wash dishes in; also, that it is large enough for churning and butter-making; and, with its useful centre work table, it will serve for cutting up meats after the winter's incident of slaughtering.

So much for convenience and step-saving in

the farmhouse kitchen. But I would go further. I would have the combination living-dining room with four-storied passway between it and the kitchen. This would be for their use, just as the town family uses it, when the farm family is alone.

But, for "the peak of the load," I would have, joined on at the side where the kitchen entry is in Everyman's House—a summer dining room. Rough lumber, rough plaster—a rude but pleasant and comfortable room, it should be, with one-piece window sashes sliding in open grooves clear to one side, leaving the whole space open. I would have table tops to set on trestles and wooden benches for seats. When not needed, they could all be piled to one side out of the way. At one end behind a dwarf partition, I'd have a place for the men to wash—and a shower bath, if I could.

In rainy or stormy weather, the year round, I would use this room, with all windows wide open, for drying clothes. In summer I would iron there. If I had no other laundry, I would do my washing there.

I would utilize this room, between times, as

a rainy-day playroom for the older children. I would put up a big stove and let the children bring in wood and have their winter parties there—candy pulls, dances, Hallowe'en, the Christmas Tree. I would serve all big family dinners there.

You see, the Farmer's Wife needs not only a Mother's Suite and a model kitchen and a living-dining room, but it is she who really needs a special—but the reverse of formal—dining room. So we will call it; but it is a room to serve countless other good purposes the year round.

And when not in use, it is off to one side where it can be forgotten. The farmer and the farmer's wife and children, at the busy season's end, can draw within the snug confines of their own proper private home and straightway forget the world, the flesh, and the "thrashers."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>I have submitted this chapter to the criticism of Mrs. Louise H. Campbell, State Home Demonstration Leader for Michigan, who approves it. Mrs. Campbell suggests putting a screened porch at the back door and making the windows in the summer dining room open street-car fashion.

#### CHAPTER XVII

#### YOU AND YOUR HOUSE

THINGS last longer than people," we say. Especially do houses last longer than people. We talk of heredity and environment. We have, too, a heredity of environment. The house survives, not only as an individual, but as a type.

In the town where I was born, I used to look with wonder upon a neighbouring frame house with a stone basement which contained, in addition to storage for vegetables and fruit, the family dining room and kitchen. I remember my mother explaining that these people had come from Vermont, where it was held economical to let the ubiquitous hillsides partially wall the cellar, and put a couple of rooms on the lower slope, making the house an affair of one story in front and two in the rear.

But why, on a Wisconsin lot as flat as a

pancake had they built, as nearly as they could, that kind of a house? Because the man was born in that kind of a house. It had for him the flavour of "home."

And because houses last longer than people, some certain house, or type of house, speaks to us, not only of home, but of our parents and our childhood. We are naturally, and forgivably, more conservative here than in most other compartments of our mind. Yet the old oaken bucket has had to give way to the kitchen faucet, and even the sacred parlour has been all but laughed out of existence.

Now the great majority of us are living in—and expect to continue living in—houses built by a previous generation. Perhaps your parents lived in this house; possibly, their parents, also. Your house has shared deeply your life's experience; has worn with you the sombre garb of funerals and the wreaths and ribbons of ecstatic wedding days. Baby's first steps went wavering across this floor.

You love it. And yet our homes, to which we are so intimately related, have a way of getting into our "blind spot." They are like the members of our immediate family: a mere acquaintance may perceive both their faults and their innate capabilities better than we can.

Or, does your house lack all these dear and glamorous associations? You bought it, some years ago, from a stranger. And have you gradually come to feel yourself enclosed in an unsympathetic, unyielding structure which refuses to give an inch to changed family needs? Your choice limited to which shall have which bedrooms, and where to dispose the various pieces of furniture?

Now it is probably not half so bad as that.

It was at this point in the chapter that my husband came home to lunch, and I read to him what I had just written. I may as well state that he says I show him each chapter, after the manner of a proud mother bear exhibiting a new cub, but that if he tries to do anything but stroke it the right way, he has to be prepared, not only to dodge, but to run!

Imagine my surprise, then, when I came to the sentence about the "sacred parlour" and he said, with shocked disapproval, "Oh, don't knock the parlour! All doctors approve of parlours. They've saved the lives of so many people. There was Mrs. B—, for instance, killing herself by inches, taking care of her sick husband up a long, steep flight of stairs. By 'doctor's orders,' her husband and his bed and belongings were brought down to the parlour. It almost killed the poor woman to sacrifice a room she seldom entered except to dust and hadn't expected to use 'until the funeral.' But there was no funeral. The parlour helped save Mr. B——'s life, and may have saved his wife's life, too, for that matter."

"That's exactly in the line of what I was going to say next," I declared. "Mrs. B——had that asset in her house—a sickroom below stairs—and she never realized it! People don't know what they've got! Couldn't tell blindfolded, to save them, what pictures are hanging on their own walls. 'The interpreter can't interpret his own house——'"

"Apparently not," laughed the doctor. "That must be the reason you are able to explain so lucidly about the Mother's Suite in Everyman's House, but haven't noticed, apparently, that you have a Mother's Suite—

which is *much* better than a parlour—right here at home."

"But I haven't," I exclaimed. "Where have I?"

"Well!" said the doctor, "suppose the children were babies again, and suppose [with a subtle emphasis which seemed to place it well beyond supposition] you were an overworked housewife—what could you do about it in this house?"

Casting my eyes about my domain, I said at last, doubtfully: "Why, if we cut a door there——"

"Exactly!" said the doctor; adding, in gallant afterthought: "I dare say you'd have thought of that yourself, if you'd needed a Mother's Suite." But honesty compels me to say I probably wouldn't have.

Which leads me to remark, dear reader, that possibly you aren't any brighter than I am. You, too, may have a much more adaptable house than you think.

Why, I dare say that many an intelligent family, moving into Everyman's House without instruction or "key" to their surroundings, could remain oblivious to many of its advantages. Its merits come to light only in connection with the art of living in it. It requires "woman's wits." Any house, in fact, requires to be met halfway. A misunderstood house is as bad as an unloved house.

What we sorely need—we who live in old houses—is a revaluation, from time to time, of the material elements of "home." We go stale to both their assets and their liabilities. Then, perhaps, we lose all enthusiasm for our house. If we really cannot manage to recover our enthusiasm, it would be a good plan to sell, and let someone else make the best of our old house, and build a new home. But—

There was once a woman in that frame of mind. Then she reflected that the property would doubtless sell for a good deal more if the house and grounds were fixed up. (Never forget the grounds as an integral part of "home.") To make a long story short, in the process of "fixing up," she fell in love with her old house all over again, and wouldn't part with it at any price!

It is truly wonderful how small the improvement which may jog us out of our domestic rut and start an avalanche of ideas and enthusiasms in behalf of a "better home." Then, perhaps, we will find ourselves able to make a fresh valuation of the house and its contents.

What is the original cost, the upkeep, the overhead, and the actual profit of some of these things we've always thought we must have because others have them? Can they be truly called an "investment"? Do they even earn their salt? Are they "worth dusting"? Or, on the other hand, are our houses cluttered with disguised liabilities—rooms we don't effectually use, pictures we don't see (and likely, are not worth seeing), useless furniture and bric-à-brac we haven't the courage to get rid of, which make us more or less of a slave to burdensome possessions that "last longer than people"—the dear people we love and want to give our best selves to.

We are certainly not left in the dark in this effort at home-orientation. The women's magazines, the household experiment stations, and the Home Economics Bureau of the Federal Government, are at the service of all of us, begging that we take and apply selectively the wealth of suggestions they offer.

So, let us all try to look at our house and its contents with new eyes. Begin with the things nearest you, touching some daily item of home activity. In the face of the constant bombardment of suggestions from household experts, I hesitate to offer any concrete example. Nevertheless, to make my point clear: Any kitchen, without adding materially to its equipment, can assemble permanently at one point the essential tools and ingredients of certain unit operations—bread-making and pastry-making, for example—and cut out a substantial amount of labour and confusion. And have you happened to realize that two sets of sugar and salt jars in a kitchen can save miles of steps in a year? The price of a single moving picture would provide them. A family "self-denial week" will purchase an electric iron. Any bright family can make a first-class ice box or fireless cooker out of an old trunk and some excelsior and a few odds and ends, besides. And anybody can paint.

And what of the bigger things that may need doing to your house? "Oh, but we can't afford it!" I hear people say. If we actually cannot afford it in cash, perhaps we can afford it in wholesome and rewarding labour.

Why, here are my friends, the Professor and his wife, and two slips of girls, and a boy of eighteen, who have actually built with their own hands a lovely summer home of six or seven rooms that would have cost them at least \$6,000 if they had had it built by a contractor. Yes, they built it all—foundation, chimney, carpenter work, plumbing, furnace setting, electric lighting. The children did all the plumbing and wired the house. They had to learn by experience and their own mistakes. But they did learn; and they have their summer home, which, presumably, they wouldn't have had except by their own joint effort.

Now, what is the matter with us and with our estimate of a home, and with our system of education, that a whole family has to be helpless and irresponsible about even small things; that, on the plea of "can't afford it," a mother should spend her life working with dull, broken, inadequate tools, as it were, with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Professor and Mrs. John P. Everett of Kalamazoo. The cottage is at Elk Lake, Michigan.

bunkers in front of every stroke she makes? If a mere boy can whisk together and install a radio set, or rush up a respectable abode for a horse he wants to keep, why can't he interpolate a new window in that gloomy kitchen and wire it up for side lights?

And furthermore, often it isn't a matter of expensive kitchen equipment nearly so much as it is a matter of routes travelled in doing one's work. Every now and then we learn of a railway company spending a million dollars or so to straighten out a curve in the road. Perhaps it is only a matter of a few miles in distance. But the company finds that, figured over a long period of years, the time lost, the side thrusts on gears and mechanisms of all the cars, and the extra rack and tear in the engine itself in having to go around that curve, justify the great trouble and expense of eliminating it.

Now, a woman who negotiates an unnecessary curve around a table, will, in time, walk needlessly the distance from New York to Chicago. And the routing of many a woman's kitchen tasks, if you sum up the steps of a lifetime, is like going from New York to Chicago by way of Hudson Bay and San Antonio. It may cost money; or it may cost only a little thought and imagination, to straighten out that curve.

And once again, about the Mother's Suite. It is my conviction that a great many little houses can accomplish a fairly good adaptation to this motif; and at a cost which is cheap, compared to the benefit accruing to the whole family.

Everyman's House is a concrete example of a little house built outright to this motif. But we cannot all fall to and build brand-new houses—or even new kitchens. Everyman's House was meant, also, to help you who are looking for ways and means of improving the little house you already have. I should be wary about advising wholesale changes in an old house. It is hard to estimate in advance either the cost or the net results. But adapting, improving, tactfully converting an old house to new ideas is another matter.

Reformed husbands may be questionable assets. But reformed houses seem to fill

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people with a peculiar joy and pride of achievement. "I did this in spite of the stupidity of my predecessor!" Or, "Behold how the house I built in my youth has profited by the wisdom of my riper years!"

THE END