

THE HOME

(ILLUSTRATED)

BY

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PERKINS GILMAN

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THE HOME

Shall the home be our world ... or the world our home?

To every Man who maintains a Home—

To every Woman who "keeps house"—

To every House-Servant, owned, hired, or married—

To every Boy and Girl who lives at Home—

To every Baby who is born and reared at Home—

In the hope of better homes for all this book is dedicated.

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THE HOME

* ITS WORK AND INFLUENCE *

BY

* CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN *



THE HOME

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TWO CALLINGS

I

*I hear a deep voice through uneasy dreaming,
A deep, soft, tender, soul-beguiling voice;
A lulling voice that bids the dreams remain,
That calms my restlessness and dulls my pain,
That thrills and fills and holds me till in seeming
There is no other sound on earth—no choice.
"Home!" says the deep voice, "Home!" and softly singing
Brings me a sense of safety unsurpassed;
So old! so old! The piles above the wave—
The shelter of the stone-blocked, shadowy cave—
Security of sun-kissed treetops swinging—
Safety and Home at last!*

*"Home" says the sweet voice, and warm Comfort rises,
Holding my soul with velvet-fingered hands;
Comfort of leafy lair and lapping fur,
Soft couches, cushions, curtains, and the stir
Of easy pleasures that the body prizes,
Of soft, swift feet to serve the least commands.*

The Home

I shrink—half rise—and then it murmurs "Duty!"

Again the past rolls out—a scroll unfurled;

Allegiance and long labor due my lord—

Allegiance in an idleness abhorred—

I am the squaw—the slave—the harem beauty—

I serve and serve, the handmaid of the world.

My soul rebels—but hark! a new note thrilling,

Deep, deep, past finding—I protest no more;

The voice says "Love!" and all those ages dim

Stand glorified and justified in him;

I bow—I kneel—the woman soul is willing—

"Love is the law. Be still! Obey! Adore!"

And then—ah, then! The deep voice murmurs "Mother!"

And all life answers from the primal sea;

A mingling of all lullabies; a peace

That asks no understanding; the release

Of nature's holiest power—who seeks another?

Home? Home is Mother—Mother, Home—to me.

"Home!" says the deep voice; "Home and Easy Pleasure!

Safety and Comfort, Laws of Life well kept!

Love!" and my heart rose thrilling at the word;

*"Mother!" it nestled down and never stirred;
"Duty and Peace and Love beyond all measure!
Home! Safety! Comfort! Mother!"—and I slept.*

II

*A bugle call! A clear, keen, ringing cry,
Relentless—eloquent—that found the ear
Through fold on fold of slumber, sweet, profound—
A widening wave of universal sound,
Piercing the heart—filling the utmost sky—
I wake—I must wake! Hear—for I must hear!
"The World! The World is crying! Hear its needs!
Home is a part of life—I am the whole!
Home is the cradle—shall a whole life stay
Cradled in comfort through the working day?
I too am Home—the Home of all high deeds—
The only Home to hold the human soul!*

*"Courage!—the front of conscious life!" it cried;
"Courage that dares to die and dares to live!
Why should you prate of safety? Is life meant*

The Home

*In ignominious safety to be spent?
Is Home best valued as a place to hide?
Come out, and give what you are here to give!
"Strength and Endurance! of high action born!"
And all that dream of Comfort shrank away,
Turning its fond, beguiling face aside:
So Selfishness and Luxury and Pride
Stood forth revealed, till I grew fierce with scorn,
And burned to meet the dangers of the day.*

*"Duty? Aye, Duty! Duty! Mark the word!"
I turned to my old standard. It was rent
From hem to hem, and through the gaping place
I saw my undone duties to the race
Of man—neglected—spurned—how had I heard
That word and never dreamed of what it meant!
"Duty! Unlimited—eternal—new!"
And I? My idol on a petty shrine
Fell as I turned, and Cowardice and Sloth
Fell too, unmasked, false Duty covering both—
While the true Duty, all-embracing, high,
Showed the clear line of noble deeds to do.*

*And then the great voice rang out to the turn,
And all my terror left me, all my shame,
While every dream of joy from earliest youth
Came back and lived!—that joy unhopèd was truth,
All joy, all hope, all truth, all peace grew one,
Life opened clear, and Love? Love was its name!
So when the great word "Mother!" rang once more,
I saw at last its meaning and its place;
Not the blind passion of the brooding past,
But Mother—the World's Mother—come at last,

To love as she had never loved before—
To feed and guard and teach the human race.
The world was full of music clear and high!
The world was full of light! The world was free!
And I? Awake at last, in joy untold,
Saw Love and Duty broad as life unrolled—
Wide as the earth—unbounded as the sky—
Home was the World—the World was Home to me!*

THE HOME

I

INTRODUCTORY



In offering this study to a public accustomed only to the unquestioning acceptance of the home as something perfect, holy, quite above discussion, a word of explanation is needed.

First, let it be clearly and definitely stated, the purpose of this book is to maintain and improve the home. Criticism there is, deep and thorough; but not with the intention of robbing us of one essential element of home life—rather of saving us from conditions not only unessential, but gravely detrimental to home life. Every human being should have a

home; the single person his or her home; and the family their home.

The home should offer to the individual rest, peace, quiet, comfort, health, and that degree of personal expression requisite; and these conditions should be maintained by the best methods of the time. The home should be to the child a place of happiness and true development; to the adult a place of happiness and that beautiful reinforcement of the spirit needed by the world's workers.

We are here to perform our best service to society, and to find our best individual growth and expression; a right home is essential to both these uses.

The place of childhood's glowing memories, of youth's ideals, of the calm satisfaction of mature life, of peaceful shelter for the aged; this is not attacked, this we shall not lose, but gain more universally. What is here asserted is that our real home life is clogged and injured by a number of conditions which are not necessary, which are directly inimical to the home; and that we shall do well to lay these aside.

As to the element of sanctity—that which is really sacred can bear examination, no darkened room is needed for real miracles; mystery and shadow belong to jugglers, not to the truth.

The home is a human institution. All human institutions are open to improvement. This specially dear and ancient

one, however, we have successfully kept shut, and so it has not improved as have some others.

The home is too important a factor in human life to be thus left behind in the march of events; its influence is too wide, too deep, too general, for us to ignore.

Whatever else a human being has to meet and bear, he has always the home as a governing factor in the formation of character and the direction of life.

This power of home-influence we cannot fail to see, but we have bowed to it in blind idolatry as one of unmixed beneficence, instead of studying with jealous care that so large a force be wisely guided and restrained.

We have watched the rise and fall of many social institutions, we have seen them change, grow, decay, and die; we have seen them work mightily for evil—or as mightily for good; and have learned to judge and choose accordingly, to build up and to tear down for the best interests of the human race.

In very early times, when the child-mind of inexperienced man was timid, soft, and yet conservative as only the mind of children and savages can be, we regarded all institutions with devout reverence and fear.

Primitive man bowed down and fell upon his face before almost everything, whether forces of nature or of art. To worship, to enshrine, to follow blindly, was instinctive with the savage.

The civilised man has a larger outlook, a clearer, better-ordered brain. He bases reverence on knowledge, he loses fear in the light of understanding; freedom and self-government have developed him. It does not come so readily to him to fall upon his face—rather he lifts his face bravely to see and know and do. In place of the dark and cruel superstitions of old time, with the crushing weight of a strong cult of priests, we have a free and growing church, branching steadily wider as more minds differ, and coming nearer always to that final merging of religion in life which shall leave them indistinguishable. In place of the iron despotisms of old time we have a similar growth and change in governments, approaching always nearer to a fully self-governing condition. Our growth has been great, but it has been irregular and broken by strange checks and reversions; also accompanied, even in its heights, by parallel disorders difficult to account for.

In all this long period of progress the moving world has carried with it the unmoving home; the man free, the woman confined; the man specialising in a thousand industries, the woman still limited to her domestic functions. We have constantly believed that this was the true way to live, the natural way, the only way. Whatever else might change—and all things did—the home must not. So sure were we, and are we yet, of this, that we have utterly refused to admit that the home has changed, has grown, has improved, in spite of our unshaken convictions and unbending opposition.

The Home

The softest, freest, most pliable and changeful living substance is the brain—the hardest and most iron-bound as well. Given a sufficiently deep conviction, and facts are but as dreams before its huge reality.

Our convictions about the home go down to the uttermost depths, and have changed less under the tooth of time than any others, yet the facts involved have altered most radically. The structure of the home has changed from cave to tent, from tent to hut, from hut to house, from house to block or towering pile of "flats"; the functions of the home have changed from every incipient industry known to past times, to our remaining few; the inmates of the home have changed, from the polygamous group and its crowd of slaves, to the one basic family relation of father, mother, and child; but our feelings have remained the same.

The progress of society we have seen to be hindered by many evils in the world about us and in our own characters; we have sought to oppose them as best we might, and even in some degree to study them for wiser opposition.

Certain diseases we have traced to their cause, removed the cause, and so avoided the disease; others we are just beginning to trace, as in our present warfare with "the white plague," tuberculosis.

Certain forms of vice we are beginning to examine similarly, and certain defects of character; we are learning that society is part of the living world and comes under the action of natural law as much as any other form of life.

But in all this study of social factors affecting disease and vice and character, we have still held that the home—our most universal environment—was perfect and quite above suspicion.

We were right at bottom. The home *in its essential nature* is pure good, and in its due development is progressively good; but it must change with society's advance; and the kind of home that was wholly beneficial in one century may be largely evil in another. We must forcibly bear in mind, in any honest study of a long-accustomed environment, that our own comfort, or even happiness, in a given condition does not prove it to be good.

Comfort and happiness are very largely a matter of prolonged adjustment. We like what we are used to. When we get used to something else we like that too—and if the something else is really better, we profit by the change. To the tired farmer it is comfort to take off his coat, put up his yarn-stockinged feet on a chair, and have his wife serve him the supper she has cooked. The tired banker prefers a dressing gown or lounging jacket, slippers, a well-dressed, white-handed wife, and a neat maid or stately butler to wait on the table. The domestic Roman preferred a luxurious bath at the hands of his slaves. All these types find comfort in certain surroundings—yet the surroundings differ.

The New England farmer would not think a home comfortable that was full of slaves—even a butler he would find oppressive; the New York banker would not enjoy seeing his wife do dirty work. Ideals change—even home

ideals; and whatever kind of home we have, so that we grow up in it and know no other, we learn to love. Even among homes as they now are, equally enjoyed by their inmates, there is a wide scale of difference. Why, then, is it impossible to imagine something still further varying from what we now know; yet to the children born therein as dear and deeply loved?

Again let us remember that happiness, mere physical comfort and the interchange of family affection, is not all that life is for. We may have had "a happy childhood," as far as we can recall; we may have been idolised and indulged by our parents, and have had no wish ungratified; yet even so all this is no guarantee that the beloved home has given us the best training, the best growth. Nourmahal, the Light of the Harem, no doubt enjoyed herself—but perhaps other surroundings might have done more for her mind and soul. The questions raised here touch not only upon our comfort and happiness in such homes as are happy ones, but on the formative influence of these homes; asking if our present home ideals and home conditions are really doing all for humanity that we have a right to demand. There is a difference in homes not only in races, classes, and individuals, but in periods.

The sum of the criticism in the following study is this: the home has not developed in proportion to our other institutions, and by its rudimentary condition it arrests development in other lines. Further, that the two main errors in the right adjustment of the home to our present life are

these: the maintenance of primitive industries in a modern industrial community, and the confinement of women to those industries and their limited area of expression. No word is said against the real home, the true family life; but it is claimed that much we consider essential to that home and family life is not only unnecessary, but positively injurious.

The home is a beautiful ideal, but have we no others? "My Country" touches a deeper chord than even "Home, Sweet Home." A homeless man is to be pitied, but "The Man without a Country" is one of the horrors of history. The love of mother and child is beautiful; but there is a higher law than that—the love of one another.

In our great religion we are taught to love and serve all mankind. Every word and act of Christ goes to show the law of universal service. Christian love goes out to all the world; it may begin, but does not stay, at home.

The trend of all democracy is toward a wider, keener civic consciousness; a purer public service. All the great problems of our times call for the broad view, the large concept, the general action. Such gain as we have made in human life is in this larger love; in some approach to peace, safety, and world-wide inter-service; yet this so patent common good is strangely contradicted and off-set by cross-currents of primitive selfishness. Our own personal lives, rich as they are to-day, broad with the consciousness of all acquainted races, deep with the consciousness of the uncovered past, strong with our universal knowledge and power; yet even so are not happy. We are confused—

bewildered. Life is complicated, duties conflict, we fly and fall like tethered birds, and our new powers beat against old restrictions like ships in dock, fast moored, yet with all sail set and steam up.

It is here suggested that one cause for this irregular development of character, this contradictory social action, and this wearing unrest in life lies unsuspected in our homes; not in their undying essential factors, but in those phases of home life we should have long since peacefully outgrown. Let no one tremble in fear of losing precious things. That which is precious remains and will remain always. We do small honour to nature's laws when we imagine their fulfilment rests on this or that petty local custom of our own.

We may all have homes to love and grow in without the requirement that half of us shall never have anything else. We shall have homes of rest and peace for all, with no need for half of us to find them places of ceaseless work and care. Home and its beauty, home and its comfort, home and its refreshment to tired nerves, its inspiration to worn hearts, this is in no danger of loss or change; but the home which is so far from beautiful, so wearing to the nerves and dulling to the heart, the home life that means care and labour and disappointment, the quiet, unnoticed whirlpool that sucks down youth and beauty and enthusiasm, man's long labour and woman's longer love—this we may gladly change and safely lose. To the child who longs to grow up and be free; to the restless, rebelling boy; to the girl who marries all too hastily as a means of escape; to the man who puts his neck in

the collar and pulls while life lasts to meet the unceasing demands of his little sanctuary; and to the woman—the thousands upon thousands of women, who work while life lasts to serve that sanctuary by night and day—to all these it may not be unwelcome to suggest that the home need be neither a prison, a workhouse, nor a consuming fire.

Home—with all that the sweet word means; home for each of us, in its best sense; yet shorn of its inordinate expenses, freed of its grinding labours, open to the blessed currents of progress that lead and lift us all—this we may have and keep for all time.

It is, therefore, with no iconoclastic frenzy of destruction, but as one bravely pruning a most precious tree, that this book is put forward; inquiring as to what is and what is not vital to the subject; and claiming broadly that with such and such clinging masses cut away, the real home life will be better established and more richly fruitful for good than we have ever known before.

II

THE EVOLUTION OF THE HOME



We have been slow, slow and reluctant, to apply the laws of evolution to the familiar facts of human life. Whatever else might move, we surely were stationary; we were the superior onlookers—not part of the procession. Ideas which have possessed the racial mind from the oldest times are not to be dispossessed in a day; and this idea that man is something extra in the scheme of creation is one of our very oldest. We have always assumed that we were made by a special order, and that our manners and customs were peculiarly and distinctively our own, separated by an immeasurable gap from those of "the lower animals."

Now it appears, in large succeeding waves of proof, that there are no gaps in the long story of earth's continual creation; some pages may be lost to us, but they were once continuous. There is no break between us and the first stir of life upon our planet. Life is an unbroken line, a ceaseless stream that pours steadily on; or rather, it grows like an undying tree, some of whose branches wither and drop off, some reach their limit part way up, but the main trunk rises ever higher. We stand at the top and continue to grow, but we still carry with us many of the characteristics of the lower branches.

At what point in this long march of life was introduced that useful, blessed thing—the home? Is it something new, something distinctively human, like the church, the school, or the post office? No. It is traceable far back of humanity, back of the mammals, back of the vertebrates; we find it in most elaborate form even among insects.

What is a home? The idea of home is usually connected with that of family, as a place wherein young are born and reared, a common shelter for the reproductive group. The word may be also applied to the common shelter for any other permanent group, and to the place where any individual habitually stays. Continuous living in any place by individual or group makes that place a home; even old prisoners, at last released, have been known to come back to the familiar cell because it seemed like "home" to them. But "the home," in the sense in which we here discuss it, is the shelter of the family, of the group organised for purposes of reproduction.

The Home

In this sense a beehive is as much a home as any human dwelling place—even more, perhaps. The snow hut of the Eskimo, the tent of hides that covers the American savage, the rock-bound fastness of the cave-dweller—these are homes as truly as the costliest modern mansion. The burrow of the prairie dog is a home, a fox's earth is a home, a bird's nest is a home, and the shelter of the little "seahorse" is a home. Wherever the mother feeds and guards her little ones,—more especially if the father helps her,—there is, for the time being, home.

This accounts at once for the bottomless depths of our attachment to the idea. For millions and millions of years it has been reborn in each generation and maintained by the same ceaseless pressure. The furry babies of the forest grow to consciousness in nests of leaves, in a warm stillness where they are safe and comfortable, where mother is—and mother is heaven and earth to the baby. Our lightly spoken phrase "What is home without a mother?" covers the deepest truth; there would never have been any home without her. It is from these antecedents that we may trace the formation of this deep-bedded concept, home.

The blended feelings covered by the word are a group of life's first necessities and most constant joys: shelter, quiet, safety, warmth, ease, comfort, peace, and love. Add to these food, and you have the sum of the animal's gratification. Home is indeed heaven to him. The world outside is, to the animal with a home, a field of excitement, exertion, and danger. He goes out to eat, in more or less danger of being

eaten; but if he can secure his prey and drag it home he is then perfectly happy. Often he must feed where it falls, but then home is the place for the after-dinner nap.

With the graminivora there is no thought of home. The peaceful grass-eater drops foal or fawn, kid, calf, or lamb, where chance may find her in the open, and feeds at random under the sky. Vegetable food of a weak quality like grass has to be constantly followed up; there is no time to gather armfuls to take home, even if there were homes—or arms. But the beasts of prey have homes and love them, and the little timid things that live in instant danger—they, too, have homes to hide in at a moment's notice. These deep roots of animal satisfaction underlie the later growths of sentiment that so enshrine the home idea with us. The retreat, the shelter both from weather and enemies, this is a primal root.

It is interesting to note that there is a strong connection still between a disagreeable climate and the love of home. Where it is comfortable and pleasant out of doors, then you find the life of the street, the market place, the café, the plaza. Where it is damp and dark and chill, where rain and wind, snow and ice make it unpleasant without, there you find people gathering about the fireside, and boasting of it as a virtue—merely another instance of the law that makes virtue of necessity.

Man began with the beasts' need of home and the beasts' love of home. To this he rapidly applied new needs and new sentiments. The ingenious ferocity of man, and his unique habit of preying on his own kind, at once introduced a new

necessity, that of fortification. Many animals live in terror of attack from other kinds of animals, and adapt their homes defensively as best they may, but few are exposed to danger of attack from their own kind. Ants, indeed, sometimes make war; bees are sometimes thieves; but man stands clear in his pre-eminence as a destroyer of his own race. From this habit of preying on each other came the need of fortified homes, and so the feeling of safety attached to the place grew and deepened.

The sense of comfort increased as we learned to multiply conveniences, and, with this increase in conveniences, came decreased power to do without them. The home where all sat on the floor had not so much advantage in comfort over "out-of-doors" as had the home where all sat on chairs, and became unable to sit on the ground with ease. So safety and comfort grew in the home concept. Shelter, too, became more complex as door and window and curtain guarded us better, and made us more susceptible to chill. Peace became more dear at home as war increased outside; quiet, as life waxed louder in the world; love, as we learned to hate each other more. The more dangerous and offensive life outside, the more we cling to the primal virtues of the home; and conversely, in our imagination of heaven, we do not picture the angels as bound up in their homes—if, indeed, they have any—but as gladly mingling in the larger love which includes them all. When we say "Heaven is my home," we mean the whole of it.

The care and shelter of the young is a far larger problem with us than with our hairy ancestors. Our longer period of immaturity gives us monogamous marriage and the permanent home. The animal may change his mate and home between litters; ours lap. This over-lapping, long-continuing babyhood has given us more good than we yet recognise.

Thus we see that all the animal cared for in the home we have in greater degree, and care for more; while we have, further, many home ideals they knew not. One of the earliest steps in human development was ancestor-worship. With lower animals the parents do their duty cheerfully, steadily, devotedly, but there is no thought of return. The law of reproduction acts to improve the race by relentlessly sacrificing the individual, and that individual, the parent, never sets up a claim to any special veneration or gratitude.

But with us it is different. Our little ones lasting longer and requiring more care, we become more conscious of our relation to them. So the primitive parent very soon set up a claim upon the child, and as the child was absolutely helpless and in the power of the parent, it did not take long to force into the racial mind this great back-acting theory. The extreme height is found where it is made a religion, ancestor-worship, once very common, and still dominant in some of our oldest, *i.e.*, most primitive civilisations, as the Chinese. This ancestor-worship is what gave the element of sanctity to the home. As late as the Roman civilisation its power was so strong that the home was still a temple to a dwindling group of household gods—mere fossil grandpas—and we ourselves

are not yet free from the influence of Roman civilisation. We still talk in poetic archaisms of "the altar of the home."

The extension of the family from a temporary reproductive group to a permanent social group is another human addition to the home idea. To have lived in one hole all his infancy makes that hole familiar and dear to the little fox. To have lived in one nest all his life makes that nest more familiar and more dear to the rook. But to have lived in one house for generations, to have "the home of my ancestors" loom upon one's growing consciousness—this is to enlarge enormously our sense of the dignity and value of the term.

This development of the home feeling of course hinges upon the theory of private property rights; and on another of our peculiar specialties, the exaltation of blood-relationships. Our whole social structure, together with social progress and social action, rests in reality on social relationship—that is, on the interchange of special services between individuals. But we, starting the custom at a time when we knew no better, and perpetuating it blindly, chose to assume that it was more important to be connected physically as are the animals, than psychically as human beings; so we extended the original family group of father, mother, and child into endless collateral lines and tried to attach our duties, our ambitions, our virtues and achievements to that group exclusively. The effect of this on any permanent home was necessarily to still further enlarge and deepen the sentiment attached to it.

There is another feature of human life, however, which has contributed enormously to our home sentiment,—the position of women. Having its rise, no doubt, in the overlapping babyhood before mentioned, the habit grew of associating women more continuously with the home, but this tendency was as nothing compared to the impetus given by the custom of ownership in women. Women became, practically, property. They were sold, exchanged, given and bequeathed like horses, hides, or weapons. They belonged to the man, as did the house; it was one property group. With the steadily widening gulf between the sexes which followed upon this arbitrary imprisonment of the woman in the home, we have come to regard "the world" as exclusively man's province, and "the home" as exclusively woman's.

The man, who constitutes the progressive wing of the human race, went on outside as best he might, organising society, and always enshrining in his heart the woman and the home as one and indivisible. This gives the subtle charm of sex to a man's home ideals, and, equally, the scorn of sex to a man's home practices. Home to the man first means mother, as it does to all creatures, but later, and with renewed intensity, it means his own private harem—be it never so monogamous—the secret place where he keeps his most precious possession.

Thus the word "home," in the human mind, touches the spring of a large complex group of ideas and sentiments, some older than humanity, some recent enough for us to trace their birth, some as true and inalienable as any other laws of

life, some as false and unnecessary as any others of mankind's mistakes. It does not follow that all the earliest ones are right for us to-day, because they were right for our remote predecessors, or that those later introduced are therefore wrong.

What is called for is a clear knowledge of the course of evolution of this earliest institution and an understanding of the reasons for its changes, that we may discriminate to-day between that which is vital and permanent in home life and that which is unessential and injurious. We may follow without difficulty the evolution of each and all the essential constituents of home, mark the introduction of non-essentials, show the evils resultant from forced retention of earlier forms; in a word, we may study the evolution of the home precisely as we study that of any other form of life.

Take that primal requisite of safety and shelter which seems to underlie all others, a place where the occupant may be protected from the weather and its enemies. This motive of home-making governs the nest-builder, the burrow-digger, the selector of caves; it dominates the insect, the animal, the savage, and the modern architect. Dangers change, and the home must change to suit the danger. So after the caves were found insufficient, the lake-dwellers built above the water, safe when the bridge was in. The drawbridge as an element of safety lingered long, even when an artificial moat must needs be made for lack of lake. When the principal danger is cold, as in Arctic regions, the home is built thick and small; when it is heat, we build thick and large; when it is

dampness, we choose high ground, elevate the home, lay drains; when it is wind, we seek a sheltered slope, or if there is no slope, plant trees as a wind-break to protect the home, or, in the worst cases, make a "cyclone cellar."

The gradual development of our careful plastering and glazing, our methods of heating, of carpeting and curtaining, comes along this line of security and shelter, modified always by humanity's great enemy, conservatism. In these mechanical details, as in deeper issues, free adaptation to changed conditions is hindered by our invariable effort to maintain older habits. Older habits are most dear to the aged, and as the aged have always most controlled the home, that institution is peculiarly slow to respond to the kindling influence of changed condition. The Chaldeans built of brick for years unnumbered, because clay was their only building material. When they spread into Assyria, where stone was plenty, they continued calmly putting up great palaces of sunbaked brick,—mere *adobe*,—and each new king left the cracking terraces of his predecessor's pride and built another equally ephemeral. The influence of our ancestors has dominated the home more than it has any other human institution, and the influence of our ancestors is necessarily retroactive.

In the gathering currents of our present-day social evolution, and especially in this country where progress is not feared, this heavy undertow is being somewhat overcome. Things move so rapidly now that one life counts the changes, there is at last a sense of motion in human