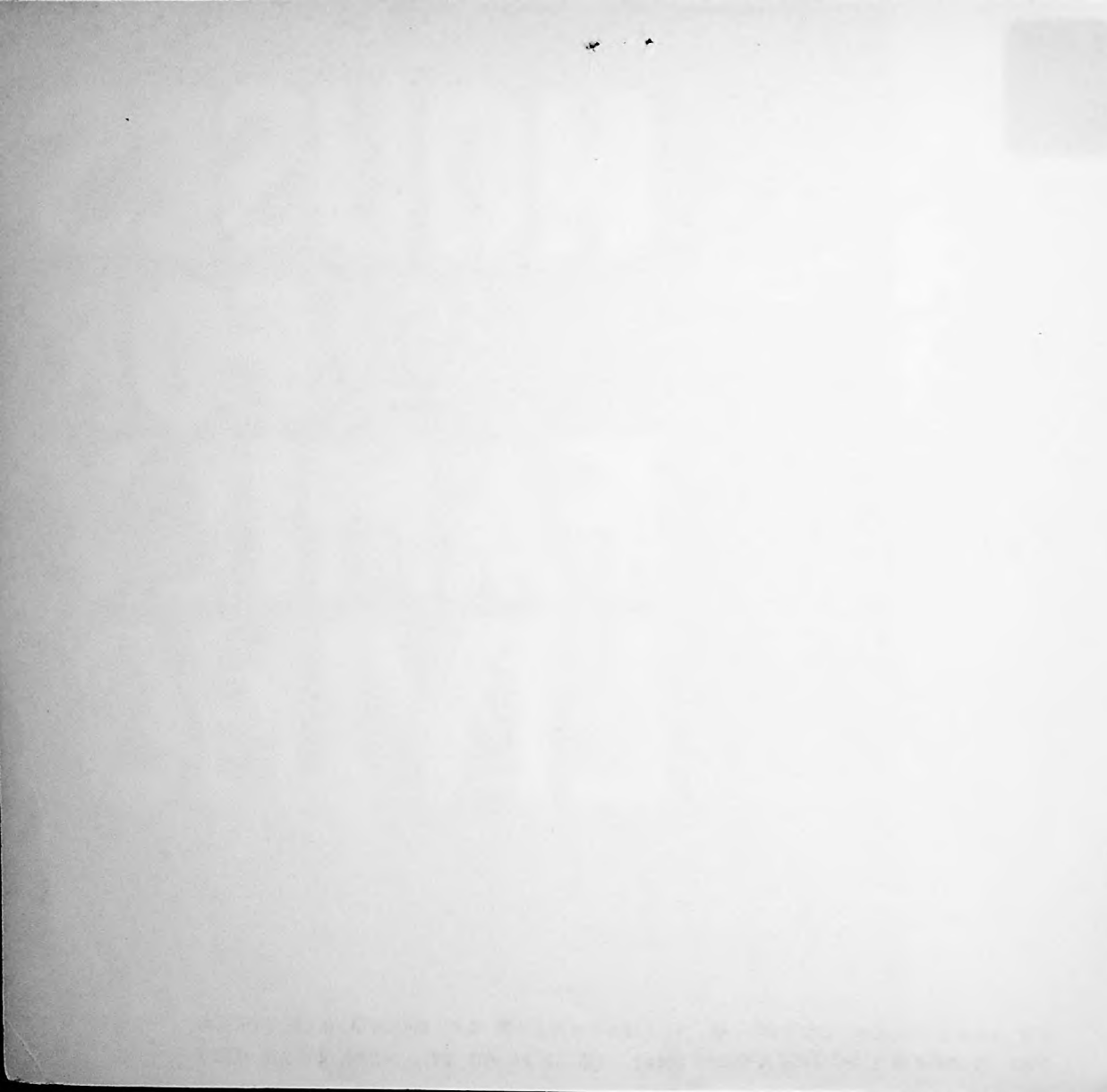


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# HOUSES FOR FAMILY LIVING

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.  
DEC 1959

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To Annabella Heath <sup>in</sup>  
in anticipation of the Women's  
Conference 1956.  
Affectionately  
Annot. Thren

# HOUSES FOR FAMILY LIVING

BY FREDERICK GUTHEIM, ILLUSTRATED BY DONG KINGMAN  
THE WOMAN'S FOUNDATION INC., 10 EAST 40 ST., NEW YORK CITY

THE WOMAN'S FOUNDATION, INC.

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## ● INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet is an attempt to put between two covers some of the information recently acquired on family living and the home and to think through what it means. It is a premature effort. Yet such a first trial, with all of its shortcomings, will give direction to the work being undertaken in the long process of developing the new house-types our families so desperately need.

To generalize this confusing mass of data we have deliberately obscured the most difficult part of the problem: the great variety of families that we must provide for. We have not considered the special requirements of the many American families of foreign extraction whose goals in family living differ markedly from those we have described. We have made no effort to consider the implications of the wide variation in incomes between different families. We have not considered the influence of geography, its effect both on housing requirements and on ways of family living. Later these omissions must be made good.

For the present we are concerned with a statistically defensible "normal" American family. Where data can be brought to bear in defining this family, such data have been used. Where data were not available, assumptions have been inevitable.

To what extent this effort at congruity has distorted the facts is difficult to say, for in most cases the facts are not known, and in others we are presented with conflicting facts.

Still, thinking and action in this direction must go on. People do not have to wait until all the punch cards have been run through the machines to know the answers to many of their problems. Let us commence.

● THE NEW AMERICAN FAMILY



OLD FAMILY



NEW FAMILY

Our houses, our communities, our cities, are the product of our own imaginations, our own tools, our own skills. The houses and cities we live in are vastly different from those of fifty years ago; they are different from the houses and cities of other times and places.

In this change lies our opportunity to reshape the homes of men, in the light of modern knowledge, to develop the potential greatness of man.

Today almost two families out of three in the United States live in cities and suburbs. We have created a new phenomenon—the metropolis. Within this environment the most important part is our homes. Here the most vitally significant hours are spent.

By the standards of a hundred years ago, our homes and our urban environment are safe and sanitary. They keep out the weather and protect us and our possessions from marauders. But we are no longer satisfied with these standards.

Today we apply new standards based on advances in medicine, in psychology, in home economics, in family relations, in other sciences. We demand safe and efficient ranges in our kitchens, mechanical refrigeration for the preservation of food, planned kitchens laid out for efficient work, good lighting to protect our eyes. The building industries are increasingly able to satisfy these needs—and more. They can give us warm floors, acoustically insulated rooms, clean and sterile air to breathe in our homes.

More important than gadgets: they can give us a home designed for family living.

Why must we have good homes? We all like to

live well, and in a time when so much effort is spent in providing automobiles, cosmetics, moving pictures and other accessories of pleasant living, it is remarkable that so little effort has been spent on the basic essential of good living itself—the home. But aside from the pleasure it would give us, why are good homes essential?

The capacities of the individual for survival are enormous. We know that life can persist in hostile and unfavorable surroundings. But when the environment for procreation, for rearing the young, for family living, is adverse, the end is near. Thus we must consider the shortcomings of our homes and of cities primarily as a setting for family living.

This is important to us as families. Beyond that, it is one reason the housing question becomes a matter of civic and of national interest.

Before we consider the domestic environment itself, we should take a good, hard look at the people who live in it and who will have to remake it to fit their needs.

It is an historical fact that the families who have lived in the great cities of the world have never reproduced themselves sufficiently to maintain a high population level. The stream of immigration from the surrounding countryside to the city alone has made it possible for cities to expand and become great. Notably has this been true of our own country.

The world has never been obliged to create cities whose population would naturally increase. We have never had to build a city for children, a city for family living. Now we must do so. Today we have to face, for the first time in history, the fact that ours is not predominantly a rural population.

Nor can we assume a continuation of the traditional life-providing character of the countryside. Urban ways of living, urban economics, urban ideals, have spread out to engulf the countryside as well. The hard road, the cash crop, the radio, family limitation, and countless other changes of recent years have deruralized the countryside. New attitudes have appeared. Now only the most backward parts of rural America—as in the hills of Appalachia—are regions of traditional living and high population growth.

### *The Traditional Family*

Far back in the hills you can still find people who live today the way most American families lived a couple of generations ago. On isolated mountain farms, these folks grow almost everything they need. Their food, clothing, and shelter are produced by their own efforts. Here still flourish the household arts and crafts of a vanished America. You still hear the slap of the churn and the hum of the loom. Here are the masterful culinary arts: the making of lard and soap, the lore of smoked, salted, and pickled meats. Here one still finds the community activities of hog killings and quilting bees.

This is subsistence living.

These highlanders of today are picturesque survivals, an isolated eddy in the main stream of our social history. The implements and handicrafts of this way of living are now prized as curiosities by a people who live in a far different manner. We do not live like that today. Few of us can even remember such a way of life. Yet not long ago, through most of the vast farming regions of the United States, this was the life of the people. Our country

was then a rural nation. As late as 1900 about two families out of every three lived on farms.

In this old subsistence way of living, a special importance was attached to the family.

*The family was the basic unit of production.*

On the individual farm, handed down from one generation to the next, the family made its living, grew rich or poor. In selecting his wife, the husband—ancient and significant title!—was choosing a business partner as well. Upon the wife's skill and good management, her thrift, her efficiency, her productivity, depended much of the family's standard of living, almost equally with her husband's efforts in the fields. Each new child that was born promised a new pair of hands to help on the land or in the household. At five a child was learning to stack firewood; at seven he could drive home the cows; at ten he was able to plow and to help with the haying. Those were the days of large families.

Families were large not only because there were many children. There were also grandparents, unmarried aunts or uncles, orphaned cousins. So long as they could help in the daily struggle to produce more food and clothing, each added member was welcome. With the rich, abundant, and cheap lands of a virgin continent still before it, the only limiting factor in a family's prosperity was the number of hands available to cultivate the land, and the wisdom, the skill, and the teamwork of the household.

This was America in the not so distant past. This was the American family.

As the massive changes of the past fifty years took place—the rapid change from making a living to earning a living, the advent of automobiles, urbanization, and the rest—this was the family that persisted in the American imagination, in our customs and our laws. It is of such a family, with all

its ancient solidarity, its cement of group interest and mutual aid holding it together, that too many of our political and religious leaders still think when they think of the family in relation to democracy, or in relation to morals and ethics.

But that family has now almost vanished. What have we in its place?

### *The New Family*

Instead of on the farm, we look for the typical American family in the city—or, more probably, in its suburbs. The family does not work together to gain its livelihood from the land. Instead the husband goes off to work in a factory or an office where he is immured for most of the day, miles distant from his wife and children. He is the sole breadwinner. His weekly pay envelope supports the family. Not the collective efforts of the family as a whole so much as the purchasing power of the dollars earned by the husband alone—sometimes aided by the wife—determine the family's standard of living.

The American family of today is smaller, by rather more than one-fourth, than its predecessor. Statistically, it comprises fewer than five persons. It is growing smaller. Its "life expectancy" is longer. Both the individuals who compose the family, and the family itself, may be expected to endure longer, to cover a longer age span. The tendency to marry later in life, especially marked in women (though in post-war years this tendency has been offset somewhat), has not shortened the span of family life. Gains of medical science have greatly enhanced the possibility that the couple will live to advanced years.

The family income is spent in purchasing food, clothing, shelter, and the myriad new goods—automobiles, radios, household equipment, and the like—that are considered "necessities" of modern life, and the many services necessary to health, welfare, and amusement.

Not the wifely skills of the kitchen and the household, so much as her skill as a purchasing agent and manager, is the important thing in a domestic economy where little is made and much is bought.

The position of the child has greatly changed. Once the potential producer, today the child is an economic liability from the moment his first doctor bills arrive. Dr. Louis Dublin of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has estimated it will cost in the neighborhood of \$10,000 to bring up the child to the age of eighteen. It will be only after six or seven years in the home, and a dozen years in school, that he will reach the age at which he can produce anything of value. And by then he will, in all probability, be on the verge of leaving the family to start one of his own. The once powerful economic incentive to have children has greatly decreased.

Buffered by the currents of a rapidly changing society, it is hardly surprising that the family as an institution is also changing. Two aspects of this change are of special importance.

In its role as a productive unit, the family has ceased to be of much importance. Its economic function has almost disappeared. Even the role of the housewife has altered. Her cooking, laundering, clothes making, are vanishing activities. The long range tendency is for the family as an economic unit to become less significant.

People may well ask why we should have families at all.

*The family is the unique producer of the generation of tomorrow, and the major influence in forming the personality of our future citizens. This today is the family's primary reason for being.*

In the group life of the family the child first becomes a member of society. From the secure foundation of a home, the child explores the larger world

of the neighborhood and the community.

We do not exaggerate when we say that the future of the race, its quality and even its numbers, will depend on our success in preserving and enhancing this dominant function of the family.

It does not greatly matter if a once-powerful economic incentive to have children has vanished. Other incentives have not. We need children to complete us as personalities.

But we do not need them if children are a bore, a care, a nuisance, if they are in the way, if the responsibility of caring for them sets us in hopeless conflict with our environment. Couples will find it easier to escape all this conflict and submit to the lesser evil of not having children.

Nor will it advance matters to bring children into a hostile world where their opportunities to grow and learn are compromised from the start. We know too much about health and disease, about delinquency and crime, about accidents and injuries, about maladjustment and mental deformities, to be content with an obsolete environment that throws such shadows on the rising generation, and combats our efforts to bring them under control.

The fear of childbirth, and even its pain, are things of the past. Yet, the fear of child rearing, and even its pain, we have not conquered. That fear is mounting each year. If families are to continue to want children and to have them, steps must be taken to lighten their burden, to provide an environment with positive incentives and rewards for families with children.

We do not wish merely to provide environments that stimulate child bearing. We are concerned that our urban environments make the positive and major contribution of which they are capable to call forth the undeveloped possibilities of the coming generation. That is our challenge.

Most people seldom make the best use of the opportunities life affords, or of their own inherent possibilities. Science assures us of man's "unlimited plasticity," but too little positive evidence of it is seen. Industry has made great strides in amplifying the dexterity, vision, and skillfulness of workers. Crude as it is, a beginning has been made. Knowledge of human incentives and capabilities is growing. The advances we have made in designing work places, and in intensifying the working hours of the day, are now spreading to embrace the worker's total environment and his twenty-four hour day. But if we are to tap known but undeveloped human resources, the environment must invite their development and utilization.

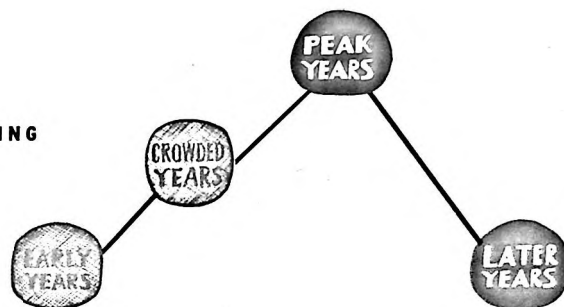
We must recognize further that at a time when attention remains concentrated on the individual, we should conscientiously develop the family group and

its values in daily living. Here is the origin of the individual, and if we fail here with the family, we shall fail later with the individual. Let us not forget that as there are potentially limitless possibilities for the individual, there are analogous resources and riches that lie within the family itself.

Here are some of our objectives for the work that lies ahead of us in reshaping our environment. We must build homes and rebuild our cities to offer the maximum advantage to families with children. We must establish environments, domestic, community, and urban, that call forth the best in the human personality. But we must enlist the family, as we have seldom used it thus far, to aid in this work. Our homes and cities must be made suitable, in the bright light of modern knowledge, not only for children but for family living.



## ● TOWARD A NATURAL HISTORY OF FAMILY LIVING



From the time a man and a woman leave their homes and marry, studies of the U. S. Census show, they can look forward to about 40 years of life together until the death of one member dissolves the family. In this time the size and nature of the family will change profoundly.

We can examine the periods into which the family's life naturally falls. All of us will recognize these distinctions. We notice when we pass from one phase to the next or when our friends do. Each of these distinctive periods presents its own characteristic problems of family living. Although such divisions of a family's life are only now becoming recognized, they check very well with the facts. There is good reason to believe that as we learn more about the family these divisions of its life will become more significant.

In the first period, which can be called *the early years*, the young couple live alone. If we take, in the manner of the Romans, Year One as the beginning of the family's calendar, we can say that as a rule the early years last until Year Three, or until the first baby arrives. During these first two or three years the young couple have requirements, habits, and problems that differ markedly from those of any other period in their lives. The simplicity of their

lives on the surface masks important problems of adjustment, and serious preparation for the family responsibilities that lie ahead.

The couple is learning to live together. Often the wife will continue to work, and well she may for the economic problem at this stage of the family's development is critical. They are struggling hard to acquire possessions—the “capital equipment” for family living, such as furniture, china, silver, linen, a car, or even a house. They are also trying to save money against emergencies or future needs they can already foresee. Often they will live in furnished, rented rooms, or in a small rented apartment or house that may be outgrown by the time the baby begins to walk. These are the early years.

The second period commences when the babies begin to arrive. It lasts until the youngest child has entered school. These are *the crowded years*. Normally, this period will commence in Year Three in the life of the family. Now the great characteristic is the growth in the size of the family—a growth of 150% from its original size. Let's assume three children in this American family. If they are spaced two years apart, as they are in more and more families, it will be Year Seven before the third baby is born. In these years the presence in the family

EARLY  
YEARS



YEARS OF FAMILY  
LIFE (GENERALIZED)

EARLY YEARS  
FROM 1 TO 3

CROWDED  
YEARS



CROWDED YEARS  
FROM 2 TO 15

PEAK  
YEARS



PEAK YEARS  
FROM 12 TO 27

of a child who must be supervised, who cannot be left alone, who is growing and learning, who must be helped and tended, protected and taught, loved and managed, is the most important factor in family living. It will be Year Fourteen before the last child leaves the home and goes to school! More than one-third of the entire life of the family is dominated by the young child.

When the youngest child is turning seven, the oldest is entering his teens. The crowded years are succeeded by *the peak years*, a period lasting almost as long. Now the family income is highest. Now the children are able to play a larger role in family management. It will be Year Twenty-five in the life of the family before the youngest child is eighteen years old. The peak years are the growing up times for the children. These are the years when they are learning to become adult members of the family and the community, the years of education and learning, at home and in the neighborhood as well as at school. They are the years of jive and jallopies, of gangs and clubs, of big appetites, intensive juvenile society, and a little later, of courtship. They are the years when the parents are crowded out of the living room, when one radio seems not enough, when the big argument rages over who is going to use the family car.

As the children leave home, the peak years recede and are followed by *the later years*. Quiet has again come to the household, often a sad and empty quiet, and the parents are left alone in a house that is full of memories, but frequently seems too large for their ordinary needs. This period is peculiarly of our own time. Its long span of fifteen years is due to our steadily lengthening life expectancy. We may expect it to increase in the future.

Into these four periods the life of the family divides itself naturally and easily. Each of the periods



## LATER YEARS

LATER YEARS  
FROM 25 TO 40

has a form and a flavor of its own. Each of them is significant for the myriad aspects of family life: for its health, its economy, its welfare, its psychology, its management problems.

*Each is significant in the design of the home.*

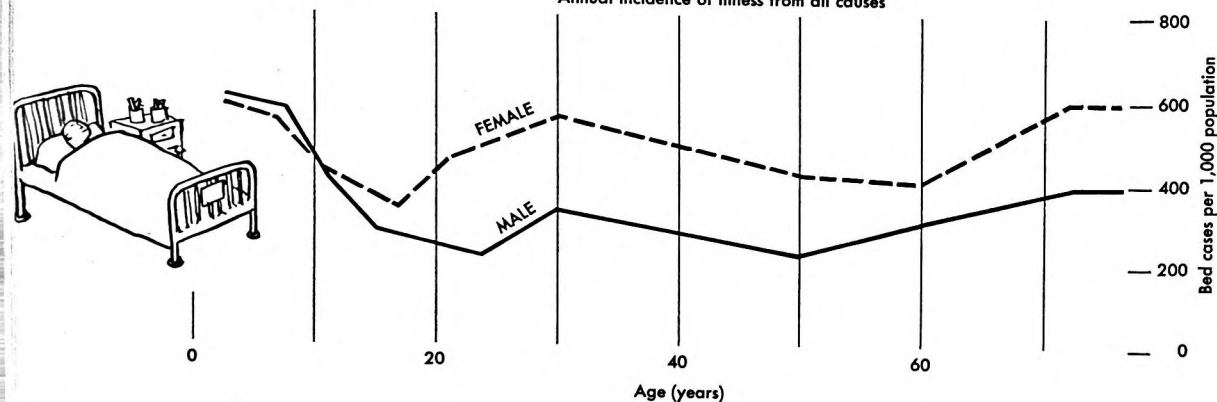
Each of these four periods of family life is of particular interest to the different experts concerned with helping the family. The home economist, for example, looks at the early years as a period when home management is being learned, at the crowded and peak years when management is strained by having to meet growing family needs. The family

relations counselor sees that the characteristic problems of family living are different at each stage. The experts on family costs and budgets find differing financial problems, and will recommend different solutions at the various stages of family development. Those interested in family health will note it is in the crowded years that the greatest frequency of illness occurs, when the children are young and the mother is having babies.

Here, then, is our biographical framework. We can think more constructively about problems of family living if we regard them in such divisions.

## ILLNESS CHART

Annual incidence of illness from all causes



## ● THE EARLY YEARS

A newly married couple usually thinks that each knows a great deal about the other. Not many days pass, however, before they find that the important thing is not whether he likes oatmeal for breakfast or she enjoys listening to the Hour of Charm, but whether each will give up some thing they particularly want so that both may have what they want together.

Important family decisions are reached *as a family*, and important family responsibilities are shared. This becomes more and more evident as the family expands and the children grow older, but the foundations must be laid in the early years if we are to have democratic family living.

These are the years when some of the most critical strains are experienced. The uncertainties are greatest at the very moment when family life is just beginning. The problems of a career are most pressing. Should the husband take a new job? Should he move to another town? Should the wife continue to work?

In acting together to solve such problems, and a host of others related to them, the couple starting life together will test their real ability to found a family and meet the larger responsibilities they must soon face.

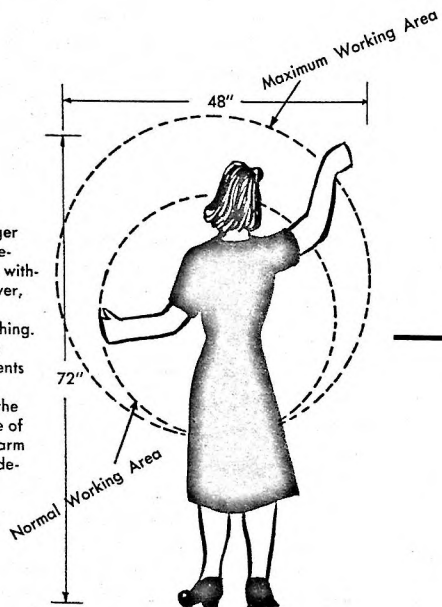


There are advantages in the early years. The relative simplicity of housekeeping, and the proportionately short amount of time needed for it, are among them. Even so, the best available studies seem to show that it takes the average homemaker nearly 40 hours a week to do her work even in a home without children.

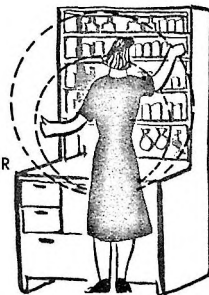
Why should it take so long? Despite our labor-saving appliances, the entire domestic routine is certainly a great deal more complicated and time-consuming than it formerly was. We have more clothing to care for. Our standards of personal hygiene and appearance are higher. Housekeeping and domestic cleanliness are more exacting. Dishwashing takes more time when each person uses four or five dishes. We are more comfortable, cleaner, healthier, better-looking and more stylish—but it all takes more time and work.

One big problem is the old-fashioned ideas we still hold about a proper household. Perhaps it would not be unreasonable to say that our domestic routine is still more complicated than it need be. It has not yet been rationalized. There are too many vestigial survivals. Millions of families today are striving to live without servants in the way a few thousands of families with servants lived fifty years

Within the larger circle the housewife can work without bending over, climbing, or excessive reaching. Storage within this area prevents fatigue. The inner circle is the efficiency zone of the lower forearm used in many detailed tasks.



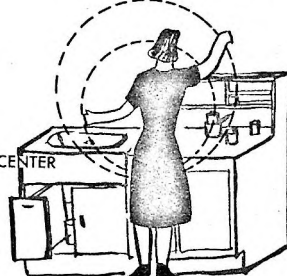
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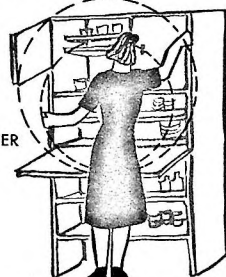
RANGE CENTER



SINK CENTER



SERVE CENTER



ago. Our manners and our habits of living have been too unconsciously patterned on "keeping up with the Joneses." Housewives are still writing hopefully to the arbiters of etiquette, asking how they can give a formal dinner for six—without servants! Still, there is good reason to think that these inherited routines are now influx and, stubborn as they are, we can change them more rapidly in the future.

But more than old-fashioned ideas about housekeeping we must blame old-fashioned houses. The truth is that the homes our young couples find to start housekeeping in are poorly adapted to their needs and requirements. Even the so-called "efficiency apartments" that the most fortunate families live in during the early years are efficient in name only. Anyone who has come to grips with the problems of living in one room and a "pullman kitchen"—where range, refrigerator and sink, as well as all utensils and supplies are crammed into one tiny strip—will know just how efficient they are! These are the fortunate families. The other couples are living in furnished rooms, cooking on hot plates or gas rings, and doing their laundry in the bathroom. They are tucked into rooms carved from old homes or subdivided from outdated apartments, with hit-or-miss equipment. You don't have to know many young couples to see where the housekeeping hours go, and how difficult it is to get a start in a good domestic routine.

Forty hours a week is much less than the time housekeeping will consume when the family is larger and responsibilities have multiplied. With the first baby the work-load will shoot up by nearly a half. Instead of forty hours a week, nearer to sixty will be needed. And there will be so many new problems it will hardly be possible to retrace one's steps to get out of bad habits and learn the fundamentals. These are the years for looking ahead, for

mastering the art of homemaking, for simplification, for short-cuts.

Mark well that homemaking is a learning process. Not only is there the science of home management. There is bringing this science into the particular home, getting down to cases, tailoring general practice to fit the special needs and conditions of a particular family. More than one housewife, trained in her mother's home, educated in college, and experienced in business, has stumbled on the routine of the household. More than one family has been broken by failure in this relatively simple area of family living. Say it loudly so all can hear: Homemaking is to be learned. Learn it in the early years.

What do couples have to learn? First of all, they have to learn about each other. The days of courtship seemed filled with this kind of learning, but with marriage the young couple finds that the learning process has just begun. They find that the lack of previous opportunities to judge one another, or simple politeness, has barred the way to understanding. Most of all, they find that doing things together will not allow everything to be done in the way one of them wants. There must be discussion, compromise, sharing. Often there will be a clash of wills. They arrive at a common ground of mutually accepted—or at least acceptable—viewpoints only after many trials and errors. Out of this process comes an agreed-upon way of living. Once found, this pattern gives them a sincere and secure foundation on which to create a home. They will have the pattern of living around which a home can some day be built.

What we have called "the learning process" can be speeded up. If you have a better idea of what the problems are, you can more easily get help in solving them. The right advice can be applied.

We could speed the learning process if we had



Single-row storage

some reasonably accurate idea of the profile of family life. What the family income is likely to be, how many children you want, where the family proposes to live immediately and in the future—the answers to such questions would supply a framework for a family plan. But the uncertainties of the early years are so great that only a few exceptionally realistic or fortunate couples may be able to find the answers with any degree of assurance.

An attempt should be made, and the answers examined from time to time as the future becomes clearer. The habit of looking ahead, by itself, will be a big help. The habit of looking at one's self objectively will help even more. In terms of the limits of the household, as set by the family itself, a framework can be established within which sound judgments can be made.

It does little good to learn if we do not remember. It is of little value to agree if we cannot enforce and carry out our agreements. In practical matters we want to apply what we know. For these reasons the family needs tools to do the job.

When people make a New Year's resolution they mean to keep, often they will write it down. The resolutions the family makes about its way of living should be written down. How should they go about it? What "tools" are needed by a family that is making a plan for family living?

### **Budget**

First, we need a budget. The income and expenditures we propose are a very accurate record of our intentions. Just as a good accountant can tell the intentions of a businessman by watching how he makes and spends his money, we can see what values a family attaches to the different elements in living by seeing how they propose to spend their income. In the budget the family will reflect such

decisions as how much to spend on its vacation, whether or not to buy a new car, or the emphasis that will be laid on savings.

Budgets help as well as record. From your figures you can tell what things cost, where the money goes, and whether or not you get *relative value* for your expenditures. You can balance initial cost and upkeep. You can see where money is tight, and where you ought to spend to get the most for your money. This kind of thinking is important to the ordinary run of living expenses, but it becomes urgently important when you commence—as you now do—to invest in "capital equipment" you expect to use over a long period of years.

The budget will guide your expenditure for housing. You can consider that rent should be about one-fifth of your take-home pay, and that you should not buy a house that costs more than twice your yearly earnings; but these handy rules-of-thumb will all have to be considered as they fit your particular case. One way to check is to consider what you pay for housing in relation to the budget as a whole.

### **Schedule**

Then we need a schedule. You can go to any good store and get regular business forms that will help you plan a budget. There are lots of books that give you advice on how to go about it. But when you come to schedules you are pretty much on your own. The trick in a schedule of family living is for each person to get his own job done so that more time can be spent together. Work the schedules to get leisure time in blocks big enough so that each of you and both of you can do something with it.

When schedules are first made, they will be full of mistakes; but a careful watch on how time is spent will make it possible to correct them until you get as near as possible to your ideal.



In the early years this is not complicated. You have only to worry about how two people spend their time. Not very many things on the schedule are rigid. It doesn't matter much whether you eat dinner at five o'clock or at eight.

All this will soon change when life begins to revolve around a schedule that commences at six in the morning, when the baby wakes; and instead of two columns in your schedule there are three, four, or five. Now the time schedules pay off in the two things people want most: leisure time in large enough blocks, and more time for the family to do things together.

### *Plan*

Finally, we need a house plan. The plan should show all the space we have available for living, indoors and out. There should also be indications, either on the plan or in a separate inventory, of all major space-consuming possessions: furniture, equipment, and the like. This tool gives us the information we need to plan the best use of the space we have to live in. We need not one plan but, as is the case with budgets and schedules, we need many plans. Like the business forms you buy for budgeting, you can get help in planning. The Department of Agriculture, for example, has one kit ("Pilot Kit 'Cut-Outs' to Aid in Farmhouse Planning"); so has the Small Homes Council of the University of Illinois (Bulletin C2.1, "Designing the Home"). Or one can be made without too much trouble with paper ruled into squares and bits of paper cut to scale representing furniture.

The purpose of the budget was to help get more for your money. The purpose of the schedule was to help get more out of your time. The purpose of planning is to help get more out of your space.

On a plan, furniture can be moved around and

problems worked out much better than they can by tearing the room arrangement to pieces and rebuilding it. This is the way to test and apply all the things that are known about decoration and furniture arrangement. Plot the lines of traffic through the house and see how steps can be saved by clearing the shortest routes. Economize by saving wear and tear on rugs and furnishings. Invent new ways of storing things close to the place where they are used, if it means putting them in chests or table drawers or building a few additional shelves. Make planning work for you.

Planning not only helps you make the most of what you have; it tells you what you need, and in that way prepares you for the next step when you move to new quarters. Few things are more difficult for most people than renting or buying a house, to say nothing of building one. It is difficult to get sound advice, not because so little is known about building but because so little is known about YOU.

The opportunity a plan gives is the chance to set down what you need for your own kind of good living. Most architects who specialize in designing small, individual family homes will agree that the ultimate problem of designing the house is a great deal simpler than the initial problem of finding out how the family really lives and what it needs. After lengthy interviews often they are not sure. Bricks and two-by-fours are more tractable and more easily understood than family habits, relationships, and preferences. Imagine the situation, then, of those less fortunate families who are trying to fit their dimly understood living requirements into the bewildering choice presented them by the builder!

All three of these tools for family living must be used and, when used together, each will influence the other. In the early years the budget is the most important of the three tools, but the others must be

used too. If you watch your time carefully, you may find that adding some piece of household equipment will save fifteen minutes of your day at a time when it counts most. But then you have to make room for the equipment on your plan. Similarly, you may decide that you can eat more efficiently in the kitchen if you have a table there better suited to that purpose. But that will mean money has to be found to buy the table.

The important thing about this approach is that it helps families look quite objectively and critically at what they are doing. It suggests revisions in family living; and the budgets, the schedules, and the plans should all be looked over and changed at periodic intervals. This is especially important when the family develops into a different phase, or when its size changes, or when the family moves, or the husband gets a raise. The written records are also an important help in working together. They stop a lot of argument about what was decided when the matter was last discussed.

In the beginning, especially, such tools can be used quite formally. Many a young couple has found it necessary to keep their week's income in cash in a series of envelopes marked "food" or "savings" and so on, to make sure they stuck to their budget. Even the dime stores sell such a budget kit. A schedule written out and posted, to consult it easily, may seem like carrying matters to extremes, but it will actually save time while you are getting used to it, and you will soon enough throw it away when the new routine is established.

Floor plans, window dimensions, and other household measurements are of great value, particularly if you can look ahead far enough to see, for example, that a 9 x 12 rug won't fit into a small bedroom, or that the long curtains you have to buy for an old bay window can later be cut in half to fit short

windows. Putting it on paper helps think the problem through.

As the young family works with these tools it will find many ways to change them. Such objective thinking about family living also points out specific problems and speeds the search for their solution. This is the time when you want decorating advice that will show how rooms can be made to appear larger. Now if ever an interest will be born in the technique of making a bed or the right and the wrong ways to wash dishes.

Working out these problems will give a new meaning to the things the experts have been learning, but which have been so seldom applied. This is the way to get more time for family living and to get more out of living.

What should be learned in the early years is not only the art of getting along easily in a domestic environment that falls short of the ideal. Out of such experiences a clearer idea should emerge of what the family needs in the way of space and equipment, how it should be organized, what to look for when you move, what to provide when you build.

### *Humanizing the Kitchen*

A good example of how to make the kitchen efficient is provided in the studies of two home economists at Cornell University. Mrs. Mary Koll Heiner and Miss Helen E. McCullough have developed a new pattern of kitchen organization. Their criticism of the slick modern kitchen and its equipment is so fundamental it will produce great changes in the years ahead. From the method they used we can get some idea of how to proceed in thinking about efficient homemaking.

Beginning with an assumption of the average height of American housewives, about five feet four inches, Mrs. Heiner and Miss McCullough tried to

determine the most efficient working "zones." Standing erect the hands are about twenty-eight inches from the floor; a height of seventy-two inches can be reached without difficulty; a span of forty-eight inches can be encompassed. In a slightly oval zone, forty-eight inches across and forty-four inches up and down, the housewife can work without bending over, stooping, squatting, climbing, or excessive reaching.

But in how many of today's kitchens can anyone perform even a part of her work without violating these dimensions?

The most efficient height for a working surface was found to be thirty-two inches from the floor. This is the efficiency zone of the lower forearm, where the manipulative muscles operate most effectively. Dishes can be washed, food mixed, prepared, and cooked most easily. To secure such a working height at the bottom of a kitchen sink, however, the rim of the sink and the level of the drainboard and dish-stacking surface must be about six inches higher. How few of our proud kitchens conform to these standards!

Certainly the slick kitchens that are still our ideal, where the top of the range, the working surfaces, and the rim of the sink all line up, do not meet this test. If the height of the working surface is right, then the level of the sink *must* be too low for comfort. If the range has a correct height, you can be sure the oven is so low it will be difficult to handle heavy roasting pans. Different heights are needed, not uniformity.

The height of the working surfaces is important, but the greatest violations of Heiner-McCullough dimensional standards are in the provisions for storage in kitchens.

In our zeal to make compact kitchens that would save steps and save space, we developed a system

of base storage and overhead storage, using the tops of the base storage units as a working surface. Result: there will be two or three shelves at the top that can be reached only with a stepladder, and one or two shelves at the bottom that can be reached only by stooping. A normal housewife will find this exasperating and tiring; but the pregnant, the aged, or the girl that wears high heels around the house will find it an invitation to accidents.

The desire for compact kitchens that led us into such a predicament has also given us storage cabinets that are too deep for efficient use. It may be permissible to store identical objects behind one another, like soft drink bottles in a dispensing machine; but when you have to dismantle the entire front line of items to find the one you want, it can hardly be called a satisfactory state of affairs by the housewife who wants to get her job done. Single-row storage, with everything visible, can be accomplished. Some proposed solutions are illustrated here; others are still to be developed.

In their studies of kitchen activity, Mrs. Heiner and Miss McCullough found that work done fell naturally into certain groups. There was mixing and preparing food, cooking it, serving, and washing up. For each of these activities they planned a *center*—a place where the housewife could stand and do her work with everything she would need within reach. Close to the mix center, the range center, the sink center, the serve center, should be kept all the materials, utensils, and articles needed for each of these separate activities. When we consider the 175 packaged food items needed by the average family in the course of a week, the more than 300 eating utensils, and scores of pots and pans, then we can understand why this simple domestic problem is in reality even more complicated than the problem of the storekeeper or the manufacturer who may have fewer

items, but who stores them more efficiently.

One can hardly doubt that by such rationalization we have just begun a process that will change the working parts of the home beyond recognition.

The design of equipment will be changed. The "ideal kitchen" will look quite different.

In cheering for progress, however, we must observe that the housewife is still regarded in the manner an efficiency expert studies a factory worker. The assumption implicit in all this research is that housekeeping is a specialized chore, to be dispensed with as fast as possible. Yet in a house designed for family living, we must also provide for families in the kitchen.

American families have decided on a share-the-work program. The days are fast disappearing when the housework all rested upon one person. Nor is the kitchen to be regarded exclusively as a well-organized workshop for one individual. We know that too many other activities will be centered here to make it possible to oversimplify the room to that extent. Space must be provided for eating, baby tending, sewing, laundry. Space must be allocated for more activities and more people. A larger amount of space in the house must be devoted to these purposes; but that does not mean we go back to the old-fashioned kitchen where you walked a mile to bake a pie. Our advances in efficiency can be translated into terms of more space without involving more waste space or wasted motion. We are just beginning to learn how.

The early years are the years for such thinking, for such adjustments. They are the years to learn such things as part of the art of family living. But to learn them well, the future must be considered as well as the present.

We have called attention to the "tools of family living." Budgets, schedules, and plans will show us many of the answers to the problems of the early years. With economic factors well to the fore, many young couples will find themselves better off if they both work for a while. Some wives will already be launched in a business or professional career. This additional income, however, should not be regarded as giving the family a permanently higher level. It should be looked upon as a stake in the future, as money to be saved or invested against the time when only the husband's income can be counted upon to support the family, and when family expenses will also be greater.

In these years the insecurities of many couples will make renting a wiser policy than buying a house or building one. This is the time when families can move easily. Possessions have not become numerous and family requirements are simpler than they will be ever again. Something can be learned from living in different kinds of places and in different parts of town. Out of such experiences a better idea of what is needed in the way of a home can be developed. Here, again, an eye to the future will make it easier to learn from such experiences. But it is in the earlier years that we can learn most easily.

## • THE CROWDED YEARS

The early years, with their problems of adjustment and making a living, seemed complicated enough. But they will appear simple from the perspective of the crowded years that follow. With the arrival of the first baby the household is geared to the child. It revolves around the baby's schedule. It accommodates his requirements.

With the first baby the household work load shoots up 50 percent. Life is more constricted. The movements of the parents are limited by the availability of help. Everything seems to take twice as long to do, and there is twice as much to do. The mother has a "tied down" feeling she never had before.

Now the preparation of the early years pays dividends. Everything will not have been anticipated, but if the ordinary routine of the household can be managed easily and efficiently, the new routine of baby care can be assimilated without too much trouble.

The tools of family living can now be reexamined. The budget, the schedule, and the plans will all look different. Even the approach to the use of these tools may have to be changed. Instead of the careful schedule to handle the predictable requirements of adults, it will be necessary to adjust the schedules



to handle the unpredictable natures of children.

The day now has a different "shape." Before the children came, it was crowded at either end. It looked like a dumb-bell. In the morning the husband had to get off to work, and in the evening there was dinner and good times with friends. Between the two, the day in the house had a long thin middle.

Now the day is shaped more like an egg. The morning and the evening hours are just as important, but the middle of the day is big and fat, bulging with the routine of child care and household duties. A little later when the children go to school it will not be so crowded. Then will come the time when "everyone's out but Mom and the dog." But at the beginning it has this shape, and the homemaker is hard pressed to find time for the affairs of the house and the children, to say nothing of time for her own individual interests.

Advantage may be taken now of the suggestion that instead of a chronological list of activities through the day, the schedule be arranged in terms of how long the duties take. Get the work done during the day as those amounts of time become available. In that way, if time is running short on a particular day, the things that can be postponed are most easily dropped. A "priorities schedule" of this



kind will often work better than the more conventional timetable schedule.

The plan for the home will look different, too. In the beginning, little change is necessary to accommodate a bassinet. But in four months the bassinet is outgrown, and a crib is necessary. You need another bedroom. Before long a bed will be needed. The bathroom begins to be cluttered up with baby things. The confusion spreads to other parts of the house, with a bottle sterilizer as big as a pressure cooker taking up perfectly good space on the limited kitchen work surface. The living space of the house has to be reorganized to accommodate a play pen. But wait! This is just the beginning. Wait until he walks!

The budget will look different, too. Three or more people now have to be supported, fed, clothed, given medical protection, amused. Seldom does income go up as quickly as expenditures. The small sums you used to spend for medical care now grow rapidly as you meet hospital bills, obstetrician's bills, pediatrician's bills. By the time a layette has been accumulated, with all of the special equipment the baby needs, the family may well decide to postpone buying a radio, or even to sell the car. Here is the place to reexamine the budget in the light of the things the family has decided are most important. Now is the time to put your tools to work.

In bringing the old plan of living into adjustment with new circumstances, it is plain that the household has begun to revolve around the child. The baby's entrance into the family means new furniture and new arrangements. It means fresh thinking.

#### *When You Move*

With most families it means the time has come to move. Baby can no longer sleep in their room. His crying becomes annoying. Once the parents roll

over in bed in the morning, there is no more rest. Improvised solutions in a small apartment become less and less workable. When the baby begins to toddle, the space two people found satisfactory now seems so constricted there is no solution except moving.

Where to move? What do you need now? What will you need?

These are the questions you can answer best—by using your tools for family living. What does your plan show? How does the budget look? How can you use the opportunity of moving to get a better schedule?

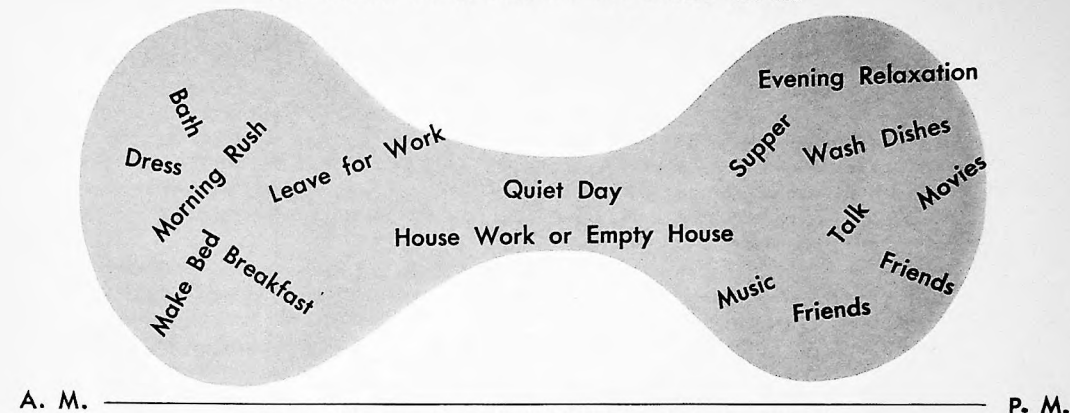
When you move, remember that the footloose days have passed. You are beginning to dig in for keeps. Not only does the moving itself cost real money, but you sacrifice too much in lost friendships, in losing your favorite grocer, in changing churches, and in other ways to move again without a sound reason. Life is unpredictable enough without creating additional reasons for moving because of your own lack of foresight.

Think hard about what you need now. But think harder about what you'll need in another few years. Study the experience of your friends, especially those who are a little older than you are. Make the best effort you can to anticipate what's ahead for you. Here are some things you may want to consider.

#### *What Children Need*

The changes in an adult's life are slow. The changes in a baby's life are very rapid. This indicates flexible arrangements and frequent changes. Why buy scales for the baby if you can borrow them for the few months they will be needed? In Sweden such basic items of high cost and short-lived usefulness can be rented, and the same idea would be useful here.

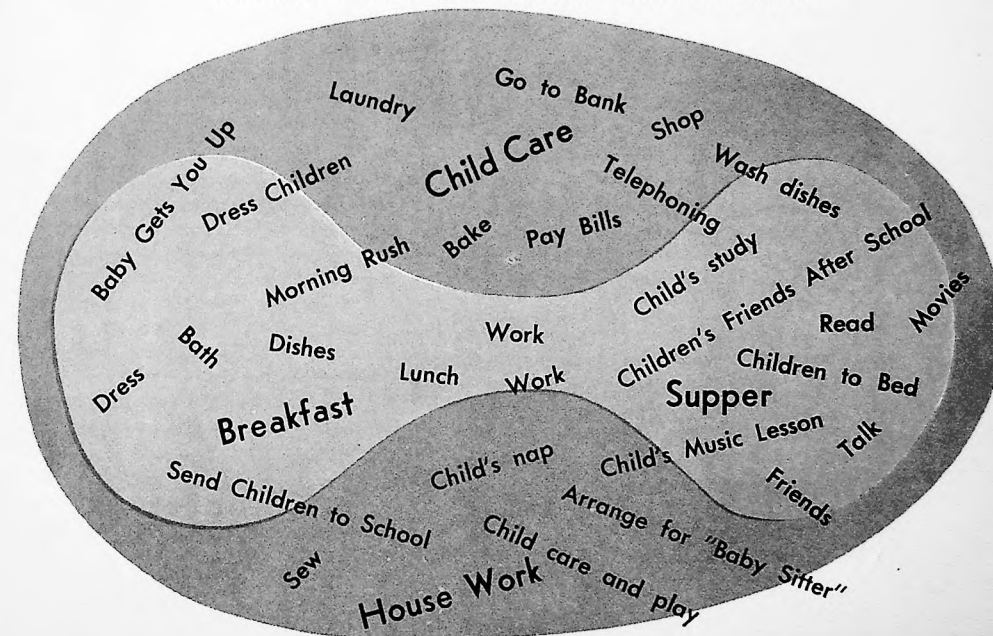
### THE SHAPE OF A DAY IN THE EARLY YEARS



A. M.

P. M.

### THE SHAPE OF A DAY IN THE CROWDED YEARS



Rethink some of your problems, and see if bathing the baby on the kitchen table isn't more comfortable than in the limited space of the bathroom. Better still, ask for more space in the bathroom when you build or buy. Above all, get used to changing things. If the budget, the schedule, and the plan you had formerly lasted a year without revising them, you may now have to change them every two or three months.

The new baby lives in the circle of his sleep, his food, his care. He enjoys daylight and likes bright colors. He begins to exercise muscles, likes to roll over and beat the air. By seven months his world is growing bigger. He comes down to the floor, uses his playpen, takes rides in his carriage. He likes to see people in the familiar surroundings of his room. He is consuming more space. You must have places for his equipment.

At ten months he begins to want to go out in the kitchen and see his mother. He does not like to be left alone so much. He creeps into the family group, or pulls himself erect in his play pen to see if he is missing anything. His world is steadily growing. It is no longer confined to the place where you put him; it has expanded to include the places where he intends to go. Gone is the time when you knew when and where he was. The years of exploration and discovery are beginning.

During the child's first year the parents should plan to make the house contribute as much as possible to the efficient handling of the new work load, and to the care of the baby in particular. In that way they can have the greatest peace of mind and pleasure in the enlarged family circle. By studying the new tasks, and making new arrangements or developing new routines, time and strength can be saved.

Changing, bathing, or feeding the baby are char-

acteristic activities that can be analyzed to advantage. Is the light good? Have you everything you need within reach? Now is the time to put up a few extra shelves, to provide a chair where it will be most used. Now is a better time to criticize the place where you are living, and see whether some other place with more room and equipment will suit you better.

The second year presents added difficulties as the baby roams and gets into things. He is growing and learning, but he is still awkward, falls often, and will make mistakes. He manages with difficulty on slippery floors. In his explorations he wants to know how things feel, smell, taste, how they look, how heavy they are. You want him to know, and to help him. In the kitchen he loves to play with pots and pans, canned foods. But he also likes to turn things on and off, and experiments dangerously with the gas stove, the washing machine, or by putting hairpins in empty light sockets. He is a furniture mover and a climber. Precautionary measures are necessary, and the rate of accidents gives a good idea of what they are.

Climbing up and falling out of windows can be guarded against by a temporary but secure barrier that need be no more than a piece of expanded metal lath or a stout screen. One can put adhesive tape over unused baseboard electrical outlets. Get in the habit of using the back burners and turning the pot handles away from the front of the stove. Check the stove frequently to see that burners have not been left on. Put the matches on a high shelf. Clean out the medicine chest and lock up all poisons.

Possibly a basic recommendation for families is to suggest that when the child begins to walk around the house, they make some drastic changes in the living room. Now is the time to clear out the geegaws that have accumulated there since the first wed-

ding presents arrived. Much of it should probably be thrown away; other things can be put away until the children are a little older. Watch out particularly for tall and poorly balanced lamps, and put away all of the breakables you really care about. Try using ten cent store ash trays for a while until the child tires of playing with them.

The purpose of such reforms is quite obviously to reduce the chance of accidents, but also to reduce the number of times you have to say "no." The child knows what that word means much earlier than most parents think—possibly as early as one year. Too many children learn it as their first word! But it is not a healthy word for young children, and it is too good a word to be wasted inconsequentially when it should be saved for the few really important occasions.

There is always a hope in the minds of some parents that the child can be kept out of the living room, except when the parents are with him. "Give him a room of his own," carol the smart interior decorators. Good. He needs one. But don't think you can keep him out of the rest of the house. It won't work.

A more constructive solution is that suggested by Dr. Frances Ilg. Provide children's toys and storage space for them in several rooms in the house. Create a little place that belongs to the child, with his own things, wherever he will be. In this way you can build up your manipulative role. Instead of leading with your chin into a no-provoking situation by inquiring, "Don't you want to go down stairs?" or, worse, "Mother wants you to go down stairs," you can use the nursery school technique: "We are going down stairs where you can play with your blocks."

It is cold comfort in these days of aggravated housing shortages, when the possibility of selection

is so limited for most families, to talk about picking and choosing houses. A house it must certainly be, however, for conventional apartment living offers nothing to a growing child and little for his parents.

### *What Community?*

We have to think now about the community outside the house as well as the house itself. Look for variety. You will depend increasingly on the community for many things, and the time will come later when you will want to give back in return. From the community you will get medical care, baby sitters, occasional help in the home, shopping and other services, schools, social organization, amusements, and other things. In the beginning it may not be so important to be on a bus line; but, unless you plan to become a two-car family, it is a thing you should consider. You may think that one store a few blocks away will provide all you need, but the time will come in such a location when getting your hair done or taking a child to the dentist will seem like a major undertaking.

The community that has variety is more likely to accommodate your many and changing requirements than one which is an arid wilderness of fancy houses in park-like settings. Variety of experience for growing children is important, too. Most of our city planning and zoning ideas work rather toward uniformity than variety. There is an old idea that variety threatens property values. We are always hearing about glue factories being built next to houses in unplanned and unzoned communities; but in the future we are going to hear a great deal more about the importance of well-planned and well-located shopping centers in what are now exclusively residential neighborhoods, and even of the desirability of small, clean, light industries in the same areas.



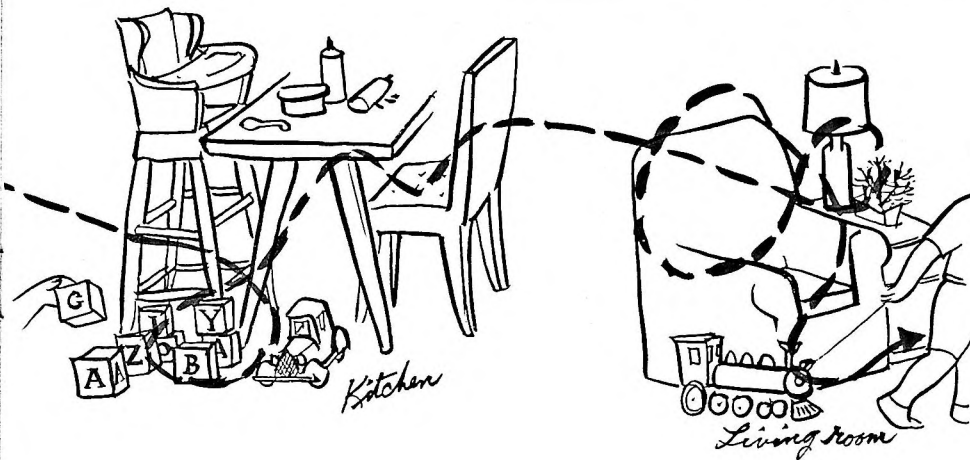
We are working toward the idea of cities composed of balanced neighborhood units. It should be possible for many families to live, and go to school, and even to work in such a neighborhood. The old central city becomes an occasionally used service area for specialized shopping, amusements, and special kinds of work. This is what many city planners think. Other people criticize the suburbs we have built, and are working toward a neighborhood "where people can know each other as wholes and not merely as functional fragments." It all adds up to balance and variety.

One modern development that embraces some of these values (perhaps as many of them as can be included in a relatively small housing development for 500 families) is that in Bannockburn, Maryland. Here in one big super-block the developers plan four tall apartment buildings, in which they expect the tenants will be mainly young couples without children, or older families whose children have grown up. Around the apartment buildings there are a great variety of row houses, double houses, and detached

houses for larger families. In the community is a shopping center, a recreation area, a nursery school, and a place for community gatherings and activities. A school is nearby. This community is planned to accommodate almost all the things people want and should have in their neighborhoods. Here is a neighborhood in which you can move easily from one house or apartment to another as your family requirements change, without having to move to a different part of town. In an unstable world this element of continuity is an important value.

The relationship between the house and the community is so close it will never be possible to solve all the living problems of the new American family within the four walls of the house alone. But it should be possible to cut down the six moves made by the typical family in the course of its career by almost half. If the house is properly designed, it should serve satisfactorily through the crowded years and the peak years.

In addition to the broader elements of a community, we should also consider the immediate sur-



roundings of a new home as well as the space inside the house itself. The growing child is increasingly conscious of the world outside his door. One of the reasons you moved from that apartment was to get some ground of your own for the children. What are you getting? Is there room for a play yard? Is there shade? Can it be fenced and properly equipped, and can it be easily supervised from the part of the house where adults are during the daytime? Is the outside area, where your two-year-old will be for hours every day, handy to an entrance to the house and the indispensable toilet; or do you have to march him around the building, walk through the living room, and climb the stairs every time his schedule requires? Mind the answers to such questions if you do not want to move again.

Now for the inside of the house. Your cooking that began on a hot plate is graduating to larger items. Chops are succeeded by roasts. Bigger appetites lie ahead. Your budget is still strained by the requirements of a family that is expanding more rapidly than its income. You are at home more because of

the children. Why waste that time when you can put it to work and save money? Under these circumstances home production shoots up. Now is the time when you don't want a miniature sized range, a 4-foot refrigerator, or any of the toy-sized equipment you were used to in the pullman kitchen of a tiny apartment. You are expanding and will expand further. Look for the next size larger than you think you need now. But remember it will be dearly bought if you don't really use it.

As for the house itself, remember your planning. Look for space, of course, but look for the kind of space you can organize to advantage to fit the way you want to live—now and in the future. There won't be many houses that suit. But you can better pick and choose among the ones available to you if you have some idea of what you need and can use. You can also decide rapidly whether, with minor remodeling, an old house can be made to suit your purposes. Many old houses have the incomparable advantage of being located in sound neighborhoods, and a little ingenuity can make them better suited to your pur-



poses than a spick-and-span bungalow in a raw subdivision. Don't be dazzled by the equipment in a new house. You can put the same equipment in any house. Don't be overcome by new paint and modern decoration. Any house can be redecorated. Watch for the thing that counts: space for living in the place you want to live.

If you are able to build, this will probably be the most satisfactory way of getting the house that suits you. In that case consult an architect who can check your ideas against his experience and his knowledge of what is practical. The tools you have used will be of great value to him in designing a house that gives you as much as possible within the limits of what you can afford.

When you think of a place to move to, remember your tools. Look over your plans, your schedule, and especially your budget. Remember what the day looks like. Remember what's in the bank. Remember what you need in terms of space. And don't forget the future.

You begin to find out who owns the house you once thought was yours when you find yourself creeping around and cursing that squeaky spot on the stairs that may awaken the baby.

From the time that the first baby begins to toddle until maturity begins to succeed to adolescence, the house belongs to the children who live in it.

Nearly twenty-five years of the life of the family is spent with infants, children, or adolescents in the home. This is the major share of the family's life, compared to which the fleeting years before the children arrive, and the aging years after they leave, are as nothing. They are also the best years of the family's life, the years most crowded with fun and good times, with perils and excitements, with love and human relationships. These years are not a chore, a purgatory. They are the best years, and we must see to it we make the most of them if we are to get the most out of family living.

One of the first steps along the wrong road is for a young couple to begin with the idea of a house that is "theirs." Yet how deceptively easy this is. They plan a home around their own interests and tastes, with a fine room for entertaining her friends, and a snugger where he can keep his guns and his fishing tackle. Everyone conspires to help them. The popular magazines are full of such plans.

We must plan not a house for the parents alone, with the children relegated to a room deceptively marked "nursery"; not a house given over to the child, where the parents are driven into some nook. We must have a home planned for the family as a whole, for its social hours, and the privacy of each person—but, above all, a house planned for family living.

## ● THE PEAK YEARS



The year the youngest child goes to school ushers in a period of new freedom. During the fifteen or twenty years before the children strike out for themselves, the family is at its peak in income, in health, and in giving and receiving in the life of the community. The schools, the library, the parks and play fields, the church, civic institutions, swimming pools, skating rinks, orchestras, the theatre, and the arts become important to the growing family. Economically the family is at the high point in production and consumption.

The years of maximum physical dependence and protection of the children are over. The family is developing strong ties through common interests. It is a vigorous period with skating, swimming, picnicking, gardening, traveling. They share on an increasingly equal level interests in music, movies, games, books, and opinions. The enjoyment of a strong family life is enhanced by the community and the home that is its frame.

When the children were young the family needed help from the community and were eager to receive the benefit of the work of the many organizations ready to help. Instruction was needed from the visiting nurses, baby sitters from the Girl Scouts, nursery school for junior. Now there is a swing of the

pendulum. The children are getting old enough to be baby sitters for the neighbors; father serves on the school board, or mother has a Girl Scout troop. The family is able to repay its debt to the community. The circle of acquaintanceship broadens, and with knowing new people comes a new understanding of other people's problems and pleasures.

While at this time the statistics show family income at a peak, the ways it must be spent seem to have increased proportionately. The budget has also grown to include the cost of clothing growing children, educating them, and seeing that they have fun and parties. In these years it is a good thing to live in a community where you can join other parents in planning for the children. No one house or lot is ever big enough for their increasing range of interests and energy. We must look to the community.

From the beginning the home has provided for a diversity of interest; it has also furthered a similarity of interests. The parents' friends and the children's friends are two different circles. When it comes to dancing, discussion, and slang, parents and children each have more in common with their contemporaries than they have with each other. Both are happier and less self-conscious when they can entertain their friends undisturbed by adjustment to another



generation. In order to make one home serve without trespassing on the rights of either, there should be a place for both to entertain.

Growing up brings a stronger and stronger sense of being a person. Youth's struggle to mature is expressed in the selection and formation, with a little help, of his own friendships, opinions, standards of behavior and manners. The self-reliance he will need to cope with the world later on is helped by the use and arrangements made in the home. The house in which he grows up can contribute to his respect for himself, for others, for work, and for property.

A group of high school students interviewed by Dr. Bernice Moore for The Woman's Foundation stressed the need for privacy and freedom — to the point of wanting separate radios and telephones and even rooms of their own apart from the main house. They were concerned with the lack of suitable places in the home to entertain their friends, with the lack of recreation space. They wanted better arrangements for serving food at parties, and open-air barbecue facilities. High among their complaints was the lack of sufficient and suitable storage space for their own clothes, equipment, and collections.

These are the views of people who are becoming adults, who are reaching out for independence, who have their own possessions, who are busily making their own social life among their contemporaries. These are the voices of tomorrow. They express the views of people with active bodies, big appetites, and gregarious dispositions. But they are also the views of our children. They need good homes, and respond to the opportunities a good home will give. If we ignore their needs, there are plenty of other places that will try to satisfy them, commercially, for a price, in ways that are often not pleasant to contemplate, leading to consequences that are often dangerous.

It is a wise parent who says to his child: "This is your home, be proud of it, ask your friends here," and then follows through with complete partnership in provision and use.

These years cover a long period in the life of the family. Sometimes providing for two generations is broadened into planning for three when a grandparent or relative joins the family. Both children and parents want so much from the house it seems as though it can't possibly be stretched to cover everything.

Begin all over again with the idea of what you want from the house. Select the house, organize the house, use the house to achieve it. Forget what the rooms are called or the custom-ridden way of using them. Count the things you want to be able to do in your home to make the family happy, and see what it will take in the way of courage to accomplish.

Throw words like living room, dining room, study, and bedroom out the window. Think instead of activities such as entertaining a group of people, listening to a radio symphony, giving a neighbor a cup of tea, playing darts, making model airplanes, planning a church bazaar, hooking a rug, Bobby's birthday party, a checker game, writing letters to your sisters, Sue's choral club, the boys' model train operations, Sunday night supper, a table of bridge, grandmother's visit, cheese sandwiches and cokes at night, tending the house plants, the minister's call, and Bobby's radio parts collection.

Review a day, a week, or a month in your mind and think what has happened. Some events happened during the morning, the evening, and some once a week. As Dorothy Field has suggested in her book, *The Human House*, try sorting your own list by Noisy or Quiet activities; or divide the happenings into Active and Passive. You will find that the list reassembles itself into these two groups.

There is no conflict of events if basically different activities are separated in time or in space. Then try to provide two living places in the home. Figure out which activities take the most space, which the least. By changing the furniture and equipment around, as well as your ideas, can you make the larger room take the space-consuming group of activities and the smaller room the happenings that take less space? Can the children's rooms become the settings for their possessions, collections, and personal interests? Be flexible.

It is easiest to make your domestic space revolution a success if each room is independent, not crossed to reach another. The change in the furniture can be no more than moving it and broadening the idea of its use; or you can go so far as to make or buy pieces that lend themselves to the new variety of uses. Just as you put the furniture that will be needed for an activity in a room, you must store all the equipment and supplies in the room where they are to be used. Uses that go together easily, reassembled in space, give a sense of peace and freedom. A kind of order superior to mere neatness evolves. This saves work. The quiet room is all ready for someone to come in and sit down. The activity area is equally ready for different uses.

Your revolution in space will give you freedom to live a less hampered existence. It will make you think the house is bigger. Sometimes the children are in the big room, sometimes the parents, sometimes the family. The smaller room may be a setting for father's relaxed evening, or for the daughter in high school to entertain her date. Or perhaps that is the way you use the other room. No one's friends and no one's activities are banished to makeshift space. The division is not by old and young, but by what goes on at the time. When the children see that the house means to give them more than food, sleep

and cleanliness, they become partners in its use and care.

The children are reaching out for the world, making their own declarations of independence. What about their parents? They, too, can reach out for the world. They, too, have a growing independence. Lying just ahead are the years of increasing freedom. Let's get ready to make use of them.

When the wise mother has put her youngest child into school and quiet has come into the house for long hours in the middle of the day, the time has come to start taking piano lessons, to become more active in community affairs. You are getting ready to undertake some long-deferred projects of your own: to travel, to extend your social activities, to play. You are preparing to defend yourself against the dry-rot of aging prematurely. The house can help here too.

The place you live and the way you live should lead to opportunities. In most instances the things children desire and need also have a seldom recognized importance for their parents as well. If a garden teaches children the world of growing things, it also opens the eyes of many parents to the new and lasting pleasures of gardening. If travel broadens the coming generation and leads to understanding and tolerance, is it any less valuable to their elders? If the hobbies of collecting and making things are skeleton exercises for occupations children will later pursue, they also have a value maturity will appreciate. As we have learned that the process of education is continuously unfolding new worlds to all ages, we must learn that educational opportunities should be provided for all ages. Their provision begins in the home.

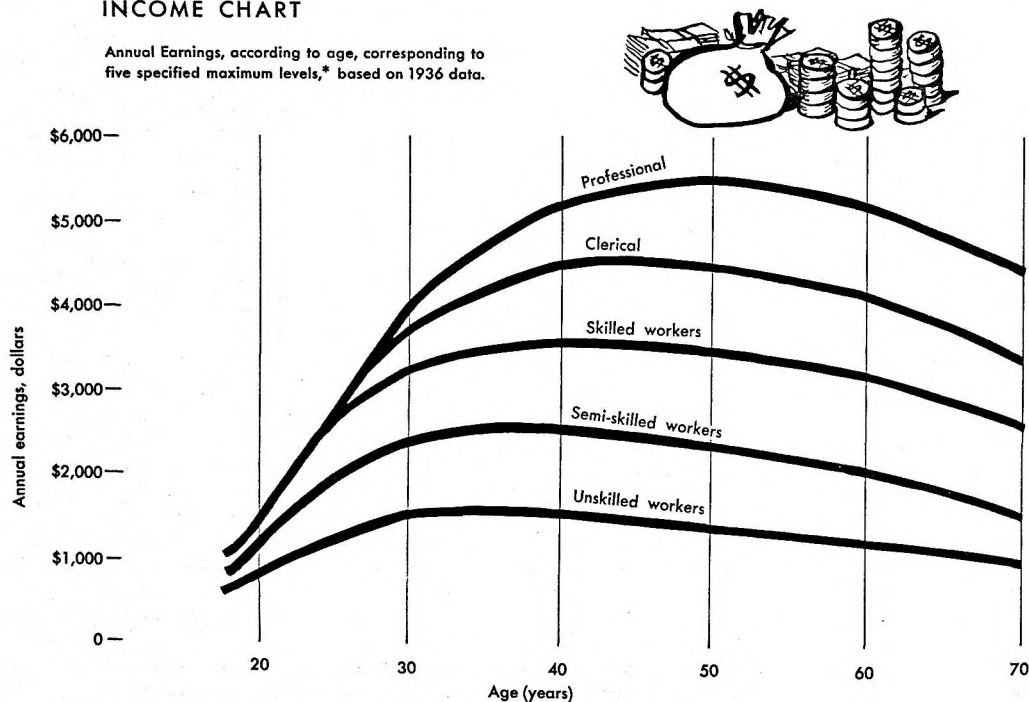
The first need is shelter for the individual, the place inviolate where through activity or reverie the stuff of life can be fashioned to suit our talents and

disposition. We all need the quiet place to which we can withdraw, as well as the social place where we can be together, in order to live a balanced life and to appreciate the varied forms of individual experience. Whether the form our interests take be books or music, pottery or repairing radios, gardening or photography, the important thing is to cultivate these interests.

Our old tools are still useful. In the cultivation of fresh interests for children and their parents, the obstacles to be surmounted are time, space, and money. Children and parents alike can overcome them better by working together than by haphazard and conflicting individual efforts. What we must remember is that allowance must be made in the family plan for the aspiration of each individual.

## INCOME CHART

Annual Earnings, according to age, corresponding to five specified maximum levels,\* based on 1936 data.



\*Based on estimates used in *The Money Value of a Man* by Dr. Louis Dublin

## ● THE LATER YEARS



When the last child has left the home, the family enters the later years.

They are new years in the life of the new American family. They are unexplored years. They begin between Year Twenty-Five and Year Thirty of married life. Ten or fifteen more years stretch ahead, a period we are steadily lengthening as the frontiers of medicine are pressed back, as we find out more about old age, as we learn better the arts of living that will carry us to advanced years.

These are the years of freedom, the years that challenge us most. They are the years we know the least about, and the years we have heeded least.

In our nation we have placed high values on youth. We are just beginning to appreciate the values of age, to the individual and to the community. When we think of Grandma's cookie jar, it is still from the point of view of the young looter; we do not yet see the pleasure Grandma had in filling the cookie jar.

Our ideal of a house is still one for a smart young couple or a prosperous family; we have not begun to give sufficient attention to the special needs of older couples.

We have had a pioneer ideal of "dying with our boots on." Too many people still finish their working life like a sprinter breaking the tape. No wonder

insurance companies tell us the most dangerous year for most people is the year following retirement!

What we have to consider is the patterns of living that are suited to these later years. What problems of adjustment must we face?

If you have become accustomed to change your way of living from time to time, you will have acquired the necessary flexibility and experience to make important adjustments now. You will be wise enough to make them pay off in a life that is more comfortable, more interesting, safer, more worth living. Preparation for these years pays rich dividends.

This is not the place to discuss at any length the many possibilities that are open to couples seeking a good plan for their later years. But it is important to remember how wide this area of choice is, because it is wider than most people assume. Besides, a good place to live in these years, as in the earlier part of your life, is good only as it fits your own pattern of living and the problems that are characteristic of this period of your life.

If you play it right, you'll avoid an abrupt transition from one kind of living to another. Don't pass suddenly from employment to inactive retirement, from participation in neighborhood affairs to non-participation, from the responsibilities of parent-

hood to the illusory "freedom" of a home without children. Above all, try not to let these changes all come at once.

Most families can split the two major changes. The time when your children move away is usually some years ahead of the time you retire. The period between the two events is the strategic zone for planning and adjustment. Before you have to face these changes, look ahead to them. Make the transition gradual and be ready for it when it becomes necessary.

Men can learn something from women. Women never "retire." They do not suddenly abdicate the responsibilities of motherhood. They don't abruptly cease to be homemakers. But there are subtle and gradual transitions in these roles as the pressure of immediate responsibilities lightens. A daughter on the telephone is a lot different from one in the house. Supper for two any time you feel like it is as much different from supper for five at six o'clock sharp as seven shirts are from twenty-one in the weekly wash. Perhaps this is a reason why women live longer.

There must be a transition. How big a change it is, and how difficult it will be, depends on you. If you let change be thrust upon you, you'll miss a lot. Instead take advantage of it, make change work for you.

We don't know, of course, but there are some good reasons to believe that many families play it the hard way. They try to hang on. They hang on to their job because they can't face the economic adjustment to a retirement income, or the psychological adjustment to inactivity. They try to hang on to their children, to keep them from marrying and leaving home, because they can't face an empty life alone. They try to hang on to their old house, and even to build up the difficulties of caring for it, because they can't face moving to a new neighborhood and making new friends, or because it is a subtle form of prestige to

live in a big house that is elaborately furnished and kept in apple-pie order, or because they can't face what seems like a backward step in moving to a small house or an apartment.

On every side we hear rationalizations for such behavior. Who doesn't know the aging couple who continue to live in a house designed for a family of five or six, and who justify the cost and inconvenience of such a house in terms of its pleasure to their children—who will return there perhaps one day every year or two? And who does not know children who fortify such mistaken convictions in the minds of their parents? We need to do better than this if we are to make the most of the later years.

The first thing we have to consider is that the later years are again a time when individuality can assert itself. The routine and the responsibilities of active parenthood are things of the past. Family living resembles more the carefree life of the early years than the more recent crowded or peak years. This is what we mean by the freedom of the later years.

But freedom is important only if you have something you want to do with your freedom. Otherwise it is like the freedom of a castaway.

The shape of the day tells the story. The pressure of a daily schedule, full of work and activity for everyone, has disappeared. We are left with only two columns in our schedule, and even they have large empty spaces. The house full of people has dwindled to a couple who "rattle around in an empty house." To take up the slack we must bring matters into closer adjustment.

Even the budget tells the same story. Family expenses have diminished, so that even after retiring on a reduced income we may have more money than we need.

But in making a plan for the later years we must remember that if freedom allows us to respond to

our desires, it is also tempered by our preferences, our capabilities, and our means. What you do should grow naturally from your own interests, tastes, and abilities. You can get into serious difficulties by plunging wildly into a poorly planned way of living.

Some families pick up and move west, never having been there in their lives. Others move from the heart of the city to the country and sink their life's savings in a chicken farm. Their behavior has more aspects of escape than of searching. Snap judgments are a poor substitute for experimentation, some sound advice, and a reasonably deliberate approach to your decision.

So don't take off for Florida or California in a rush, burning your bridges behind you. A long and successful life in a sound community gives you a stake there worth more than you'll find in any travel bureau's Garden of Eden. That's why seventy-year-olds take the rigors of northern winters with a smile.

Often, of course, there are good reasons for moving. But take care where you move. What you get into is as important as what you are getting out of.

Once you have settled on your pattern of living in the later years you can better approach what adjustments in living space are necessary and desirable.

After you have decided what you want to do, and where you want to live, you can face the planning job with greater confidence. If you elect to stay in the same place, then you want to consider what can be done to make the house suit your new needs. If you decide to move, then you want to know what to look for in the way of a new place to live.

You may even want to continue living in the same house. You like the neighborhood, and you don't want to leave your friends. But you might consider whether to move to the first floor, remodel the house and rent the second story. You can use the extra income, but more importantly you'll save the strength

wasted in climbing stairs. You'll avoid accidents. You'll cut down housework.

If your house isn't suited to remodelling, or zoning bars the way, you might sell and take a smaller house in the same neighborhood. But if a garden means a great deal to you, don't take an apartment. Or if the garden was just for the kids, don't continue a responsibility that means nothing to you now.

The advantages of living in smaller quarters are obvious, but this decision may also mean there will be less space for possessions that have sentimental value. This is a good time to pick over carefully what you own. Sell, give away, or throw out the pieces you don't really use or care about. Try to have the things you keep in reasonable correspondence with the space you have decided will suit your needs.

In planning your new quarters—and even if you stay in the same house, they *are* new quarters for your new way of living—remember all the things you have learned in a lifetime of family living. Make those adjustments that are important for the way you live now, and the way you have decided to live in the future.

Whether you move or not, this is a good time to look over the house with the gimlet eye of a safety engineer. Is there a handrail on the cellar stairs? Is there good light? How do you stand on fire hazards? How far do you have to tote the ashes, garbage, and trash? What can you do to make getting out of the bathtub less hazardous? Fix the slippery floors, the loose rugs.

Make a regular program of what you need, and carry it through. It doesn't matter whether you do it all at once, or piecemeal over several months; whether you have the work done, or do it yourself. But it won't cost much to have some non-skid mats laid in the places you are likely to slip, a few extra



electrical outlets installed, stronger light bulbs, a hand grip near the tub, and the other things you may need.

In your survey of domestic needs, consider sickness and the care of sick people. There is more illness among older people and children under five. But there are no statistics to support the fear of a long, disabling illness that haunts many people.

Still, you can't be healthy all the time. You have to watch increasingly against falls and accidents. After sixty the accident rate increases some, but the time it takes to recover skyrockets. Broken bones in old bodies take their time in knitting again. More rest in bed may be required.

An important factor here is the reduced manpower of the family. When you were in the peak years a sick person caused a little disturbance in the household routine. Now it means the active "working force" is reduced by half, and what is left is further handicapped by having to take care of the sick. You can anticipate that.

When you are sick you need a separate room, near the bath, and near help but out of the main traffic. This is important in all stages of family life, but especially now. A good person to help you anticipate what you may need, of course, is your visiting nurse. She can check over what would be desirable in the way of furniture and decoration, lighting, closet space, and other details. Most homes don't need a "sick room"—but they do need an all-purpose room that can easily be adapted for the comfort and care of members of the family who may be ill.

In deciding your plan for home management you have the experience of a lifetime to draw on. You can use this experience best if you break out of the routine long enough to look at it objectively. The next time you come back from a trip away from home, don't fall back into the same old habits but

use your fresh perspective to see how they can be changed. Kitchen work and housework seem deceptively easy when the later years commence. But this is the time to change to the way you will want to do things later when you tire more easily. Move the beds so they are easier to make, change the height of the sink so you don't have to bend over, get that new range, or do any of the other things your experience and common sense tell you will help.

Rethink your decorating scheme. This time it's for *you*. If you have taken smaller quarters, make them bright and cheerful, with plenty of color. A lot is going to depend on your frame of mind, and color is a powerful psychological stimulant. Color can also make you nervous or depressed. Remember you are going to spend more time indoors, so make the most of your opportunity. Find the windows that have interesting views. Surround yourself with things that mean a lot to you, that you can use or enjoy. But don't fill the house with booby-traps that just make extra work.

Recall all the things you have learned about how to cut down work and build comfort into the house. Probably you'll still eat in the kitchen, but you may also want some comfortable chairs here as well. A good room for guests is important, and if you want your grandchildren to spend the night don't throw out the crib right away. The radio is going to play a larger part as your life draws closer around the hearth, but only one person may want to listen to it.

The same principles of good management, however, will apply. You don't want any wasted steps or motions. Even if the scale of housekeeping is reduced, you still want the kitchen as a control center, close to the door, the telephone, and the place where you eat. You have enough respect for your own time not to want to waste it unnecessarily.

Plan your house to make it contribute the most

to your new way of living. This may even be the time to build a new house. Why not? You may live there fifteen or twenty years, and you may live a lot longer if you have a really congenial environment, tailored to suit the way you live, and to help you get the most out of living.

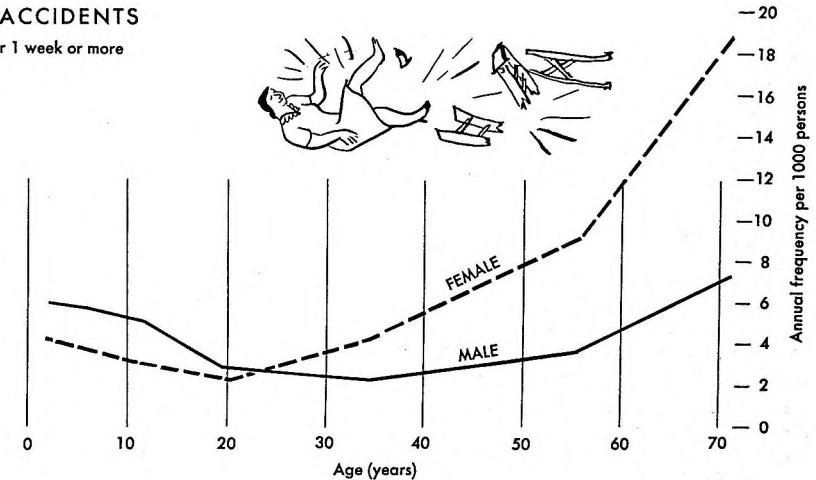
We are better off in preparing for the later years as the result of our reduced hours of labor. The seven-hour day, the five-day week, the two weeks vacation with pay, give us a chance to adjust to a slower pace and to build up the part-time and leisure-time activities we want. It is possible, for example, to establish pretty substantial roots in a second com-

munity where the family spends its summers, and where you can arrive Friday night and leave early Monday morning for much of the rest of the year. You can combine your vacation and your retirement plans. Most of all, you can prepare.

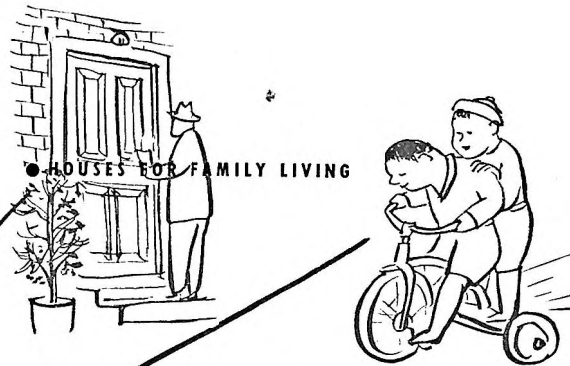
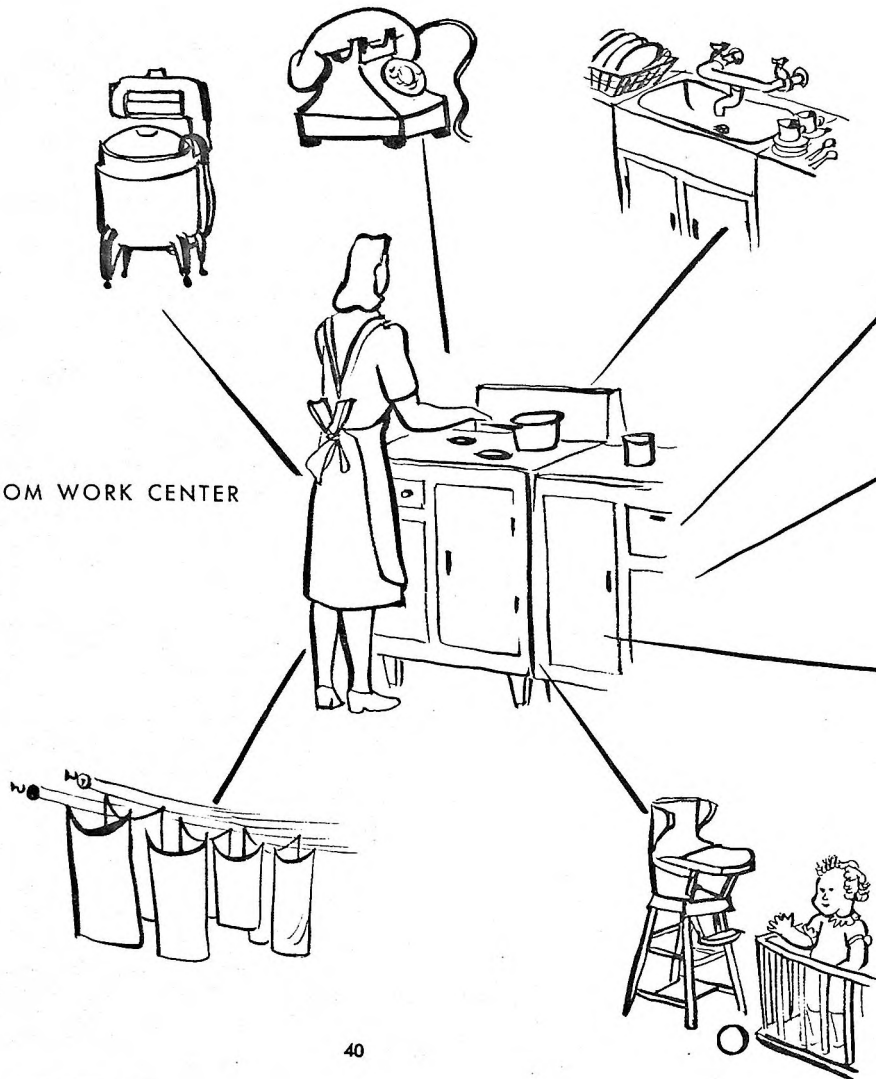
Modern retirement plans, endowment policies, and the social security program help cushion the abrupt change from full productivity to little or none. The times are working to help solve the problems of the later years. But the variations between families are so great no universal formula will ever be found. Only families themselves can ultimately solve the most important individual problems of these years.

## HOME ACCIDENTS

Disabling for 1 week or more



CONTROL FROM WORK CENTER



We began with the assertion that a new American family was today emerging, with a different way of living, and different requirements for living than the American family of a couple of generations ago. In following this new family through the four stages of its career, we have painted its portrait in detail, especially in relation to the home. Now we must look more closely at the home itself.

The houses in which our families live, it goes almost without saying, are obsolete. Either they were built in years past with quite a different kind of family living in mind, or they are being built today with scant appreciation of the values in family living that increasing numbers of people consider most important.

Too much of our national housing inventory is composed of houses built originally for moderately well-to-do families with servants that have finally "trickled down" to the point where they are occupied in whole or in part by families of very modest circumstances with no servants whatsoever. Obviously they don't work. Substantially all the rest of the homes we have, those more recently built, have minimum standards of space, whether apartments or houses, and seldom have provided enough room for a normal family of five people. They hardly ac-

commodate the "statistically average" household of 3.8 persons! (This is the population per family which includes boarders and relatives according to the U. S. census.) The raw fact is that we have not been building houses for families. Instead families have been trying to make a home with the best they could find in the way of a start. That is the explanation of the columns of helpful hints to the hard-pressed family that crowd the household magazines and newspapers.

Such a neglect of the fundamental interests of consumers could happen only in the "seller's market" our housebuilders have had for too many years, and now have in exaggerated form. In our new country we have had a chronic housing shortage. Under circumstances of more equal economic bargaining the interests of buyer and renter would have to be considered more seriously. Today they can be, and are being, ignored. People have to take what they can find to live in, and count themselves lucky to find anything. Newly formed families impatiently wait for accommodations to rent. Families in the crowded years are still holding fast to the two-room apartment they found adequate when they were first married, because they cannot find a place to move. There is today little opportunity for the forces of consumer

demand and choice to be really effective. Consequently the men who build the houses we live in have been under no particular compulsion to change their practices.

At this point we should remind ourselves that we are not talking about the structural problems of the house. The sticks-and-stones side of housing is just as important in its own way as the family living side and it presents difficulties of its own. It is vitally important if the cost of houses is to be reduced. But on the structural side some striking advances have been, and are being, made. They have not come as fast as many people had expected, but there is no doubt that major technical changes have already been launched that will revolutionize housebuilding. They should give us a cheaper, well built, quieter, better insulated house. But, alone, these changes will not give us a better house, one designed for family living.

It is because we are already living in the midst of such a revolution in the housebuilding business that it is so important to give thought to the goals of this activity. Housebuilding should not be just another money-making business. Building homes is an activity freighted with possibilities for good or for evil, not only for families but for the nation as well. We have a national interest in the quality of our homes as well as their quantity. As the art of building changes, it is well to have before us a clear idea of these values, and a good picture of the homes we need.

So long as our families have to live in obsolete, hand-me-down houses, the best they can hope for is a compromise of some sort. Families can, and many of them have, made successful adjustments to living in the houses that now stand. A good deal has been done by skillful remodeling of older dwellings. But this is the merest surface of the problem. Even setting aside the famous "third of a nation" that still

lives in slums, and the doubled-up families and the new families whose advent suggested in the whopping big national estimate of 20,000,000 houses needed in the next twenty years, there is still room for substantial skepticism about the portion of our housing that has thus far been accepted as satisfactory. Certainly it is not considered satisfactory by the families who live in these houses. If they are structurally sound, a large portion of them must be socially obsolescent in terms of modern family requirements.

Just what is the stubborn and inflexible role of the house in our lives? Some of it we have seen. But how many families have found their happiness disappearing under the steady pressure of an unhandy house? How can we measure such devastation? How, more significantly, can we sort out the difficulties that are ineradicable in the domestic environment, and those we can remove by reasonably good management and adjustment?

Take the matter of school lessons. In most of the houses being built today the bedroom is too small for a child's study. It is not large enough for a study table, or hardly a satisfactory chair! The natural light in the room during the late afternoon and early evening hours is seldom of an acceptable standard for reading and close work. What happens when, as is so often suggested, the child is set to work at the dining table—often the only work place in the house? His study hours conflict with the busiest time of the day: when the evening meal is being prepared in the adjoining kitchen, when the table is being set for dinner, or being cleared after dinner.

Take the matter of child supervision. It is Monday morning, and the mother is doing the laundry—in the kitchen, we hope, for in the basement it would be worse. Does she have to interrupt her work every few minutes and walk to the other side of the house

in order to make sure that brother is not beating sister over the head with a sand pail, or that the baby is not strangling in his play pen? You do not have to submit to much of this kind of treatment before you understand why the files of child welfare agencies are littered with cases of mothers who tie up their children to rings in the floor, lock them in closets, or do any of the other crazy things that normal people frustrated past the breaking point will do.

Take the matter of noisy toilets and poor sound insulation. One of the principal characters would be the person of exaggerated sanitary habits who flushes the toilet at five in the morning and wakes the baby, who in turn promptly alerts the entire household. Or the child who is so embarrassed to go to the toilet and flush it, while strangers are in the house, he invites the inevitable catastrophe.

This is the catalog that could be expanded indefinitely. Individually each item seems minute and of little consequence. But as they accumulate, they lead inescapably to broken homes, maladjusted personalities, ill health, delinquency and crime. What was the old Chinese torture? Just the dropping of water. What drives the laboratory mice insane? Incessant minor obstacles and small disruptions in the daily routine. Do not belittle the small things, for they lead directly to large consequences.

We must face up to the issue of housing as a vital element in family living. Without an acceptable solution to the housing question, all of the other remedies for family troubles—for divorce, the low birth rate, juvenile delinquency, maladjusted personalities, and the rest of the social problems we are now dumping on the next generation—the remedies advanced for these problems will be incomplete. Indeed, the very advice given to solve such problems can hardly be put into effect. We must attack that

prime cause of major family difficulties: the obsolete house and the obsolete community in which it stands.

The difficulties the house presents to most families are persistent and recurrent. Because we can do so little about them, they frustrate us. The exceptionally capable and successful family can, and does, make adjustments to poor living conditions. We pride ourselves on the families who "rise above" their difficulties. Many of the houses in the slums are kept scrupulously clean under the most adverse conditions of dirt and overcrowding. But at what cost! If we are to relieve the homemaker of some of her household drudgery in order that she may assume the full responsibilities of motherhood for the coming generation, we must commence with the reform of the house. This is the ever-present environment of the family. Other conditions may be changed, but the house remains so fixed an element that the only solution most families find is to move out.

But who moves in? And what can the vacating family find to move to, save another obsolete house, larger perhaps, and better equipped, but seldom designed to meet their needs. This is no solution. What is?

Perhaps we can make a beginning by applying some of the things we already know about the house that will really suit the needs of the new American family.

Judged by traditional standards it need not be a very large house, for the modern family is smaller than before and without servants. Extra space means more work. Efficiency in operation demands a compact house plan. The money invested in household equipment precludes any extra expenses in building. *But it must be larger than the houses that speculator builders are now offering families of moderate income.*



What we know about family living needs, and what we know about the structural evolution of the house, indicate that it will normally be on one floor, without basement or attic. With these traditional catch-alls out of the house, the problem of storing family possessions formerly kept there becomes acute and calls for a more direct solution. So does another storage problem: the array of household equipment and machinery in daily use the family has found increasingly necessary over the past generation.

The rooms into which the traditional houses we know have been divided will disappear. Some of them have already. A distinguished American architect still living can boast that he "killed the dining room." Gone are the parlors, the pantries, the larders, and many of the other specialized rooms of yesterday.

Here is one important way we can get more space for living without building a monster of a house that would be essentially a wasteful collection of highly specialized rooms. We must get out of the convenient habit of thinking of the house as a collection of rooms. Instead we must regard it as a *pattern of spaces*, each space designed for a special group of activities and each with its special size, shape and quality. Within these flexible spaces many more activities can be suitably accommodated that are hopelessly congested and at odds in today's compartmented rooms. Architects call it "the open plan." They do not mean the house is a cave of the winds; instead they want to express the freedom and flexibility that becomes possible in spaces properly designed and related to each other, as opposed to highly specialized rooms separated by fixed partitions. They want to build up and smooth out our use of space to get a house in which every part can be easily and appropriately used.

### The Work Center

The heart of the new house is a work center. Here food is stored, utensils kept, the meals prepared, and the housewife—helped by the whole family from time to time—gets her day's work done. This means a lot more than a slick individual workshop for cooking, although no gains in efficiency need be lost. It means a place to do the laundry and the ironing, and to sit and do a bit of mending and sewing when a few spare minutes present themselves in the daily routine. It means a place fit for child care, for feeding, for play pens, and even bathing the baby. It also means a place with more of the characteristics of a living space than a traditional work space. There can be one or two really comfortable chairs, attractive curtains, and the atmosphere of the hearth.

We know that such a space must be convenient to the entrance of the house and to the telephone to allow us to manage and care for the day's interruptions. We know that it must be located in proximity to an outside play space to allow easy supervision. We know that it should be located very close to the dining area.

It will help us visualize such a space if we remember the variety of activities that will take place in it, and give it in our minds a suitable character. As the work center loses the severely hygienic atmosphere of a stripped-down chemical laboratory, it can assume some of the warmer, friendly character of a living place. Better planning and greater flexibility will make it more efficient than its ancestor, the old-fashioned kitchen, ever was. There can be more glass or marble slabs for pastry making, more wooden cutting surfaces, if a bit less sheet linoleum. There can be warm colors, natural wood surfaces, and pictures on the wall. We do not need knick-knacks to make such a room "livable." We need common sense to get rid of the degrading and specialized scullery

character that still hangs over the most normal, most dignified, and most necessary functions of family living. This is the place where the most time is spent during the day, and where the family can most often be together in working, eating, and playing. It is the place most deserving of careful and thoughtful planning.

The shrill voices we hear in the household magazines babbling about "modern kitchens" are beginning to pick up such needs and to advance, if tentatively, some solutions. It accounts for the growing popularity of "the peasant kitchen"—whether Hungarian or Pennsylvania Dutch. But beware of the articles on kitchens that artfully commence with an irresistible appeal to present difficulties. "This kitchen is designed for children," they will say. But look carefully to see that it is designed for the bottle-fed infant, the food-spilling toddler, the restless teen-ager, the nibbling adolescent with the hollow legs. Make sure that it is not just a kitchen for the children. Make sure that it is a *kitchen for your whole family*, now and forever.

### The Living Area

Turn now to the living center of the new home. Here is another complex space, one that must provide room for the whole family and for individual members of the family as well. It must have elements of quiet and of noise. It must be proud, presentable to visitors; and it must be practical, comfortable for the family's activities. If we think of this space as a traditional living room, fixed and rigid, all is lost. The problem becomes as impossible as squaring the circle. By thinking of it as a space, or a series of spaces, by thinking of inside and outside space, the conflicts and incongruities can be satisfied. We can secure even greater flexibility by realizing the possibility of changing the "atmosphere," of "setting a stage" that could be changed through the years.

What has to be accommodated in such a living center? First there are the activities of the family alone; later we can consider the special problems that arise when guests enter the home.

But first, one is disposed to say a word in behalf of the husband, that often ignored figure upon whose efforts the modern family depends almost wholly for its livelihood. His early departure in the morning has removed him from the family scene, but his arrival in the evening is an event of the first magnitude. He will have, at best, an hour or so before the children go to bed. This is the precious moment when the family is together, and we should make every effort to do our best with it. But what too often happens? The husband arrives in the suburban home after the exhausting day at work and commuting, his body sore, his nerves still quivering, his stomach empty, in an apprehensive mood. He may be met half-way down the block by his children, which is very nice as those things go. But what he wants is a bath, a change of clothes, and a few minutes quiet before he is called to share in a discussion of family problems. Nor do you want him rough-housing with the children and getting them in a high key before settling them in bed. This is the situation so common in our suburban families that calls for the highest degree of management and stage setting. It will be in the work and the living areas that the family reunions take place, but before that momentous event of the day, allow an adequate space for privacy for that father in the midst of the day's clamor.

What goes on in your family's living center depends a great deal on your stage of development and the tastes you have for recreation, entertainment and all-around living. Some very substantial provision has to be made for the use of this room to "knit up the unravelled sleeve of care." In such a place we must be able to relax, to enjoy ourselves, to recruit our

energies for the busier parts of the day. Such activities will vary enormously from family to family. They will include dancing with children to music from the radio, a quiet game of backgammon, finger-painting projects, viewing a baseball game by television, reading the Sunday paper, and a thousand other activities. There will be quiet evenings at home, times when only the "sitter" and her trusty radio occupy the room, and times for family councils.

With guests we must distinguish, as most families do, between those who can be treated as "one of the family" and those who must be given—and properly impressed by—a more formal reception. We can also distinguish between those who are invited and for whom provision can be made in advance, and those who arrive unexpectedly and must be received. Fortunately the latter do not come in large numbers, although in some families they may come often.

It is pretty clear that the guests whom one knows well, who can be expected to pitch in and help with the dishes, and who will not mind the litter inevitable in a small place that is well lived in, do not present much of a problem. Nor is it a very difficult state of affairs when a group of such friends turns into a singing beer party, a barbecue, or a loud political discussion. We can clear the decks for such occasions.

Complications arise mainly when "the boss comes to dinner," when people arrive whom we wish to impress with symbols of prestige, of power, of wealth or of position. Here the stage must be set very carefully, or we must have a corner of the house—a reception area—that is ready at all times to receive the unexpected and unfamiliar visitor. Possibly it will have to be separated from the family living center, to be screened off, or to be around a corner at least. When receiving such unexpected guests, we want privacy. When they are expected we can arrange the family schedule to secure privacy—even if

it means sending a child off to spend the night with a friend.

As a problem this situation in most families has been exaggerated. It narrows down to the unexpected guest for whom a rather formal reception is indicated. This may be no more than a committee chairman in the local PTA whom you don't know very well, or a man who turns up selling something you might want. It may happen only once or twice a year. *But because of this, in most houses, a disproportionately large space is kept in a constant state of readiness, almost as unusable by the rest of the family as the old-fashioned parlor that was kept locked, with the shades drawn, except on Sunday afternoon when "callers" were expected.*

Another aspect of the house should be considered here because it is so closely related to the living space. Most families need an "extra room," and in the two-story house they need it downstairs. This is an "all-purpose room." It serves as a study or library, a guest room, a sick room, a second living room where privacy can be secure, an extra space for entertaining, or possibly a game room. It should have the same plastic and changeable qualities as the other parts of the living space, but should be separate from it. In some houses it may also serve as part of the reception area we have been discussing.

In arranging for such living spaces, remember the requirements of a Christmas party, a home wedding, a birthday party, an October Halloween for the kids, a rainy Labor day that can be salvaged without standing in line at the movies. Think of contagious sickness in the home, of someone who comes to spend the week-end and take care of the children, or your old college roommate who unexpectedly turns up. Think of what happens and where it will take place before you start thinking of how the place will look.

The resources of the whole building industry, our architects, engineers, product designers and furniture manufacturers are at your disposal in solving this problem—and it can be solved. In a small space, the keynote must be flexibility. Your space can be readily converted from its daily character as an informal family gathering place into a fairly formal setting for a large party. The secret is not difficult. First, we must clear out of the living area the things that do not belong there; in short, the rest of the house must be planned too. Second, we must have temporary storage space as well as that committed to daily use. Third, we must use all the stratagems of the interior decorator to aid convertability. Finally, the basic materials of the room and its furnishings must be capable of easy cleaning and decorative treatment.

### *The Sleeping Areas*

Now what about the sleeping areas? Again we call for a compact treatment; but we still cannot afford to think of these spaces as "rooms" that are reserved for a specialized function of sleeping alone. Other activities must take place here. If they are not accommodated, they will overflow into other parts of the house. The vogue for tiny bedrooms has utterly destroyed many houses for family living. A good bed is essential, the least dispensable luxury. But the room in which it stands must accommodate far more. There must be ample storage space for clothes, and for clothing and bedding out of season. There must be room to dress. There must be a table with a good light, whether it is used for a dressing table or for study. There must be at least one comfortable chair. Perhaps there should be a washstand in the corner, discreetly concealed behind cabinet work but ready to lighten the rush hour burden on the bathroom.

For a well-designed sleeping area we need good ventilation, reasonable quiet (sound-proofing), and decent light for everything from reading in bed to studying and critical self-examination in dressing. We need a room that is designed to carry us through the years.

Perhaps it will begin with nothing more than a crib, a bathinette, and a chest of drawers. But then it must accommodate a youth bed. Still later there will be an adult bed and the possibility of redecorating when the child is eight or nine and responds to dropping the nursery character of the room in recognition of his approaching maturity. We want the sort of flexibility that will let us knock out shelves for children's toys to make space for a dressing table. We need a space that can grow up with the changing requirements of its occupant, that we will not be afraid to change, and that will even encourage such change.

Of all the parts of the house, the sleeping spaces are the most personal. Other parts of the house belong to the family as a whole. Here is a place that belongs to the individual. This is where you "get away from it all," "let your hair down," "have a good cry." As the house itself protects the family from the community, we must develop in the sleeping area some of those things that make for individuality. Here a young girl can indulge in boudoir fripperies, here we can develop a properly scaled nursery, here the student can be alone with his natural history specimens, his model planes, his dreams.

It may be possible to arrange such a room to give it the character of a daytime sitting room, but this is a poor compromise if it means spending eight hours a night tossing around on a squashy narrow "day bed." With all its other desirable qualities, this is essentially a sleeping place.



Basically, bedrooms are much alike. Superficially, they will change with the individuals that occupy them. The parents' room, however, has special requirements. It should be larger. Ordinarily two persons occupy it, while the child is more likely to have a room of his own. Parental responsibilities are many and unceasing, and their sleeping area must have elements of control. A cry in the night must be answered. It should not be too far from the children's rooms. Nor, millions of parents will exclaim, should it be too near.

Finally, more thought should be given to marital privacy. We need a lock on the door. We need positive soundproofing, both to bar outside noises and to retain inside noises. Here we tread on very subjective territory, full of countless variables that are only dimly known. But certainly there are too many bedrooms where frigidity may be established by lack of privacy, where it becomes impossible to make love without the fear of interruptions, the distractions of exterior noise, and where ardor is dampened by the thought of listening ears.

### *The House Itself*

In discussing the major areas of the house—the work center, the living space, the sleeping areas—we have touched only lightly on the relationships that these spaces should have to each other, to entrances, to the out-of-doors. What of the house as a whole?

Great as are the changes in the separate parts of the house, a greater change is taking place in the organization and planning of the house as a whole. We know that an entrance which opens directly into the living area sharply restricts the use of that room and minimizes its value; that when a living area must serve as a corridor between the entrance and the kitchen, the bath, or some other center, it be-

comes almost useless for its main purpose, and becomes a messy nuisance as well. When a child is brought into the house to go to the toilet, he should not be distracted by the fascinations of the living area, nor should he have to track through it in his dirty galoshes. These are a few things we do know.

We know, too, about the importance of storage, and we have some quite accurate ideas of what is needed. The inventories of family possessions have given us, in feet and inches, what storage space we need to accommodate our possessions. The home economists have given us the idea of storage at point-of-first-use. We have no intention of going back to awkward basements and attics if we can get proper storage where we need it. Nor can we be sold on the usefulness of that passing fancy of the 30's, the basement recreation room, or that even more horrible idea, the basement laundry, with its long haul to the drying line, and its musty tribute to alleged damp-proofing.

But there are many things we do not know.

Our purpose here is not to design the homes we need. It is to point out what we need to know in order to design them.

No one has yet translated into feet and inches what democratic family living requires. We do not know how to design an efficient kitchen where the family members help prepare the food, serve it, and wash up. No one has yet designed a house built around "the mother figure"—the person who is watched, imitated, and from whom we learn the arts of the home. The house designed to grow up in, to grow old in, the house designed for family living, has yet to be born.

These are the homes we need.

What are our chances of getting them?

## ● WHERE WE COME OUT

We have seen what families need in their houses. But we know, too, that few houses today give families what they need. Today family living must adapt itself to houses. We need houses adapted to family living. The houses we live in today reflect old ideas, out-dated theories, horse-and-buggy notions about domestic needs and efficiency. Our *changing attitude* toward the house must eventually result in a *changed house*. Our houses have barely commenced to change in response to our present needs and desires. Yet change they must, unless our ideas change.

Our ideas about family living, however, are rooted in the science and knowledge of our times. The design of our houses is rooted in tradition and precedent. Which is the stronger?

The question that remains is this: how fast will it be done? What must we do to speed the day when future Americans can live in good environments?

Progress lies in two directions.

We need to know more about family living requirements.

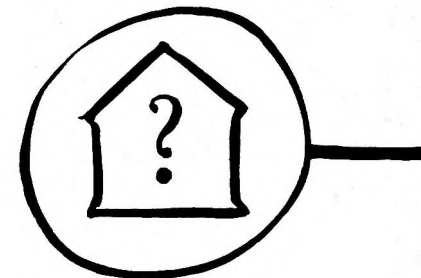
We need to apply right now what we already know.

The research program that will tell us what we should know about family living in relation to the home need not be described here. It is obvious that

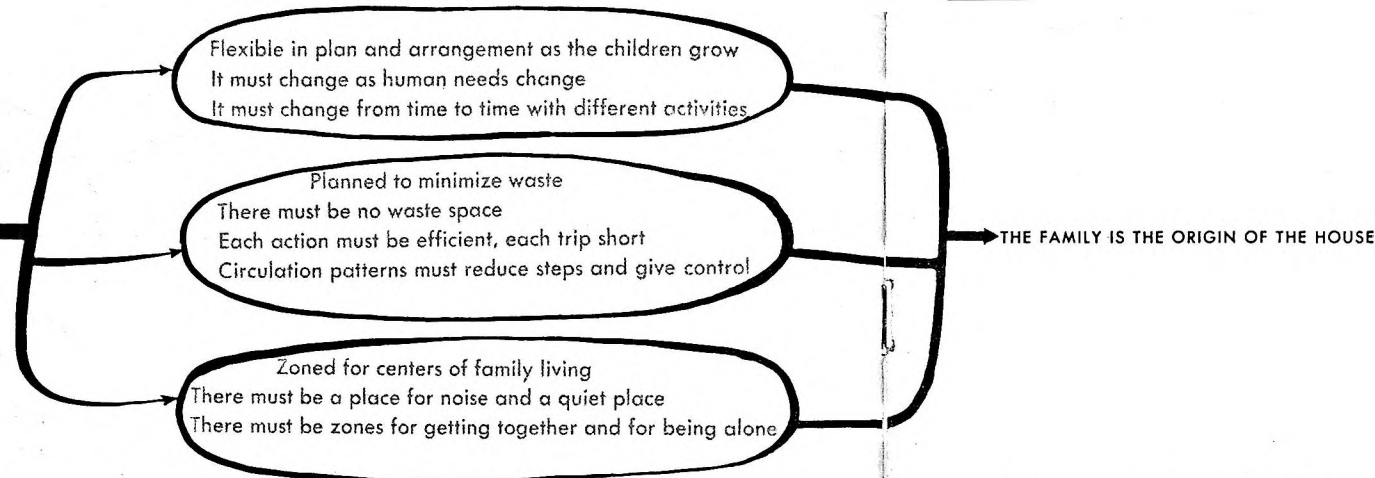
we do not yet know enough for any architect or builder to design a wholly good home for the new American family. If we did, such homes, even if in small numbers, would be going up. Too much of what we know is information of value to the sociologist, but of little use to families themselves or the people who build homes for them. It has not been translated into feet and inches, into blueprints and specifications. For practical purposes we must have more specific information.

Some of the ways of finding out what we need to know are clear. They have already been explored sufficiently to show us what their advantages and limitations are.

We can ask families what they need. This is the technique of the opinion polls. It has been applied to sample populations of families by a wide variety of agencies, including a number of household magazines. We have learned that very few housewives are able to speak with authority for the other members of the family. Alone they are not good judges of what the whole family needs. We have also found that many people are not good judges of what their needs really are. They are creatures of tradition and precedent, and of unwise desires. Their eyes are full of advertising stardust, and they mistakenly think new curtains and a home laundry would solve their prob-



## THE HOUSE MUST BE



lems when a disinterested observer will see that they need an extra bedroom in the house! Certainly when it comes to an expression of true family needs, the polls are least reliable for the simple reason that families who have never lived in a good house can hardly be expected to know what one consists of. Useful as they are, when properly conducted, *we do not want polls of ignorance as the sole basis for designing our new homes.*

We can study families objectively, as an anthropologist studies a primitive tribe. This has been done in two notable studies in Stockholm and New Haven, Connecticut. But this process takes a great deal of time and money, and we do not yet have reports on enough families to make a solid basis for opinions as to their needs. Here is an approach that can be pressed farther, and with promising results. In the limited studies that have been made thus far, just the inventories of family possessions alone are staggering in their implications. They have also shown us a great deal we did not know before concerning the daily use of the different parts of the house by members of the family. But all of this information taken together does not give our builders and manufac-

turers and inventors all that they need to know about family needs, the amounts of space they require, and the desirable relationships between these spaces.

Finally, we can turn to the experts. Architects and builders have been at work on the housing problem for centuries, and they have some shrewd and well-founded opinions. Other experts concerned with the family's mental and physical health, its welfare, its management problems, family relations, and the rest, also have some well-formed and independent views on what the house should provide to make healthy, well-adjusted, efficient, and wise families.

But often the experts do not agree. They are too concerned with their own special interests to be able to see the problem as a whole. Many of the experts represent new sciences, whose very terms are as strange to the other experts as they are to us. We can expect them to get together more and more as time goes on, but that is a process that can be hastened by conferences, better publication of research findings, and other methods.

We can find still other approaches to studying family living that will produce useful and applicable information.

Now, how can we put to use the information we already have in order to get better houses?

A good part of this pamphlet has been concerned with summarizing some of the things we know already, but we have covered only a small part of it. The information on family living needs and housing requirements is now scattered through dozens of books and obscure technical periodicals. It would take a trained research worker months just to compile a reasonably complete list of *references* on these books and articles. More time would be required to digest this data and make it useful, in handbook form, as information on the structure of the home has been organized in manuals. This job has not been done. Here is a good reason why architects and builders have seldom been able to come to grips with the problem, and apply what is already known; it is not known to them, and will never be known until the information has been synthesized and put in a form they can use.

We need not only the information itself, in usable form, but we need a receptivity to such information before it can be applied. Otherwise it is like certain chemicals in our food that we cannot absorb into

our bodies. We can't eat nails, but we can eat iron. The information we need must be in a digestible form. There must be a recognition of why it is valuable, and a readiness to apply it, before it can be absorbed by the innumerable people who now make up the building industry.

This is a long process. It means an educational job of the first magnitude.

This pamphlet is a beginning. It leads to the ripper, more mature philosophy that will help us use the facts we know and are learning about the house designed for family living. We must be seriously disturbed by what we already know. But we can take heart. Recognizing how deeply involved this problem is in human values and understanding, we are well launched in solving it. We are developing a philosophy that will help us choose more wisely and confidently, that will give us harmony, balance, and suitability in our houses instead of a hodge-podge of new gadgets and ideas.

As each family does its own thinking, formulates its own requirements, and makes its own plans, it can help solve its own problems and contribute to the common advance toward a full family life. Each family knows its own promise, its own genius. Each family can decide upon its own values: decide where to sacrifice, where to make compromises, where to stand firm. Already many families know enough of what they want to go ahead.

But families need help. The men who build their houses — architects, builders, the manufacturers of building materials and equipment, and the investors who commit capital for a generation—must also think through what modern families need. They must discover the form of the house the family needs. Not in sales value, not in architectural precedents, not in structural efficiency, but in family living itself, they will find the form of the new house.

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● The following persons attended the Rye Conference. Their participation does not imply concurrence in this report:

Miss Tessie Agan  
Mrs. Doris I. Anderson  
Dr. Benjamin Andrews  
Mr. Edmund Bacon  
Mr. Charles Agle  
Dr. Margaret W. Barnard  
Dr. Morris Brand  
Dr. Muriel Brown  
Mr. Leslie Cheek  
Miss Alta Dines  
Mrs. Evelyn M. Duvall  
Mrs. Rhea Eckel  
Mr. Thomas Fansler  
Mr. Clarence W. Farrier  
Dr. Lawrence K. Frank  
Miss Elizabeth Guilford  
Mrs. Eva B. Hansl  
Mrs. Mary Koll Heiner  
Dean Joseph Hudnut  
Mrs. Dwight B. Hutchinson  
Dr. Frances Ilg  
Mr. Richard Ives  
Miss Loeta Lois Johns  
Miss Virginia Jones  
Mr. Dan Kiley  
Dr. Earl L. Koos  
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Miss Virginia Lyon  
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Dr. Bernice M. Moore  
Dr. Janet F. Nelson  
Mrs. Catharine Lansing Oats  
Mr. William C. Reed  
Miss Mary Rokahr  
Miss Helen Romanofsky  
Mr. Abner Silverman  
Mr. Oscar Stonorov  
Mr. Allan Twichell  
Mr. William Vladeck  
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