

## The Home and the Hospital

By Charlotte Perkins Gilman



## "All My Elements Are There"

### The Oat is a Complete Food

Students of food values know that the oat contains all the elements we need. And in the right proportions. All save fat—which the cream supplies—and water.

It is rich in elements which most foods lack.

It is famous for its energizing powers.

For ages the effects have proved that. But science now tells us why.

It is this great food—the most delicious, most important grain food—that Quaker Oats presents in extra-luscious form.

It is for lovers of vivacity, capacity and power.

In this rich, flavory form folks eat it plentifully and often—as they should.

# Quaker Oats

## The Royal Grade of Vim-Food

Its extra goodness is due to selected grains. Quaker Oats is flaked from only the big, plump, luscious oats. We get but ten pounds from a bushel.

The little grains have no such flavor as you find in Quaker Oats.

All the world over, millions of

oat lovers have discovered this Quaker Oats quality. So everywhere this premier brand outsells any other.

Every grocer sells it, and without extra price. Asking will bring it to you. Remember this, for your own delight, when you next order oats.

Large Round Package, 25c. Regular Package, 10c.  
Except in Far West.

### The Quaker Oats Company

Peterborough, Canada

(1497)

Saskatoon, Canada

**C**HARITY is said to begin at home. It may be so, but sanitary science certainly does not.

The home is commonly the place of birth and of death, with us and many of our animal ancestors; but as a place of life, of strong healthy living between these two terminal events, it has little to boast of.

So long as people lived and worked mostly in the open air, it did not matter so seriously what kind of air they slept in; and the early use of the home was mainly to sleep in. The Eskimo knows little about ventilation and cares less, but so much of his time is spent in the fierce purity of Arctic air that he can breathe whale oil smoke, carbonic dioxide and animal exhalations for a good many hours without too much injury. The modern civilized home in a temperate climate works most evil because so much of our time is spent in it.

The pleasantly, piously and poetically arranged imprisonment of the women in houses, and the children therewith, the literal spending of, say twenty-two out of the twenty-four hours in a closed building, is what brings out in painful prominence the unsanitary nature of that sacred institution, the home. While our houses stood alone and apart, while the structure was comparatively crude and the wind swept through it, while the household's discharge of slops, garbage and like, even if thrown broadcast in the vicinity, was diluted at once by the great body of free air in which it lay, and while the contents of the house were comparatively open—then indeed one could live in it, even ignorantly, with less injury. But now that we build plastered and papered houses, with closed windows—even double windows—doors that fit, roofs that keep out the weather; while these houses are so jammed together that their emerging odors mingle in clouds and hang thick about them, and while they are filled to overflowing with things of all sorts, mainly of cloth, from which steadily fall off into the air we breathe that gradual drip of dead matter in fine floating particles, which in an old shut up home, piles thick in velvet dust on everything; now indeed the life of the house-bound is heavily endangered. When this first occurred, when the homes of mediaeval ignorance, or oriental, were thickened into cities—just the mechanical grouping of cities without the city's vital structure—then arose that strange and awful child of too thick homes, the plague. We died by hundreds of thousands in this stage of living, simply of our own dirt.

Then arose sanitary science, after we had died, uninstructed for many centuries, and began to find out what ailed the home and how to improve it. The first problem, the most vital, or rather the most deadly, was that of sewage. The city grappled with that problem, solved it in large measure, and forced its conclusions, by law, on the long reluctant and resisting home. The excretory system of our cities is now fairly safe; the plague, the black death, has been conquered in great degree. But we still die in shameful numbers. We despise the Hindu, dying of cholera for lack of sewerage. But we die at a rate of one in four, for lack of ventilation. We have the white plague, actual and successful, steadily killing us off in our most valuable years, costing us one-quarter of our lives, and billions of dollars annually; really billions—a loss, it has been calculated, equal to our entire annual export trade. We die patiently of this, as our ancestors died of the other, and fail to see how swiftly we could end it if we would.

Consumption, like typhoid fever, is a dirt disease, but it is from dirt in the lungs instead of the intestines; at least we suffer most from it in the lungs. Bad air, foul air, poison air, a transference of invisible filth, thick mingled human breath, fetid gases, dust and dust and dust; and behold the swarming millions of tuberculosis bacilli holding carnival in our helpless bodies! The effect of dust, even out of doors, is shown by the fact that street clean-

ers succumb in enormous proportion to consumption. The stone cutter, the needle grinder, everyone who steadily breathes dust, is an easy victim of consumption. We have to learn to purify the air of our cities from its body of dirt, as we have purified the streets of "surface drainage" and, more directly, we have to learn not to poison it.

In this part of the struggle sanitary science must penetrate that well-nigh invincible fortress, the home, and teach it not to generate disease. Building laws come first: proper air space, sunlight, room for physical decency and health of the inhabitants. Here is the hospital, taking in the wreckage of the home, and teaching it how much cubic space a human being must have; how many cubic feet of air an hour, and what kind of cleanliness is clean. Pure, white, sterilized and safe, with the inmates so guarded that even though diseased they do not further infect one another, this is the extreme of human effort to allow nature free play in the struggle for health.

Now why cannot the home learn of the hospital? It need not be full of sick folk. If all the homes were what they should be we should need few hospitals. It need not be as coldly colorless, but beauty in household decoration can be obtained without our masses of dust-generating cloth. A house could be as lovely as a sea shell, and as smooth. It could have thrilling beauty of color and of line, pure satisfying proportion, all manner of tender ornament and decoration and yet not a needless thing in it.

And above all it could have pure air, as far as its own contribution went. While we allow our manufacturers to poison us by wholesale with low lying clouds of smoke and deadly gases, the home can not be safe; but an intelligent spirit in our homes would rise up against that wholesale outrage as the men of old rose against the poisoners of the wells. Meanwhile, the home could at least see to it that it did not do its own poisoning.

Here sits the family around the evening lamp; all dutifully getting the light over the left shoulder, for the sake of their eyes. The lamp meanwhile is consuming as much oxygen as one of the family. The furnace is going merrily, and the wind howls outside. All is peaceful and serene and nobody complains till a boisterous son comes in from out of doors.

"Huh!" he says, rudely. "Why don't you open a window?"

"The window is down in the dining room," replies his mother, severely; "you have just come in from outside, that's all."

So he sits down in the family air and subtracts his portion of the remaining oxygen as peacefully as he can, contributing also his portion of used-up air, air that grows fouler and fouler as it is breathed and rebreathed by the group, and no one notices it. You go to the theatre and find it worse—more light, more people, the rising emanation of the thousands of breathers quite outstripping the intake of the "ventilators." See Mr. Dooley on The Coronation: "The place was full of aristocratic associations, on account of the ventilation bein' bad."

We need to know just what dust does to our insides, what dust is, where it comes from, how to avoid it. We need a cultivated taste in air—as we have in music; a "trained nose" as well as a trained ear or eye. And we need a machine, an invention, a little scientific appliance, a thing like a thermometer, small, pocketable, which the well bred could consult on occasion and say, "Dear me! This air has but eleven per cent of oxygen, and it's up to 83 with deleterious gas!" While we wait for the inventor, let the home learn of the hospital, and so escape it.

A place where people live, all the time, ought to be quite as sanitary, as "antiseptically clean" as a place for sick folks. The hospital elaborately shuts the door after the horse is stolen.

Who stole it?