

# **THE COMFORTS OF HOME**

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The Comforts of Home by Ralph Bergengren

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**RALPH BERGENGREN**

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### CONTENTS

Thoughts While Getting Settled . . . . .	1
Praise of Open Fires . . . . .	16
Furnace and I . . . . .	29
No Stairs — No Attic . . . . .	41
Concerning Kitchens . . . . .	56
The Plumber Appreciated . . . . .	68
The Home of the Porcelain Tub . . . . .	81
At Home in the Guest Chamber . . . . .	95



11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

THOUGHTS WHILE GETTING  
SETTLED

PROPERLY speaking, the new house was old. A hundred years and more had gone over its chimney, — down which, as we were to discover later, a hundred flies and more would come when the open fires had warmed it, — and within doors it would have charmed any amateur of the Colonial by the antiquity of its furnishings. Temporarily it belonged to me, my executors, administrators, and assigns. But there were limits to our possession. None of us might 'permit any hole to be drilled or made in the stone or brick-work of said building'; no 'sign or placard' might we place upon it; we might not 'over-load, damage, or deface' it; nor might we 'carry on any unlawful,

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improper, noisy, or offensive trade' in it. We had admitted that the glass was whole and in good order, and bound ourselves to keep it good, unless broken by fire, with glass of the same kind and quality. In case I became bankrupt I had agreed that the owner, the owner's executors, the owner's administrators, and the owner's assigns should treat me with every form of ignominy that the law has yet invented to make bankruptcy more distressing. Nor could I hold them responsible if our guests fell down the cellar stairs; although there I think they would be morally responsible, for a steeper flight of cellar stairs I simply cannot imagine.

Of all documents there is hardly another so common as a lease, or more suspicious. Observe the lessor — a benevolent, dignified, but cautious person! Observe the lessee — a worm