



# Home Comforts: The Art and Science of Keeping House

*Cheryl Mendelson*

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*Home Comforts* is something new. For the first time in nearly a century, a sole author has written a comprehensive book about housekeeping. This is not a dry how-to manual, nor a collection of odd tips and hints, a cleaning book, a history book, or an arid encyclopedia compiled by a committee or an institute. *Home Comforts* is a readable explanation for both beginners and experts of all the domestic arts -- choosing fabrics, keeping the piano in tune, caring for books, making a good fire in the fireplace and avoiding chimney fires, ironing and folding, setting up a good reading light, keeping surfaces free of food pathogens, and everything else that modern people might want to do for themselves in their homes. But this reliable and thorough book on the practicalities of housekeeping is also an argument for the importance of private life and the comforts offered by housekeeping.

Cheryl Mendelson is a philosopher, lawyer, sometime professor, and a homemaker, wife, and mother. *Home Comforts* is based on her domestic education, which she acquired while growing up on a farm in the hills of Greene County, in southwestern Pennsylvania, from her grandmothers, aunts, and mother. Learning from the distinct domestic styles of her native Appalachian relatives and her Italian immigrant relatives, she appreciated early on how important domestic customs are to a sense of comfort and identity in life. She writes out of love and respect for her subject, and hopes to inspire others to develop the affection and respect for home life and housework she was fortunate to have learned.

Mendelson addresses the meanings as well as the methods of housekeeping with a keen sense of the history and values involved. The result is a warm, good-humored, engagingly written book with a message and a point of view, one that is overflowing with useful reflections and information. The clarity, breadth, and depth of the information collected here are unparalleled. You can read *Home Comforts* for thoughtful entertainment or use its ample index to help you find the answers to practical domestic questions. There is nothing quite like it.

### Among this book's unique features:

- A skeptical discussion of the excessive use of disinfectants in the home.
  - How to iron a dress shirt and how to fold sheets.
  - How to make up a bed with hospital corners.
  - How to do all basic sewing stitches.
  - How to choose proper sizes for sheets, tablecloths, and other household linens.
  - How to set the table for informal and formal meals.
  - Expert recommendations for safe food storage.
  - The most exhaustive and reliable information on fabrics, textile fibers, and their laundering, drying, and other care that exists for nonprofessionals.
  - A thorough explanation of care labels and why and how you should often (carefully) disregard them.
  - Housekeeping guidelines for people with pets or with allergies.
  - What to do about dust mites.
  - How to clean and care for wood, china and crystal, jewelry, ceramic tile, metals, and more.
  - Guides to stain and spot removal.
  - Extensive recommendations for improving home safety.
  - A summary of laws applicable to the home, including privacy, accident liability, contracts, and domestic employees.
- **200 Elegant, Clear Drawings** ·

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