

# The Story of Washing

## How the Modern Machine Evolved

THE desirability that raiment, if not new, should at least be clean, seems to be of very little later date than that of Mother Eve herself, at whose door we lay so many evils. In Mosaic days laws were given that after certain occupations, soiling alike to clothing and ideas, such as the killing of cattle, both raiment and bodies should be cleansed; and it becomes easy to trace the source of the proverb that "cleanliness is next to godliness." In some cases, cleanliness becomes apparent as the result of godliness, as with the conversion of savages, and in others, cleanliness remains apparent, when, perhaps, godliness has become obscured.

A state of savagedom is known to exist where there is neither cleanliness nor godliness, and as with the case of the hen and the egg, it is difficult sometimes to know which came first. Certain we are, however, that when they come they do so practically together, the love of God and the love of cleanliness.

### The Heavy Toll of Washing.

THE early settlers of this country, we are told, found its people, the Maoris, practising cleanliness, washing both their household linen, what they had of it, and their clothing in running streams and pools. This also is the method still practised by natives of other countries, and very well indeed is the washing done, the dirt being either beaten out against the stones by hand, or trodden out by the feet, but at what cost of labour?

At what cost those same early settlers pursued the cult of cleanliness for themselves, their families, and their households is told only too sadly in the tale of womenfolk not only grown old before their time, but of lives unnecessarily sacrificed before the fetish of the wash-tub. We dare swear, that whatever else occurred, and even if the mother of the family remained at home, few of the children ventured forth on high-days and holidays wearing anything but the cleanest of clothes, and those probably highly starched into the bargain—but again at how much cost to the mother in loss of health and sacrifice of leisure!

HERE is a translation describing a simple washing day of the earliest age. It is in contrast to the clothes washing day of the Victorian era, now happily receding from us with the incorporation of electrical energy and mechanical "do it in no time."

However, having to tell how Odysseus, shipwrecked and far-spent with swimming, wins to shore and drags himself, naked, to hide in the bushes just as Nausicaa—the king's daughter of the country—drives down to the beach with her maidens to wash the court linen in a stream close by, he tells the business thus:

Then they took the clothes from the waggon, and carrying them to the dark water, trod them in pits briskly, in rivalry.

Then, after they had washed and cleansed away all the stains, they

spread everything out in order on the foreshore, even where the sea, beating the coast, had washed the pebbles clean. Then . . . they ate their mid-day meal on the river bank, waiting till the clothes should dry in the sun's rays. And anon, having finished their meal, the maidens and the princess, they fell to playing at ball . . . and among them white-armed Nausicaa sang the song which led the game.

It is doubtful whether up to sixty or seventy years ago, they even had the advantage of soap, and certainly not as we know soap to-day, with its attendant myrmidons of soap flakes, powders, etc. Probably the first form of water-softener that was used was lye, and afterwards home-made soap, at first, necessarily, of a crude quality.

### When the Copper Came.

WELL, other times, other ways, and so came the means of obtaining hot water, the copper which must have seemed quite ideal to those early settlers, then the mangle and the wringer, but still, in spite of all, real heavy hard work for the woman already overdone with other duties, both indoors and outdoors, and groaning to think of the indoor work neglected, or not done as she would have it.

No mother ever shirked motherhood because of the extra labour it involved, but it is well recognised that mothers require saving from themselves, where service to their children is being considered.

Necessity was always the mother of invention, and so far back as 1845, nearly 100 years ago, we find the idea of a machine to accomplish the dreaded business of washing-day being developed, but, of course, in a crude fashion. From that, the Lancashire dillies evolved. Efficient and inspiring they were, but still dependent upon hand-power. Hand-power — only a mild word for the ensuing ache of shoulders, back and limbs that follows the old-fashioned washing-day, that has made invalids of otherwise capable women.

### What Electricity Can Do.

IN this country to-day there is no excuse for such waste of life and energy. Electricity is here, and electrically-operated washing machines, from the size designed to handle only smaller pieces, and which takes up almost no room, to the larger ones which take care of the family laundry with ease and speed. They are all very simple to operate, and many are now equipped with extension legs, which allow adjustment to the required height. They are constructed after intelligent study of the needs of the home, and not only is construction studied, but design and colour are given due attention. Ease in operation and in cleaning are two of the main factors considered.

There has, perhaps, been a tendency in the past for some women to look upon electricity as a mysterious power almost beyond their comprehension, with which they have been diffident of

# Trials in Tact

(Conducted by Savoir-Faire)

## Problem No. 10 (Last of Series)

1st Series.

Mrs. A. is on the same telephone party-line as Mrs. B. and has always been on good terms with her. One day Mrs. C. rings up Mrs. A. and makes a certain serious allegation against Mrs. B. Mrs. A. refuses to be drawn into a discussion of the matter, but immediately Mrs. C. rings off, Mrs. B., who has evidently been "listening-in," rings and asks Mrs. A. for verification of the last speaker's name. Mrs. A. realises that the matter is serious and does not wish to be involved. What should she say or do?

Suggested by "Sue."

(Answers must be post-marked not later than April 10, 1930.)

A nom-de-plume may be used, but names and addresses must be sent. The same nom-de-plume must be retained throughout the series. All replies must bear a postmark dated not later than the Thursday after the date of the journal in which the problem appears, and should be addressed to "Savoir-Faire," "Radio Record and Electric Home Journal," P.O. Box 1032, Wellington.

Savoir-Faire's decision must in every case be accepted as final.

## Notes

FRECKLES: Your solution of Problem No. 8 arrived after the last issue had gone to press, but the postmark was quite in order, and you have therefore been credited with 3 marks.

Fiat Pax: No, Fiat Pax, regarding Problem No. 7, so far from suggesting that Mrs. B. should approach Miss C., you say "the proper course to take in the first place is to warn the erring husband. . . . Miss C. can be ignored as she has already compromised her friendship and her conduct is sufficient to indicate that she will not brook any interference."

## Solution of Problem No. 9.

COMPETITORS seem to have found the ambiguity of the description of C. as "an official onlooker" something of a stumbling block, but I think were he either definitely superior or inferior to A. and B., we should be so informed. As I read the problem, he is not actually concerned with either, but in a position to know the facts.

I agree with Mrs. Mason and all those other competitors who state that it would probably be worse than useless for C. to tackle A. So far from mending matters, it would be more likely to make things worse for B. On the other hand, C. should not stand by and see rank injustice done to B., especially as the work of the department must also suffer.

Senga's answer is short and to the point. She says: "C. should advise B. to make a complaint to their superiors to the effect that he was not getting a fair deal from A., and at the same time offer to support B.'s evidence, seeing that he is in sympathy with him." I would, however, amend it so far as to say that C. should inform B. that if he feels inclined to lodge a complaint or ask for an inquiry, he can count on his (C.'s) support, and leave it to B. to act or not, as he thinks best.

Marks have been awarded as follow:—A Trier, 5; Anon, 3; Apple Pie Mary, 0; Bonza, 5; Clara, 0; Duplex, 3; Deerfoot, 5; Equity, 4; Fiat Pax, 5; Frances, 5; Freckles, 0; Grace, 0; Haven, 0; Irene, 4; Jean, Te Puke, 0; Jonquil, 3; Kummel, 4; Lucid, 5; Mrs. Mason, 4; Myra, 5; Mayflower, 4; Natural, 3; Nomen, 4; Olivia, 5; Priscilla, 3; Pumpkin, 5; Query, 4; Radex, 0; Radio, 3; Rosa, 0; Senga, 5; Seylla, 3; Summit, 2; Thames, 0; Tuner, 5; Topaz, 4; Undine, 3; Viola, 3; Verity, 5; Wynward, 0; Weaver, 3; Xylonite, 0; Xerxes, 5; Yum-yum, 4; Zenobia, 4.

acquainting themselves, but electric washing machines are sent out with such definite instructions, the mechanism so simple, requiring hardly more than that the operator should know how to start and stop the machine, that it is a truism to say that a child can do it.

There are diverse types, to suit all ideas—some with, some without wringer attachments; some operating on the principle of agitation, the clothes being lifted rapidly but gently up and down through the hot suds; others spin the clothes rapidly through the water, and will also spin entirely or partially dry. Special care is taken in every instance to avoid damage to the articles being laundered, so that no fear need be entertained on that score.

Nor need lack of finance prove an obstacle to the possession of one of these household boons. In most cases, a small initial payment is all that is

required, with subsequent monthly payments so small that they need hardly be taken into account, and which are certainly more than adequately covered by the ensuing saving of time and labour.

The present is the time, before the short days of winter are upon us, for every woman to decide, be she town or country-dweller, rich or poor, the way she will wash her clothes.

## How Unnecessary

A LONDON boy, being sent to bed by his parents, set the house on fire. If his feet were cold, he need not have proceeded to such extreme measures, had his mother provided him with one of the neat little electric heating pads.