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Simplify the Weekly Wash

Much Needless Labor Can be Avoided by Buying the Right Kind of Clothes
(By Georgie Boynton Child, in The Delineator.)

Unless you have tried to do laundry work yourself you may not realize how important it is to begin the study of your washing problem with the wise selection of your wearing apparel. One thing looks as easy to launder as another to the inexperienced eye. But a trained laundress knows that two washings of the same number of pieces often require entirely different amounts of care and labor.

If you will examine the price list of any well-managed and successful laundry, you will find that no definite price is given for any piece of women's or children's clothing. Each article is "so much and up." This method has been adopted for just this reason. Even in the laundries where work is systematized much more carefully than in the average home, and where there are specialized workers for each kind of work, it has been found impossible to quote an average price that would allow for the difference in time and skill that is required for a fussy thing over one made up simply. The difference lies very largely in the ironing.

A Wise-Young Mother

I once knew a housekeeper who was wonderful in the way she selected the patterns for her own underwear and house dresses as well as for her children's clothing. She could tell at a glance the patterns that would be most effective, and then would take these and improve them so that little dresses and aprons would be evolved that would slip over the ironing board and be ironed in half the time required to iron an ordinary child's dress or apron.

At the time of which I speak there were two or three of us young mothers, each making the dresses for her first baby. We all wanted them to be as dainty as possible. One of us bought only the most expensive nainsook for her baby's things, and made them with hand-embroidered yokes and ruffles on the bottom. I decided to ask the advice of my experienced friend before I bought my materials. She gave it quite plainly and bluntly.

"It is very foolish to spend so much money on materials, thinking that is going to make your baby well dressed. The important thing is to have plenty of the simple little slips so that the baby can have a crispy, fresh one every day, that can be done up so easily that the baby can be kept immaculate without effort. Why, even a fifteen-cent lawn, if it is fresh, looks better than ninety-cent nainsook that is the least bit mussed. Make up the baby's slips without yokes or ruffles. You will find that even a two-year-old child ought to have more slips than dresses, just because they are so much easier to iron."

Then she added another bit of advice about the length of children's dresses. "Another important point is the length of children's dresses. It makes a vast deal of difference if the length is right. A well-cut, simply made dress of becoming length always looks well, whereas, no matter how fine the material is or how beautifully made, a dress looks forlorn if it is two or three inches too long."

I began to study my laundry problem from a new point of view. While I was trying to simplify the work in my own home, I also watched the methods other mothers used. In talking with them I learned that the average mother, unless she does her own washing and ironing, never thinks of these details at all. Many of the women I knew spent more money on their children's clothing than I did; experienced a great deal more worry and anxiety; and had twice the amount of laundry work, but with no better results. Their babies looked no better dressed than mine because they failed to consider the laundry side of the matter before buying clothes.

We begin, then, by studying our laundry problem before it is a problem. Then we must agree on a policy that we can all adopt for laundry work:

We all of us want plenty of nice, clean clothing, and we want our work well done. We will simplify by buying

the things that are easy to wash and easy to iron, or by buying crinkled underwear that requires no ironing; by eliminating fussy, lace-trimmed garments, and by selecting colors that do not fade and that do not soil easily. In other words, we eliminate everything that requires an undue expenditure of time.

We soon discover that the thing which causes us the most difficulty in washing is not the size of the wash, but the difference in care required for the different kinds of clothing. Take, for instance, the washing of a family where there are many children's dresses and rompers. There may be among the colored clothes five or six different materials, each of which requires special treatment to prevent fading. There may be dresses of fast color trimmed with contrasting colors that fade easily. There may be white socks which have light blue, pink, or tan tops. An expert laundress would give each color a little different treatment; she would set the colors of the new dresses, and after rinsing, brighten the colors of those that were faded; but it would take skill and patience and time to do such a washing carefully.

The average washerwoman has not the training to do the work in this way. The result is that in most cases the clothes become faded and unsightly after one or two washings. Often in the wash are seersucker rompers of two colors. It requires hard rubbing and extra washing powder to remove the dirt that is deeply embedded in the fibre of the cloth. After a few treatments of this kind they require new bands and seats, and soon fade badly. Socks with colored tops usually are either imperfectly washed or the colors faded in the process.

In the case just given, the difficulty and loss of time in washing was caused by not having made the children's dresses and rompers of materials that could be washed without more than ordinary care. There are such materials to be found, and it pays well to make them our standbys. By testing samples of dress materials before we buy them we can be sure of what we are getting, and thought in buying means saving time in washing.

Wash-Day Loses Its Terrors

When we have gained the wisdom to buy the right kind of materials and learned how to make them up effectively and simply, we need no longer dread wash day. If the laundress fails us, we can put thru a good-sized washing without fatigue. Then it is that we will rejoice that much of the underwear is made of crinkled materials that require no ironing, and that the ironing that must be done can be done easily and at our own convenience. With an electric iron, or alcohol iron, and an ironing stool we can be independent.

Robinson was one of those really good-natured souls who are always ready to lend a hand to a pal in distress. One day, as he was pegging along on his bicycle down a narrow country road, he came across a man holding a ram by the horns.

"Halloa!" cried Robinson. "Can I help?"

"I should be much obliged," replied the other, "if you'd hold this ram just while I get that gate over there open?"

"Certainly," replied Robinson; and, dismounting, he boldly seized the ram by the horns.

"Thanks, awfully," said the stranger, now on the other side of the gate. "The brute attacked me more than an hour ago, and I've been struggling with him ever since. So long, old chap! Hope you'll be as lucky as I was!"

The will of Miss Caroline P. Whitlock, of Atlantic City, N.J., stipulates that a negro band shall follow the hearse in her funeral procession, playing lively airs.

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How to Debate

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These books will fill the need so far as debates on the above subjects are concerned. In each book is given a brief for the argument on each side of the question. Each book also contains a number of the best articles available, thus supplying authoritative information on both sides of the question. In addition each book contains a long list of books, magazines and articles and where they may be secured, so that any person who desires to get information on either side of the question may do so. These books contain from 145 to 235 pages each and are attractively bound in green cloth covers.

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