Glad-irons Replace Sad-irons

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By Ida Ruth Younkin

R E M E M B E R the old sadirons whose heat you judged by the ferocity of the sizzle? Equipment needed for those days of ironing drudgery included—a strong right arm, a gaily colored calico holder to protect your hand from the hot handle, yesterday’s newspaper for a stand, and a piece of wax to keep the bottom of the iron smooth. Then there was the big, heavy ironing board—one end resting on the kitchen table and the other on a stool on which perhaps the cookie box was set and maybe an old encyclopedia to give the necessary height.

After gingerly touching the iron to find that it gave a good vigorous sizzle, you carried all of its seven or eight pounds from the stove to the board, rubbed it quickly over the wax, and after making a strong sweep of black on yesterday’s news item, you proceeded to scorch the sleeve of the first garment. The next sleeve looked pretty good, but a little later the iron was all cooled off and back you trotted to the hot stove.

The old sadirons are relegated to the past but still they give a more pleasing picture than that of our primitive ancestors using stones and pebbles to smoothen clothes. A tenth century Scottish household used a “smoother” which resembled an enormous inverted mushroom. Made of black glass, it was five and one-half inches in diameter and had a stem seven and one-half inches long. The Greeks and Romans were indebted to the Egyptians for their so-called gauffering irons which they used to pleat their linen robes.

One needn’t travel far in America to find some rather ancient irons. In a dusty old hotel filled with Indian arrowheads, guns and beautiful old furniture, a gray bespectacled old man is the proud possessor of a collection of old irons. He lives in the little town of Nau­voo, Illinois, which the Mormons deserted in their flight to Salt Lake City, Utah. The irons, like many other pieces of the collection, belonged to the Mor­mons and to some French colonists called Icarians.

One of his irons is practically a miniature stove. A draft and a short smoke-stack were provided, charcoal serving as the fuel. Its operator needed a good oxygen supply as well as a strong right arm! No doubt she often stooped to blow the burning charcoal to greater brightness.

In another, a small door was provided at the heel of the iron where a red hot bar could be slipped in with a pair of tongs.

So back in the good old days it was burnt fingers and burnt clothes!

Children Around the World

By Mae Louise Buchanan

I T A L Y ’ S “asilo d’infanzia” has enrolled one third of the children from 3 to 6 years of age in government supervised schools. Macaroni, rusk, rice and corn mush frequent the menu. Italy has not yet acquired the necessary “egg a day” habit.

Russia’s “creches” are to liberate women from care of their children while they work in the field or take part in the social or political life of the country. The children are given a communist educational foundation.

Austria’s slogan is “Give to the child beauty and joy—childhood impressions live forever.”

Russia is the only country that has adopted the idea of “The Home for the Mother and Child”—an enclosed waiting room in a railway station, where children under sanitary super-

vision are allowed recreation, rest, food and baths. Scientifically cleansed toys, beds and food are for their convenience.

Amsterdamsche Vereening Tot Instandhouding van Kinderbewaarplaatsen! What a mouthful! Can you imagine saying that for Netherland’s nursery school? There they fill clear glass bottles with colored water and place them in windows. The Netherland people are very partial to bright and gay colors.

There is no baby-talk, no spanking, no threats among the Cree children in Canada.

Rome children bring their own lunches from home. Officials check the ration and then go about improving the mother’s knowledge of foods in guiding her purchase and food preparation.

After the years between 1880 and 1890, when electricity became more available, someone conceived the idea of inserting an electrical resistance coil in the center of the old sadiron.

The rejuvenated sadiron, looking forward to better times, proceeded to the addition of a wooden handle, and a perma­nently attached cord with a spring added for protection. It was dressed up further by adding nickel plating to the spring, handle strap, and top and middle casting.

Fairly respectable now, the electric iron still left the house-wife dependent on the sizzling test and, although a scorched dress was only occasional, it was by no means exceptional. The plug in—plug out method was the operator’s only means for controlling the temperature to be used on her choice pieces.

With the changes in the family wardrobe have come strong contrast in materials—heavy linens, delicate silks, sensitive rayons, novelty wools. To meet the need, the plug in—plug out method was abandoned and in its place came our shiny, stream-lined irons with automatic temperature controls to insure a temperature range suitable for the fabric being ironed.

The new model has become a true “smoothing” iron with its lighter weight (three to four and one-half pounds) and higher wattage (1000 instead of 600) made possible by better home wiring. Heating capacity, not weight, is now recognized as the important factor. And with a flick of the finger, you may switch the temperature from a low one for your best silk dress to a high one for your heavy linen suit.

Other features in the newest irons? Cork handles, handles open at the front end to make the ironing of intricate sleeves no longer so awkward a task, a heel on the iron to take the place of the old stand and large sole plates to cover greater areas.

Bevelled edges makes sliding around buttons easy. Handles are shaped to fit the hand and of materials that remain cool and easy to grip. And on many of the new irons the cord runs right into the iron instead of plugging in. Rust proof, stain proof surfaces make the iron a shining part of the household equipment.

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