

ANNotations . . .

Pre-Dawn Ironing

By ANN CONNELL

EARLY MORNING is our favorite time for ironing, but seldom do we get to it as early as today—4 a.m. Having gone to bed early, because washday this week followed a Sunday afternoon spent in weeding the flowers, we awakened before the dawn. Since slumber would not return, and we decried the loss of time, we rose; the ironing waited.

Morning was pink behind Judkins Point as we set up the ironing board in the kitchen, and the tall poplar trees in the neighborhood of the Carl Huffakers loomed dark against it. It was twilight; things were visible but not distinct in the garden, and the birds were carrying on a twittering chorus of sweet sounds.

As we looked out the door-window, suddenly the screen rattled and a dark shape came before our eyes. Corpie, the cat, ("Corporal Cuthbert reporting Ma'am.") had climbed up to ask admittance, remembering, no doubt, food left in his dish last night. We let him in quickly, lest his clatter disturb Himself, who had still three hours to sleep.

FOUR-THIRTY. We'd finished the flat things, and the silky stuffs that are woman-garments of today. Our mind went back to the trousseau of which we'd been so proud, more than 30 years before. Rayon was very new, and there were rayon "vests", hand-sewn, with ribbon shoulder straps, and to match each pink, blue, lavender and peach vest there was a chemise and gown of dimity, voile or lawn. Our mother had sewn each one lovingly by hand, with lace and embroidery, medallions of Irish lace and Irish eyelet work. One set, of palest pink, was silk and trimmed with row-on-row of our favorite Val lace with clustered dots, the lace handsewn with Katie's stitches. . . .

We pressed T-shirts and sturdy shorts, with a thought backward to those many-buttoned BVD's of our early washings, which were forever losing buttons to the wringer. . . .

FIVE O'CLOCK. We reached for a bundle of dampened linens. This part of the ironing we always enjoy—the Irish in us, again, we suppose. (We find ourselves buying here a towel, there a towel, preferably handwoven, so that we shall always have a bit of linen to launder and enjoy.) We thought of the incongruity that now when we have electricity and the steam iron to make ironing so much easier than in former days, but women no longer wear starched and ruffled garments which took such hours of "smoothing." Hanora Collins, our grandmother, packed her treasured irons, which really were cast of that metal, in Boston and brought them out to San Francisco and then to Oregon. They had to be heated, on end, at the fireplace, before there was a stove.

Our mother, Katie, started housekeeping on the Four Mile Creek homestead with the same sort of irons, but she had a stove to start. I remember how proud she was when Dad got the new irons which had removable handles; first a wooden handle with a lever which locked or lifted free. Next came irons of some alloy like aluminum, which had a polished steel cover and handle; irons at last were bright and clean-looking. Our sister had the first electric iron, heavy and awkward-seeming, now, but Oh! a wonder then. . . .

IT'S BROAD DAY outside, now, but the rosy glow is gone. Still no sign of life in any house within view, although a car goes by on the street outside now and then.

We reach for a shirt; this and one more and we're done. Suddenly we note a reflected light on the roof-peak of a house facing east—somewhere the sun is coming up. Yes, there is another glow showing behind Judkins Point. By 5:15 the sun was peeking through the poplars, getting in our eyes. We stopped and put on coffee, kindled a fire in the trash-burner before starting the last shirt. That done, we thought of some summer dresses which needed pressing. . . . one thing we do not like about summer! (Sh-h-h! Say it softly—summer was reluctant enough this year!)

Ah, coffee! We fill the stove, take a cup of coffee to Himself, and at six go back to bed. It feels more restful now!

Shower Honors Darlene Empey

JUNCTION CITY—Miss Darlene Empey of Springfield was honored with a bridal shower given by Miss Doris Peterson and Miss Hazel Peterson at their home in Junction City Wednesday evening. Miss Empey who will be married July 23, to Kenneth R. Wicks, is a former Junction City resident. Decorations were pink roses and miniature aqua colored umbrellas. Gifts were presented in a gayly decorated laundry basket which was given to the guest of honor at the close of the evening. Sixteen of her former schoolmates were invited.



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