

# Women Earn Good Living by Washing.



**T**o choose taking in washing for a living is one of the future possibilities of the muscular well bred, with the chance of the pretty "blanchisseuse de fin" of the Tribby type becoming common.

Just at present the evolution of washing by hand towards becoming a fine art has reached a stage where a few women of more than the average mental scope usually accredited to the washerwoman are making what might be called good living wages out of it by doing "specialty washings," which bring the best price at the least expense of physical strength. Speculators in the different fields of money making are attracted by the fact that this much has been done by women alone and unaided, with small equipment, and by handling the money end of it in a way in which business is mixed in an astonishing degree with sentiment.

The possibilities of this kind of work cluster around the greater apartment houses which are built for living upon the hotel plan, where there are found instances of good money made, with methods of charging which are, to say the least, unbusinesslike. For instance, there is one woman who lives in a four room flat out on the north side, who has worked out a method by which, working entirely alone, she takes in \$20 a week. She avoids the loss of money and strength of the ordinary washerwoman by washing entirely for people in one large apartment which is within twenty minutes' ride. She charges by the piece and, with few exceptions, does nothing but women's and children's wear of a quality which not only brings large prices but which she puts into such small space that she can get it all home on one trip. She insists upon its being ready for her Sunday night, which

any woman will aver is the most inconvenient time for the owner of the clothes. Yet Sunday night the clothes are ready, wherein is shown the autochthonousness of the washerwoman over her of greater pretensions.

### Seven Washings in One Day.

With her work already gathered in the house, this woman does all of her seven washings on Monday. Although she handles sometimes 200 pieces, they are of such fineness and lightness that this is the easiest day in the week. With help at the wringer she is through, with the clothes in the last water, and kerchiefs and small unstarched pieces that dry quickly are hung out by four o'clock in the afternoon. The next morning she begins with starching and hanging out, doing enough sprinkling that day and every evening to get one or two lots of clothes ready to take home each night. She has finished by Friday night and has Saturday to work for herself, having worked at the clothes only five days in the week at an average of ten hours a day, with expenses that do not exceed over \$2.50. At the same time the clothes are beautifully done, so much better, in fact, than in the ordinary laundry that she told me that when once in a pinch she sent something to the laundry she would not take it home before "dumping it into the tub," as she expressed it, and doing it all over again. The lares are all worked over and pulled out by the fingering process. Ribbons are taken out of lingerie and washed and ironed separately. Embroideries are ironed on the wrong side. In addition, her work is that much better than laundry work because the clothes are handled gently in the washing, are dried out of doors, and are not done by machinery.

For all this, and in spite of the fact that some of her customers pay often as high as \$3.50 a week for their little bundle of personal linens, her charges are moderate beside those asked for the same things when done by the average laundry. For instance, she was doing, the other day, a half dozen snowy petticoats from the trousseau of a bride who had just come to the apartment after her wedding trip, and who upon her travels had been paying \$1 apiece on account of extra frounce. This woman did them for 50 cents apiece. Right here is the place where "business" and even the most progressive washerwoman are strangers.

### Charges Less for Better Work.

"Why don't you charge as much as the laundry when the work is better than theirs?" I asked. "Well, I like to do the work as cheap as I can for those who appreciate it," was the answer, which was accompanied by a motherly little touch to the bride's petticoats, hanging in a beautiful row upon the line. "I like to wash cheap for my good customers. Most of them are always pleased and never think of saying I ask too much. I'll do it for them a little cheaper, but there are some women who are never pleased, no matter how well it is done, and who are always trying to jaw me. I can soon tell whether I want to keep them or not. I wash for them once or twice, and if they get to jawing me I drop them out and take somebody else."

### Appreciation as Part Payment.

The encouraging sign to those who would consider hand washing in a money making light lies in the fact that, as

conducted at present, there is another coin of exchange accepted as part payment which is at par with money. In the washerwoman's words, it is appreciation. Incidentally, the woman who can give a little "jolly" to her washerwoman of the kind which will stand pat when she thinks she is touched in her pocketbook can still get bargains in well done lingerie, and may even at times have a chance at the almost extinct family washerwoman. One woman who worked this principle to the extreme, perhaps, employed for years an unusually expert woman, who came to the house once in two weeks and did the whole washing and ironing for that period in one day. As regularly as she came she carried off a little bundle of provisions, which she "took" out of the pantry. It was just her "little way," as she never touched anything but oddies. The woman philosophically matched it by a little way of her own in appearing not to notice, and as a consequence, in spite of the horror of her friends, got from \$1 to \$5 worth of washing done for \$1.50, with about 25 cents' worth of groceries thrown in.

This principle of working for people they like with a price scale which is arbitrary is found in all stages of taking in washing, even to methods of counting by the dozen. An old couple owning a little home, who succeed in making \$5 or \$6 a week, with the husband working at home to help with the washing for the first two days, and carrying the wash back and forth to places where he does scrubbing and job work the rest of the week, have a scale of their own which is a sample. They charge 50 cents a dozen for everything, counting handkerchiefs and small articles, too, as one. Waists are extra from 10 to 15 cents, and big petticoats are worth 25 cents. This couple combine forces by his coming home from his hour work and ironing sheets, handkerchiefs, and "plain"

ironing. They pride themselves on charging "fair" in order to keep the same customer.

### Pay by Dozen or by Day.

The passing of the woman who takes home work by the wash instead of by the dozen sits down to a matter of disagreement between employer and employed. "They do not want to pay anything like what it is worth by the dozen," said a woman who had been doing a two weeks' washing and ironing at a price varying between \$2 and \$2.50 with objection made when it went to the higher notch. "They forget that every rag at the laundry counts, even if it comes home torn in two," she said, showing how she had figured out her expense of time and money. It took her two days to do it, and in the summer when she used gasoline for fuel her list was as follows:

Snap and Mending	10 cents
Gasoline for two days	25 cents
Breakfast and lunch for two days	3 cents
Laundry	3 cents

Deducted even from her highest price this left only \$1.82 as pay for her two days' work. Besides the fact that her house is all messed up after each day's work. Instead, if she goes out at a dollar and a half she has it clear, and comes home to find her house in order; her breakfast and lunch are furnished and set out for her, and in some cases her carfare paid, and she gets her three dollars clear. The woman who will take washing home now in any way but by the dozen is the one who is tied at home by her children and who needs the money badly. The minute she is foot loose she goes out by the day.

## There Need Be No Waste for the Wise and Thrifty Housewife.



In another pocket tissue paper is put to be used artistically for stuffing out the sleeves and trimmings of fancy gowns, and ignominiously in taking the grease out of the frying pans before applying the dish water. The little paraffin papers that come on bread were disposed of in an envelope for the wrapping of lunch sandwiches and the covering individually of the halves of picnic eggs.

### Economy Even in Charity.

The uses of newspapers, provided there is a little plot of the charmed space which is known as "one side" to put them in, can be easily made both philanthropic and domestic. The Sunday supplements are put with the magazine accumulation until a postal card can take a "call" to the nearest hospital, in the public wards of which the lack of reading matter is great enough to keep a hospital wagon busy. Domestically the uses of newspaper are endless. A little pile of them over the kitchen table and sink are ready to be taken down and used half unfolded to protect the oilcloth in every bit of work which is performed. Especially are they better than a pan to use in peeling and preparing fruit and vegetables because of the trick of doing paper, contents, and all up into a little wad and dumping it into the can. Newspapers work to the soaking point and wrapped in thick layers around lettuce will keep it fresh and sweet almost indefinitely. More thick layers of them laid over the ice in the refrigerator will keep it full one-third longer in the ice stage of its existence. Wet papers torn up and used in swamping rugs keep down the dust and "brighten" the rugs perceptibly. Used as a wrapping for furs and winter clothing they are almost a sure preventive of moths. When fashion does not cause the cook and everybody else to trail around in tanned gowns, layers of papers are invaluable "rugs" for the kitchen floor, besides the endless uses as linings to closets and drawers and shelves. In ironing newspapers have their uses, both in rubbing off the iron and in rolling up large quantities of them for slipping inside sleeves to press seams. In treating this subject from the view point of economy of



space, as well as material, the case which holds the table leaves is suggested as a receptacle which will keep the files for every day in order and accessible.

### Old Bottles Find Ready Sale.

The accumulation of bottles, which in itself suggests taking to drink on the part of anybody with good house-keeping instincts, will make good money returns, especially if their contents have been of the thirst quenching variety. In the little publications which are gotten out by large corporations the rebate, running up as high often as \$2 on a case, is stated in terms that pays the householder to remember that, if he buys domestic articles, the bottles containing imported vinegars are unsalable except to the rag and iron men, who will give as high as 2 cents apiece sometimes for the larger varieties. Beer bottles are especially salable, while those with patent stoppers, while they can be returned, are invaluable for root beer, supplies of which kept in the ice box have "persuading" qualities as an ice man and milk man "hand out." Champagne bottles are useful for bluing and vinegar, as they are not used for refilling with the original vinegar, as is done with claret and other wines. In the vinegar connection stone jars and large jugs will bring 4 and 5 cents from the grocer.

Drug bottles are useless, except for breaking up, which leads up to another kind of domestic economy. Finely pounded and poured into mice and rat holes glass is irresistible, while for large places which rats dig under the edges of masonry and cement sidewalk, a mortar can be made with it which they cannot get through. Flour, water, sifted ashes, and the glass form the formula, which will hold regardless of varying proportions as to quantities. In large apartments, where the sorting of waste products is made lucrative by the janitor, no use has been found for cans which are taken to the "dumps," though cut up into flat pieces these also can be used for shutting off mouse exits.

### Baskets Make Good Kindling.

Strawberry boxes and vegetable baskets make not only good kindling, but good summer fuel, where there is a furnace, although the best of the small boxes are now broken up and used in kindergarten work. The smoother and prettier shaped baskets which come from china stores can be painted in lovely reds and blacks and dark oriental colors or stenciled in pale shades with gold to help provide the absolutely work saving scheme of having scrap baskets in every room. Painted in white, baskets large enough to hold a considerable purchase of dishes are just as artistic for clothes hamper as the kind that are paid for.

For those whose time limitations prevent the practice of everything that could be outlined in indoor economy, a postal card to the "junk" shop—it is so classified—will bring the rag man, who is fast disappearing from many localities, particularly in flat neighborhoods, where this class of stuff is seized by the janitor. Incidentally, street bargains with the dealer will prove more lucrative upon rags and newspapers than those with the wagon man.

### How the Salvation Army Helps.

One of the reasons for the lack of patronage of the rag and iron man is the broader economy which many people



feel to be accomplished by summoning a wagon from the Salvation Army. For instance, it is a question whether the worn shoes of the family shall be sold to keep the "message" in brooms, which it will easily do, or whether they will be passed on to the army. If taken there they go to the Industrial Home, where they are mended by an "out of work" recruit. They are then put into one of the little stores of the society where they are sold for a small sum or they are used together with old clothes gathered in the same way and put in order by the same class of labor, to put the "out of a job" man in shape to be considered. Incidentally part of the records contain cases of this rejuvenating process having "landed" men in the same job from which they had been ignominiously turned down just before while applying in a state of tatters. Children's wear and women's, even hats and corsets, are cleaned, restituted, and refitted to be sold in the stores at small prices. Magazines are used in the same way and broken chairs are patched up and made both sitable and salable. This also is done by the Salvation Army. Even the papers and baskets and bottles the army wagon will remove, provided the call is not for this only, but includes anything else which will be of value.