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EXTENDING THE USES OF ELECTRICITY

ITS APPLICATIONS TO DOMESTIC SERVICE

By H. S. Knowlton



AN ELECTRICALLY HEATED LAUNDRY IRON

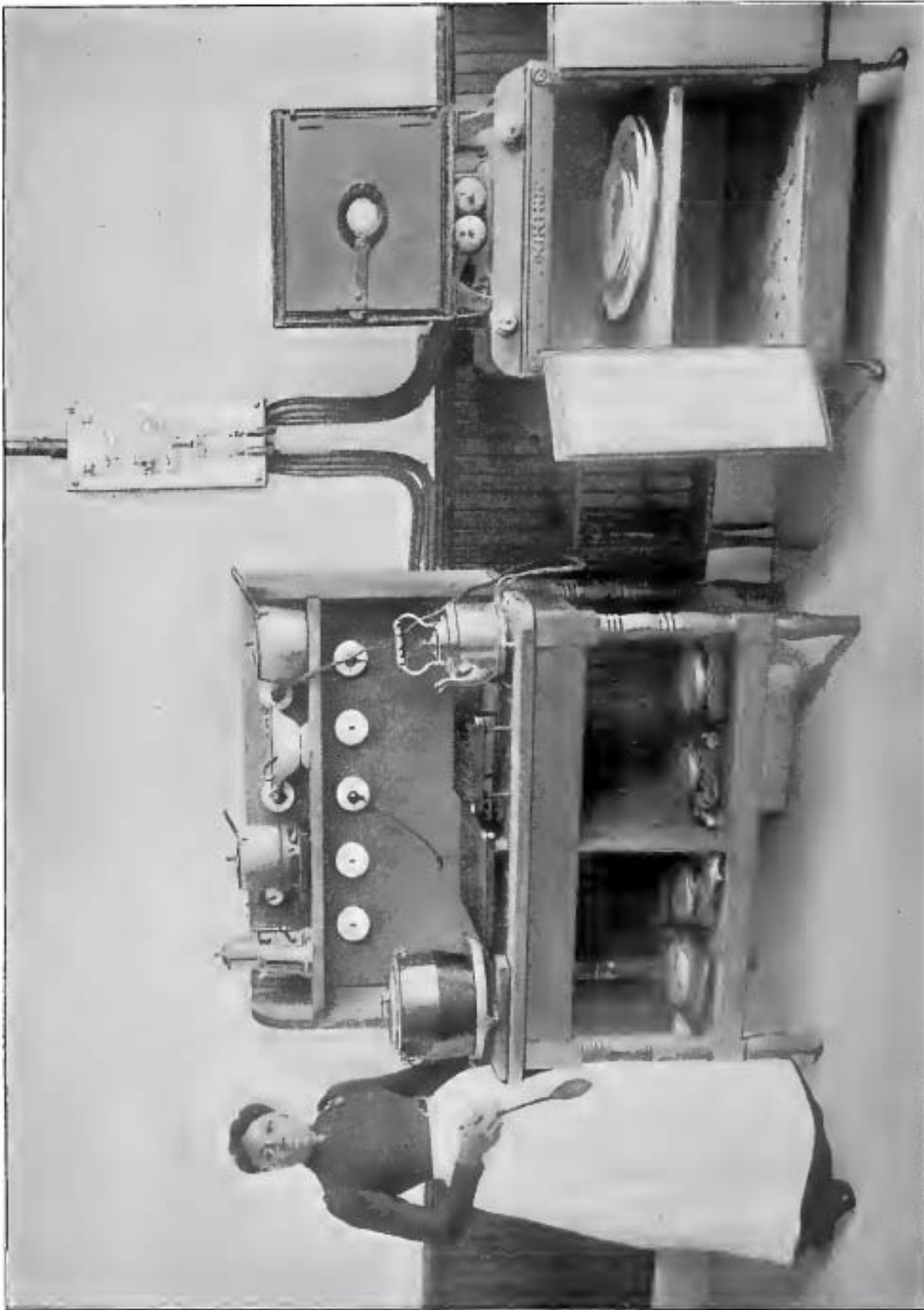
VIGOROUS efforts are now being made by progressive electric central station managers everywhere to extend the uses of electricity in dwellings, the fact being duly recognized that the opportunities in this field are far from being fully utilized. The experience of the telephone companies in the matter of residential service well illustrates the growth of business which the adoption of favourable rates tends to produce, and it is undoubtedly true that some such course in the central station field would bear good fruit. The

rate problem, it is true, is a dangerous thing to tinker with, but the fact remains that in many places the residential business of local central stations is only a small fraction of what it might be.

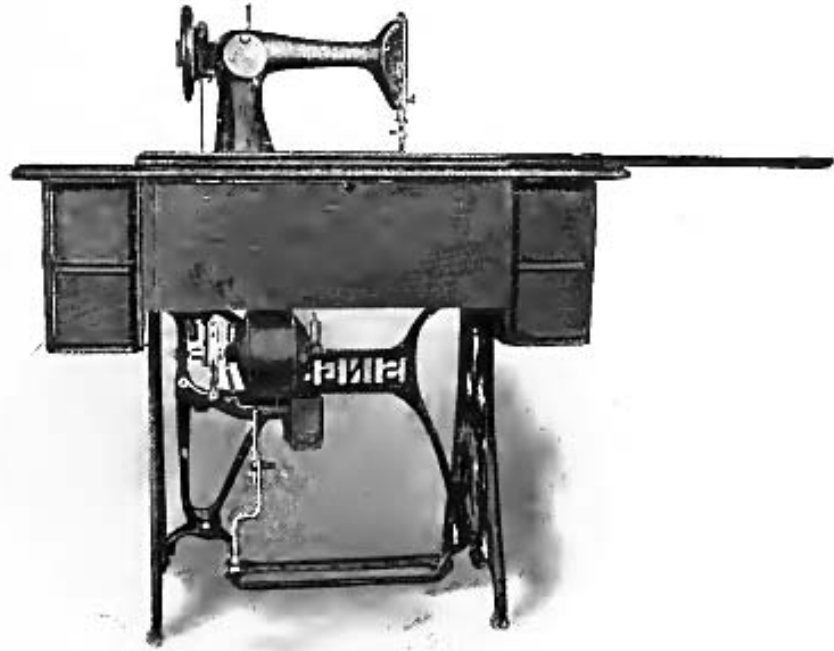
From the standpoint of the general public, almost any rate is likely to be assailed as too high, so that the clamour for reductions which is perpetually put forth by unthinking consumers should carry relatively little weight. With the present activity in the gas field, however, it behooves the central station manager to examine his residential rates carefully before deciding that nothing can be done to make them more attractive to



A PROMETHEUS HEATER



AN ELECTRIC KITCHEN OUTFIT INSTALLED BY THE SIMPLEX ELECTRIC HEATING CO., CAMBRIDGE, MASS.



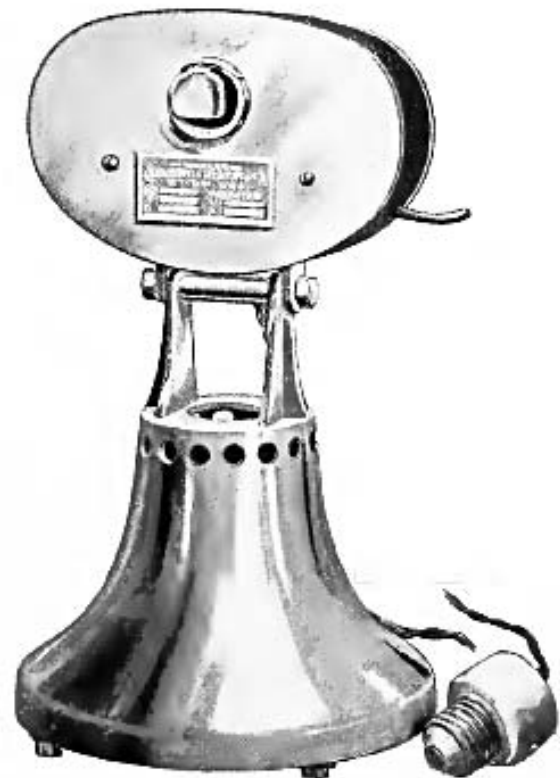
A SEWING MACHINE DRIVEN BY AN ELECTRIC MOTOR MADE BY THE DIEHL MANUFACTURING COMPANY, ELIZABETHPORTE, N. J.

the small consumer. On account of successive reductions in telephone rates in New England, the average revenue per telephone in exchange service has decreased in the last ten years from \$83 to \$37, but the resulting increase of business has been enormous, and 6 per cent. dividends have been declared with gratifying regularity. This is a heavy reduction—over 55 per cent. in fact—and while two public service industries as different as telephony and central sta-

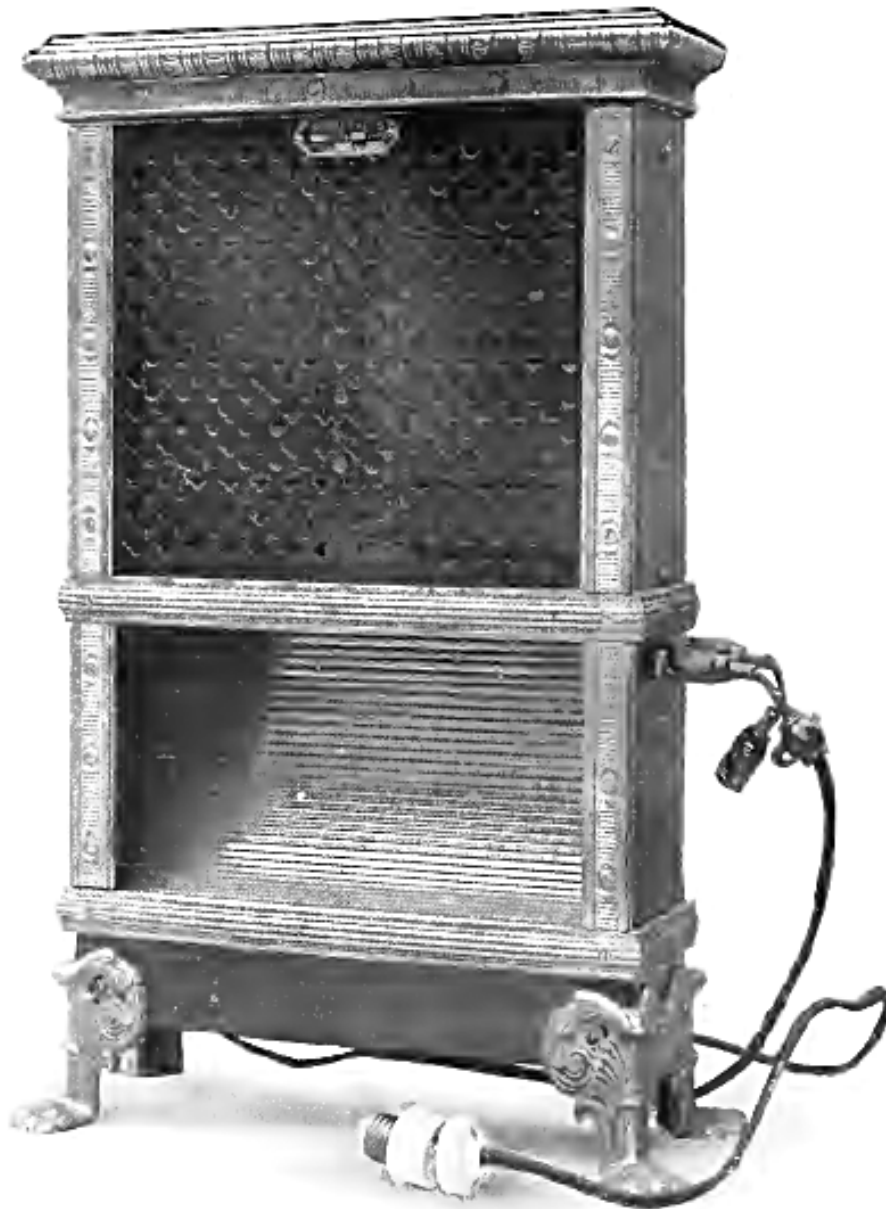
tion practice cannot be directly compared in financial policy, it is significant that prosperity has followed the reduction in telephone rates, even though the cost of service increases



A MODERN ELECTRIC BROILER MADE BY THE AMERICAN ELECTRICAL BRAKER COMPANY, DETROIT, MICH. A MEDIUM-SIZED STEAK CAN BE COOKED WITH THIS DEVICE AT A COST OF TWO CENTS



FOR LIGHTING CIGARS ELECTRICALLY



AN ELECTRIC RADIATOR MADE BY THE PROMETHEUS ELECTRIC COMPANY, NEW YORK

with every new subscriber added to the system.

In the more progressive sections residences are now very generally equipped with electric lighting circuits, and the conduct, frequently found, of both the gas and electric light business by the same company has not always resulted in the neglect of the possibilities of the latter illuminant which is so common in some communities. It is a curious fact that even the heads of electric central station companies do not always enjoy electric light service in their own

residences. Certainly any company which is actively pushing new business propositions should see to it that its responsible officers are consumers of its product, even if the service be supplied free of charge.

In a good many places electricity is regarded as a luxury, very desirable to have in one's residence, it is true, but expensive in comparison with gas. There is no use shutting one's eyes to the fact that this is the state of mind of many a gas consumer of moderate means, who would be only too glad to use electricity if

its cost were lower. Among the fairly well to do, it is not very difficult to convince the prospective consumer that with reasonable rates, even if these are somewhat greater than the corresponding gas tariff, the superior cleanliness, flexibility, convenience, and safety of electricity considerably outweigh the advantages of the older illuminant. But when we come to the man of small means, and the great majority of urban dwellers fall within this category, the only effective argument is an actual rate which compares favourably with the bill which he is accustomed to pay to the gas company. Very few town houses are now to be found which are not piped for gas, but far too many are not wired for electricity. It is a good plan for the central station to have on file the condition as regards gas or electric wiring of every house in its territory, preferably in card index form. It costs time and money to obtain such information, but it is worth all it costs, if the task is performed systematically.

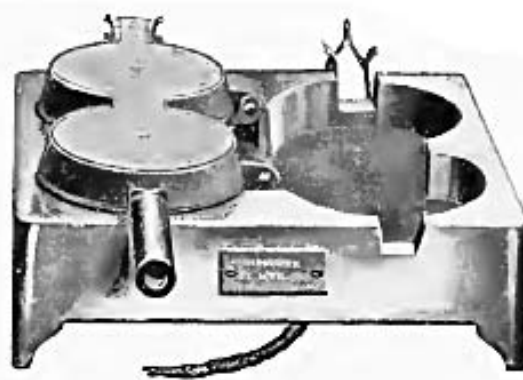
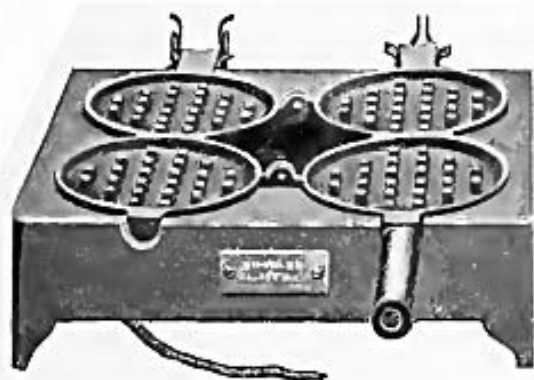
The uses of electricity in domestic service are constantly increasing, and as the customer's means permit, so can he avail himself of them. Scarcely a week passes in any large city when the daily press does not record one or more fatal cases of gas poisoning, but it is a rare occurrence indeed when the electric wiring of a residence causes death through a transformer breakdown. The quality and hygiene of the incandescent lamp



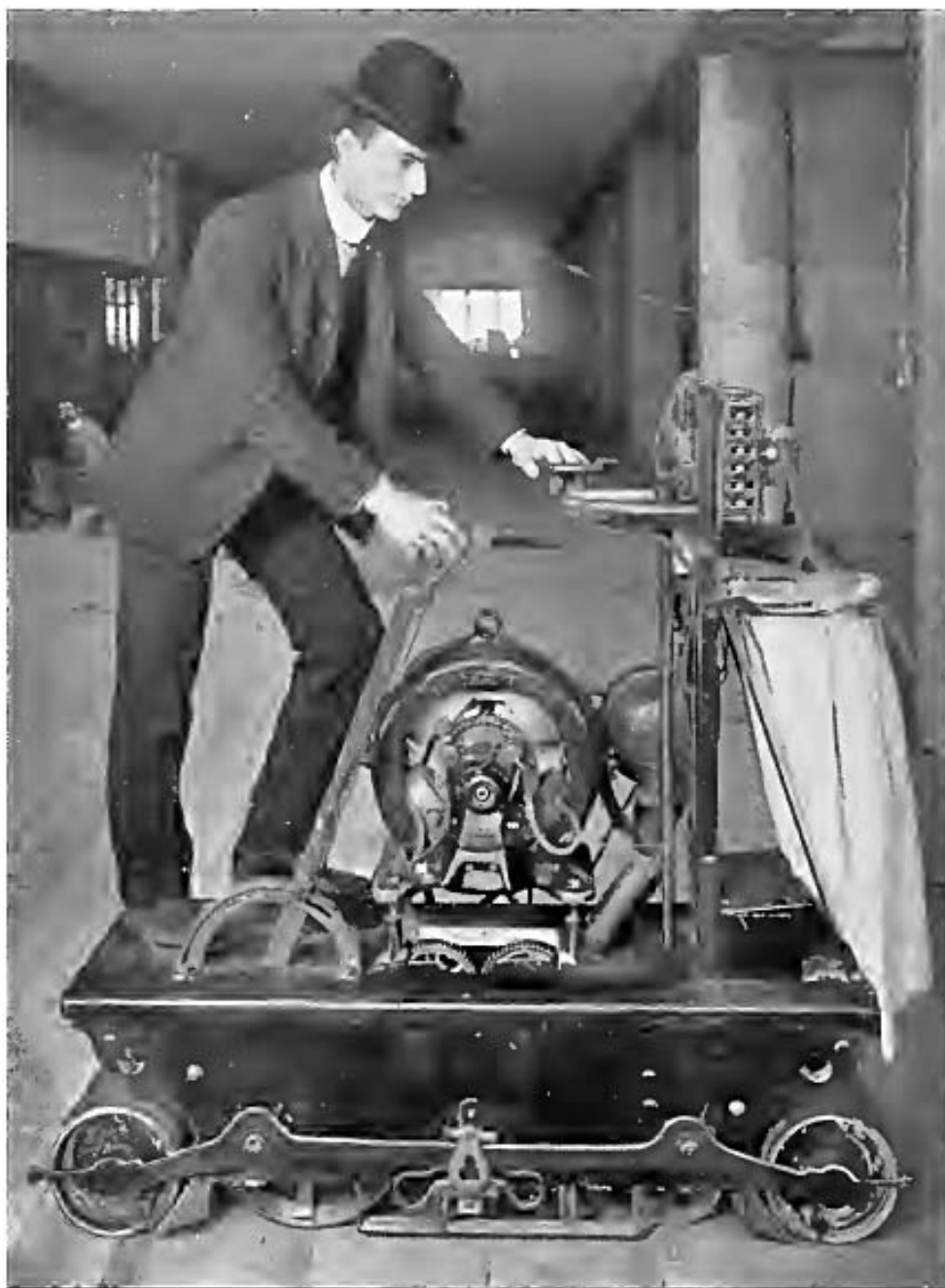
CARPET SWEEPERS, TOO, ARE NOW ELECTRICALLY DRIVEN.—THE HUTCHISON ELECTRIC CARPET SWEEPER CO., PITTSBURG

ought to finally place it in all but the poorest dwellings, but the work cannot be done unless the cost to the consumer is within his means.

The sewing machine motor has worked the physical salvation of many a housewife, but until the cost of its operation fits the average purse



ELECTRICALLY HEATED WAFFLE IRONS



A FLOOR POLISHING MACHINE WITH CROCKER-WHEELER ELECTRIC MOTOR DRIVE

its benefits must remain unknown by those who need it most of all. The polishing of tableware, grinding of coffee, chopping of meat, washing of dishes, cleaning and sweeping by motor-driven pneumatic exhausters, operation of cutlery grinders, ventilation of chambers and living rooms, sterilization of drinking water, and the operation of chafing dishes, curling irons and other heaters, are only a few of the things which the presence of electricity in a residence allows.

Of course, many of these uses could not at once be enjoyed by the average family, and yet the simple introduction of a lighting circuit is the entering wedge of many good things to come.

The crux of the whole matter is simply this,—the central station man's motto must be, "Electricity in every home," to paraphrase the familiar slogan of the telephone companies. Possibly in some cases it will be found impossible to reduce the rates

for residential lighting much below the present charges, even figuring a liberal percentage of increased business as the result. The introduction of high-efficiency lamps will help considerably. Vigorous advertising will



AN ELECTRIC IMMERSION HEATER MADE BY THE AMERICAN ELECTRICAL HEATER COMPANY, DETROIT, MICH.—COILS OF THIS KIND ARE SPECIALLY ADAPTED FOR HEATING WATER OR OTHER LIQUIDS IN TANKS OR VESSELS, AND FOR THIS PURPOSE ARE TO BE PREFERRED TO DISC HEATERS OR HOT PLATES, BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT ONLY MUCH QUICKER IN ACTION, BUT ARE ALSO MORE ECONOMICAL AND DESIRABLE IN OTHER RESPECTS

be useful, if it is brought home to the average citizen. Multiplied small profits are as good as a few large surpluses. In any case, it will pay to examine the residential rates care-



AN ELECTRIC WARMING PAD MADE BY THE SIMPLEX ELECTRIC HEATING COMPANY, CAMBRIDGE, MASS. THE ELECTRIC WARMING PAD IS DESIGNED TO TAKE THE PLACE OF THE ORDINARY CUMBERSOME HOT-WATER BOTTLE. IT CONSISTS OF AN ELECTRIC HEATING ELEMENT, WITH AN OUTER CASING OF RIDER-DOWN OR RUBBER CLOTH, THE OUTER CASING BEING REMOVABLE AND WASHABLE, SO THAT THE PAD MAY ALWAYS BE KEPT IN A SANITARY CONDITION

fully, and to definitely determine whether or not they can be made sufficiently attractive to the small consumer to make the gas-lighted home an exception, instead of the rule.

