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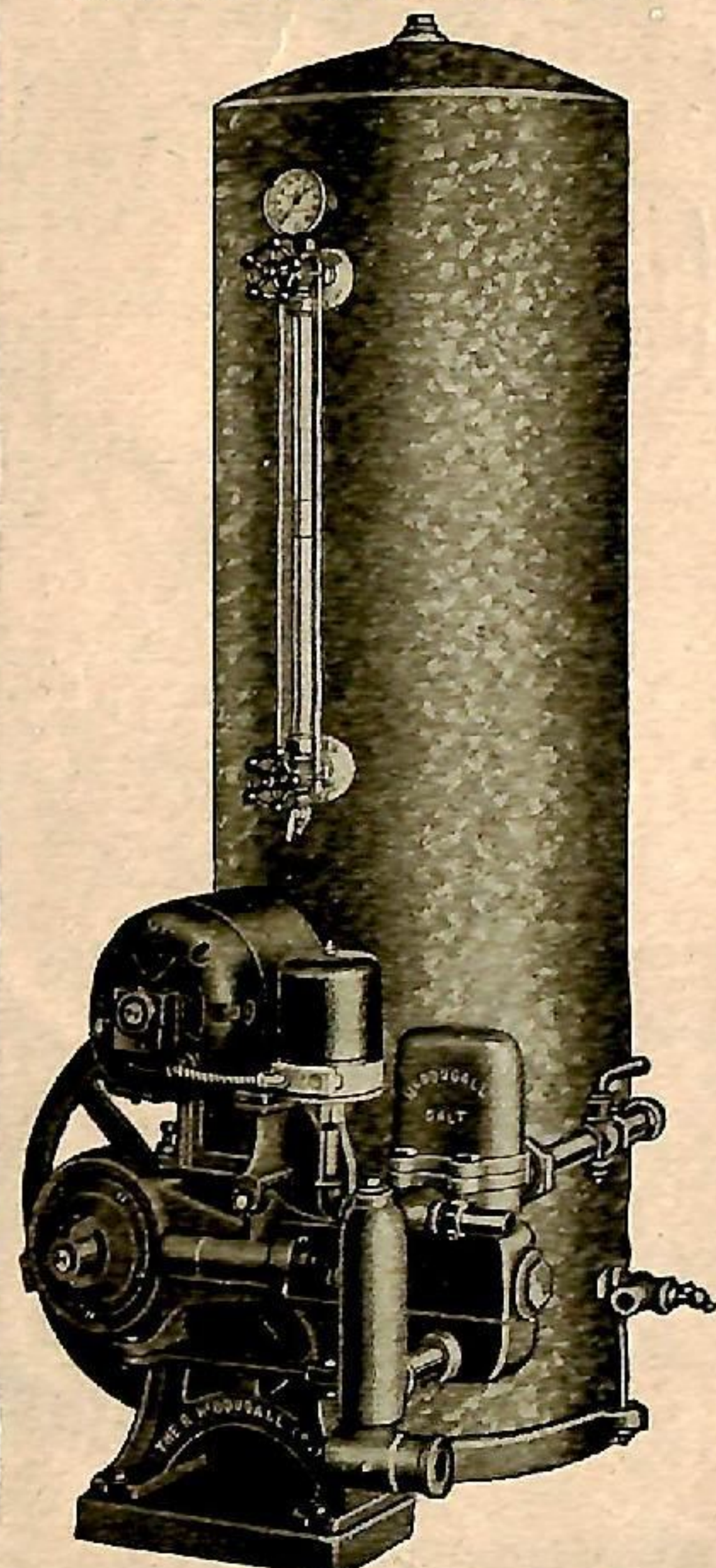
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PLAY WITH THEM

(Continued from page 47)

that in the privacy of their own homes, the greatest of the great are often the most simple and human, the most happily gifted with understanding hearts that retain something of the beauty of childlikeness. They are also big and broad enough to recognize the playrights of the youngest in their midst. A great man stoops to grow more straight in spirit, conquering Time and all its kin, when he drops the cares of the day like an out-worn garment, and takes a little child upon his shoulders.

I am not advocating frivolity, childishness, nor foolishness on the part of mature persons who ought to know better. Neither do we admire silly nor kittenish ways that are utterly out of place for grown people. But I am all for "the merry heart that doeth good like a medicine,"—one of the sanest, wisest sayings in the best of books. I advocate the cultivation of a glorious sense of humor, the infinite capacity for seeing fun, and making our own when there isn't any.

"Mother is always too tired to laugh." Don't let that be true of any daughter of Eve. Let's learn to laugh easily, readily. It makes wrinkles around the eyes and mouth, to be sure, but they are merry wrinkles, with whimsical, up-tilted curves. Much nicer to look at, a lot better to own than the kind that worry plows. Any mother amongst us with frost on her breath and ice in her eye need not expect to have and hold the warm, clinging confidence of her children, nor to occupy a very spacious spot in the inner sanctum of their private lives. We instinctively love pleasant people who are sincerely interested in us and our little ways. Well, so do children.

I WENT calling on a certain woman just the other day. It was a beguiling spring morning, and she was out-of-doors when I arrived, but she came in later, laughingly explaining what she had been about.

"Maybe you'll think me silly," she smiled, "but I was out helping the girls to get their play-house started. You see we couldn't afford to buy them a set of doll's dishes this year, as we had planned. So I cleared out my summer kitchen cupboard of all the things I'd been hoarding for years, and the children have gone off with the old broken-nosed tea-pots that belonged to two generations, the salt and pepper shakers that won't shake, cups without handles, plates with "bites" out of them, and cracked saucers that will still hold a mud pie. Their Dad has fixed up the big box which belonged to my mother's upright piano for a house. He put a window in one end and a door on the front to go in and out, and talk about fun! The girls are playing at house-keeping out there under the Manitoba maple, just as if they had all the riches in the world!"

I told my friend that I considered her children rich, indeed, to have picked such parents, and I went out myself to see and admire the happy home-making in the piano-box house under the good, green tree. It was a beguiling spring morning, and a robin was telling the world about it, from the top of the wire fence. But he was carolling no more cheerily than two small children busily "pouring tea."

I have never heard a mother talk about the subject yet, but she bewailed the fact that she did not take or make time to enjoy life with her children when they were very young. There was always too much to do. Quite true. There always seems to be. But children do not stay with us, as children, for very long. Too soon, amazingly soon, they are up, and out, and away, and our chance is over.

Ten to one your little girl will not remember fifteen years from now, whether you mopped the kitchen floor, and waxed the dining-room linoleum on Wednesday or Thursday (Continued on page 65)

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