

OAKLAND PROUD OF LAUNDRIES OPERATED BY WHITE MEN



PICTURE SHOWING GENERAL CLEANLINESS OF A WHITE LAUNDRY.

So often in speaking of a city the subject comes up about cleanliness. The city of Oakland ranks second to none on the Pacific Coast, it being recognized as one of the cleanest cities in America. But in speaking of cleanliness our thoughts are carried to the laundries which are a much more important factor to a city than most people imagine.

In Alameda county there are about forty big laundries which are owned and operated by Americans (or white people of some other nationality). In these laundries there are employed about four thousand men and women, all of whom receive very good pay, consistent of course, with the work they do in their respective positions.

These laundries mean much to the commercial life of a community. For instance, the salaries alone paid in a year to employees of white laundries is from \$2,400,000 to \$2,750,000. This is an extremely conservative estimate as the writer has taken an average of only \$12 per week for each person.

If the general public knew the amount of money circulated every day by laundry workers, fewer employees of stores and other business houses of Alameda county would spend their money with the Chinese and Japanese laundries, whose employees live on a few cents per day and mean nothing to a community outside their own zone.

Still there are thousands of people who send their soiled clothes to a Japanese or Chinese laundry to be cleaned.

The original intention at the commencement of this article was to elaborate only on the modern machinery and the great expense the laundrymen have incurred in the installation of such machinery as the improved facilities require, but one of the most important features of the white laundries would thereby be omitted, and the comparison to follow would be less understood.

Water softeners, that save labor, soap and rubbing and represent quite an outlay, starching machines, extractors, steam ironers, etc., are no small item of ex-

pense in a well-equipped laundry and are worthy of an inspection and of an educational value to one not familiar with up-to-date laundry methods.

Of the sanitary conditions that abound in the white laundries a brief mention will be made.

Spotless cleanliness prevails everywhere. The floors are of cement and perfectly drained, and the system of ventilation and the abundance of light that floods the establishments is as near perfection as human ingenuity could devise.

The clothes when put in revolving washers are washed thoroughly and quickly in hot soft water, and the revolutions force the water through the garments, rendering them clean in a very short time. The clothes are rinsed in the same machines in six complete changes of water. Every article is thoroughly sterilized and when removed from the washing machines are not only but odorless and absolutely aseptic.

Care is taken to prevent any signs of disease, either of a slight or dangerous character. The premises of the white laundries are free from dampness and some are so constructed as to be very inviting to the visitor, and a pleasure to be employed therein.

The following article is in striking contrast with the description of the places conducted by white men, and applies to 90 per cent of the laundries operated by Asiatics:

Chinese and Japanese Laundries as a Source of Infection.

"The transmission of the various Asiatic diseases frequently takes place through the medium of clothes laundered by Asiatics. The Chinese are notoriously addicted to the habit of living and sleeping in same rooms where the washing, drying and ironing of clothes is done.

There have been specific instances where contagion has been directly traced, and without doubt, the alarming increase of trachoma among whites is directly at-

tributable to the employment of Asiatic laundries, especially Japanese. Several well defined cases of trachoma were observed among Japanese laundrymen in the cities of Oakland and San Jose. Any person conversant with this disease can readily detect a case through a peculiar appearance of the eye and the enlarged and more or less inflamed condition of the lids. While treatment obscures the disease to an extent, it is impossible to entirely eradicate the evidences of it.

"The outbreak of the bubonic plague which occurred in Seattle in 1908 was traced directly to an Oriental laundry. The original victim was found dead on the floor of his laundry. The undertaker who attended the body died within twenty-four hours; his assistant followed within a day; and a female relative also succumbed. A police officer whose family patronized this laundry, together with two of his relatives, died within the week.

"Aside from ethical reasons, the persons who would imperil the health and lives of themselves or their families for the sake of a few pennies are certainly following a course which is of doubtful economy, and almost sure to bring terrible and swift disaster in the shape of Asiatic pestilence or disease."

Thus, it may be seen, the danger lurking at the very threshold of our homes when patronizing Chinese and Japanese laundries.

Another thing, they work from twelve to fifteen hours per day, and it is no uncommon occurrence to see Japanese laundry wagons working all day Sunday.

The employees of white laundries not only have respectable hours daily, but are through early on Saturday, working only half the day.

THE WORLD'S GREAT INDUSTRY.

The laundry industry in the United States is of mammoth proportions, ranking third in capital invested and seventh in the number of persons employed.

In Alameda county the record is even more flattering, as the laundry industry here leads all other manufacturing from the standpoint of the number of workers engaged.