



Help Around the House

Before the advent of electricity and running water, several of the chores we take for granted were major hindrances to everyday life. Imagine... no lights or oven or refrigerator, no sink or toilet or washing machine.

Because we eat three times a day and enjoy a wide range of foodstuffs, we have created a vast array of tools to take advantage of the splendors of nature. A great example is the production of butter. Since early man domesticated cows and goats, humans have made butter. Initially, the task was performed by tossing cream in a stitched goatskin sack. Many will remember the butter churn, a more recent gadget performing the same function. Gadgets, too, evolve and improve through time...and, sometimes they become extinct.

The rest of the house required just as many innovations for "civilized life." Brooms led to sweepers and vacuum cleaners to keep dirt and dust at bay. Cleaning clothes at the river or well led to washing sticks and boards, which in turn led to wringers and, now, the washing machine. Candles led to lightbulbs, fireplaces to bed warmers and central heating.

Look for artifacts that are no longer necessary due to mass-production. Find others that can't possibly be improved upon.