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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Subject: "Ink Stains." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Of all the spots and stains that may find their way to our clothes or our household fabrics, ink stains cause the most trouble. They are so difficult to remove.

You can imagine how I feel when the first letter on the morning mail informs me that one of my friends has an ink stain on a colored silk dress and further that the silk dress isn't washable. That's the bad news that came in yesterday. So I went over to consult Miss Margaret Furry at the Bureau of Home Economics on how to get that stain out. That's a problem and no mistake. Sometimes ink will wash out, if the fabric is washable. And sometimes, when everything else fails, you can bleach the ink out, but you can only use bleaches with white material. And this lady's dress is colored.

Then, here's another difficulty. I don't know what kind of ink made that spot. Different kinds of ink contain different substances and need different treatment. For example, you don't treat indelible ink as you do India ink.

Genuine India ink is finely divided carbon mixed with gum and formed into a cake which is rubbed with water. Drawing inks often contain shellac and borax in addition to the gum. And they often contain finely divided carbon or coloring matter. Now if these inks have penetrated the fabric deeply, you may just as well know the worst -- they're impossible to remove completely. But certain chemicals do help. You might try wood alcohol or denatured alcohol, dilute glacial acetic acid, chloroform or gasoline.

The so-called indelible or marking inks are of two common types -- those with an organic dye, such as aniline black, as a basis, and those containing silver nitrate or other silver compound. Aniline black inks are remarkably fast and once they become dry, you may as well give up trying to remove them.

Still others on the list of inks are printing ink and writing ink. Even writing inks differ among themselves so that what will remove one writing ink may not affect another at all. If your ink spot is of "unknown composition", as the scientists say, the thing to do is to try different ways of removing the spot. Begin with the simplest material you know that might take it out and the one that is least likely to injure the fabric.

Soap and water will take out some kinds of ink if the fabric is wash-

able.

Mild acids also may remove the spot. An old-fashioned remedy for ink spots was milk or sour milk. It wasn't the milk that did the job -- it was the lactic acid in the milk which formed as the milk soured. Some inks come out with oxalic acid. You soak the stains in the acid a few minutes, then rinse them in clear water, and finally in water to which a few drops of ammonia have been added. Lemon juice, dilute hydrochloric acid, salts of lemon and so on are other remedies that sometimes work. However, in most of these the fabric must be washable so that soaking won't harm it and it must be white, so that the chemical won't bleach out the color.

Most silks these days are washable. So before you decide definitely that the material must not be soaked in water or a water solution, better try out a little place of the dress that won't show and see if water really harms it. Even if the material isn't considered washable, still you can use a spotting solution containing some water if you apply it carefully.

Now one more point in this matter of using acids. Oxalic acid is a bleach, to be sure. But if you use a very dilute solution and apply it properly, rinse it out thoroughly, and apply ammonia afterwards, you won't affect the color. If the dye fades with the acid, the ammonia, often will restore it.

Here are two mixtures that may be successful in taking the ink out of this colored silk dress. You can try one or the other or in some special cases try them both in alternate applications.

Have you a pencil handy? You might like to jot one of these formulas down.

Mixture No. 1: 9 parts of denatured alcohol and 1 part of ammonia. Sponge this out with alcohol.

Mixture No. 2: 9 parts of denatured alcohol and 1 part of acetic acid. Sponge this out with alcohol.

Here is still another mixture that may work. Use 40 parts of soapsuds and 1 part of ether. (That means automobile priming ether.) Sponge this mixture out with water.

But there's a point to consider. In general, plain water is less likely to affect the color of a fabric than alcohol.

Lay an absorbent pad under the spot. Use a little glass rod or an eye dropper to apply the material to the spot, and dab it on, a very small amount at a time, rinsing the spot out between applications. You'll find that many weak applications are more successful than too much or too strong a mixture at a time. Try to keep the mixture on the ink spot and off any other parts of the dress.

In removing spots, as in every other job, ^{the} thrifty homemaker considers first how well she can do it and whether it will pay to do it at home. Sometimes the chemicals you have to buy to remove the spot cost more than sending

the dress to a reliable commercial cleaner. When that's the case, what's the use of doing it at home? You may not do the job as well and it may actually cost you more.

Certainly every housewife wants to know how to deal with simple stains herself. But these complicated, stubborn stains -- better use discretion before you attack these.

Let's leave the stains now and plan our Sunday dinner.

No, let's do better than that. Let's plan Sunday dinner and Sunday night supper. Let's have an entirely hot meal at noon making use of the oven while it is going. Then it will be easy to plan supper around a salad of crisp, raw vegetables.

Veal roast for the main dish at dinner. How about a nice inexpensive roast like the shoulder? And nice brown gravy. Then, for something different in the potato line, how about sweet potato puff with marshmallows on top? That makes a nice Sunday or special-occasion dish. Then stuffed tomatoes; Buttered onions; and Quick coffee cake served hot for dessert. For the grown-ups in the family, that coffee cake calls for a cup of coffee, served at dessert time.

Here's the recipe for sweet potato puff

5 or 6 medium-sized potatoes	2 tablespoons of melted butter, and
2 eggs	2 tablespoons of hot milk
1 teaspoon of salt	

I'll repeat that list of five ingredients. (repeat.)

Boil the sweet potatoes. When they are tender, remove the skins and also any discolored portions. Press the sweet potatoes through a ricer. There should be about 1 quart of the pulp. Beat the yolk and the whites of the eggs separately. To the sweet potato add the yolks, fat, milk, and salt. Beat well, and fold in the beaten whites. Pile the mixture lightly into a greased baking dish and bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees F.) for 45 minutes -- or until the puff is light, fluffy and nicely brown on top.

Monday - Economy Day. Maybe we'll talk about fall jelly making to save the surplus fruits.

