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REMOVING INK STAINS

"I'm sorry, Mother. The girl next to me jogged my elbow and the ink went on my dress. Is it hard to get ink stains out?" Probably you have encountered the tragedy of spilled ink with every one of your children. If you were armed with the free Government bulletin on home methods of stain removal from fabrics, (No. 1474-F), you were able, doubtless, to deal with the trouble effectively. This publication can be obtained by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Each type of stain requires a treatment especially suited to the substance that caused it, but a few general rules about stains can be quoted before discussing the measures necessary in any particular case, such as an ink stain. Act as promptly as possible after the accident has occurred. Stains of all kinds become stubborn if left in the fabric. Always begin by trying the simplest treatment first, the one least likely to injure the fabric. If you are obliged to resort to chemicals, use them in diluted form and use a separate dropper for each chemical. Two or more short applications of a chemical will usually work better and injure the fabric less than one long application. If you are in doubt as to how the material will act under treatment, experiment on a sample of the goods or on an inconspicuous part. After the stain has been removed, be sure to wash out the material thoroughly or neutralize all traces of the chemical used. If you use different chemicals, rinse the fabric with water between applications.

Twelve different ways of treating writing ink stains are discussed in the bulletin on stain removal. This is because writing inks differ in their chemical ingredients, and therefore the same agents will not remove all ink spots. If possible, when the ink is moist, the bulletin suggests, apply an absorbent to remove any ink on the surface and keep it from spreading. Corn meal, salt, French chalk, fuller's earth, magnesia, and talcum powder are good absorbents. If the spot is

large, apply one of these substances before trying other agents. Work the absorbent around with a blunt instrument and renew it when it becomes soiled. When the dry absorbent fails to take up more ink, make it into a paste with water and apply again.

If the fabric is washable, soap and water, as in ordinary laundering, may be satisfactory for some types of ink. Milk is an old-fashioned remedy for an inkstain. Soak the stains for a day or two in milk, changing it as it becomes discolored. Pastuerized milk usually is not so satisfactory for this purpose as milk that has not been heated.

Several different chemicals are effective at times on white materials. Almost all of them will remove the color from colored fabrics, as well as the stain, and, if used in too concentrated a form or allowed to remain on the fabric too long, will weaken it. You might soak the stains for a few seconds in a saturated solution of oxalic acid, then rinse in clear water, and finally in water to which a few drops of concentrated ammonia solution have been added.

Or try "salts of lemon," also called "salts of sorrel," or by its chemical name, potassium acid oxalate. Soak the stains for several hours, if necessary, in a solution of 2-1/4 teaspoons of potassium acid oxalate dissolved in half a pint of water.

Potassium permanganate is satisfactory for stains on many delicate white fabrics as well as on ordinary materials. It should not be used on rayon. Dissolve 1 teaspoon of the crystals in 1 pint of water and apply a little of this to the stain with a medicine dropper, a glass rod, or a clean cork, and allow it to remain about five minutes. Remove any pink or brown stain left by the permanganate by applying hydrogen peroxide, made slightly acid, if the fabric is woolen, or by using oxalic acid in saturated solution, or lemon juice for cotton, linen, or silk. Follow either treatment by thorough rinsing.

Javelle water, which is a special combination of washing soda and chloride of lime, is effective on white cotton or linen if carefully handled, but should not be used on silk or wool.

Commercial ink removers are composed of one or another of these common chemicals and are generally satisfactory if directions are followed. Still other methods of treating ink stains are discussed in Farmers' Bulletin 1474-F.

