

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, February 15, 1932

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

le 2
9
3 H H
Subject: "Saving Clothes." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Stain Removal from Fabrics."

--oo0oo--

We've been having a lot to say recently about economy in food. But we haven't spent much time on economy in clothes. And there's a lot to say on that matter, too. Clothes are an important item on the budget and saving them is worthwhile.

The way you treat your clothes has a lot to do with whether they last and whether they keep looking trim, fresh and new.

Cleanliness is one important item in good treatment. If clothes are kept clean the fabric gives better service. Spots and stains not only spoil the neat appearance of a dress or suit, but they may actually damage the fibres of the material. Perspiration stains, for example, are very hard on silk. That's why it pays to wash silk stockings so often. It's a bad plan to wear stockings even once and then lay them away without washing. It's even worse to stuff soiled stockings in shoes. If you want your hose to give you good service, wash them after almost every wearing. Use lukewarm suds made from mild soap, and rinse thoroughly in lukewarm water.

But garments that can't be washed--wool or silk dresses, coats, suits and so forth--these can be kept clean at home if you know how to treat spots and stains.

I sometimes think every bride ought to be required by law to take a short course in stain removal. I'm sure a lot of domestic tragedies would be prevented that way. And I'm sure a lot of good clothes would be saved. It's a useful art to know just how to clean soiled and spotted garments. It's very convenient to know just what to do when Jimmy spills ink on the rug or when Polly Jane, in her best bib and tucker, sits down in the flypaper. Many a home disaster that might have occurred in such situations has been prevented by the woman who is wise in the ways of spots and stains and who keeps on hand the right materials for removing them.

I don't mean to go into the matter of stain removal deeply today. But I have a few pointers by experts for success in removing stains at home:

Act promptly. Go after the stain while it's fresh. Many a stain becomes stubborn if it is left to stand on the fabric.

In the case of unknown stains, try cold water first, unless it is likely to waterspot the fabric.

Try the simplest method of stain removal first.

Use only the chemical and the method recommended for the fabric on which the stain occurs.

Use diluted chemicals.

Use a separate dropper for each chemical.

Two or more short applications of your chemical usually work better and injure the fabric less than one long application.

When in doubt as to how the material will act under treatment, experiment on a sample of the goods, or on an inconspicuous part of the garment.

After the stain has been removed, be sure to wash out the material thoroughly or neutralize all traces of the chemicals used.

If you are using different chemicals rinse the fabric with water between applications.

So much for taking out spots and stains. Further directions--methods of removing all different kinds of stains, are to be found in the bulletin on stain removal. That is one of the most useful bulletins for any home library. It is called "Stain Removal from Fabrics" and its number is 1474. Anyone interested in keeping clothes trim and neat will want one.

While we're mentioning this matter of saving clothes, I'd better mention clothes closets. They have a great deal to do with the way your clothes look and wear. Is your closet light and well-ventilated to keep out moths? Is it equipped with a rod and hanger for every separate garment? Wooden hangers are some of the best to use because they don't discolor or rust fabrics. A simple way to prevent dresses slipping off those hangers is to wind a rubber band around each end. Have you garment bags in your closet to protect your light party frocks or other garments that you wear only occasionally? And what about your shoes? Have you shoe racks or shelves to keep them from being scuffed about and getting dusty on the floor? It's a good idea to keep shoe trees in every pair or to keep them stuffed with paper so that they will hold their shape.

Oh, by the way. Before I change the subject and start on the menu for today, I want to answer a postcard that just arrived this morning asking how to take out cod liver oil stains from colored dresses. This card was written by a mother who says she thinks many other mothers have the same problem.

Well, this is what the experts have to say about cod liver oil. Before the garment has been washed the cod liver oil stain looks just like most oil stains--a clear, translucent spot on the fabric. In this condition it is easy to remove. Cod liver oil, you see, is what is known as a fixed oil; that is, it doesn't evaporate as kerosene or benzine does, but remains indefinitely in the fabric. Because it is a fixed oil, soap has very little effect on it. The result is that when Baby's bib with cod liver oil spilled on it goes to the laundry it comes out with a brown stain which is very stubborn, in fact, often impossible to remove without bleaching. Bleaching, of course, won't do for colored fabrics. So the safe time to go after those stains is when they're fresh, before you wash the garment.

cloth and apply carbon tetrachloride liberally with a small piece of soft cloth or chloride dissolves it. As you work, change the position of the folded cloth so that you are working on a clean surface. Repeat this a number of times until all traces of the oil have been removed. While the carbon tetrachloride still remains, wash the garment with soap and water, giving special attention to the stained section.

The brown stains set by soap ^{and} ironing during laundering can be removed by bleaching if the material is white. Hydrogen peroxide is one bleach that may be used. Potassium permanganate and oxalic acid used alternately are others.

Brown stains on colored garments, however, are ^a much more difficult problem. They will sometimes come out by applying a very dilute bleach. Try it first on a sample of the material or an inconspicuous part of the dress. Then you can tell whether the bleach will or will not affect the color badly.

Another inexpensive menu for you today. Stuffed flank steak for the main dish. The recipe for that is in your beef leaflet and it's ^{an} excellent meat dish for the family and very inexpensive. Then baked potatoes served on the half shell. Five-minute cabbage or some other leafy vegetable. And for dessert, that old favorite, gingerbread and apple sauce.

Just for variety, it's often nice to serve potatoes on the half shell instead of just plain baked. Here's the way you fix them. When the potatoes are baked take them out of the oven and cut them in half lengthwise. Then scrape out the inside, being careful not to break the skin. Wash the potato you have removed, season it with salt, pepper and butter and either cream or rich milk. Then beat it until it is light. Now place this mixture back in the shells, brush over the top with melted butter and put the potatoes right back into the oven to reheat and brown. For variety, you can sprinkle grated cheese over the potatoes before they are browned. Or you can add a little chopped green pepper to the potato mixture.

Tuesday: "Questions and Answers"

