

2016

The Housewife and Her Working Clothes

Margaret Kingery
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker>



Part of the [Home Economics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kingery, Margaret (2016) "The Housewife and Her Working Clothes," *The Iowa Homemaker*: Vol. 1 : Iss. 1 , Article 3.
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol1/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

M is for milk that makes muscle and bone.

One pint each day would be best until you are grown.

I is for iron in spinach and eggs, Builds red blood and sinews for strong arms and legs.

There is no doubt that the Health game is the national game of America today. Everyday sees more and more scales and health charts being placed in school rooms, more nutrition classes started among the mothers and weight and strength contests being waged among the children themselves. Could the Toothbrush Brigade of the United States assemble some morning, what a gratifying sight it would be to the commanding officers of the Child Health Organization! And the athletes which will one day

be in the public eye will rival the old Romans themselves in strength and sturdy robustness.

Iowa children are holding their own but after Cho-Cho's visit the health curves ought to dash upwards. Women's clubs, school superintendents, public health nurses and the mothers themselves are inviting Cho-Cho to their town to teach the Health game to all the boys and girls. Perhaps, some time, they may meet the Picture Man, The Health Fairy or the Jolly Jester.

But if real visits from real people are impossible there is the Health Library which contains such pretty stories as "Cho-Cho and the Health Fairy," "A Diet for School Children" and "Child Health Alphabet." The latter holds such wheedling little rhymes as:

"L is for luncheon, served hot in the school,

We wish all the teachers could follow this rule."

"S is important and therefore I hope You'll pardon my specially mentioning soap."

It winds up convincingly:

"Now march for it, children, with drum and with fife

Z is the Zest which health gives to life."

With special attention called to health habits as they are by the efforts of the Child Health Organization it is not hard to show the child that the boy who wins at the game of Health will have an excellent chance, when he grows up, to win at the game of Life.

The Housewife and Her Working Clothes

By MARGARET KINGERY

PERHAPS there is no surer sign of a woman's sense of the beautiful than her own costume when at work in her home. It is surprising how many women can plan and furnish a very artistic and individual house and yet, herself, be a most inharmonious and jarring note in the whole color scheme. This is something that the average woman either never thinks of or simply doesn't care about, yet she will spend a great deal of time and expense planning or selecting her street clothes and her afternoon and evening gowns.

Somewhere, she has heard that blue is a fine color for house dresses. Blue is a clean, pretty color that doesn't fade, so blue she has—regardless of the effect of blue on her own coloring or with the color scheme of her home.

It is true that blue is a most becoming color for a fair-haired, blue-eyed woman with a clear complexion, but for her, whose eyes have a greenish-cast, and whose skin is a little sallaw, blue is most unflattering. Green trimmed with brown or buff or black would be much more becoming and, incidentally, more individual and distinctive.

Who ever saw an orange house dress? Probably, no one, because few women would dare to have one. Yet a brilliant orange chambray or crepe dress trimmed with black bindings would look really stunning on one with black hair and eyes. She would be the center of interest in any part of her home, and that is what she should be, for a home is merely a beautiful background for the folks who live there. She might cover a straw shade hat with the same material so that her costume would be more complete when she was in her garden or on her way to market.

Rose color and red in various shades are colors which give a warm reflection when worn near the face, and are very flattering to one whose skin has lost a little of its first coloring. Blue, with its cold reflection, robs this type of face of even the little color that may be there.

White is an excellent color in its

proper place. It is a most sanitary, but perhaps forbidding color, and when worn near the face, throws harsh, gray shadows. By contrast, white brings out the grayness or sallowness of the skin, with disastrous effects. If there must be a collar on the house dress try a pink one, or a cream one, or a lavender or green or yellow—anything but a solid white collar. A collar of thin white material, such as organdie, is permissible because then the color of the dress with which it is worn, shows thru and takes away the curse of the dead white.

There is, too, a psychological effect of the colors one wears. Any one feels in a better frame of mind when she realizes that she is wearing a becoming color and is an addition to the general landscape. In her kitchen she may match her brilliant house dress with the gay gingham curtains. Nothing launders as easily as gingham curtains and they stay clean much longer than the usual white ones.

I once knew a woman who had in her home a marvel of a spotless white kitchen—a most excellent impersonal laboratory. She soon grew a little dissatisfied with the monotony and coldness of the solid white so she bought a red geranium to put in the window. That was interesting so she decided that a little more red would be more interesting. She painted the labels on the salt, sugar and flour cans red and made a red and white checked border at the tops and bottoms of the cans. One day, she found some lovely red and white checked gingham which matched the painted border on her cans. From this she made herself a dress and then stitched bands of it on her curtains. It was always a joy to visit her kitchen after that, for it had an air of geniality that it never could have had before. In fact it was as delightful a room in which to sit and visit as her charming living room.

Good color and good design are not found in the cheapest grades of wash materials. Why on earth, tho, when the average housewife spends over

half of her waking hours in her house dress, does she want to buy the cheapest grade of materials?

We all profess to think more of our immediate family than of our friends and acquaintances, and yet we usually spend six times as much that and money on our afternoon and street clothes than on the clothes we wear at home. This isn't intelligent nor logical. It is subjecting those we love best to an acid test, and it isn't fair. Buy a good quality of gingham that is guaranteed not to fade, make it in a 1921 style—not a 1912 model—and as long as it lasts it will be a joy to yourself and all who see you.

Unbleached muslin is a delightful background for all kinds of applique work. Designs may be cut from cretonne and hemmed on or the blanket stitch in black or a contracting colored thread may be used. Figures are sometimes cut from plain material and the designs worked on in outline stitch. Baskets are worked out in outline stitch and the flowers tumbling out of it are cut from gay cretonne and stitched on. Black cord may form the handle of the basket and also the girdle, with the ends frayed out. Any cross stitch design lends itself admirably to decorating even the plainest housedress of chambray or gingham. Care must be exercised in the choice of colors to see that they blend.

Japanese crepes may be bought in a wide variety of colors that are lovely, and that launder beautifully with little ironing. Ginghams in plaids, checks and stripes, and plain chambray ginghams may be very good in color and design. English print, which is none other than our old-fashioned calico—a little finer in quality and much better in design—makes quaint dresses. For colder days, we may find a good choice of color and design in challis, which are washable. With all this wealth of color and materials on the market, there is no excuse for buying ugly, cheap, muddy materials to gallop together, somehow, into a hopelessly homely housedress to be hated by all.