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Iva L. Brandt
Iowa State College

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If You Make Your Own

By IVA L. BRANDT, Professor of Home Economics

She may do without money,
She may do without books,
But civilized women cannot do without
looks.

FOR THE apparel oft proclaims the man." The truth of this saying is probably more applicable today than it was at the time of Shakespeare. At that time class distinction was the main thing that clothing indicated. Today we can estimate bank accounts, guess at occupations, judge of mental, moral and social standing by the clothing that is worn. Efficiency is increased or decreased, positions are retained or lost, confidence is gained, and peace of mind secured, because of the way we dress.

The time has long since passed when it is necessary to argue the question of the importance of dress. Every broad-minded, intelligent person today is ready to acknowledge that it is a serious fault and not a virtue to have a disregard for the way we look, which means, of course, the way we dress.

Frank Alvah Parsons, in a recent lecture here, said, "It is the duty of everyone to look as well as he can—under the circumstances." If "the circumstances" should be that one is attractive in face and figure, and has plenty of money, it is no particular credit to that individual that she looks well, but if "the circumstances" should be the reverse, then to look well means that some real, clever, intelligent work has been done.

There are three factors that should determine one's method of buying clothing. The money that may be expended, the time that can be devoted to it and the skill one has for planning and making clothing. Very fortunate, indeed, is she who has the time and is clever enough to make her own clothing, for she can be better dressed on half the money that her less fortunate friend spends in buying her clothing ready made.

The prejudice against the homemade garments that sometimes exists is due to the fact that probably not more than one person out of ten who makes her own clothing has real ability to select and make, and the other 90 percent do not take the trouble or time to train themselves.

Some of the ear marks of the ordinary homemade dress are:

1. Inaccurate or incorrect construction. This includes such points as facings around neck lines not laying smooth and flat; the use of machine stitching where hand work should be done on neck and sleeve facings, hems in wool, silk and heavy cottons; sleeves not carefully adjusted, and garments fitted too tightly, especially at the waist line (making them lacking in loose and graceful lines).

2. Lack of careful pressing during the process of making and after the dress is finished.

3. Line and color often not appropriate to the individual. With a little care and practice these can be done away with.

I once heard a student say of the dress she had just finished, "It really looks as

if it might be a ready-made one." She spoke with a great deal of pride, and when asked if she considered that a real compliment to her work, she replied, "Oh, yes, indeed, I think ready-made dresses usually have an air of distinction that the average homemade dress lacks."

There is no reason why the dress made at home should not have the little touch that gives the "air of distinction" referred to above. If the home dressmaker would make the dress on plain, simple lines and then put all her effort on some accessory or trimming that would give it that air of smartness so much admired in ready made dresses, the results would be far more gratifying.

These distinctive touches usually come at the waist line, neck, bottom of sleeves, in a vest or drape at the side of the skirt.

The girdle may be unusual because of the material or the manipulation of the material, or it may be a novel ornament on a very plain, simple belt. The ornament may be made of sealing wax in lovely colors, or of ribbon, braid, folds or fringe. The neck line may be emphasized by the ever popular French fold, alone, or in combination with a blanket stitch in a harmonizing color, by a simple, decorative stitch, a clever collar, or collar and tie or a bit of lovely lace. A vest may be unusual because of its shape, a bit of hand embroidery or a contrast of texture such as soft pleated chiffon with a heavier wool or silk. Very effective banding trimming may be made of braid, cable stitching in yarn or silk, simple hand embroidery or self folds.

Often a row of buttons down the center of a vest, along the dart in a sleeve, or down the center of the back, is needed to give the dress that finished or tailored look. Buttons of any size can be made at almost any dry goods store, or the merchant can send them away to be made. Pleating for panels or narrow trimmings can be secured through the local dealer. A dress may be perfectly plain in itself, a strand of beads, or silk cord with some lovely ornament giving the accent. If some color from this accent is repeated in a small bag, or on a hat, a most charming costume should be the result.

This sounds very well, some may say, but I am not clever and where can I get my ideas?

Study fashion magazines for just these details, not for the entire costume. Very often a design which is quite extreme and unattractive as a whole, may have a girdle or a neck finish, a sleeve or a cuff that is well worth copying.

Become a keen observer of the good points in ready-made dresses, whether they be on your friends, in the street, in the ready-to-wear departments, or in the shop windows. Whenever you see something clever and attractive make note of it immediately, on paper, if possible, or if not fix it in your mind until you can put it down on paper.

Study lovely color combinations wherever you see them, in pictures, Japanese prints, pottery, or textiles for any pleas-



To look well means that some real clever, intelligent designing and work has been done.

ing color combinations can be repeated in dress materials.

There probably never was a time when the markets were so flooded with lovely materials, such a variety of textures, such a range of color and designs in cottons as well as silks and wools.

One fairly thrills at the prospect of a new gown.

So why shouldn't one plan and make for herself just the costume she has been wanting all this time?

ENROLL 956 IN HOME ECONOMICS DIVISION

Home Economics at I. S. C. is growing!
Statistics prove it!

Students enrolled at Iowa State in the Home Economics division number 956, according to a statement given out recently by Registrar J. T. Sage and Miss Edna Walls, acting dean of Home Economics.

This number includes those in the two departments, as follows: Home Economics—Freshmen, 411; sophomores, 310; juniors, 108; seniors, 59. Home Economics and Agriculture—Freshmen, 1; sophomores, 8; juniors, 8; seniors, 1.

The remainder are: Graduates, 18; special students, 3; noncollegiate juniors, 7; noncollegiate seniors, 6; irregular students, 3; homemaker, 13.

The Homemaker course is offered to women residing in Ames. Classes are held several times during the week.

This is an experiment being tried this fall, and to all appearances is proving successful.