Cotton Is Back Again

Margaret E. Davidson
Iowa State College
COTTONS are again used to express the mode! New youthful styles are fashioned from gay, crisp cottons, which give a feeling of brightness and charm impossible with other fabrics. COTTONS were high in favor ten years ago. Every woman wore gingham, and the younger generation's standby for summer parties was an organdie and the younger generation's standby fabrics. Cottons were high in favor ten years ago. From slim tailored sport dresses to gay picturesque frocks, all are again found in cotton. Each smart style has been developed from the particular material which can be used to best advantage, for cotton is so versatile that it may be woven into countless different fabrics. With the new fabrics, each dress has become delightful to wear, and astonishingly simple to care for, and best of all, the color is fast. Cotton fabrics may be so easily laundered that spots are removed and the dress may always be restored to its original freshness in a way which adds to its charm and comfort.

Gingham, shirting, broadcloth, lawn and plique are all used. But these are not the same gingham, shirtings, broadcloths, lawns and pliques of ten years ago. The American cotton manufacturers followed the lead of the silk manufacturers, and have employed styles designers, with the result that the cottons of today, besides being admitted practical, have the added appeal of being extremely fashionable.

The trend for cotton dresses was well illustrated by the 4-H Club girls' style show, held recently at their annual convention in Ames. Material was furnished through the Cotton-Textile Institute of New York, to one girl from the clothing club of each of the 4-H clubs. Each girl was furnished through the Cotton-Tex­tile Institute of New York, to one girl from the clothing club of each of the 4-H clubs. Cotton was first used in making rayon. Then rayon makers found that cotton linters could be used just as well. These are too short to use in making any other fabric. Later the hulls which are left behind after the linters are removed were found satisfactory in manufacturing rayon. Still later, chemists found they could get material similar to cotton but cheaper than linters by cooking wood with alkali and purifying. The last discovery has been the one centered around the use of cornstalks.

This use of cornstalks for rayon production will make the cost of its manufacture much cheaper. “Within five years, one billion pounds of rayon will be marketed in the United States and cornstalks will be a very important product of the farm,” says Professor Sweeney of the Iowa State College Chemical Engineering Department. Cornstalk board has recently been found of value for use in place of lath and shiplap on houses. It insures a cooler house in summer and a warmer one in winter, and will save about thirty-five dollars in fuel for one winter in the average six-room house.
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This Act authorized an appropriation of $20,000 for the year ending June 30, 1926, with annual increments of $10,000 thereafter until the total amounts to $60,000 annually for each state. This money is used for "paying the necessary expenses of conducting investigations, or making experiments, bearing directly on the production, manufacture, use, distribution and marketing of agricultural products and including such scientific researches as have for their purpose the establishment and maintenance of a permanent and efficient agricultural industry, and such economic and sociological investigations as have for their purpose the development and improvement of the rural home and rural life."

The projects in home economics fall under the general heads: foods and nutrition, including studies on vitamins and the importance of other minute food accessories, household management, and clothing and textiles. The aim of the investigation is purposeful, thorough, conclusive and progressive from one point to another. The ultimate aim is to be practical and to give practical facts. The object is to advance the science as well as the art, to improve the art on the basis of science.

At the present time, Iowa, with all of the work carried on in or near Iowa State College, has $7,850 with which to carry on investigations in just home economics under the Purnell Act. The work at Iowa State is being supervised by the following people: Dr. P. Mabel Nelson, A. T. Erwin, M. D. Helser, J. B. Davidson and Dr. E. E. Hoyt.

The outlook for productive research in home economics is especially bright, with all of the projects and investigations being carried on under the direction of these three organizations.

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