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The Season Suggests a Sewing Machine

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How fortunate is the woman who makes her own frocks. In the spring, when a young man’s fancy is so unruly, the heart, soul and fancy of such a maid or matron are firmly held by plans for making clothes. Unless she is a lucky owner of a sewing machine, the “woman-who-sews-at-home” begins a quest for the type which best suits her need and pocketbook.

She discovers that there is much to learn before she actually chooses one from among the many makes. Since sewing machines are no longer new things and untried, she finds that nearly all standard makes are good, for the standard machine is known by the manufacturer’s name and the number, which always appear upon it, implying his guarantee. It usually sells for a fixed price and worn out or broken parts are, as a rule, easily secured for it. As compared with a standard make, she will probably consider a machine less desirable which does not bear the manufacturer’s name. It sells for a lower price and the average life of such a machine is much shorter than that of a standard. It is often impossible to replace broken parts and if the retailer from whom the machine was purchased is unable to secure satisfaction from the manufacturer, it must be discarded while some of the parts are still nearly as good as new.

As to general appearances, the customer will readily distinguish three types of sewing machines: the stationary cabinet machine with a treadle, the console electric machine and the electric portable. Prices vary for different makes of these types. Fair average prices for the stationary cabinet machine are $75 to $85, for the console electric, $135 to $150, and for the electric portable, $65 to $95. Arrangements can usually be made whereby machines can be purchased for a comparatively small cash payment, to be followed by weekly or monthly payments until the whole amount is made up. The shopper is not surprised to learn that in such cases it is necessary to pay a price which is somewhat higher than is asked when cash is paid.

**Types of Machines**

Upon discovering variation in the prices of the machines, the “woman-who-sews-at-home” begins to seek for the factors which cause the variation. She finds that differences in mechanism, kind and number of attachments and the finish of the machine cabinet have considerable influence upon the price.

There are two distinct types of sewing machines, according to mechanism, the chain stitch, of which there are countless makes now made, and the lock stitch types. The lock stitch is further divided into three classes, according to the manner of making the stitch. These are spoken of as the vibrating, the rotating and the oscillating shuttle machines. As soon as she has seen the shuttles work in combination with the needles to form the lock stitch, the customer realizes the significance of attachment and which of these names for types of machines have a very distinct meaning for her.

Having made this progress, the next step is to know the good points of each type. She will be interested in knowing that the mechanism of the chain stitch machine is simple and that, in case of need, its stitching is easily removed. On the other hand, she will learn that the lock stitch machine makes a strong, durable stitch, which is alike on both sides and requires no special care for the fastening of threads.

**Oscillating Shuttle Machine**

The vibrating shuttle, which was the type originally used on many machines and which proves quite satisfactory for the machine which is treadle driven, has two distinct advantages over a motor-driven machine. It is very noisy and the regularity of its vibration is unbalanced by the vibration caused by the greater speed at which the motor propels the machine. It is easy for her to understand why the rotary shuttle is the quietest and best type to use with a motor. There is less jar from stopping and starting the shuttle and, in consequence, less wear upon the machine itself. The oscillating hook or oscillating shuttle machine is the third type. The terms, “hook” and “shuttle” are used to indicate a difference in the placing of the mechanism, “hook” indicating a horizontal and “shuttle” a vertical position. Either arrangement is an improvement over the vibrating shuttle, in that they are less noisy, but neither is as efficient as the rotary in its action.

She finds that some machines are sold with attachments and that others are not. Since she realizes that well made, well fitting, guaranteed attachments add to the machine’s possibilities for garment construction, she is glad to discover that there are reliable companies whose sole business is the construction of attachments for the various types of sewing machines. In order that every attachment may be perfectly adjusted, each bit of mechanism, no matter how small, is examined in a testing room so that it is perfect when it is put on the market. She knows, then, that she may expect service from her attachments.

If they do not work satisfactorily and she is unable to discover the cause of the trouble in the book of directions which she secures from the dealer, she may ask him to refer her to the attachment company, which will usually make the piece good. She will take care, of course, to purchase the attachments which are intended for the number and make of the machine which she selects.

At first the “woman-who-sews-at-home” may doubt her ability to use the attachments, but when she examines the instruction book and when she remembers how much time is taken up in doing such things by hand, she decides that she will not be without them. The book also gives her a good idea of the attachments which she may purchase. She finds binders, needle threaders, a bias cutting gage, hammers of different kinds, tuckers and rufflers in the list, all of them with detailed information as to their use. If she still experiences doubt, she can ask the aid of the service department which most sewing machines companies maintain.

The electric sewing machine has a distinct advantage over one which must be driven by human power. It is a saving of time and human energy. The electric motor justifies its higher price. The “woman-who-sews-at-home” learns that several of the better known electric companies are offering, for very moderate prices, small electric motors which can be attached to the treadle machine, making it possible for the woman, whose machine is still too serviceable to be discarded, to secure better service from it through electric energy. Such motors may be attached to the electric light systems which are commonly found in farm homes. These systems usually provide an alternating current that differs from the commercial current only in the fact that it is less strong. The cost of operation of the sewing machine motor is very small, from one to one and a half cents per hour, and it is estimated that with a round bobbin electric, the most efficient type of electric machine, 76,000 stitches cost about one cent.

**Choosing the Case**

The machine cabinet causes price variation and so may affect the choice of machine even after the “woman-who-sews-at-home” has decided which she wishes to buy. An oak case is cheaper than a walnut. For the portable machine, which is especially well adapted for use in an apartment or a small house where there is little room to spare, various kinds of tables or cabinets have been made which may be had at prices ranging from $10 to $20, depending upon whether they are of table, console or desk type, as well as upon their finish. In some machines, the head, which consists of all the working parts of the machine, with the control or treadle, may be folded into the cabinet when not in use. Some of the older makes are equipped with box-like covers, which protect the head from dust and dirt. The machine head is usually made of cast iron.

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appropriate form—creamed or scalloped; a green vegetable, such as string beans, peas or asparagus tips. If you don’t serve a salad for the first course you might serve here either a fruit salad or head lettuce. Hot rolls, jam and relishes might finish this course. Dessert, any frozen one you wish, cake, coffee. Nuts in nut cups may be on the table throughout the meal if you choose.

You may be able to work out color thru the kinds of fruits chosen, and the decoration on the cake and garnish of the frozen dessert. A parfait is very lovely to serve if you have parfait glasses. Your nut cups might be of the color chosen also.

**How can blue and yellow be used as a color scheme in table decorations?**

A blue and yellow color scheme is best worked out by using a blue bowl with yellow flowers or the other way around for the center piece. Use a yellow fruit cocktail or a grapefruit and orange salad or a salad of carrot and cabbage with much lettuce. Green works into every color scheme. An orange or lemon colored dessert may be used. A parfait shows up color beautifully. We do not repeat the same flavor in the one meal. If you use orange and grapefruit in one place, don’t use it any other place. Hard candies of orange and green are lovely to use. If you have nut cups they can be blue. I should make an attempt to color any foods. Use those that are of the kind required, as nearly as you can of the color chosen. Candles add to the decoration, also. There is danger of over-doing the effect of the table by making it cluttered up with much decoration. Simplicity is more elegant than an elaborate decoration.

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but for portable machines, at least one company is offering an aluminum head, which has the advantage of being lighter in weight than the iron. It is also more expensive.

The “woman-who-sews-at-home” is especially delighted with the electric light which she discovers attached to the head of the electric machines and she thinks how convenient such a thing would be if she should care to sew during the long winter evenings. Perhaps if one hasn’t the money to purchase an electric machine just now, it might be worth while to pay a little down. But then, that must be her decision and she will sleep over it and talk it over with the family at home. In her mind’s eye she sees the lovely fabrics which are out on spring display. She has really done enough, tho, for today. She will take the numbers of the machines which she is considering and call the clerk before 10 o’clock tomorrow morning to tell him which machine she really wants for her own.

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