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The Hygiene of Clothing

By ALICE M. ROSENBERGER

WHAT are the points we consider when we make clothing? Is it style, durability, becomingness, the hygienic qualities, or are the first four considered in their relation to the last? Too often we are governed by the style and weariness of the garment, with suitability and durability following in close second place. In the end, hygienic conditions may be considered. Often we do not stop to estimate the amount of comfort, the increase in our efficiency and the effect upon our mental health obtained by wearing hygienic clothing. Clothing which does not conform to the laws of hygiene is constantly undermining the health of the individual by draining the body energy which should go to build up a resistance to disease, in general and especially those of the throat and lungs.

In our consideration of hygienic clothing, we should first consider the needs of the body. In its ideal condition, the body should be maintained at a constant temperature of 98.6 degrees F., kept dry, clean, sufficiently ventilated and so unrestricted that all its processes can proceed properly. If the body does not wear sufficient clothing, or the wrong kind, to keep the temperature normal, the body will tend to regulate the temperature by a chemical or physical change. This sort of regulation results when heat is increased by greater oxidation or the burning of fuel in the body. Variations in the quantities of blood sent to the skin, affecting the loss of heat by evaporation, are factors in the physical regulation of temperature. The term "physical regulation" implies that the body temperature is maintained without necessarily changing the rate of oxidation. Thus, in requiring excessive chemical or physical change in order to maintain a normal body temperature, there is an unnecessary loss of energy. This is common among those who wear too little underclothing in the winter, who stand in a draft or cool off too quickly after exercise, who wear chiffon hose on an extremely cold day.

We can help keep the body clean, dry and sufficiently ventilated by the proper selection of fabric for our garments. If we endeavor to maintain an ideal body condition, our choices of clothing should depend upon the fiber content, the weave, the weight, the finish and the cleansing qualities of the fibers. The experiments carried on to determine the relative merits of the fibers, cotton, linen, silk and wool in moisture temperature and ventilation factors, vary according to the way in which the fibers are woven. By experimentation, it has been found that a knitted fabric is to be preferred to a woven one, particularly for undergarments. By being knitted, a larger amount of air, which is a poor conductor of heat, is held in the meshes. This makes it warmer because the heat of the body is retained and the evaporation is more uniform. The comfort of a garment depends upon the amount of air it encloses and the amount of body heat it retains. This explains why a napped surface material is warmer than one with a smooth finish. Blankets of modern density are most effective for retaining heat when not exposed to air currents, but the heavy weight blankets are more effective in keeping out the wind.

Cotton and linen fibers are good conductors of heat and therefore will not protect the body from excessive loss of heat in the winter. However, when cotton is napped, to resemble wool, we find that this changes because of the increased amount of air it can hold. Silk and wool are poor conductors of heat and will prevent an excessive loss of heat from the body. Undergarments made of these should be worn by infants and children, by people underweight or with poor circulation, by old people and by men working out of doors in cold weather. On the other hand, a heavy woolen garment will prevent the penetration of excessive heat to the body, which explains why firemen wear woolen shirts all the year.

In regarding qualities of the fibers, linen and cotton are preferred because they give up dirt quickly and can be boiled. Silk is easily laundered, but because it cannot stand real high temperature, it cannot be completely sterilized. Wool gives up dirt readily, but care must be taken in laundering as it shrinks and felt easily.

Our clothing must also take care of the wastes which our bodies give off. Since linen absorbs moisture readily, and also permits rapid evaporation, it is desirable for summer, but cools the body too readily in cold weather. Cotton absorbs moisture and holds it longer than linen. Silk absorbs moisture quickly and gives it up readily and is very desirable for undergarments. It is much warmer if closely woven, but is too expensive for most people. Rayon is being extensively used as a substitute for silk, since it launders easily, is cheaper and satisfactory in most respects. Wool absorbs moisture and also retains it. Although it becomes very damp in still air, in a draft of cold air, the heat conduction is rapid and the body receives a chill. However, if wool is not laundered properly, the air spores are closed and the heat by function of the skin is interfered with by a layer of moist air held between the skin and the garment. Present-day manufacturing processes have made it possible to bring some of the qualities of wool to other materials, such as a fleeced cotton, cotton flannel, etc.

In experiments carried on by the Bureau of Standards in comparing cotton and woolen blankets, there was found to be no significant difference in the heat resistance or in the resistance to passage of air or moisture. Cotton blankets are stiffer than woolen and are not as pliable and they absorb moisture more quickly.

The cut of a garment also determines its hygienic qualities. The design of a garment should be such as would permit easy cleaning and freedom of motion. It should not have any tight bands that would interfere with the circulation. A garment should be cut so the weight of it comes from the shoulders and is not tight in any place.

Besides choosing hygienic clothing, there are certain hygienic habits in relation to clothing that we should follow in caring for the general health. On cold winter or rainy days, it is quite essential that we wear heavier soled shoes, rubber or galoshes. The foot comes in close contact with the cold paving if a thin soled shoe is worn and chills the body very much with the possible causing of colds in the head, disturbance of the bowels and inflammation of the pelvic organs. In addition to wearing galoshes on the cold wintry days, wool stockings help to protect the body from unnecessary chilling and consequently the lowering of one's resistance. The proper protection through under and outer garments is also essential. On rainy days the raincoat is a decided protection; however, it should be removed in the house as it does not allow for the necessary ventilation of the body and it causes excessive perspiration.

There are certain dangers which might arise from the use of some textiles. Diseases may be carried by... (Continued on page 16)
Value of Rural Clubs (Continued from page 14)

The two most outstanding benefits of club work are: the value to the individual and the value to the community. The individual always profits in two ways. He gets developed many advantages and is providing that wholesome and satisfying social life needed in the rural communities. The club meetings and other events provide these features.

The Hygiene of Clothing (Continued from page 15)

In Selecting Materials for Your SEWING PROBLEMS

It is well to remember that FINEST FABRICS COME FROM STEPHENSON'S Opposite Campus

Exclusive Agents Official Cooking Class Uniforms

Parno's Jewelry Store CRANFORD BLDG.

Expert Watch, Clock & Jewelry Repairing Oldest Established Jewelry Store in Campus-town

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In another Iowa county the methods of feeding cattle and the quality of livestock has been greatly improved the past few years due almost entirely, it is said by the breeders of that county, to the extensive club work done there.

Several girls have become local leaders in their communities, under the guidance of the county girls' committee. One girl is at present as well as assistant in her own club, but is also secretary of the women's organization in her own town. Another girl is news reporter for the county farm bureau.

But these results are often only secondary to the value the work has in developing boys and girls in other ways. Thru the clubs hundreds of young people are getting an experience and training in handling and making plans or programs, conducting meetings and in cooperating together which was not to be had by the average adult on the farm today. It is being noticed already that some of those boys and girls active in the clubs will be former club members. In the future this development of leadership will be very noticeable.

Many receive an ambition to get more education. Over 200 former club members are now attending Iowa State College and many are probably in other schools. Socially, the club work has also developed many advantages and is providing that wholesome and satisfying social life needed in the rural communities. The club meetings and other events provide these features.