CHAPTER XIV

CLOTHING

Hygiene of clothing.—At the present time much is being said and written about the conservation of health. How to keep well is of far greater importance than how to get well. It is not, however, only a question of being sick or well, as the terms are ordinarily considered, but of caring for the body in such a way as to keep it at the highest point of efficiency. Proper clothing is one of the means of attaining this end and is, therefore, worthy of careful consideration. While age, climate conditions, and the occupation of the wearer all affect the ultimate working out of the problem, nevertheless there are some general principles which will help in the determination of what is best, considering the conditions of daily life.

One might ask the question, "Why do we wear clothes?" Different answers would naturally be expected, as the use of clothing is quite different under different circumstances. To summarize, the use of clothing may be given (1) as a means of protection; (2) to satisfy our
sense of modesty; (3) to satisfy our instinctive love of adornment; and (4) that we may appear like others, or be in fashion. In cold climates the protection afforded by the clothing worn is of primary importance, while to the naked savage in Africa, whose only clothing is a string of beads, love of adornment heads the list. Adornment and fashion are of first importance in the minds of many, and are alone considered when choosing clothing. Fashion should not be ignored, but neither should the extremes of the designer be followed at the expense of proper protection or the sacrifice of the sense of modesty. Compliance with the demands of fashion is good up to a certain point. Unless dressed according to the prevailing styles the majority of people are uncomfortable, become self-conscious, lose their poise, and are unable to do their best work. One should strive to dress in such a way as to be unconscious of clothes. That is the condition which will make possible the largest amount of effective work. Some one has said, "To be well dressed is not vanity but sanity," and it is true when considered from the standpoint of the comfort and poise of the individual.

As mentioned above, age, climate, and occupation greatly affect the clothes problem. The infant, because of its proportionately large surface area, loses heat much more rapidly than
the adult, and, therefore, must be protected by warmer clothing. Wool next to the child is necessary through the second summer. Old persons frequently feel the need of wool, because, since they are less active, their circulation becomes sluggish and it is, therefore, more difficult to keep sufficiently warm. It is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules, as individuals differ in their requirements, but as a general rule the normal adult does not feel the need of woolen undergarments. The warm houses and public buildings of the present time make it seem wiser to wear less in the house and then have a heavy wrap to wear out-of-doors.

The physical properties of textiles which were given in previous chapters should be reviewed, as those which affect the conduction of heat, absorption, and evaporation of moisture are of importance in considering the hygiene of clothing in general, and especially of underclothing. Wool and silk are poor conductors of heat, and linen and cotton better conductors. Wool feels warm to the touch because it does not take heat away from the body. Linen and cotton feel cool and, therefore, make pleasant clothing for summer. The amount of air enclosed in the meshes of the fabric affects the conduction of heat even more than the nature of the fiber. Still air is a poor conductor of heat, and a cotton or linen fabric, if loosely
woven or finished with a napped surface, is quite warm. Outing flannel is a good example of the effect of air spaces in increasing the warmth of a cotton fabric. Linen absorbs and gives off moisture rapidly, cotton and silk more slowly, and wool most slowly of all. The hygroscopicity, or the property of absorbing moisture without seeming wet, is high in wool and silk and low in linen and cotton. Wool may absorb 30 per cent of its weight of moisture without feeling wet.

Loosely woven linen makes an ideal material for summer underwear because it absorbs and gives off moisture very readily, thereby cooling the skin. The high price is prohibitive for most people, so the linen mesh underwear is not much used. A knitted cotton garment does very well, and the lower price makes these garments more popular than the linen. Linen and cotton can be laundered much more easily than wool and silk, which is another point in their favor for use in undergarments.

Wool would make an ideal material for cold weather undergarments because of its low heat conduction, if it did not hold moisture for so long a time and "felt" in washing. Both objections may be partially overcome, especially the latter, by mixing cotton, linen, or silk with the wool. Infants, invalids, and aged people who exercise little and do not perspire freely,
need the warmth of the woolen material, and for them the wool and cotton, wool and linen, or wool and silk garments are satisfactory. A light-weight woolen garment worn over a thin cotton one is found by some people to be a good combination. The cotton takes up the moisture readily and it is then taken up and given off slowly by the wool. This arrangement provides for the absorption of the perspiration and prevents the chilling of the body.

The average normal individual is more comfortable when clothed in cotton undergarments of various weights. Undergarments made of silk have a pleasant "feel" and the heat conduction is low. The price is prohibitive for most people, however, and it is, therefore, little used in undergarments.

It should be remembered that heavy and warm are not synonymous. A garment may be heavy and still not warm. Two light-weight garments are much warmer than one heavier one because of the layer of air between the two garments.

The requirements for outer and undergarments differ somewhat, as the garment worn outside should be such that the wind will not penetrate easily, while a loosely woven undergarment offers greater protection because of the spaces retaining heated air.

The importance of keeping clean the clothing
worn next the skin can hardly be overestimated. The sweat glands of the normal adult secrete about three pints of perspiration daily, and most of this must be taken up by the clothing. When the pores of the cloth become clogged, proper absorption and ventilation are prevented, which means that the body remains moist and exposure to a draft causes a chill. Some fabrics are naturally cleaner than others. Linen contains less natural oil than cotton, and, since the fibers are longer, has fewer protruding ends to catch dirt and bacteria. Experiments show that about three times as much dirt clings to cotton as to linen, and about twice as many bacteria are collected by the skin when cotton garments are worn. Cotton fabrics, however, may be easily laundered, and the high temperature and soap used are satisfactory disinfectants. Cotton garments may, therefore, be kept in a sanitary condition if changed frequently. Wool furnishes an excellent feeding ground for bacteria, especially when soiled, and the difficulty with which it is laundered makes an added objection to its use next the skin. Sleeping between woolen blankets, which cannot be washed frequently, is a most unsanitary practice, as the above statement indicates. Either sheets or cotton blankets which may be frequently washed should be used. Sheets should be long enough to tuck in well at the bot-
tom and fold over the bedding at the top at least a foot. This serves as a protection for the bedding which cannot be washed often.

Many girls and women are not sufficiently careful about frequent washing of corsets and shields. Corsets may be easily and thoroughly cleaned by the use of a small brush and plenty of soapsuds. After rinsing in clear water and drying in the sunshine, the garment is as fresh and clean as when new. Shields should be soaked a few hours in tepid suds, prepared with a pure neutral soap and soft water, and rinsed in cold water. Hot water makes the rubber brittle and should always be avoided. A brush may be used here also, but it should not be necessary if the shields are washed frequently. They should then be hung to dry in a cool place, never near the stove or over a register, as the heat will spoil the rubber. Shields may also be kept in good condition for several days if they are washed off each time the garment is removed. This may be done by using a cloth dipped in soapy water, and afterward one rinsed in clear water. Thus the shields need not be removed from the garment then. They must be removed frequently, however, and washed thoroughly.

The corset.—While it pleases fashion at present to have the waist large and the clothing worn loosely, in a few seasons the tendency may
again be toward the small waist and consequent tight lacing. In considering the subject of proper clothing, therefore, we cannot omit a discussion of the results of constriction of the waist and chest by the use of a tight corset. There may be a difference of opinion as to whether the present modes, allowing greater freedom of movement and a possibility of deep breathing, are the result of education along these lines or whether they are simply a whim of the designer. We trust and believe that the trend at the present time is toward more sensible and hygienic dress for women.

Dr. T. Sadler, in "The Science of Living or The Art of Keeping Well," says on this subject: "Corsets restrict the breathing; they weaken the abdominal muscles; they displace the internal organs, favoring constipation, and indirectly contributing to the causes of indigestion and congestion of the liver and pelvic organs. The corset is indirectly chargeable with the vast amount of the sufferings of womankind usually designated as 'Female complaints.' " The present day corsets, mentioned previously, cannot be charged with the evils spoken of by Dr. Sadler. The pressure in this case is low on the abdomen, where there are few organs, and serves as a support, holding the organs in place instead of causing the downward pressure. With the possible looseness at
the waist and above, there need be little if any interference with the circulation and deep breathing. The front laced corset is found to be more comfortable by those whose work requires that they sit most of the day. The pressure of the front steel on the nerve center causes discomfort in some cases and many doctors recommend the front lace corset because it does away with the steel in the front. Tight garters on any corset are bad because of the downward pressure which should always be avoided for reasons already given.

Corsets are not necessary for the woman with strong muscles unless she has a large accumulation of fat at the abdomen which needs to be kept in place. Unless all garments be suspended from the shoulder, however, which is not always convenient, the discomfort from the bands at the waistline may be much worse than a loose corset giving plenty of breathing space. Hanging all garments from the shoulders may cause an undue strain on the back. This again is something which each individual must decide for herself, keeping in mind the general principles of health and hygiene.

Shoes.—Shoes should protect the feet from hard or sharp objects and from heat and cold. It is important that the feet be kept warm and dry, as cold feet are frequently responsible for colds, disturbance of the bowels, and inflamma-
tion of the pelvic organs. A physician who has had large experience in a children's hospital said that cold feet were the cause of more colic in babies than any other one thing. Cold extremities prevent proper digestion. Wearing rubbers is not considered fashionable by some, but a pair of rubbers worn in stormy weather will save much discomfort and possibly several doctor bills. Rubber is impervious to both perspiration and air, and, therefore, should only be worn when necessary. The low sandal variety is best under ordinary conditions. The question of wearing low shoes in cold weather should not be overlooked. The blood vessels are near the surface in the legs and arms, especially at the joints, as ankles and elbows, and consequently insufficient covering of these parts means a chilling of the blood. This undue loss of heat in the extremities means a proportionate congestion in some internal organ, with a possibility of serious results. It should be remembered also that such a loss of heat means a loss of energy which might have been stored up for use in time of emergency or expended in accomplishing something worth while.

The close fitting, extremely pointed-toed shoes with the absurd French heels cannot be too strongly condemned. High heels are especially harmful to young girls who are just developing into womanhood, and mothers should
"think twice" before allowing their young daughters to wear them. The natural shape of the foot should not be lost sight of in selecting shoes. It is unlike the hand in that the large toe, which corresponds with the thumb, is usually longer than the others, and instead of running straight ahead, as so-called "anatomical" shoes are built, slopes slightly outward. The shoe should, therefore, be somewhat pointed, slanting from both sides toward the center, although most of the slope should come on the outside, following the natural curves of the foot. The natural lines of the human foot are graceful and beautiful, and if we would only accustom our eyes to its real shape as displayed in properly fitting shoes, we would soon admire nature's work and cease futile attempts to improve upon it. Discomfort means lowered efficiency, and it is important, therefore, to have the feet, as well as the other parts of the body, comfortably clothed.

Experience with a large variety of materials has shown leather to be the best for general use. For shoemaking purposes, it is unsurpassed because it is tough, flexible, porous, and reasonably water-proof, and has a moderate degree of ventilation. It is not ideal because it retains heat and perspiration to an undesirable degree, has an unpleasant odor, and cannot be kept clean, to say nothing of sterile. The same pair
of shoes should not be worn constantly, since they do not become thoroughly aired and dried out during the night. It is more satisfactory and economical to have two pairs of shoes for ordinary wear, and change frequently.

Just a word about the selection and care of stockings. It would be ideal from a hygienic standpoint if white hosiery could be worn all the time, but for obvious reasons this is not convenient. The dye used in black or colored hose may cause trouble if the skin is bruised and broken. Numerous incidents could be cited of blood poisoning being caused in this way. Sometimes it has meant being laid up a few days, and occasionally even the loss of a limb. How to prevent such a situation is the question which interests us. Something may be told about the permanency of the dye by moistening the handkerchief or any piece of soft white cloth and rubbing the stocking. If the cloth is stained the stockings will crock when worn. Tight or ill fitting shoes frequently cause blisters which result in trouble. If the shoe rubs at the heel and begins to redden the skin, a thin piece of velvet pasted in the shoe, with the napped side next to the stocking, will prevent friction. Stockings which are too short are uncomfortable and do not wear well because of the constant pressure. On the other hand, if they are too large the surplus forms in creases
or folds which are also uncomfortable. The "happy medium" of a perfect fit should be arrived at if possible for the sake of comfort and economy. For the person with sensitive feet the right and left hose, which are now manufactured, are advisable but are unnecessary for the individual with normal feet.

**One-piece garments.**—From the inside out, one-piece garments are best from a hygienic standpoint. They are more comfortable, as all who have tried both will testify. Extra bands and layers of material are eliminated. Such garments may be worn loose, since they are held in place, always looking neat and trim. Union suits are constantly gaining in favor, also combination suits, princess slips, and one-piece dresses. Fashion is partially and perhaps largely responsible for the trend in that direction, but however that may be, we trust that the condition may become even more prevalent in spite of changes in fashion.

**Collars.**—High, tight collars interfere with the circulation and may affect the eyes. Exposure of the throat and chest in cold weather is unwise for the average individual, as it means an undue loss of heat and energy. It is just as unwise, however, to bundle up the neck with heavy furs or mufflers. This excessive covering of the neck and chest causes the skin to perspire freely and become tender so that the least ex-
posure to cold results in congestion, thus increasing the possibility of sore throat, colds, and pneumonia.

**Hats.**—Large or heavy hats are uncomfortable, either because of the weight or the difficulty with which they are balanced. Nervousness and an unnatural position may result because of the effort to balance and maintain the poise. Tight hat bands affect circulation and cause discomfort. Men err on this point more frequently than women but when the mode in vogue calls for the close fitting hat for women, it is well to have this possible danger in mind.

**Garments worn at night.**—It hardly seems necessary at this time to refer to the wearing of garments at night which have been worn during the day, but lest there be some who have never thought of the necessity of airing, especially the undergarments, it is mentioned here. The discussion concerning absorption and evaporation of perspiration explains the reasons for this. The union suit, shoes, and stockings should be placed where they will be thoroughly aired during the night. The dress or waist should be hung either wrong side out, or at least with the inside and shields sufficiently exposed so that they are well aired.

If one is not sufficiently warm without the underclothing at night, a separate suit should be used. Aside from the reasons already sug-
gested, the added bodily comfort is an important fact. For greater warmth sleeping garments of wool or heavy cotton flannel may be worn.

**Appropriate dress for various occasions.**—The gown should always suit the occasion. The school girl and the business woman should attire themselves simply, becomingly, and neatly. The fancy lingerie, lace, or chiffon blouse, very low necks, short sleeves, party slippers, plumed hats and jewelry, are all out of place in the correct business or school costume. The simple tailored suit, with a tailored or a very plain shirt waist, good sensible shoes, and a simple small hat are much more fitting. The sailor suit is always appropriate for the school girl.

The reception or party gown is out of place at a Sunday service. Clothes worn to church should be simple and inconspicuous. It is much better to be underdressed than overdressed.

Simplicity and immaculate neatness should characterize the dress of the traveler. It should be free from all unnecessary ornament and should be inconspicuous in color.

The dress of the individual must be suited to the community in which she lives. The elaborate evening gown, perfectly correct at a formal city reception, would be entirely out of place in a small country town.

**Economy of dress.**—Unless one's circum-
stances are such that a suit or a dress may be discarded after wearing a few times, novelties in color and style should be avoided. The selection of color is important, not only from the artistic point of view, but also where the money side is being considered. The woman who is spending only a small amount on her clothes cannot afford to wear vivid, striking, or queer colors nor extreme or ultrafashionable modes. She should adopt a color scheme limited to those colors that are becoming and that harmonize. Use a staple color, as navy blue, a soft brown, or green as a foundation with gloves, hats, neckwear, and other accessories in harmony. The economy of this is evident, as fewer garments will serve all occasions. Navy blue is a safe color to choose as it is becoming to almost every one and can be purchased in all standard materials. The woman with brown eyes or red hair will find brown, green, or black most becoming, and therefore most suitable.

**What is a bargain.**—Is there anything which so delights the heart of a woman as being able to take advantage of a bargain? Everything placed on the counters where a bargain sale is advertised is not necessarily a real bargain. The salesmen have discovered that many women do not exercise their judgment when attending such sales and have learned to take advantage of this. The following incident illustrates this
fact: A clothing store in Michigan had a slight fire, and some of their goods were mussed and soiled by the water and smoke. To get rid of these damaged goods a fire sale was advertised. The people thronged to get the bargains offered, and continued to come after all the sale goods had been sold. The merchant did not like to disappoint the crowds, so had the clerks take new, fresh materials and wipe the floor with them to make them look like the others, and then for their trouble the price was raised a few cents. The crowd eagerly snapped up "the bargains" and went away happy.

When attending a sale of any kind, one should look for legitimate reasons for the reduced price. Broken lots and odd sizes must be gotten rid of, even at a sacrifice. Soiled garments do not sell readily at the regular price, and the merchant is glad to make a reduction to get rid of such garments. In such a case, if the garment be one which can be laundered and the reduction more than covers the cost of laundering, this may be termed a legitimate bargain. The same may be said of mill ends, remnants, samples, and novelties such as belts, bags, and collars. Seasonal sales also furnish an opportunity for economical purchases. For example, the January white goods sales have become an established custom in many stores. Real bargains may be found at such times.
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Rubber goods and silks, which deteriorate rapidly, are frequently put on sale in order to dispose of them quickly. Sale silks are seldom economical, and unless you are allowed to test a sample and find the silk unweighted, beware. A weighted silk which has been in stock for some time will seldom wear long enough to pay for making up. A young woman bought such a silk and after keeping it a few months took it to the dressmaker. The waist was cut out but never basted together, because when the pleats were laid it split in the creases. Occasionally there will be found in the lot, an unweighted silk which is really a bargain.

Another danger encountered in bargain sales is the temptation to buy things that are not needed at the time, and with no prospect of an early future need. A story is told of a woman who was fascinated by sales of all kinds. She frequently brought home purchases which greatly amused the family. One day, after attending a second-hand sale, she returned with a door plate on which was engraved the name Thompson. When asked what use she expected to make of a door plate with Thompson on it, she replied that she thought one of her daughters might marry a Mr. Thompson and then she could give it to them. Perhaps this seems almost unbelievable, and yet women are constantly buying things for which they have as lit-
tle need. Benjamin Franklin said, "Buy what thou hasn’t need of, and ere long thou shalt sell thy necessaries." This does not refer to buying staples in quantities. It is wise to put in a supply of thread, needles, pins, tapes, bias bindings, and such things that are frequently needed. This will save the inconvenience and loss of time caused by numerous shopping trips when these things happen to be needed. Staple cotton materials, hosiery, undergarments, and such other materials and garments not largely affected by fashion may be purchased in quantities out of season when the price has been reduced. Suits, coats, etc., may be purchased late in the season at about half price. If one is willing to wear plain tailored styles, which do not change so radically from season to season, instead of the extremes, fads, and novelties, it is possible to dress well on a smaller amount of money. A person of small means should not attempt to keep up with all the fads, as they soon lose their attractiveness and, therefore, necessitate frequent changes, if one is to appear well dressed.

Buying staples in large quantities and buying out of season necessitate an income beyond the amount needed from day to day. Unfortunately those who need most to economize are unable to take advantage of such methods of economy.
There are many who, either because the income is small or because of a lack of planning, buy on the installment plan. An investigation made in New York City showed that from 20 per cent to 100 per cent more than regular price was paid when the installment plan was used. It is unfortunate that those who need to economize most, frequently shop in this way.

**Care of clothing.**—Proper care of clothing plays an important part in the clothes problem if one wishes to appear well dressed on a small or even reasonable amount of money. The appearance of the most beautiful garment is greatly impaired if mussed, spotted, or minus a hook, eye, or button. On the other hand, a simple dress of inexpensive material if in good repair and correctly put on, gives one a well dressed appearance. The careful brushing of clothes which have been worn on the street is a point frequently neglected, but is one which adds much to the appearance and life of the garment.

**Clothing budget.**—A consideration of the proportion of the income which should be spent for clothing, and how that amount may be most wisely used, is of value. Such a study gives us the benefit of the experience of others and makes us think about the garments which will be best suited to our needs. This planning will naturally reduce expenditures, as any one
knows that haphazard buying is extravagant. For the person on a salary there is quite an advantage in planning the purchases from month to month and year to year. In this way it is possible to avoid having an undue proportion of purchases come in one month or one year. If this is not considered, a suit, waist, hat, shoes, and gloves may all be needed at the same time without sufficient money to pay for them. The same is true of garments for the year. Coats, suits, furs, etc., should be distributed so that all are not purchased from one year’s salary.

Studies of thousands of family and personal clothing budgets show that the amount spent for clothing varies from 12 to 17 per cent of the money received. Circumstances vary the amount which must be spent. For example, a teacher or a woman in business, who must always be well dressed, must spend more money for clothing than the woman in the home who is most neatly and properly attired for at least part of the day in a simple cotton house dress. The climate also affects the kind and amount of clothing needed. There is a value in keeping one’s clothing account from year to year, since it shows what purchases have been made, and a study of it in comparison with other clothing budgets may show how better results could
be obtained for the same or a smaller expenditure.

Suggestive Review

1. Hygiene of clothing. Functions of clothing. Undergarments, quality suited to individual, importance of keeping clean. Bedding and bedroom ventilation. Hygiene of corsets, shoes, hats, dressing of neck, etc.

2. Appropriate dressing for school girls and business women. Suitable clothes, etc.

3. Bargains—legitimate bargains, so-called bargains which are frauds.