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HOW TO SELECT CLOTHING.

A Tailor's Advice as to How to Detect Cotton Warp and Shoddy in Cloths.

"The stuff in this suit of black clothes you made for me is not what I took it for," said one of an uptown tailor's customers to him the other day, in a reporter's hearing "I have just had them cleaned, and now see how they have whitened at the edges."

"That's because of the cotton warp in the material, which the scouring soon makes apparent," said the tailor, genially.

"But you assured me particularly that the material wasn't shoddy."

"So I did, and I told you the truth. But at the same time I told you that it was cheap American goods, and that is just what it is—a well-appearing American woolen manufacture, with a large percentage of cotton warp. If you had wanted shoddy, I could have sent you where you'd have got something still cheaper, for shoddy is a kind of goods I won't make up for love or money. But, if you will remember, I showed you much better, but more expensive goods, of both foreign and American manufacture, which I offered to recommend heartily enough. But you were bent on having the poorer but well-appearing goods and so consulted your own wishes instead of my advice."

The customer seemed to have nothing to offer against these statements, and presently took his departure, apparently much dissatisfied with himself, if not with the tailor.

"How," asked the reporter, "is an inexperienced buyer to distinguish between all-wollen goods and the material containing cotton warp, of which that gentleman was complaining?"

"By merely raveling the rough edge of the material and inspecting the threads," said the tailor. Any one can tell a cotton thread from a woolen thread. The one will break short in two, on being tested, while the other will fray and floss out, like yarn and worsted. In this way you can readily detect a mixture of cotton warp in a sham all-woolen fabric."

"How do you detect shoddy in cloth?"

"In just the same way, and even more easily. Fray out two or three threads from the rough edge and untwist them. If they contain shoddy it will drop out of the twist, sometimes like sand, and then again in an impalpable dust, that will like enough make you sneeze. If you'd inhale enough of the stuff it would be apt to give you both a headache and sore throat, for most shoddy is rank poison. Ever in a shoddy factory?"

"No."

"Well, I was, and I know something about it. Fact is I worked in a shoddy factory just one week when I was a much younger and more necessitous person than I am now. Necessitous? Well, I should say so, for nothing short of starvation could have driven me to seek employment in that poison mill. Talk about quicksilver-mining and that sort of thing for turning live workers into galvanized corpses! Why, such employment is positively invigorating compared with a shoddy mill. I stood it just one week, and was then laid up for six months. Lucky I switched off when I did, or I'd have been atrophied into kingdom come long ago. Even as it was it was a close shave."

"How is shoddy made?"

"I can tell you how it was made twelve or fifteen years ago, when I served my week's apprenticeship at it. They may have made improvements in the milling since then, though, of course, the product itself is just the same mean, swindling, poisonous stuff it always was. I was placed over a sort of machine something like a patent straw cutter, only in lieu of straw, you fed it with cloth scraps, remnants, clippings and rags. These pass through the teeth of the machine on to revolving knives, just like a straw cutter, which minced them up pretty fine. After that they passed through another and yet another machine, getting minced finer and finer at each operation, until the stuff was reduced to a coarse powder. This powder was then bolted, and the fine powder or dust that passed through the last sieve was the beautiful stuff called shoddy, or flock. Then came the dyeing process, and the dirty job was complete. I never got any further than feeder to the primary machine. Although I kept a wet sponge tied constantly over my mouth and nostrils, the work was almost too much for me at the end of the first day. Why, once an hour I would squeeze out that sponge muzzler, and the water that came from it would be blacker than your hat, and smell worse than any ragpicker's sack. At the end of the week I pocketed my $6 wages as if I had stolen it, and slid for home like a rocket, where I was sick abed a long time afterward."

"How did the other operatives stand it so much better than you?"

"Some of them didn't, while those that did had cast-iron throats and lungs like bellows, I suppose. Some men can stand anything."

"How is the shoddy mixed with the cloth?"

"It is simply twisted up with the warp before the weaving. This gives fictitious weight and durability to a fabric whose native flimsiness would otherwise betray the worthlessness of the woof. Young man beware of shoddy, whose presence in cloth you can always detect in the manner I have told you."

"But in ready-made clothing?"

"There you have no means of detecting it, save by wearing the goods. You have to trust to the honesty of the firm of whom you purchase. Though I don't deal in ready-made goods myself, it is no more than just for me to say that many firms that deal in nothing else are perfectly honest and trustworthy, and whose guarantee of what they warrant is as good as gold. Only, in addition to the precautions I have given you, be very careful in choosing goods, whether made up or not, to know that the material has been properly fulled. Without a perfect course of fulling, woolen cloth will always shrink upon becoming damp."

"What is the exact meaning of fulling?"

"Fulling is the last or finishing process through which cloth passes, or should pass before it is ready for the wearer's use. It is a process by which cloth is scoured, cleansed and thickened. It consists of a series of pestles or stampers, which alternately fall into and rise out of a trough, through which the cloth is being passed, along with fuller's earth or some other cleansing material. The process, besides ridding the cloth of the grease and oil used in preparing wool, prevents it from shrinking thereafter in coming in contact with the wet. You often see trousers for instance, that looked large enough, and even overlarge, when first put on, but which, nevertheless, shrink up too small, or all out of shape, after encountering a single hour of wet weather. That is because the material was not thoroughly fulled. In selecting clothing material, always make sure that it has been properly fulled."

"But how can an inexperienced person tell whether it has been properly fulled or not?"

"He can't. There is no way by which he can. His only safeguard in this respect is to take his tailor's word for it. Hence how important it is for every man to have an honest tailor. Let me repeat my warning, young man. In selecting clothing material, beware of shoddy, and put your faith in an honest tailor."

Some of the Causes

Giving rise to dyspepsia are overwork, badly cooked food, hurry in eating, too much grease, disagreeable companions, too little sleep, too much worry. Dyspepsia is a curse; but Brown's Iron Bitters is a blessing; because it casts out dyspepsia, and makes suffering people well. Mrs. E. Patton, 2620 Franklin street, St. Louis, says: "I used Brown's Iron Bitters for dyspepsia, and it did me good."

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