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Simple Tests Telling Quality of Textiles

There are a great many tests that may be used to determine the genuineness and value of materials, but only a few that are practicable for the home.

If the buyer is not absolutely sure that the material in question is as represented it is best to ask for a small sample and apply some of the home tests before making the purchase.

For instance, to ascertain if a material is all linen and not mixed with cotton, apply a drop of water. The moisture spreads rapidly on linen, but will remain unabsorbed on cotton for some time. However, this is not always a safe test, as cotton and linen are often heavily sized with dressing which prevents the water from being absorbed. Another test for cotton and linen is a drop of glycerine. Linen will become transparent, but cotton will not be affected. Crushing in the hands will show the difference between cotton and linen, as linen wrinkles more than cotton. Sizing may be discovered by rubbing the materials between the hands to see if the dressing will come out. Washing also will remove the dressing and reveal the true nature of the material.

Cotton and wool mixtures when moistened wrinkle more than pure wool materials.

In examining materials it is well to know that cotton fibers are short with fuzzy ends, while linen fibers are long and have even ends. Wool fibers are short, kinky and stiff. Silk fibers are long, straight and lustrous.

The nature of the material may also be ascertained by burning a small sample. Cotton burns quickly with flame. Linen burns in the same way, but does not catch so readily, as it has less oil in the fiber and less air in the woven cloth. Wool burns slowly, giving off an odor like burnt feathers and leaving a gummy residue. Silk burns more slowly than wool and with less odor and leaves a crisp ash.

Worth Knowing

China Cement.—Make a thick solution of gum arabic by dissolving two tablespoonfuls of it in hot water. Into this stir plaster of paris until the mixture is the consistency of gruel. Apply to the edge of the china with a fine brush. Allow the china to stand three days before using.

Sewing Hint.—When stitching pockets on aprons, skirts, etc., you will find that they will not rip off as easily if the stitching is begun about half an inch from the top, stitch upward, then turn downward. When you come to the other side stitch downward the same distance as you stitched upward on the first side.

Feather Advice.—Never sun feather beds or feather pillows. Air them on a windy day in a cool place. The sun draws the oil, and the feathers will have a rancid smell if they remain in the sun.

Mildew Remedy.—An excellent remedy for mildew is to saturate an article with kerosene. Roll it up and let it stand for twenty-four hours and then wash in very hot soapsuds.

Fish Odor.—To remove fish odor from silver knives and forks or from cooking utensils let stand in cold water before washing.

Superstitious Musicians.

Musicians are often singularly superstitious. Paderewski once ordered an expensive apartment in London, but refused to enter when he found it was No. 13 of a certain street, although he paid for it. Massenet has written twenty-one operas and many other compositions, but on all of his manuscripts page 12½ is written in place of 13.

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