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COUPONICALLY SPEAKING

TWO and a-half months have passed since the introduction of clothes rationing, and in them seventeen of our clothing coupons have passed across the counter, a total out of all proportion to the state of our wardrobe or to the number of the couponless weeks, which long before November will stare us in the face. Many of our readers will be in the same position. Now must we begin the task hateful to a confirmed coupon-spender of going through the wardrobe and bringing out to the light of day garments which we had hoped forgotten for ever, of turning, dyeing, renovating such garments, and finally, worst task of all, of wearing them as long as warp and woof hang together. But perhaps, in thus assessing our wardrobes, our hearts are warmed by the sight of the costume we bought last week, at the sacrifice of eleven coupons, it is true, but which we feel will continue to add glory to our otherwise mediocre collection of wearing apparel. To keep our few really memorable garments surrounded by that aura of desirability which first attracted us to them, and at the same time to bring our less desirable garments up to a higher level of wearability will therefore be the

chief occupation of our couponless months. Hints on achieving this two-fold object are given in a recent A.C.E. talk "Making Clothing Last."

It begins, probably too late for most of us, with a hint on "How to Buy." Clothing must be selected for its wearing qualities, warmth and simplicity of cut, and with an eye to future alterations and adaptations. If for example you select a good tweed three-quarter length coat for spring, you will be able to make a sports skirt out of it later on, when it has lost its first youth. Choose a skirt style with inserted pleats, for these pleats can be made from the sleeves of the former coat. When you are buying the coat keep in mind the colours of the other garments you are likely still to use with it, and even those you are likely still to wear with it when it has changed into a skirt. You may be heartily tired of seeing yourself in blues or greens or browns, but if the colour that forms the basis of your wardrobe suits you, your appearance will be much smarter than if you eventually acquire a motley outfit. Accessories can be made to supply variety.

Look Your Coat Over

When you have bought your coat have a look at the way the buttons are sewn on and resew them if necessary, and at the same time strengthen button holes and perhaps put an extra stitch or two into the corners of pockets. And sew a small piece of material under the top of pleats that may have a pull on them. You can easily embroider a small arrow-head there while you do the job. The finishings of many otherwise satisfactory "ready-mades" are poorly done. It pays handsomely to improve them.

Ultra smart fashion books often depict an extremely well-dressed woman resting on her shooting stick one hand thrust deep into her sports coat pocket. If you have any consideration for the continued neatness of your own coat, don't do it. Nothing looks worse, or ages a coat more quickly, than a grubby sagging pocket. Several handkerchiefs bulging from a pocket can do almost as much damage, for no amount of shrinking or pressing ever really remedies the fault. Collars of coats, too, require frequent care, a good scrubbing with soap and water being often all that is required. Well pressed lapels do much towards that fresh look and of course be careful to remove any spots or marks immediately after they are noticed, for you remember how they come there and so can treat them with appropriate removers.

Treatment for Skirts

The skirts of costumes if not well treated often become baggy. You can prevent this by lining them to well below the bulging part, and across the knees as well. The cut of the straight skirt is most important; those with the side seams well towards the front, and with a fairly narrow back panel, keep their shape best, though even these must be pressed frequently to look their best. It is often quite possible to combine coat and skirt when past their best, into a good coat frock, so that worn parts come in slightly different places. Fre-

Women and the Home



quently, however, it is more satisfactory to re-make the material into clothing for the children.

Most of us do look after our smart new coats, costumes and frocks fairly well. By giving just a little attention to keeping them perfectly clean and well pressed, and by removing stains promptly we can do much to preserve their brightness.

But the mother of several boys or girls has a much more difficult task. Not only must she keep clothing in good repair, but she must devise means for using old clothing for the children. Father's trousers can be cut down in such a way that some of the more intricate pieces of tailoring are retained for son's pants.

Gym. Frocks are a Trial

Girls' gym. frocks are rather a trial. Daughters from about ten years old can be taught to do their own pressing and cleaning. Maybe they will tell you that Betty Brown's mother does hers, and you will feel you are being rather stoney-hearted about the matter. But when small daughter is twenty or so she will thank you for the training. Caring for clothing can be just as much a matter of course business as bathing or eating, if you have always done your own. But to go back to the matter of gym. frocks. Frequently pressing and cleaning—and both are unavoidable—wear out the edges of the pleats badly. Also the rubbing of a case full of books on the walks to and from school, against the hem soon wear out that part. Turning the tunic is not much good, the pleats have to go back into the same places again, but you can cut the tunic down for a younger sister before it is badly worn, or make a skirt out of it.

It is rather a temptation to take a semi-worn frock for wear in the house in the mornings, but a more thrifty policy is to use real work clothes, and if you are tired of the old frock, to clean it thoroughly and store it away till you have forgotten it. Recently, I brought to light some old clothes treated in this way, to be boiled with joy by girls enthusiastic about their re-making. An orgy of reconstruction ensued. Sleeves and collars were cut off and new ones made of bright contrasting materials. And this kind of renovation is all the easier now that many of the commercial patterns are specially designed for the purpose.

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