

Do You Test Your Textiles

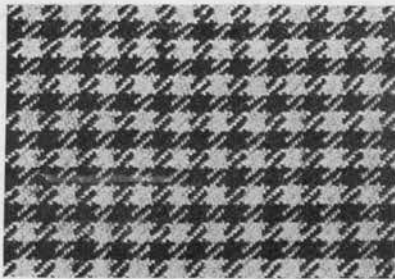
By AVIS DUFFEY

EVERY buyer, whether selecting material by the yard or in the finished garment, realizes that it is not an easy matter to distinguish fibers. The manufacturers are very successful in making one fiber resemble another but there are various simple tests which may be made without requiring much time or expense and yet give fairly accurate results.

Our grandmothers could go to the store and term a fabric "linen" if a drop of moisture placed on it was quickly absorbed in an even circle. Now, however, the manufacturer has learned to treat his cotton in such a manner that the sample must be washed to remove the dressing or this test is not reliable. The only dependable means of detecting cotton as an adulteration of linen is the microscope. Linen fiber, as seen under the microscope, can be distinguished from all other fibers by its joints or nodes. Cotton is twisted unless it is mercerized and then it is round in appearance. Wool is easily detected by its many scales while silk is seen as lustrous, smooth, round threads.

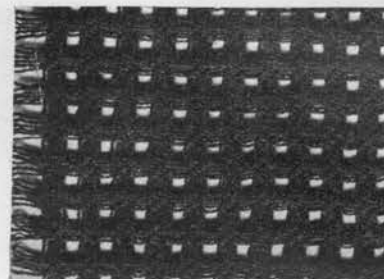
Grandmother could ask for all wool material and be reasonably sure to get it, but many of our medium and low priced materials on the market today are a combination of wool and cotton. The cheaper flannels are often found by testing to be cotton with a wool nap only or wool spun around a cotton core.

It is rather difficult to make an accurate test unless a sample can be experimented on outside of the shop. The breaking test is probably the best one to apply if a sample cannot be obtained. The fibers of the broken end of a raveled thread of linen will be straight and irregular and each fiber end pointed while the cotton ends will be fuzzy. The wool



I

I. The original is a mixture. The white yarn is wool and the black is cotton.



II

II. Shows the cotton foundation, the lye having destroyed all the wool yarns.

fibers will be slightly rough and wavy while the silk yarn breaks with the separate fibers fine and straight.

If a sample can be taken it may be tested either by burning or by means of chemicals. Linen and cotton, since they are vegetable fibers, burn in the same manner. The flame is yellow and the odor that of burning paper. They burn quickly and the ash left is gray and small in quantity. Artificial silk is also of vegetable origin and burns quite like cotton and linen but even more quickly. Wool burns slowly and leaves a gummy residue in the form of a ball. Silk burns quickly leaving its residue in a grayish ball of smaller proportion than that of the wool. Both give the odor of burning hair or feathers since both are of animal origin.

In addition to being an aid in detecting cotton as an adulterant of wool and silk materials, the burning test is useful as a test for weighting in silks. A pure silk burns quickly leaving the gummy ball described above, while a weighted

silk burns more slowly and the raveled yarns retain their original shape.

A simple chemical test which may be used at home consists of boiling the sample in a solution of lye and water. (One teaspoon of lye to one pint of water makes a sufficiently strong solution.) After about five minutes boiling, the wool and silk will dissolve and the cotton and linen remain unchanged. This test is valuable in detecting cotton adulteration in wool and silk fabrics.

Artificial silk or rayon, as it is popularly called, is coming to be widely used. Altho it is an important fiber it is not as strong as the product of the silkworm nor as expensive. Artificial silk is more lustrous and glossy than real silk, and the fiber itself is coarser and less elastic than the natural silk fiber.

Perhaps these few suggestions may prove useful in judging fabric quality and content for, altho the price is usually taken as an indication of quality, experience proves that it is not always a reliable one.

Farm and Home Week Pays,

By ANNA WESTROM

Over 325 women registered at the booth in Agricultural hall during Farm and Home week, Feb. 2-7. This does not include women who live in Ames or drove from nearby towns to attend the lectures, without registering for a room. These busy women spent one week of their much demanded time on the Iowa State College campus learning the art of homemaking.

They spent their days at lectures, which grouped themselves around the general subject, "The Cornerstones of the American Home," which include the health of the family, family development, and sound financial standards.

Dr. Caroline Hedger of the Elizabeth Memorial Fund of Chicago was an outstanding speaker, lecturing on "Child Life at its Best," and "The Homemaker and the Community Health Problem." Dr. J. F. Edwards, head of the department of hygiene gave daily lectures on health.

Family development was brought out in a number of lectures. Those by Dr. Smiley Blanton, director of the child guidance clinic, Lymanhurst hospital,

Minneapolis, on "Emotional Life of the Child," and "The Mental Hygiene of the Home" were especially helpful. Mrs. May Pardee Youtz, Iowa City Extension service, and E. L. Morgan, University of Missouri were other outstanding speakers. Miss Fannie Buchanan, educational department, Victor Talking Machine company, talked on the use of music as a recreational feature in the home and in the community. She says, "Music washes away from the soul the dust of every day life." Mrs. Mignon Quaw Lott, recreational director for the extension department of Montana State College of Agriculture, developed the recreational side of home life, and introduced "Problems with a Purpose" for the community.

Mrs. Clara I. Judson, budget specialist in the American Bond & Mortgage company, Chicago, discussed "The Business of Homemaking," "Training Children for Spending," and "America's Biggest Business." Miss Gertrude Lynn, extension home management specialist spoke on "Weighing Values in Spending the Homemaker's Time." Numerous lectures were

also given by various faculty members.

One of the new outstanding features of this year's Short Course was the beginning of study groups on Child Life and on Home management, where women could exchange their own ideas and experiences. Both groups were so well attended that it was necessary to find larger rooms than had been planned for the meetings. "How can you get a child to eat what he should eat if he doesn't want to," was a question raised by one of the mothers at these meetings. Other mothers gave their experiences, and Dr. Hedger summed up the discussion in these words: "Know what you want the child to do, and do that same thing yourself. It is a two man job, and each must do his share." In this informal way the women became better acquainted, and realized that their problems were being shared by others.

After 4 o'clock the women were entertained at teas at the Home Management houses, and by Meal Planning classes. They were also given a chance to use

(Continued on page 16)