UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Tuesday, January 25, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

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More spots and stains to worry about this week.

A bride reports an argyrol stain on one of her best embroidered towels. (A hope-chest towel, she says.)

Then the mother of three children writes that, as the result of an epidemic of colds in her household, grease spots left by nose drops seem to be on everything from shirts to sheets.

Still another listener asks about fruit juice or wine stains on a table cloth.

Let's take up these various stains, one at a time, and see what can be done about them.

First, argyrol on that nice towel.

Argyrol makes a nasty-looking dark stain but not a hopeless stain if you give it the right treatment. And oddly enough, iodine is one of the things you use to treat an argyrol stain. Another is that chemical called "hypo" which the photographers use in developing pictures. And a third is some household ammonia. (Yes, it does take a little fussing to get argyrol out, but it can be done.)

First, moisten the stained fabric -- the towel, in this case -- in clear water. Then drop a few drops of iodine on the argyrol stain and allow it to stand a few minutes. While it is standing, put a little hypo in a cheesecloth bag and dip the bag in a dilute solution of ammonia -- a tablespoon of ammonia in a cup of water, say. Now daub that moistened bag of hypo on the iodine stain again and again until all the color disappears. The argyrol and iodine will fade out together. Finally rinse the towel thoroughly in water.

So much for the argyrol stains.

Now about the spot made by nose drops.

By the way, these spots may look like ordinary grease spots but you don't remove them in the same way. You see, nose drops are liquids with a base of eucalyptus oil containing a little menthol and some coloring matter. Fortunately, the coloring matter doesn't combine with the fabric.

To remove the spot, first dip the shirt or sheet or whatever the stained article is in water. Then apply a few drops of 20 percent acetic acid. Work the acid into the spot and then rinse out with water.

So much for the argyrol and nose drops. Now about the stains made by fruit juice or wine.

As you have often heard your Aunt Sammy say, it pays to give any stain prompt treatment. The sooner you go after it, the more chance you have of getting it all out.

This is particularly the case with substances containing tannin -- fruit juice or wine, for example. Tannin becomes set by age, and by heat, and by soap or soda or any other alkali. And once a tannin stain is set, it's pretty sure to stay. At least it will give you a good deal of trouble. For there's hardly a more stubborn stain in the world.

Most housewives know that the way to treat any fruit stain is to pour boiling water over it as soon as possible and never, never send it to the wash, or touch soap to it, or press it with a hot iron.

But wine stains generally come out better if you rinse them with clear, soft water and then soak them in warm glycerine. (You can warm a saucer of glycerine by setting it in boiling water.) Then rinse out the fabric with clear water.

So much for stains. Several listeners have written lately to ask about pressing rayon fabrics. Some report that the iron sticks to the fabric, and sometimes damages it. Others say they can't get the wrinkles out as they can from silk fabric.

Try this: Press rayon from the wrong side. Instead of a pressing cloth, use heavy tissue paper dampened by passing a wet sponge or cloth over it. Then press with a warm rather than a very hot iron. But watch the temperature to prevent sticking.

Several weeks ago a listener wrote to ask us how to take the tarnish from a metal cloth dress. Here's another metal-cloth question: How to press silver or gold cloth?

Answer: Turn the garment inside out. Then sponge lightly with some sizing material such as gum arabic dissolved in water. (Use a light solution of gum arabic so that it won't make the fabric too stiff.) Moisten the cloth evenly but don't make it wet. Then simply press hard with a medium hot iron. No steam or pressing cloth is necessary.

Another listener who plans to take advantage of the late-winter sales asks for advice on getting a good buy in a winter coat. I have sent this lady Department-of-Agriculture Leaflet No. 117 called "Quality Guides in Buying Women's Cloth Coats," Leaflet No. 117.

That's all the questions this week. More next Tuesday.

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