

# How MAN has solved the PROBLEM of KEEPING HIS CLOTHES ON



The cavewoman of 20,000 B. C., left above, kept his clothes on with thorn or fishbone, and thus the pin was used. . . . Cretan women of 3000 B. C., right, made frogs out of loops of thread.



Of course, some of the clothes they're wearing have no visible means of support. . . . While hooks and eyes, below, have a history all their own



**T**HE next time you tell your opponent in an argument to keep his shirt on, just stop and think of the literal implications of what you are saying. What is he supposed to do if he wants to take his shirt off: open the zipper in the twentieth century fashion, or unbutton the buttons as men have been doing for years?

For the problem of keeping his clothes on is one which has absorbed the energy and taxed the inventive genius of man ever since those long-lost days when human beings were really cavemen.

While different peoples chose to cover different parts of their bodies,—Mohammedans their faces, the Chinese their artificially compressed feet, the Sumatra and Elebes tribes their knees, the Central Asians their finger-tips, the Samoans their navels—others set up an even wider variety of standards.

The Tahitians consider it okay to go without clothes provided they are sufficiently tattooed; women of the Caribbees may leave their hut without the usual girdle, provided they are painted; in Alaska women felt a deep sense of shame if they had no plugs in their lips.

Because there are so many different ways of keeping clothes on, the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, which tells the story of scientific progress from early days to the present in a series of unusual exhibits, illustrates in a unique manner the evolution of how people have been keeping their clothes on since those prehistoric days in 18,000 B. C. when man, clad in fur or hide or skin, made a contraption, which can be called a pin, and slipped it through a loop of hide on the fur.

**I**T was the Fuegians, who lived at the extremity of Cape Horn, who got the idea of attaching the skins they wore to their bodies by means of cords. Some of the others took pieces of the bones of animals they had eaten, tied them on to the skins and used them to stick through the loops they made. They also used thorns and the handy fishbone as a spike to put through tough skins to hold them together.

As the years wore on, the female of the species didn't like the idea of adorning her clothes with animal bones;



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she preferred polished balls of wood or some cheap metal to use as fasteners, and wove loops out of the various kinds of wool and thread at her disposal in order to take care of the antecedents of buttons. Other kinds of fasteners also were used; in remains of the European lake dwellers recently uncovered, there are many pins, some ornamented, others in whose shape the origin of the safety pin can be traced, and still others of more elaborate bronze.

Most authorities agree that the pin is of the greatest antiquity, preceding the needle by some time. From the natural thorn used to fasten things together, pins developed through bronze brooches in the bronze age to the ordinary domestic pin.

Up around 3000 B. C., the picture changed. Garments were sewn and became much more elaborate. As the figure shows, the young lady who is chock full of sex appeal didn't like the idea of wearing the bones of animals; she made loops out of thread and succeeded in creating what we call the frog.

Women of Crete chose elaborate costumes with bodices cut very low, like

the crinolines of 1800 in France; they often ornamented them with gold buttons. Minoan women, dressed in heavily-petticoated, skirted and flounced garments reaching to their ankles, kept their clothes on with tight belts.

The Assyrians wore a tunic which they kept on by means of a broad belt with pendant tassels; there was a shawl over it and they wound narrow strips of cloth around their legs.

The Greeks had a word for it, too, and theirs was the brooch, which can really be called the granddaddy of the safety pin, since it actually pierced the garment and thus held both sides together.

**R**OMANS had no problem, in keeping clothes on with outside pins or brooches, for they wore the toga slung over the shoulder. What they had to achieve was particular skill in keeping on their loose, flowing garments by manipulating them over their bodies. The women, however, not wearing the

toga, used brooches, clasps and girdles.

In the Middle Ages, tailoring was born and clothes began to be made to fit the body. The Germans in the fourteenth century began wearing their tunics shorter and more closefitting. Over the velvet, silk, or embroidered waist, sometimes lined with fur, a belt was buckled on loosely to hold it in place. A sword and dagger were attached to the belt by special thongs. Sleeves of tunics were laced or buttoned in a rather elaborate fashion.

Girdles, belts, bodice-laces and all kinds of tying arrangements were substituted for the frog idea and the buttonhole was born, though in a slightly different state from what it is now.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ties were used even more extensively than buttons; as a matter of fact, the first mention of the button in literature occurs in "Piers Plowman" in 1377 where there is talk of "botones overgylte."

Buttons, of course, were used long before, but their first use was only as ornament. Only later were they used with loops and still later with the buttonhole. Brass buttons were first manufactured in America in Philadelphia in 1750 and hardwood ones were made in the Quaker City 20 years later. The Quakers refused to wear any button unless it was useful.

Hooks and eyes have a history all their own. It was the warriors of old, like the Norsemen, who used buckles, fastening one piece of metal onto another, and the Romans lent their help to the hook and eye by bending one piece of metal and cutting a hole in the opposite one for it to fit into. This may be taken as the ancestry of the hook and eye.

The nineteenth century saw the purely mechanical fastener, in the form of a snap, two pieces so made that when they were pressed together they clicked and stayed together. From the snap there was a gradual progression to the complicated zipper, which is composed of one side which acts as a hook while the other acts as an eye. The two are in perpetual alignment so that, by moving the catch up or down, the hooks can be made to engage, and once they engage they stick and are perfectly closed.

