LESSON III

COVERING OF FRAMES

SOME shapes are suitable for plain covering; some, by reason of their eccentric lines, it is not possible to cover plain; for such shapes one resorts to folds, shirrings, or draped effects, each of which will be treated of in turn.

The buckram frame, to be plain covered, should be of simple form, so that no join, or at most only one, may be needed to fit the covering to the brim.

If the brim is very wide, or is to be curved up, or down, in any place, it will be necessary to put "braces" where needed. These are just bars of wire set across the brim with a button-hole stitch, either in form of flat-ended pear-shaped loops, or straight bars (see Fig. 1), the ends of which are turned sharp along the edge wire for about an inch and sewn firmly to this, the other end running an inch up against the crown. The

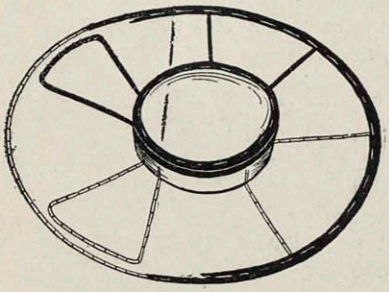

FIG. 1—SHOWING "BRACES" STRAIGHT AND IN LOOP FORM; ALSO MUSLIN BINDS AND COVERS ON WIRES

loop is carried from an inch up the crown to the edge wire, running parallel with this for about 3 inches, then turning back towards the crown, where the space between the two wires is only 1½ inches.

After the braces are on they must be covered with bias strips of thin interlining crinoline, and in the use of Panne velvet, silk, satin, or broadcloth, thin sheet wadding is to be used over the muslin, or the wires will be outlined through the material; baste the coverings on with very fine thread.

After all braces are covered, the edge wire is bound with bias muslin cut 1¼ inches wide, folded over double, and this double muslin clasped and *stretched* over the edge wire and basted on below it. After this is on, cut another bias muslin strip, 1½ inches wide, and *stretch single* over the first bind; baste this at its *lowest edge;* the first gives roundness to the edge, the second is needed to sew to, as you cannot sew your velvet to the stiff buckram. (See Fig. 1.) The edge of the crown, which in hand-made frames is always wired, must be clasped with a strip of muslin, as shown in cut; if properly stretched, it need only be basted round on top of the crown; the side will cling. Circular wires on brims must be covered the same as braces; by stretching *one edge* of the strip the circular form is obtained, and it is quickly basted on with a long "cat" stitch.

In using Panne velvet, silks or broadcloth, the entire frame must be covered with sheet-wadding, fitted on by the pattern, the edges cut level with the frame, and the edge bound with a bias strip of the same, left raw edge, of course; very fine thread must be used, and the *basting* stitches not pulled at all tight, as even this will show through the outer covering.

Wire Frames

If these are to be used for plain covered hats (though this is not desirable), they must be covered with muslin

cut to pattern, *on both sides,* then with wadding, if necessary, as described. Cape net frames need more bracing than buckram or sparterie, but they make the nicest hats. French willow *cloth* is excellent for covering wire frames for plain fitted velvet, etc., being very light, smooth and firm.

Taking the Patterns

If the pupil has studied and learned the making of buckram frames, the taking of patterns will be an easy matter, but for those who have not we will give two or three methods applicable to different shapes.

Many under brims can be stretched on direct from the piece of velvet, without first taking a pattern; pinned round to the crinoline bind, cut round with a ½-inch margin beyond the hat edge; but, unless the crown is taken out, the pattern must be taken for the upper brim piece.

For brims that are curved in at one place and flat at another it is best to measure across for the largest diameter and get a perfect round pattern, as directed for the making of frames; this round is to be pinned on the under brim, and by plaits and slits fitted snug and smooth to the brim, the edge and head lines being cut flush with the frame.

Never allow any turnings in patterns.

It follows that such a pattern cannot be cut flat from the velvet without a join; this must be made to come at the least conspicuous place and where the join is shortest.

Sometimes it is best to stretch the *upper* side of a brim, as in a block mushroom shape; in this case the crown must be taken off, the under facing put in first, cut by a pattern that *fits the edge,* and the material *stretched* till it fits into the curve, in which it is held by tiny invisible stitches in the material, and long ones on the upper surface of the frame. The upper brim piece is then stretched on, the crown covered and put on after.

The same method is used in up-turned brims that bulge; the upper is here put on first, and secured in the curves by long stitches on the uncovered side; the tiny ones on the goods, being of matching silk, they really do not show, and there is no other way to compel the material to cling to the frame. Before removing the pattern from the frame, carefully mark F., B., R., L., for front, back, right and left side, and mark the frame to correspond. Note also whether you take the pattern over or under the brim. Do the same with the crown pieces, bringing the join of the side crown where the trimming is to come. Some milliners glue velvet to frames, but it is dangerous and not a desirable method, though the blocked hats are made so.

Cutting Out the Material

In placing the patterns on the material, especially velvet, all must be placed *the same way of the pile,* so that the whole hat will shade one way; there is a difference of taste in this; some like to brush forward, some backward, from the edge; personally, we prefer to brush from the head out, as this is least likely to disarrange the trimmings if a small velvet whisk is used.

If you will look at Fig. 2, you will see that the "front"

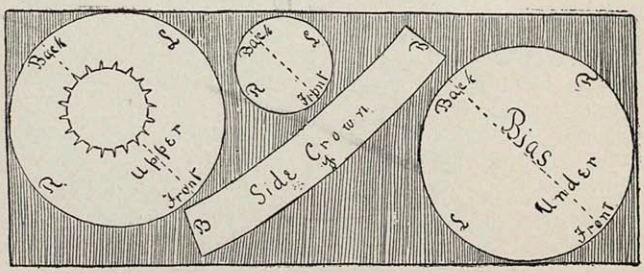

FIG. 2—PATTERN PLACED ON VELVET; BIAS LINE RUNNING FROM BACK TO FRONT IN EACH PIECE ALIKE

of each piece is on the same direction of the *bias* pile; in this illustration the brim is alike on both sides; therefore the pattern may be safely so placed, but if there is the least difference, it is safest to first cut the upper brim, cutting out at the headline, then by placing this on another piece of the velvet, the same way of the pile, *face to face* or back to back, and cutting the under facing by this, but *not* cutting out the headsize, we ensure the correct pieces for both sides; otherwise it is quite possible to cut two for one side.

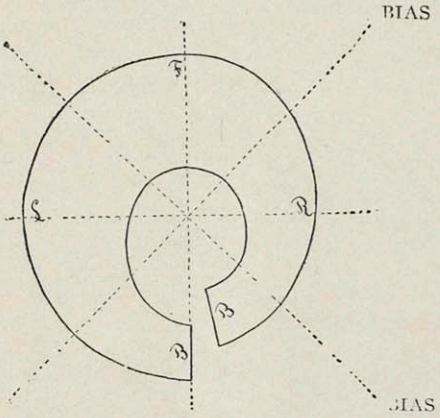

FIG. 3—BRIM DEEPLY CURVED UP ON LEFT SIDE. BIAS LINES RUN OBLIQUELY THROUGH, JOIN COMING ON STRAIGHT LINE AT BACK

Use single-face canton flannel for practice.

In cutting the material from pattern allow a one-half inch margin beyond the edge, and one inch at the headline, this to be snipped in at 1-inch intervals to the pattern headline. (See Fig. 2.) The same is to be allowed when stretching materials over frames, either brims, or tops of crowns.

The reason for leaving the under facing with crown piece in is that the piece may be stretched out *perfectly smooth,* the edges pinned, trimmed down to the ½-inch margin or even less, turned in and slipstitched to the upper part; then the crown piece is cut out with the 1-inch margin, snipped to the head-line, the snips turned up inside the crown and sewn.

In cutting the "tip" allow a half-inch margin; on the side of crown the same, on each side, and at each end.

It will be noted that in the figure the join of side crown comes at the back; this is optional; the pattern must be taken to fit all round, and cut down at the least conspicuous part, in a straight line from crown top to headline, but the *front* must be *marked,* and the pattern so placed that this comes on the bias line. It is clearly shown in the figure how the bias line runs directly through from middle front to back in each part of the pattern.

There are deviations from this rule. In Fig. 3 it will be seen that the bias lines are so placed that a straight line runs along the one side of join at the back, and directly through the middle front; joins fit smoother the more on the straight they can be managed, and the one straight line will hold the other, which is on a slight angle, in sewing; this last must be held *towards you,* when slipstitching.

Dome crowns are covered by stretching over as tightly as possible a piece of the material, the bias line running exactly from back to front; they will stand a lot of stretching and coaxing, and, unless very deep, almost every little wrinkle can be worked out; the material is, of course, pinned in place to the muslin bind, and, when perfectly stretched, sewn with a long stitch on one side and a tiny back stitch on the other; or cut a little longer, turned up inside crown, and sewn to the crinoline bind; but if they are very deep, it is best to cover only the top thus, and finish the sides with folds or in some other way.

Eccentric Frames

In covering mushroom frames it must be remembered that the edge line is usually of less circumference than that part of the frame that "bulges"; hence a tight, smooth fit can only be obtained by fitting the *edge* and headline, and *stretching* the material around over the curve. This applies equally to silk and velvet. Also in covering mushroom frames the under side must be done first, and the facing, either plain or full, held in place by invisible stitches on the material and long ones on the reverse. In the same way all curved brims must be treated, so that the covering will cling to the frame.

So many shapes have curves that make it impossible to cut the pattern without a join; let this be made to come where it will show least, and if possible be hidden by trimming. As this depends so much on the shape and design of the moment, no rule can be given, but silk or velvet should be neatly stitched, the seams opened and the piece replaced on the frame, but sheer materials are best merely lapped over. (See "Making Joins.")

Making the Hat

As before said, the rule is to put the upper brim covering on first, except in frames that curve like a mushroom. The pieces should be marked with cross pins corresponding to the marks on the pattern before removing this, then, when placed on the frame, mark to mark, the pieces will fit. Smooth out with the flat hand from the headline out, taking care, however, to smooth at the *straight* of the goods, never at the bias, or the piece will be stretched and the fit ruined. Now pin at back, front, and sides at the edge, then between these pins, and again between. Being sure that the piece is smooth as hands can make it, turn it over the edge and pin it to the muslin bind, pins *head down;* but if the margin has stretched to more than the ½ inch, pare it more; it may be less, but must not be more. Having pinned it all round, sew the turning to the muslin

bind with a large shallow "cat-stitch." (See Fig. 4.) Many milliners use a long stitch with a very short "pick-up" stitch, passing the needle straight towards the edge. The snipped margin that turns up against the crown need not be sewn now.

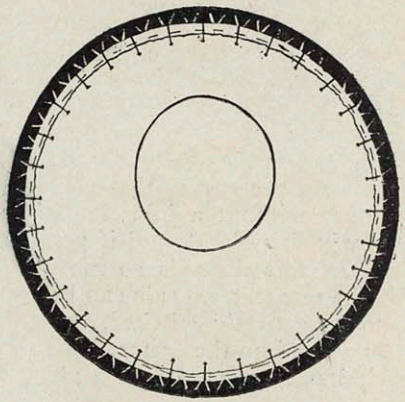

FIG. 4—UPPER VELVET COVERING STRETCHED ON BRIM, EDGE TURNED OVER, PINNED TO MUSLIN BIND, AND "CAT-STITCHED" TO THIS

Next the under facing is put on, laid mark to mark, and pinned back, front, and sides to the edge, then between as before, and smoothed out till not a wrinkle is left; then trim off the margin to one-third of an inch, turn this in so both edges are level, and pin, with the tiny English or fine steel pins, *heads up*. This is so the pin marks shall not mark the velvet.

This facing, *held towards* you, is now welded to the other by a short "slip-stitch" just inside the two edges. (See Fig. 5.)

Take up a fraction, not more than one-sixteenth of an inch, just inside the turn of the *lower* facing, passing the point of the needle at once into the upper facing,

where you pick up as small a bit; draw up the thread close; now, in repeating for the next stitch, put the needle in right opposite to where you last brought it out; thus you have a slanting and perpendicular stitch alternately, which will close the two edges effectually. Drop out the pins one ahead as you work, and hold edge firmly with finger and thumb of left hand, so it cannot slip and cause fullness or twists. It is well to hold a cutting of velvet over the edge under finger and thumb, so that the pressure may not mar the velvet.

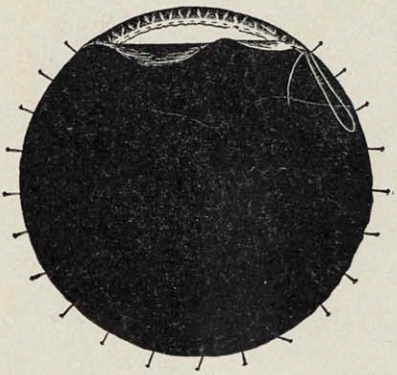

FIG. 5—UNDER VELVET FACING PINNED ON AND "SLIPSTITCHED"

Uncut Velvet

In using "uncut" velvet, the direction of the ribs must be considered in place of the pile of ordinary velvet; the same is the case with corded or even grosgrain silks; broadcloth has a shine equal to mirror velvet.

Making Joins

There are three ways of making joins in brims; the nature of material and shape must decide which to use. In a firm material the two edges may be pinned together

so that one can trim them to a ½ inch, then the brim covering partly loosened and the join made (closely back-stitched) on the wrong side, flattened out, and re-laid in place. In some shapes it is not safe to do this; then the bias side of the join is laid in place on the frame, and the straight side turned in and laid over it, pinned securely and slip-stitched down.

The third method is the "woven" join; in this both edges of join are best on the bias or nearly so; both are turned under so the edges just meet, and are slip-stitched closely together by an alternate invisible stitch in each edge, just the same, in fact, as the edge of the hat, only that this operation is on the flat.

Covering the Crowns

For a crown the sides of which are perfectly straight, i. e., where the circumference of top is the same as the headline, no pattern is needed, as a bias strip will stretch round; measure the depth of crown, and cut the strip two inches wider; you need one inch for a ½-inch turning along each edge, and it will stretch the other inch

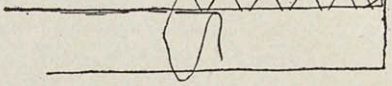

FIG. 6—EDGE OF VELVET "CAT-STITCHED" DOWN

narrower. Turn the edges over and "cat-stitch" them down as shown in Fig. 6. To do this so no stitch shows on the right side, the upper stitch is taken only in the *overturned* part of material, taking care not to catch the under side; the lower stitch is just *one thread* of the *back* of the material taken up; the stitches should be of equal size and depth, and not pulled too tight, or they will pucker the web on the right side.

The crown top may be cut out first with a sufficient margin, or a corner cutting stretched on, taking care to get it on the right bias and shading. Pin to the bind, then sew down, so there is not a bit of fullness around the edge; sew half or a third of an inch below the edge in an even line of stiches, ½ inch long on the *right* side, with a tiny back stitch inside the crown; trim off all material below the line of stiches. Now stretch on the bias strip, letting the one edge come level with top of crown; the lower neatens the snipped margin of the upper brim which runs up against the crown. (See Fig. 7.) Let the join of the side crown

FIG. 7—SEWING COVERING ON TOP OF CROWN. SHOWING FINISHED BRIM

come where the trimming will cover it, turn one end in over the other, and slip-stitch down; it needs no other sewing.

Sloping crowns must be cut to pattern and snugly fitted; if the tip is smaller than the base, the margin must be snipped round, so that it will turn over flat and not ride up; if the base is the smaller circle, then this is snipped; in either case it is well to cut a piece of the thin crinoline muslin to the *exact* pattern; turn the edges over this and "cat-stitch" them to the muslin; then, if the fit is as snug as it should be, it will not need slip-stitching round the edge of crown in a "bell"

shape, as the muslin will support it; a sugar loaf crown —one with tip smaller than base—must be so snugly fitted that it needs only the join slip-stitching the same as a straight crown. The side must come level with top in either case. In thin materials cut the crinoline a little larger than patterns and turn over with the outer covering.

Finishing Edges

There are, of course, various other ways of finishing edges. One is a bind; in this case the velvet is cut without an edge margin, this being just top sewn to the muslin bind, and the bias velvet bind, wide or narrow, put on after.

The photographs show such a finished brim, but as the hat was made over a wire frame, the result is not as flat and satisfactorily perfect, as it would prove on

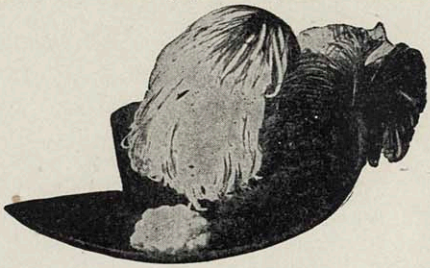

FIG. 8

one of stiff fine cape net, buckram or sparterie. (Fig. 7.) In this case the bind was 1 inch wide when finished on either side, and allowing the stretching necessary to ensure the *inner* circles having *no fullness,* the bind was cut 4 inches wide.

Covering Wire Frames

If a wire frame is to be covered plain with velvet or silk, it must be very perfectly covered under and over with crinoline cut to pattern, then the edge bound; if silk is to be used the layer of sheet wadding will be necessary.

Toques and turbans have a bias stripe of crinoline stretched around the outside of the brim, the edge turned over the edge wire and *basted* on below it; slits are cut up from the lower edge, and lapped to fit, or wedges cut out, so the covering is smooth and light as possible.

The crown, if a dome is covered with one piece, stretched over, slits cut up from the headline towards the top, and lapped to fit, and sewn to the crinoline that turns up inside the crown from the brim covering.

If the crown is a flat top shape, the side is first covered with a bias strip stretched around, or if very

FIG. 9

sloping this must be cut to shape; then the tip is put on, cut with a ½-inch margin, which is snipped, turned over on to the side band, the snips lapped and sewn to side band with a ½-inch long stitch.

The foregoing is intended for solid coverings only; when sheer effects are desired, the frames are covered with tulle, mousseline de soie, or tarlatan, or even Brussels net, when lace motifs are to be appliqued on.

Plain Covering

To plain cover a wire frame with tulle, at least four layers should be used on each side of the brim, and

six or eight over the crown. If colored, the frame must match; a charming idea is to have silver or gold wire frames for white or very delicate colored tulle hats.

Mousseline de soie and chiffon are used in the same way, two layers on each side are enough of these; and of crêpe de chine only one layer is needed on each side. Crêpe Francaise is rarely used to make a hat, being employed merely as a frame covering, a foundation for some better material to go over; it comes in all colors, is quite wide, and only twenty or twenty-five cents the yard. Tarlatan is also used, but is not suitable for any purpose that will allow it to show. It comes in all colors, is very wide and inexpensive.

An excellent quality of tulle comes at twenty-five cents the yard, anything cheaper is unsuited for either plain covering or shirring.

To cover frames take a correct pattern in paper or thin interlining muslin; measure widest diameter across, fold a square of this diameter of as many layers of the material as are required, pin together firmly, pin pattern on (back and front on a *bias* line) and cut with a one-half inch turning at edge, and one inch at headline, which must be snipped in to headline. Cut upper and under sets of layers separately and place upper set on brim first, turn edge over wire and run a thread around under the wire; place under coverings in place, turn edge over wire and run; this will be covered by the bind. Pin together and run round the two sets of facings just above the headwire.

Crowns are best covered in one piece,—from two to six-ply according to material;—dome crowns must be stretched as smooth as possible, unless they are treated in some artistic way; plain low crowns may have the circular piece drawn down in tiny plaits to the head line, or a draped or "Tam" crown may cover the frame. If it is a high crown the top may be plain, and the sides done in flat folds, or some other pretty way.