LESSON XX.

More money is to be made by sewing than almost any other profession open to women, if conducted in a thoroughly professional manner. It is not necessary that the dressmaker always remain a seamstress. Exercise all the talent within you; study the details and the outlines of every garment that comes before you. Plan new styles, new designs. Picture in your mind’s eye particular cuts and lines that will fit certain figures and styles of women. Study color combinations and what shades are best suited to certain complexions, eyes and hair. It is not the mere sewing woman who makes money—it is the woman who goes on each year improving her art and adding more and more to her store of knowledge. There is always something new to be discovered in the world of gown-making, and she who accomplishes the wonderful creations and the novel things is she who demands the attention of the fashionable women and can command the highest prices, for women will pay for style, no matter the cost.

Learn to be a maker of gowns that are really worth while. Make the best of what this little book has taught you—improve upon all the suggestions given herein. Save what you can that you can afford to work your way later to a higher course of the work. If at all possible seek employment if for only a short period in a strictly high-class modiste parlor in a large city. Here keep your eyes and ears open to everything that is new; compare the mode in which they do things there to the manner in which you have been doing; get all the actual practice possible on their elaborate gowns and wraps; note particularly the manner in which they conduct their business; see if you could improve upon it when you are ready to go into active work.

To make the most money by sewing you must do the best of work. Put out the finished article so that it will be perfect and free from criticism. The inside of your garments must be as neat as the outside. No woman is so careless about herself as not to appreciate a gown that is well finished inside. If you do not actually do this work yourself, employ no help that neglects these little details. Sew all shields, bones, hooks, buttons, trim-
nings, bindings, etc., with care, so that the person after
wearing the garment once or twice is not made to realize
that she has been deceived as to the class of work you are
sending forth.

In opening a dressmaking establishment, select desirable
roomy quarters, either in a first class residence district or
in the business section of your town or city; if you are a
stranger to the customers you hope to have, then it is better
to make your beginning where you are surrounded by close
neighbors, as people who hire sewing always prefer their
garments made near home, thus saving those long tiring
trips for fittings, where they are obliged to dress for the
street.

A neat glass sign suspended from a chain in your win-
don will soon tell the neighborhood that a new dressmaker
is in their midst. Have cards with your business, name and
address neatly printed thereon and arrange with some
trusty youth to have them delivered at the door of each
house within several blocks of your new establishment; or
secure the names and addresses of your prospective cus-
tomers and mail your business cards to their homes; or in-
sert a clever advertisement in the columns of your daily or
weekly paper announcing your business.

You can begin with one assistant, and add more as
the business grows.

Conduct everything on a thoroughly business basis. Do
your work neatly, be obliging, and in every manner endeavor
to make new customers.

Dress neatly, have your own clothes well cut, and made
up with a jaunty air and an original style. This is the very
best kind of advertisement and draws custom.

Have one set price for your work, to all customers, and
grade your prices according to the labor put upon it. Make
your terms moderate at first—you can ask more compensa-
tion when your customers are made to realize what you
can do.

A dressmaking establishment should have ample light
and plenty of ventilation. A large cutting table, 4x6 ft.
should occupy the center of the work-room. If a number
of girls are employed, then each draper with her assistant
should be supplied with a sewing table fitted up with at
least two large drawers in which to keep tools and work
when not in use. Each draper should also be supplied with
a form on which to drape her garments while in the process
of construction. Have the work-room spotlessly clean—it is an inviting work-room that has its walls done in white enamel or paint and kept free from soil. The floors should be covered with white canvas that can be lifted each night and the refuse shaken off. This canvas should be laundered once every week.

The machines should be kept in perfect repair, and free from dust and oil. One machine to each draper and assistant is none too many. If you have access to motor power it is better to run your machines by electricity. Enforce thorough cleanliness in workroom and there will be fewer damages to pay on soiled garments.

Two good ironing boards with plenty of heavy irons and a two-burner gas stove is most essential to the work-room's equipment.

Aim to have a separate room for fittings. If this is not possible, then curtain or screen off one corner so as the customer is not obliged to be stared upon by a dozen questioning girls while being fitted. It is better, too, to have the customer away from the work-room as the girls soon know too much of your business. This fitting room should be supplied with plenty of light, a three-panel revolving mirror and an adjustable stand on which to have your customer stand while having skirts hung. The floor should be neatly covered with canvas.

A small reception room is quite essential to a first-class place, as ladies are often required to wait their turns for fittings. This room should be equipped with a small table with a few good magazines thereon, a neat rug on the floor, jaunty curtains to the windows, and roomy, comfortable chairs.

Do not overwork—the dressmaker is so apt to attempt more than she is able to care for. Do not promise your customers to do more than you can finish within a given time and therefore become clogged with work. Eight or nine hours is long enough for any woman to sit in a cramped position or to worry over some unruly garment; therefore when your quitting hour comes, lock the workroom door and walk out, not to enter again until working hours in the morning.

There is money to be made from sewing, under most any circumstances. Even in a small town and with only one assistant the lady in charge should clear at least twenty dollars a week for her labor.
Or if the dressmaker wishes to do residence work, thus avoiding the responsibility of an establishment, she can readily find employment in homes. Her mode of obtaining customers is followed along the same lines as in establishing a business. When once established she will find no trouble to keep busy and the wage paid will range from $1.00 to $5.00 per day, all depending upon the ability of the person in question and the size of the town in which she works. Then too the resident seamstress always obtains free of charge her lunch and sometimes her breakfast and dinner, which is an item to be considered.

Dressmaking Specialty Work. If you do not care to do general sewing then why not specialize on some particular line—for instance, take up waist making, do nothing but make waists. This is the day of the specialist and she who does one thing is more successful than had she learned a half dozen vocations and does not really know one of them.

Then there is a line of tailor skirt making; learn to make tailored skirts and make them well—give them lines and a finish that will demand the attention of any well dressed woman.

Children’s sewing is another line of specialty work. Learn to make the kiddies dainty little frocks that will make your little customers the envy of the entire neighborhood. You will find this work extremely lucrative and interesting.

Tailoring work is a moneyed branch of sewing and more money can be made from this than any other branch of sewing. It is quite heavy work, especially coat making, and is not really a woman’s work as it requires a man’s strength to give the finished garment the proper pressing, and pressing is the one great feature that counts. Yet there are many women who prefer this class of work as it is more simple and when a certain few details are followed out the very letter you will encounter no serious trouble in putting out tailored garments for which you can command the very best price that is paid for any kind of sewing. The work requires extreme accuracy, ideas of correct proportion, neatness and lines that will exactly suit the customer for whom the tailored garment is intended. No slovenly work can be tolerated in tailoring, as there is no trimming to cover defects, and all work should be finished as you proceed with the garment.
Teaching dressmaking is another feature of the sewing world. It has been found to be a paying line of this work as well as light work. If you are an old established modiste and wish to drop the sewing to open a school all you will need to do is to inform your pleased customers. If you pleased them when you made their gowns they will be sure to recommend you to their friends, when you have decided to teach the mysteries of making dresses to others. But if you are new to the city or town you will be obliged to go about the work to secure pupils in the same manner as recommended in establishing a sewing business. Have two rooms at least and be sure they are light and airy. Fit up with small tables, one for each pupil. One sewing machine to about six pupils will be sufficient.

Select The Carens System of cutting to teach your pupils, as it is the most simplified system in use today. A child can learn it. Also teach them to properly handle patterns. This gives the pupils an idea of the manner in which a garment goes together. When the pupil has thoroughly mastered the idea of cutting and can cut any garment from measure, then she is ready for the sewing room. Have her bring some plain material with which to make a plain gored skirt or simple shirt waist. All pupils should furnish their own material on which to practice. Be sure that each pupil can fit and finish one of each kind of a woman's wardrobe before she is allowed to graduate. She must do this work neatly and accurately.

About a three months course is the average time allotted the sewing pupils, and in this time any pupil should be able to handle in a neat, concise manner any garment. A fee of not less than $25.00 should be charged each pupil, depending upon the town, and class of people with whom you expect to deal. You know conditions always vary the prices for everything in certain localities. It is quite advisable to allow the pupils to pay on the installment basis, if they are taking the regular course; it is easier for the pupils and you would get scholars by doing this where you would not be able to find one to pay the full cash price down on entering the school. A good idea is to require a cash payment of $5.00 and a payment of $5.00 each week until the full amount is paid. So you see by working up a class of about twenty pupils, each paying $25.00, would net you a nice income of about $500.00 in three months, or $150.00 a month, which is considered excellent wages for a woman.
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Figure for yourself what a dozen girls, each earning you five dollars a week, will clear you in one month’s time, $240.00—and this besides your discounts will mean no trifling salary for the ambitious woman.

A word to those who wish to learn for economy’s sake. It is not the material that makes clothes so expensive; it is the high salary and other expenses of the dressmaker that makes the clothes item a serious proposition. Then too you avoid those long waits to get your garments from the shop. You can always have many more clothes if you can make them yourself.

So now the pupil can see why the writer has impressed it so strongly upon her mind all through this course to make a real success of her chosen work. It means independence and a permanent income for life. It is an education that when once mastered no one can take it from you and you can derive an income from it wherever you go, whether married or single, young or old. The remuneration from your labors in the sewing world exceeds any other providing you go about it rightly and give a good lot of common sense and hard work to the business.

TO THE LEARNER.

As this is distinctively a text book on dressmaking, the author has eliminated big words and difficult sentences for the pupil to ponder over. Plain English has been used to express her thoughts and she trusts that no reader of this work will experience any difficulty in grasping every idea involved in this book.

The principles if thoroughly understood and put into sufficient practice will enable the pupil to make any ordinary garment of a woman’s wardrobe.

This book is practically what the term signifies. It tells the pupil just what to do and how to do it. If every text book were its own instructor there would be no need of colleges or schools. The author has aimed to make this work a school in itself—taking the place of the oral instruction in a class or actually coming in contact with a sewing establishment.

Be sure to take one or more dressmaking magazines. There are many, and every one contains something new and interesting. Study each new fashion printed therein. You should not think of being without the best dressmaking
magazines no more than a lawyer, preacher or physician would be without a technical magazine of his profession. Get these magazines regularly and keep posted on all that is new and up-to-date.

Do not get discouraged. Do not get the impression that you can thoroughly master a profession so important as dressmaking in a few days—there is always something new. It requires practice, patience and perseverance—so does every art. Go on in your chosen profession. There is always more to learn—be a graduate in your profession.

Whatever department of sewing you intend to enter, teacher, resident seamstress, children's dressmaker, or conducting an establishment, stand at the head of your profession and you will never lack employment.

QUESTIONS.

1. Describe fully how you would fit up a sewing room.
2. Why do you consider it valuable to learn dressmaking as a profession?
3. Who should learn to sew? Why?
4. Why do you consider the conducting of a dressmaking school an important phase of the dressmaking business?
5. Describe fully the method suggested in this lesson of establishing a dressmaking business or school.
6. Why should every dressmaker be supplied with high class fashion books?
7. What steps are essential in order to realize success in the art of dressmaking?
8. How can tailoring be made a profitable branch of sewing?
9. Why keep dressmaker's findings?
10. Why would you favor a position as resident seamstress?
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