CHAPTER XXV
CARE OF THE CLOTHES

GOOD PRESSING is a very important part of dressmaking and tailoring. Special boards and tailor's cushions may be made at home or bought from any dressmakers' supply house. (Chapter XII, page 61.)

In opening seams, dampen the seam, if the material will permit it, and press slowly, bearing down heavily on the iron. Very little dampness should be used on cambric, as it flattens the twill and spoils the texture. Little or no dampness should be used on silk. A cloth, well wrung out of water, may be used on these materials, and their seams may be dampened slightly. Seams should be pressed over the curved edge of an ironing-board so that the seam edges will not be marked on the garment.

Velvet must not be pressed, but should be steamed so as not to injure the nap.

To steam velvet, heat an iron and place it face up between two cold irons arranged so as to hold the hot iron firmly. (Fig. 325.) Lay a damp piece of muslin over the face of the iron and draw the velvet over the muslin. The steam will have the effect of pressing the velvet without hurting the pile. Seams can be opened in this way, and this method can be used on velvet, plush, wool velvet, materials with a high nap, satin and silk.

Velvet may be mirrored or panned by passing an iron over the surface of the velvet, ironing with the nap. After velvet has gone through this process it can be pressed as much as is necessary. If the iron can be held with the flat surface upward by a milliner's steaming-box or a tin box, the seams of perishable materials can be pressed open by running the seam over the surface of the iron.

Nearly all pressing is done on the wrong side. Suits and heavy cloth may be pressed on the right side by steaming. Wring out a cloth as dry as possible and keep it over the place to be pressed. Have the irons hot and press firmly until the cloth is nearly dry. Turn the garment to the wrong side and press until thoroughly dry.

The shine which sometimes comes in pressing may be removed by placing a dry cloth over the shiny place. Then wring out as dry as possible a second cloth which has been thoroughly wet. Place it over the dry one, and with a hot iron pass lightly over the spot. If the material has a nap requiring raising, the place may be brushed with a stiff brush and the process of steaming repeated.

Many fabrics retain the imprint of the basting-thread under heavy pressing. For such material it is necessary to give a light pressing first, removing all basting-threads before the final pressing.

ALL CLOTHES should be taken care of as systematically as possible, as their period of usefulness depends entirely on the way they are treated. Lingerie and washable waists and dresses should be mended before they go to the laundry. A small hole will become a large one in washing, and not only is the work of mending doubled, but the injury to the garment is frequently irreparable.

Woolen clothes—dresses, suits, coats, skirts, etc., should be brushed regularly and watched closely for such small matters as loose buttons, frayed skirt-braids, missing hooks and eyes, and soiled chemisettes or yokes. Coats should never be left lying carelessly over chairs, and should never be hung up by the collar or armhole. They should be kept on hangers when they are not in use so that their necks and shoulders will not lose their shape.

Dresses and waists should also be kept on hangers, and if they are made of light, perishable materials they should be slipped into great bags of silkoline to keep them from
the dust. The bag should be as long as the waist or dress. If one has plenty of closet room, it is much better to keep one's evening dresses hanging up in bags than to lay them in chests or drawers where they can not fail to become badly wrinkled.

Skirts should not be kept on wooden hangers, as they are likely to become stretched at the hips. Small strips of braid or ribbon should be sewed inside the waistband of each skirt—one on each side, and an equal distance apart. The skirt should be hung by these hangers on two hooks placed just far enough apart to keep the belt taut.

Winter clothes should be brushed and cleaned and then put away during the summer months with plenty of gum camphor, moth-balls or some other safe moth-preventive. Summer clothes should be put away clean and packed as carefully as possible, so that they will not need pressing when they are wanted again. Sheets of blue tissue-paper can be put between the folds of white dresses to prevent them from turning yellow.

CLEANING can frequently be done at home with very little trouble and expense.

TO CLEAN WOOLEN GOODS, the simplest method is washing in warm water and soapbark. Get ten cents' worth of soapbark and pour over it two quarts of boiling water. Let it stand until the strength is taken from the bark, strain, and pour into a tub of lukewarm water. Let the goods stand for half an hour in the suds, then rub well and rinse in another water of the same temperature to keep the goods from shrinking. Press on the wrong side before it is thoroughly dry. Experiment first with a small piece of the material to be sure that it does not change color or shrink badly.

FOR SILKS, mix six ounces of strained honey and four ounces of a pure soap with one pint of pure alcohol.

Lay each piece of silk flat on a table or marble, and with a brush cover the silk with the mixture, first on one side and then on the other. Brush the silk as little as possible and always straight up and down. Dip the silk in several tepid rinsing-waters, the last one mixed with a little honey. Do not wring the silk, but hang it up, and when half-dry iron with a cool iron on the wrong side.

A French method of cleaning black silk is to sponge the silk on both sides with spirits of wine, and then iron on the wrong side with a piece of muslin between the silk and the iron. Ribbons may be cleansed in the same way and rolled smoothly over a bottle or round stick to dry.

VELVET is cleaned by steaming. First brush the velvet thoroughly with either a soft or stiff brush until all dust and lint are removed. It is better to use a soft brush if the velvet is not too dirty.

If a milliner's steaming-box is at hand, invert a hot iron in the box and cover the face of the iron with a good-sized piece of muslin which has been thoroughly wet. This produces steam, and the muslin must be moved along as it dries. The velvet is held with its wrong side against the muslin and brushed carefully with a soft brush until the pile of the velvet is raised. Always brush against the nap. The pile may also be raised by holding the velvet tightly over a pan of boiling water.

FOR BLACK LACES, an old-fashioned cleaning mixture is made by boiling an old black kid glove in a pint of water until half the water has evaporated. Strain, and, if necessary, add a little cold water. After brushing the lace, dip it up and down in the liquid. Then roll it over a bottle, or pin smoothly over a covered board to dry.

WHITE LACE may be washed in a suds of pure soap, then thoroughly rinsed and pinned over a covered board to dry. Some laces will stand ironing on the wrong side. Let the lace partially dry, and iron over several thicknesses of flannel.

GREASE-SPOTS on woolen or silk are best removed by naphtha, gasoline, ether or chloroform. These solvents are highly inflammable, and must, therefore, never be used near a light or flame. In applying any of them to grease-stains, place a piece of cloth or blotting-paper underneath the stain to absorb the excess liquid. Rub the spot from the outside toward the center until dry, so that the liquid will not leave a ring. Ether and chloroform are less liable to leave a ring than gasoline or naphtha.
A good mixture for removing grease-spots is made from equal parts of alcohol, benzine and ether. Powdered French chalk or fullers' earth may be used by placing the powder over the stain and holding over a heated iron. The heat will dissolve the grease, and the powder will absorb it.

**MACHINE-OIL STAINS** may be removed in the following manner: Moisten borax and rub it on the stain from the outside toward the center, taking care not to spread it. Pour water through the material. Washing with cold water and a pure soap will remove most stains of machine-oil.

**BLOOD-STAINS** may be taken out by washing with soap and tepid water. They may also be removed by covering the spot with wet laundry starch and allowing it to stand. Afterward it should be washed.

**INK-SPOTS**, if still moist, rub either salt, meal, flour or sugar, and wash in cold water. Or, lemon-juice may be put over the spot and covered with salt. Then place the article in the sun for a while, and wash. The process may be repeated, if necessary, until the ink-spot is entirely removed.

Another method for removing ink-stains is to let the material soak in javelle water, made from one-half pound of sal soda, two ounces chlorid of lime and one quart of water. After soaking a few minutes, wash in clear water.

**IRON-RUST** is removed by the same mediums as ink.

**MILDEW** is the hardest of all stains to remove, and can not always be taken out successfully. Any of the mediums used for ink and iron-rust may be tried. For silk only, dip a flannel in alcohol and rub briskly, first on one side and then on the other.

**PAINT**, when fresh, can be softened with vaseline and washed off with benzine. Or, it may be rubbed with equal parts of turpentine and alcohol. If a grease-spot remains, remove it with benzine. Turpentine mixed with a little ammonia is also good. Wash off with soap-suds or benzine.