CHAPTER VII

SKIRTS

THE LINING SKIRT

To the foundation or lining skirt much attention should be given. Experience has taught me that the best results come from the use of a five- or seven-gored pattern for this purpose.

How to Cut a Five-gored Skirt.—The measures must be accurately taken. These are:

Waist—tight.

Front—from waist line at center to the floor.

Side—from waist line to floor over fullest part of hip.

Back—from center at waist line to floor.

Around hip at fullest part—taken easily.

If the pattern is too long, fold it across through the middle in a tuck to the required length. If the reverse is the case, slit the pattern across, about in the middle, and insert a piece
wide enough to make the length desired. The reason for putting in or taking out a piece at the middle, is that the shape is not interfered with at the bottom.

The best cotton material for skirt lining I have found to be percaline, which sells from twelve and a half cents per yard to thirty-five cents per yard. This last is very fine and silky. A very substantial and satisfactory quality can be had for twenty-five cents per yard.

To cut a five-gored skirt place the lining on the cutting table. If there is no fold in material make one by putting both selvages together and creasing the length of skirt on the fold thus made. Now place the front gore, which is always a straight line, on the fold, and pin the pattern on securely along the edges and once or twice through the gore so that it will not move. Allow as much below the pattern as is needed for a hem;
about two inches makes a sufficiently deep hem, or if a ruffle is to be placed on the bottom of the skirt, subtract the depth of ruffle less one inch from the length of skirt. This inch will give you space on which to sew the ruffle. This amount must be taken from all the gores. Cut out the gore, allowing about three quarters of an inch for seams.

To cut the side gores place the straight side of the pattern to the selvage of the lining, with the broadest part at the cut end. Cut the larger gore first and invert the second gores and cut them from the same width. Short skirts should flare less in proportion to the size of hips than long skirts. The front breadth of skirts for large figures should be gored less than for medium-sized figures and should be broader at the hip line. This allows for the extra width, which is needed more for the front than at the hip, and prevents the skirt from drawing up in front.

To Baste the Skirt.—Place the bias edge or side of front gore to the straight side of second gore and baste with uneven basting from the top to the bottom. Hold them so that the bias side will not be stretched. Repeat the same process with the second and third gores. Join the back
seam. Be sure to have the top of gores even, letting any unevenness come at the bottom.

To Fit the Skirt.—Put the skirt on the person wrong side out and pin the back seam together at the hip line. Be sure that the center fold of the skirt in front is pinned securely at the top to the underclothing, so that the skirt will not be drawn more to one side than it is on the other. Make all the fittings on the seams of the skirt. Keep the grain or woof thread even around the hips, and alter or fit from the hips to the waist. Trace exactly where the back seams come together, as the inverted plait will be turned and folded back to meet at the same line. Take the skirt off and baste the alterations, stitch by machine and pink out the edges, then press the seams open. The skirt lining is now ready for the last fitting. Try the skirt on again. Place a belt tape around the waist line and pin the skirt to it, arranging the inverted plait at the back. Decide about the length of the skirt and find how many inches from the floor it will measure. Take a ruler or yardstick, place the end on the floor or table and move it around the skirt, marking the number of inches from the floor as decided upon. This will give an even line when turned up. The
longer the skirt is the more fullness there is at the bottom, consequently when the hem is turned you will find it necessary to fit the fullness into little plaits. Distribute these plaits so that they will be as nearly perpendicular as possible. Measure with a gauge the depth of hem plus one half inch to turn in, and baste the hem down. Stitch close to the edge. Finish the back seam with a placket. (See Placket, page 29.) Turn over the belting and stitch close to the edge on right side.

THE PLAITED SKIRT

Of the many styles in skirts the plaited skirt is undoubtedly the most popular.

The pattern from which the lining skirt was made may be used for a guide in making a plaited skirt. Once the hip line is fitted properly the measure may be divided into as many parts as there are to be plaits in the skirt; for instance, if sixteen, divide the hip measure into sixteen parts, cut each of the sections or parts twice as wide at the bottom as they are at the top. The center front of the skirt will be placed on the fold of material and the plaits run from the center toward the back, forming a box plait for the center front, taking the first two of the sixteen sections or
gores. Mark the center of the other fourteen parts and trace with long basting stitches. Join all the parts together with three-quarter inch seams. Do not press the seams open. Now lay the plaits evenly at the hip line, fitting them into the waist measure. Place belt on waist line and pin on plaits to it. Baste the plaits close to the edges or in as far as is desired. For slight figures the plait may be stitched in as far as an inch, as it tends to make one look larger. Join the back seam, press open, and turn skirt up as lining was turned, with the ruler or measure from the floor. Bind the seams inside and make the placket. Great care should be taken when putting on the hooks and eyes on a placket. The under side of the placket for this skirt should have a fly stitched on, so that there is no chance for the skirt to spread apart and show the lining or petticoat.

ANOTHER STYLE OF PLAITED SKIRT

A gored skirt with a plait at each seam may be made very easily in this way. After the skirt pattern has been secured with the proper hip measure the skirt may be cut in the regular way, allowing as much on each gore as would make a plait the depth desired plus an inch seam. Baste
the skirt together at the original gore marks, leaving the amount of goods for tuck and seam on the inside. Place the skirt on the person to be fitted and make the alterations by pinning the seam over or letting it out where it is necessary. Be sure the material for plait and seam is folded to the side, back or front, to which you wish the plait to face. Remove the skirt from the person; baste a line down the skirt as far in from the gore line obtained in the fitting, and to the depth you desire. Join the seam on the wrong side to the bottom of the skirt. Place the belt on the skirt, and finish placket and bottom of skirt in the usual way. Remove the bastings and press the skirt. Any number of plaits in the skirt may be obtained in this way.

**A SLOT-SEAM SKIRT**

A slot seam has the appearance of two inverted plaits. To make a slot-seamed skirt, the gores should be cut with an allowance of material for a plait, and the edges of

![Figure 30. Slot Seam, Right and Wrong Sides.](image-url)
the gores turned to the inside of the skirt. Another piece of material the length of the skirt gores on both sides, is placed under the edges of the gores to form a rest or foundation for the edges to be stitched to. The under piece is cut narrow at the top and sufficiently wide at the bottom to hold the plait and to allow for a flare when the person is walking.

A CIRCULAR SKIRT

From its name one may get the idea that such a skirt is cut in a perfect circle; this is not the case, as a perfect circle would throw a great amount of fullness at the bottom of the skirt. When a skirt is cut perfectly circular, the flutes or ripples fall regularly and there is the same amount of fullness at the front as there is at any other point, and we can easily see how very lacking in grace such a skirt would be. To obviate this seams may be made at the center of the front and back. Open the fold of the material and lay it flat on the cutting table; place the front line of the pattern on a line which will extend six inches in from the true bias; try to place the crease or fold of the material as near as possible over the fullest part of the hip; this will prevent
much of the stretching which happens to every bias skirt. The back seam will also fall a little off the true bias, and this is also an advantage, as it prevents the back seam from dropping as much as a true bias would do.

When a circular skirt is cut and stitched it should be placed on a temporary belt tape and hung in the closet for three or four days (a week if possible) to allow the bias to sag. When striped, checked, or plaid materials are cut in this style, the stripes should be placed in such a manner that the most prominent line will form a long V; it takes quite a little planning to get similar lines or checks on both sides; but they must be worked out until the result is obtained. If possible, use a large table to cut skirts on so that you can walk around and need not stretch over, as this is very injurious physically. Women should be much more careful than they are in this matter.

A good circular-skirt pattern should, if possible, be obtained; but if not successful in getting one, use a seven-gored pattern in this manner: Place the gores of the paper pattern in their regular order, front, one, two, and three, on a large piece of paper. Let their gores meet at the waist
line. Decide on the number of yards you wish your skirt around the bottom. Place the front line or fold of the front gore on paper, just as was suggested in the circular-skirt directions. Spread the gores apart until you get them placed as you desire them. Try to have them meet at the hip line if possible, but, if your skirt is to be very wide at the bottom, you may have to lap the gores a trifle from the waist line to the hip line. The spaces between the gores represent the flutes or ripples of the circular skirt. Allow six inches on each center back seam at the hip for the inverted plait; let this addition taper to four inches at the waist line. As the plait must follow the line of the body, it must be less deep at the waist than at the hip. Sometimes the circular skirt is made of very wide material. In that case it is often cut without a seam in the front. The straight line of the pattern is placed on the fold of the material. If the material is not wide enough piece it by joining selvage to selvage. Skirts which are known as "sunburst skirts" are made from the circular-skirt pattern seamed up front and back and plaited by a machine made purposely for them.
CUTTING A BIAS

There are two kinds of bias edges; the materials used for a facing or binding on curved edges, folds, cords, and various other fancy trimmings, are cut a true bias; the selvage is folded on a woof thread across to the opposite selvage, the slanting line made by the fold is the true bias. Bias material is often preferred in facing a straight edge because it makes a smoother lining than a straight strip of cloth. Ruffles are almost always cut on the bias. When several strips are necessary, they may be accurately cut by first finding the true bias and cutting it, then take a yardstick and measure on both the selvages the number of inches or parts of an inch and make a mark; draw a line from selvage to selvage, connecting these marks with marking chalk or pencil; cut exactly in these lines. A garment spoken of as gored is cut with bias seams. The intention in goring any garment is to reduce the size and weight by taking away all unnecessary material, or to improve the appearance by decreasing the fullness at the waist and hips and increasing it at the bottom; in many cases it is an economical way of cutting.
FITTING THE SKIRT

Though the paper pattern is a great help to the home dressmaker in making a well-shaped gown, she must also use it intelligently. The pattern is not all; it must be opened and smoothed out, every notch and perforation located; a great amount of skill and patience is expended in making these patterns and every mark has its meaning, and unless the directions are closely followed a successful result is simply a chance. Remember, too, that the paper patterns are cut to the accepted measures for perfect forms, and nearly all of them will need some alteration, either taking in or extending at the proper places. The woman who uses paper patterns will not mind the expense of a few yards of common cambric which she cuts according to the pattern before cutting into the material. If this extra expense appears unnecessary she will match every notch of the paper pattern, pin every seam, tuck, plait, or fold together according to the directions on the envelope; she then measures the pinned-together pattern and compares it with her own measures, and notes where the alterations will be necessary at waist, hip, or in the length. The knowl-
edge gained in this little experiment will repay her for the time spent, as she will have an intelligent idea of the manner of the construction of the gown she wishes to make.

In direct contrast to this careful worker is the haphazard dressmaker who imagines herself so clever that the pattern is simply a meager guide in cutting a gown from material sometimes quite expensive. If the garment is cut in a slipshod manner many trying situations will arise and, of course, the pattern is condemned. The hang of the skirt depends to a great extent on the placing of the patterns on the material; in the first place, in every reliable skirt and waist pattern a line of perforations indicating the position in which the pattern is to be placed will be found; these perforations run up and down the straight or warp threads of the material; if the pattern is securely pinned in this position the material may be cut accordingly; if no allowance is made for seams leave three quarters of an inch for them on the outside of the pattern. In laying on the gores of a skirt, place the lower edge inside the selvage; as the gore tapers toward the waist line it will throw the upper part of the gore a few inches from the selvage. It is wise to pin all the gores
in place before cutting; allow a sufficient space between them for a seam on each side.

To make a tuck, plait, or box plait, pin the pattern in its proper position, being mindful of the perforations for the straight line; mark all the perforations with a pencil or chalk mark; take the pattern from the material (which was doubled) and connect the dots, making a straight line with the yardstick. Mark these lines through both folds of the material to insure the same lines on both, with tailor's tacking.

TAILOR'S TACKING

This is a method of marking which is used by tailors and a most accurate one, too. In making it a long double thread of basting is used. Begin with a knot, make two small running stitches and one about an inch long; the thread allowed for this long stitch must be about twice the length of the space for the stitch; then make two more small stitches and the long, loose stitch again; repeat this to the end of the line. The reason for leaving such an amount of thread for the long stitch is that there may be a thread long enough to hold in each side of the material when it is pulled apart. The threads are cut and the line
on one is exactly the same as that on the other. Fold the tucks or plaits along the tacking and baste them the desired width. In altering box-plaited skirts, the size of the box plait itself must not be changed, but the alteration must be at the seam under the box plait if greater width at the hip is necessary; if less width is desired lap each side of the plait over until the right size is obtained. Do not finish the seams of a skirt as a French seam; either bind, overcast, or pink them; a French seam is more suitable for underwear or shirt waists.