CHAPTER VIII

MAKING A WAIST

CUTTING THE LINING

THE first essential is a good waist pattern. Be sure your pattern is your proper size; this may be determined by the bust measure. Place cotton lining material on the cross of the goods, that is, with the selvage toward you, flat on the table; never raise it with your hand from that position until the whole pattern is pinned to it. Place the bottom of lining at the end of the goods, and arrange all the portions economically, but in such a manner that the waist lines run evenly with the thread of material. Do not strain the pattern out of the position which this thread will determine. Pin each piece of the pattern securely, tracing at the edge of the pattern. On the front of the waist about two inches is allowed for the hooks and eyes; this extra material forms a piece to turn back as a finish for the sewing on of the hooks and eyes. Allow about
one inch extra on the under-arm seams, as the alterations in fitting may have to be made there. It is also a good plan to allow one-inch seams at the shoulders. Three quarters of an inch is a good margin for seams on the other portions. It is much better to trim off the seams a little after the waist is fitted than to be forced to piece them or to make new ones. Allow a good seam at the neck and around the armhole. Even if these are tight they may be cut away after the proper size of armhole is determined.

In joining the portions, be sure that the waist lines are even. Pin these along the traced lines and baste from the waist line up and down with small, even basting. Do not stretch or strain any of the portions in order to make them meet, as any discrepancy should be either at the neck or armhole, and if a seam has been allowed there the lining has been protected. However, there should be no serious discrepancy.

FITTING THE LINING

Put the lining on the person with the seams on the outside, pinning it firmly at the chest and waist line, then along the traced lines of the fronts, holding them together. Now look at the
back of the waist: If it is too long the shoulders will need taking up; if the waist wrinkles across the back a dart across the waist at the shoulder blades makes the back fit smoothly. Try to avoid taking in the back seam, as it often pulls the other forms out of place and away from the armhole, making the armhole too large at the back. The rounding form would then have to be taken in also. The back having cross dart does away with these alterations, except in some cases when the figure is very hollow at the back armscye; then it is necessary to take in the round form. Pinch in the portions at the waist line and wherever it is necessary. If the front armscye or armhole is too large pull the fullness forward, so that the grain of the front of the waist under the arm at the armhole is straight, then smooth down from the shoulder seam over the shoulder bone until the waist feels comfortable; lay it in little plaits or tucks. If the front seam appears too long, smooth down from the neck any extra fullness and pinch it into a little dart at the hollow of the bust; be careful not to draw the waist down too much. Ask the person being fitted if the waist is comfortable. This will help you very much, as one cannot always judge from the appearance
whether it is comfortable or not. Mark the waist line, armhole, and neck with a row of pins, also make a mark with crossed pins where the front seam of the sleeve should be placed. Always fit both sides of the lining. Remove the waist carefully after the pins have been securely fastened, as the loss of a pin from the fitted waist sometimes causes a deal of trouble. Mark both sides of the waist front with pins, before the impression made by the pins used in fitting is lost. Trace all the alterations with colored cotton. Reverse all the seams, making sure that the waist is even at the waist line, and the portions as even as possible. As figures are not always the same on both sides, it naturally follows that the waist will not be exactly the same on each side.

**FINISHING THE LINING**

When stitching, the tension of the machine should not be too tight. Sewing silk should be used and the stitch medium. After the waist is carefully stitched, remove the bastings and notch the seams at the waist line, also one and one half inches above and below the waist line, so that the waist may not be tightened, but left free to curve at the proper places. Crease the seams open with
your finger and place them over some round surface. Never press a round seam on a flat surface; if nothing better is available a broomstick will serve. Use a well-heated iron, not hot; lay the weight at the point of the iron exactly on the seam, as that is where the pressing is needed most. Go over the seam with the iron flat on it, so that it will lie flat to the waist. If heavy woolen material is being pressed, dampen the seam a little first. The seams may be either overcast, bound, or pinked; this is a matter of choice, but I have always found that a waist with overcast or pinked seams gives more freedom.

(For the boning of the waist, see Featherbone.)

When the featherbone is stretched in and the waist turned back it is ready for the hooks and eyes. The hooks are set in on a waist about one eighth of an inch, and the eyes far enough outside the line to allow the hook to slip in easily. Fasten hooks and eyes strongly; sometimes it is well to sew them on with a buttonhole stitch.

FEATHERBONE

Since the fashion demands a tight-fitting lining, the necessity of a well-boned waist is once
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in boxes in a nice silk or cotton casing ready for use. It is stitched fast to the seams all the way, and so becomes part of the waist and does not pull out, and the waist always retains its shape. The bones in a waist must be sprung. To do this with featherbone is simply to stretch the goods so that there is more length of bone than seam length. This curves the waist toward the figure. Therefore the amount of spring required depends on the curve of the figure. Use sewing silk, a very long stitch, and a medium-sized needle. The seams must be carefully pressed and finished, bound with seam binding, pinked or overcast.

There are various kinds of featherbone, each one intended to meet a long-felt want, such as the collar bone which holds the collar upright.

Featherbone crinolette is placed in the hem of skirts or any place on a gown which needs holding out without apparent stiffening. It is almost invaluable. Also the sleeve extender. Now that the figure is much more defined and tighter-fitting dresses are in vogue, we must necessarily give much thought to planning the proportions of the figure. The sleeves will furnish much for consideration. If the effect of a small waist be desired, the shoulders and upper sleeves must
be broader; and again featherbone comes to the rescue. Caps made somewhat like a small dress shield boned on the edge with featherbone tape are one way of obtaining a broad effect. A framework around the top of the arm of two round stripes and two vertical stripes of wide featherbone tapes will make a good foundation on which to tack a draped sleeve. It is light and will not crush into wads, as other materials, such as crinoline or tarlatan, have a tendency to do. In fact, almost anywhere that a stay is needed featherbone can be utilized.

**POSITION OF BONE IN ATTACHMENT**

Place the featherbone wrong side up under the machine foot, pass the needle through the center of the bone, in the center row of stitching, allowing one inch to

**FIG. 31.—POSITION OF BONE IN ATTACHMENT.**
project back of the needle for finishing the ends. Draw the bone straight toward you, drop the presser foot, then place the boning attachment over the bone so as to guide it under the needle, securing it in place by tightening the thumb-screw. Now raise the needle and presser foot and you are ready for boning.

DARTS

Place the waist wrong side up on the machine. Begin by boning the first dart. Lay the flatly pressed open seam on top of the bone and boning attachment so that the bone is right in the center of the seam. Put the needle down about one inch below the top of dart, close to the seam stitching, crowd the goods (using the forefinger of each hand) up to the needle, lower the presser foot, and cut, being sure the fullness starts right with the first stitch or from the needle.
This is an important point, as it prevents the bone from showing at the top, or causing a little plait above the top of the dart. Continue crowding to within one inch of waist line, following the machine stitching very closely, but never in the same stitching, then hold the seam very firm to the bottom of a short waist. Bone both darts alike.

**FINISHING BONES AT TOP**

You have on each seam allowed an inch of bone to extend beyond the needle. First tie the thread so that the stitching cannot rip. Rip the center row of stitching out of the extended bone. Slip the casing back and cut the bone off one half inch, rounding the corners, then turn the casing loosely over end of bone and fasten to bone and not to seam of waist, thus leaving one half inch of bone loose at top of each seam.

![Fig. 33.—Finishing Bones at Top.](image-url)
TO BONE A COLLAR

Four to six bones are used, as best suits the wearer. Two bones are tacked in about three quarters of an inch from center front, two more at a point just back of the ear when adjusted, and one at each end, the bones back of the ear being cut slightly longer than the front bones. Ribbon-covered collar bone may be used without additional covering, or a Warren’s featherbone stock foundation may be used as a skeleton collar.

THE SLEEVES

Cut the sleeves with generous seams; it is very difficult to take the exact measures of an arm, as the muscles vary greatly; some are much larger in the lower muscle, and others have larger upper muscles, so it is well to cut a sleeve with the back-seam allowance at least one inch. To baste the sleeve—place the upper sleeve piece flat on the table with the back seam nearest you. Take the under-sleeve piece and place the traced seam on the seam of the upper sleeve. They should fit exactly; if they do not, find the bend or break of the arm of both pieces and place them together. Pin along the traced line. Now smooth both of the
pieces until they are perfectly flat, and pin together at top and bottom. Fold the back edge of the upper sleeve over to the under piece, beginning at the top and placing the edges together; pin the traced lines so that the edges will stand up from the table to within one inch of the elbow mark. Now begin to pin the lower pieces together the same as the top, to within one inch of the elbow mark. This will leave some fullness in the upper piece. Gather this fullness into the space which is free on the under sleeve, distribute the gathers evenly and pin together. Baste with small, even basting. Pull the sleeve up on the arm so that it fits well into the armscye, pin the front seam to the cross pins on the waist, and at the place where the back-sleeve seam meets the waist turn in the top of the sleeve in little puckers and pin it to the waist around the armhole line; this line is determined by fashion.

HOW TO SEW HOOKS AND EYES ON A WAIST

Mark with a tracing of colored thread the front line of the waist marked by the pins in the fitting. Be sure that the waist is even; do this by pinning the back seam of waist together, open the shoulder seams, and place one side of the
waist flat on the other; unless there is a marked
defect in the figure of the person, which you would
have noticed in the fitting, the front tracings
should meet. The next step is to place a stay of
cambric, taffeta, or crinoline about one and one
half inches wide over the tracing on the inner side,
so that half of the staying piece is on either side
of the tracing mark. On the right or hook side
turn the lining back on the wrong side of the waist,
so that the fold is one eighth of an inch farther
out than the tracing line; baste a line about three
eighths of an inch in on the waist, through the
stay and piece, which has been turned over and
stitched by machine from the neck to the bottom
of the waist. On the left or eye side of the waist
repeat the same operation, unless the fold is made
from the traced line exactly. The hooks should
be placed about one and one eighth inches apart;
they should be held straight on the waist, with the
end or bill exactly at the traced front, or back,
line, as the same rule applies to waists opened in
the back. Hooks must be sewn firmly with four
stitches through each little ring, and three or four
strong stitches on the bill; it is well to finish with
buttonhole stitches. Coarse cotton, No. 40, or
buttonhole twist, should be used to sew on hooks
and eyes. The eyes must be placed on the edge of the waist front so that they extend sufficiently for the hooks to slip into them. They must be sewn with three or four strong stitches in each ring, and two or three stitches over each side of the eye. Hooks and eyes may be sewn through to the outside of waist, if that part can be hidden by the trimming; in any case they must be sewn through the staying piece. Before the hooks and eyes are sewn on, a piece of uncovered featherbone should be slipped into the casing made by the stitching on the waist fronts, about five inches above and to the end of the waist below the waist line. The hooks and eyes should be sewn through this bone. The piece of the lining turned back from the front tracing forming the stay or foundation on which the hooks and eyes were sewn, may be turned back over the hooks and eyes and form the facing or finish. This facing should be hemmed at the outer edge. If this piece of material is not wide enough to cover the hooks and eyes, a bias piece may be turned in and hemmed on both sides to the lining to cover the stitches used in sewing on the hooks and eyes. This bias facing must extend the length of the waist.
THE COLLAR

To fit a collar, cut a piece of crinoline on the bias about the height of the person’s neck plus an inch, turn both the edges over about half an inch on the outer side, shape the lower edge by stretching it with the fingers to a slight curve, place the band on the neck of the waist and pin it there so that it fits comfortably. If this band be too high, turn the upper edge over to the proper height. If it stands out from the neck at the center front, take a little dart in it so that it fits snugly to the throat. Mark the back where the band meets with pins.

DRAPING THE WAIST

The waist is now ready to drape, that is, to apply the outside material to the waist lining. The most approved way to do this is to place the lining on a bust form. The bust form is one of the greatest helps in the sewing room, and may be obtained in the department stores for a very moderate sum, sometimes for fifty cents or less. If one lives too far from a large town, it will prove a good investment to send to a larger city or town for one.
The bust form should be a size smaller than the size of the waist to be draped. The reason for this is that there are very few perfect figures, and consequently if the lining is perfectly and truly fitted to the person it will not fit a model form and will require padding out where the discrepancies occur. This would be impossible, as may be readily seen, if the bust form were the same size as the waist measures. Several kinds of padding may be used, cotton batting, hair, or tissue paper. Tissue paper proves the least expensive and most practical. The padding must be pushed into the spaces firmly, but not in lumps.

The design of the waist should be definitely planned. If the material is a short pattern and requires much planning to obtain the design decided upon, it is well to cut a rough pattern of paper on the bust form. If you are not limited in material, the planning may be done by pinning it to the lining at once.

A PLAIN DRAPE WAIST

Measure the lengths desired. For the front of a thirty-six-inch waist one length of double-width material twenty-four inches in length, for the back, one half a width twenty inches long, will
be sufficient. Fold the length for the back so that the selvage and cut edge meet, to get the center; trace the center with a colored cotton thread. Place the center tracing on the center seam of the waist lining, allowing the material one inch higher than the lining at the neck, so that it will not fall short at the point of shoulder at the neck line. Pin the material securely with pins about three inches apart down the center line, drawing it with the fingers to the waist line. Pin the material across the back at the armscye line in such a way that the grain or woof threads run straight across, and are not drawn or strained out of their proper position. Pin all around the shoulders and armhole, smoothing all the superfluous fullness away toward neck and armhole. Now smooth the material down along the under-arm seam, and pin. Place the pins, if possible, in a horizontal position. This suggestion applies to
the pinning on of any drapery. You will find that if you draw down the material on the grain to waist line you will have some fullness between the center and the under-arm seam; this fullness is usually laid in little plaits or gathers. Pin all the material securely at the waist line.

The front of a plain waist is usually finished at the center front with a box plait covering the opening, or a vest set in. If a vest is placed in a dress, it is done before the waist fronts are draped. Cut the double width through the fold, making one piece for each side. If a box plait is to be the finish for the front opening, fold back the selvage edge on the wrong side, fold the right side into a tuck which will hide the selvage edge, and stitch. Then stitch the other side the same distance from the edge, forming the box plait. This, of course, will be placed on the hook side of the waist. The edge of the eye side of the waist

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**Fig. 35.—Draped Waist, Front.**
is turned back on the wrong side about half the width of the plait on the hook side, and stitched on the selvage. Place the material on the front of the waist, always draping the right side first, with a generous seam on the shoulder, that is, raise it about one inch at the highest point above the neck line, smooth it over the front of waist to the armhole, having the straight thread running across. Pin it securely across the chest, down the front, and around the armhole. The draping of the remainder of the front depends on the fashion of the waist, and the prevailing mode in drapery. Sometimes fashion demands that all waists shall have a blouse or puff in the front of the waist; at other times the material is drawn down rather snugly to the waist belt. If a blouse or puff is desired, the material is raised at the center front into a puff or pouch and pinned securely at the waist line. Then the material is smoothed on a sort of bias which clings to the round of the form from the front armseye to the waist line and throws the necessary fullness to the puff or blouse; this fullness is gathered or plaited into the space from center front to the front dart, and pinned securely. The material is pinned a little in front of the under-arm seam, so that it may be
placed in the seam or slip-stitched over the back, which will have been sewn securely to the bone of the under-arm seam.

Now remove the waist from the bust form, and baste the material securely where it has been pinned. (Be very careful not to remove the pins before basting.) Pin the waist together at the waist line and around the neck and armhole, so that each seam meets the corresponding one and the waist is even. Now pin the bottom of waist below the waist line, and trim it off to the desired length and shape. Do not cut it too short, as an allowance for turning the edge over the bones on the inside must be made. Cut the bones to the exact length of the waist, and baste the edge, which will be about one half inch wide, up on the inside of the waist; be sure that there is an even line for the bottom of waist. Cut a bias strip of the lining about one and one half inches wide to face the

Fig. 36.—Draped Waist Taken from Bust Form.
waist. This facing may be sewn on the waist by placing the bias strip smoothly on the bottom and basting it through the middle of the strip, then turn in both the edges and hem. The hemming stitch must not be caught through on the right side.

Another way of facing the waist is to sew the bias strip, with right side toward the turned-up edge of the waist, with running stitches. Then turn the facing up and turn in the edge to the lining and hem it on to the lining. Be very careful to begin the sewing of all facings with a couple of stitches to secure it, and to fasten with a firm stitch or two and a buttonhole stitch. The hemming stitches should be dressmaker’s hemming stitches, and not the tiny stitches used in plain sewing. A dressmaker’s hemming stitch is larger and more of a slide stitch, and when well fastened looks better and is just as reliable.

A belt tape is now placed in the waist to hold it down firmly on the

Fig. 37.—Belt Tape.
body. This belt is measured to the waist line tightly, and fastened with a hook and eye, or belt buckle, such as is used on men’s vests. The belt is secured to the three back seams of the waist, about one quarter of an inch above the waist line; it is caught to the bones by cross stitches.

DRAPING THE SLEEVES

Sleeves are made in various ways. For a plain waist we will take a plain two-piece sleeve with fullness at the top of the upper sleeve somewhat on the plan of a leg-o’-mutton sleeve. The material for the under-sleeve piece is cut exactly like the lining, but the upper sleeve has the number of inches desired added to the width and height from the elbow up to the top. This fullness on the width may be obtained by laying a tuck through the center from elbow up and adding a sufficient number of inches to the height to make a good shape.

The outside material is basted to the pieces of lining and put together in exactly the same way as was the lining. The sleeve is turned up to the required length and faced in the same way as was the bottom of the waist; it is then gathered at the top, the lining and outer material separately; the
usual guide for the beginning of the gathers is about four inches from the front seam of the sleeve, and according to the fullness from four to five inches from the back seam of sleeve. The lining gathers correspond to the outside in extent, but are, of course, not so full. The lining and material are basted together. The gathering strings are fastened by drawing them up to desired space and then fastening them around a pin placed perpendicularly in the material. The sleeve is now ready to baste into the waist. The front seam of sleeve is placed exactly at the mark in the armscye, which is generally from two to two and one half inches from the under-arm seam toward the front. Pin the sleeve into the waist, holding the inside of sleeve toward you, so that the sleeve may be stretched into the waist bust from the front where the fullness begins, around to the back fullness, and adjust the gathers so that they will be on the top of the shoulder. When the sleeve is basted in try it on the person, make any alterations necessary, rectify, and stitch in by machine. Trim off the armhole seam and overcast the edges with a firm but loose stitch. Shields, or protectors, are sewn in the armscye with a tacking at each point, once on the
under-arm seam, and once in the sleeve. Be sure that these are sewn through the binding, as any perforation of the rubber in the shield would defeat the purpose of the shield. When the shield is placed in the armhole, smooth the waist and sleeve over it, and in this way you will find if it is in too tight. An improperly put in shield often destroys the fit of a waist.

THE BELT OR GIRDLE

Waists usually have some sort of decoration for a finish a little below the waist line; this is called a belt or girdle. A girdle may be made of taffeta or satin, or, in fact, of any material which will lie in graceful folds around the figure. Another fashion for finishing the bottom of a waist is to shape a bias band to the shape of the waist, line it with crinoline, and stitch in rows about the width of the machine foot apart.

For a high girdle to be folded irregularly, one which reaches from three to five inches above the waist line, a true bias from nine to ten inches is necessary. The bias is drawn very snugly at the waist line and allowed to flare above and below, according to the curve of the figure. The material is then tacked on to the waist from the top to
bottom on the bones of the waist. If the girdle is to close in the front the ends should be folded in and sewed to the front waist bones, and the edge trimmed with little buttons, or a small ruching may be placed over it to hide the opening. If the girdle is to be finished at the side, about three inches from the center is the proper distance where it should lap. When the girdle fastens in the last-named fashion, there should be no extra material under it, as otherwise it does not allow the lap to lie flat on the waist. Hooks should be placed on the lap side of the girdle sufficiently close together to hold the belt in place, and loops, either of metal or silk, placed in a corresponding position on the side over which it laps. The hooks should be sewn in from the edge of the lap about one quarter of an inch and covered, save for the bill of the hook, with a piece of Prussian binding or silk.

TRIMMING WAISTS

Many and varied are the fashions of trimming waists. Waists may be trimmed by making the designs on the pieces intended for the drapery, such as tucks put in in designs and insertions of lace set in between and across in any fashion the fancy dictates. Then there is the plait which may
run either vertically or around the waist. Shirring also forms a most attractive trimming. The fashion books will suggest many ideas, and are of great assistance in this way. Gimps, braids, medallions, are also very much used. Lace also, in its many designs, may be cut apart and readjusted in a thousand ways. Pretty little ruchings are made by shirring pieces of silk, chiffon, or net; these when applied to the waist make it very attractive. Hand embroidery is just now very fashionable for collars, cuffs, yokes, etc. Roses and flowers are made of silk chiffon and velvet and applied to the different parts of a gown. All waists of net, chiffon, or any transparent material, should be interlined or veiled with mousseline de soie, as it softens the effect and hides all seams in the lining. When a transparent effect is desired for a yoke, a double layer of mousseline should be placed over the lining with seams on the shoulders. This must come below the line intended for the lace, or whatever material is used for the yoke proper, as seams and sewing are liable to pull the mousseline out of its place and therefore it is well to be protected by an inch or so in reserve. Leave a good margin at the neck line as that also works away. The material for
the yoke must be stretched over the mousseline without a seam on the shoulder, necessitating the finishing of the shoulder seam first. This should be done by either turning the mousseline in with the lining shoulder seam, or making a plain fell of this seam; in any case, it must be a very small but secure seam. The collar for such a yoke must also be transparent. It is made of double mouseline, boned, and is placed on the mousseline on the neck line and sewn there; the lace of the yoke is joined to the collar lace by applying one to the other; this does away with the harsh line of the collar joining the waist. When the yoke and collar are secure, the waist lining may be cut out to the depth desired, and finished with a piece of seam binding sewn over it, or simply hemmed. The hooks and loops are placed on the yoke in the same manner as on the waist.

THE GOOD FIGURE

A few words about making one look a nice figure. Every woman owes it to herself and to her family, and, in fact, to the world at large, to look as well as she possibly can. I do not mean that all these people should suffer through her vanity, but a reasonable amount of it will help one
along wonderfully. To make up the figure, the corset, of course, occupies first place; a good corset need not be a very expensive one, but it must be the right size and shape. A liberal amount of corset string is the next consideration, and by the way, a linen or silk corset string is not an extravagance. Put the corset lace in the corset so that it is very loose, and the corset may be put on the person without any compression. The next consideration is the garter or supporter. If the hips and abdomen are large, or inclined to be, two sets of these should be sewn to the corset, one set on the front and a single supporter on each hip. The corset should cover the hips well. Before lacing in the corset, the garters should be adjusted to the stockings. To protect the stocking, turn the top over, making a double thickness to which the garter is fastened. The corset is placed well down on the abdomen and fastened from the bottom. Pull in the lower lace until comfortable. Then lift your body out of the corset, as it were, by leaning first to one side and then to the other. Then pull in the top lace, and bring both of the laces around to the front, and tie under the front garters, or a hook which is placed low down on the front of the corset.