CHAPTER XV

USEFUL HINTS

MISCELLANEOUS HINTS FOR SEWING

ARMHOLES should be overcast or bound with a bias strip of soft lining silk or muslin.

The size of the buttonhole is determined by the diameter of the button.

When sewing in a sleeve, sew from the inside of a sleeve, that is, hold the sleeve toward you; in this way the sleeve is eased into the waist.

The front seam of a sleeve is placed about two or two and one half inches from the under-arm seam of the waist. Another very reliable guide is to fold the armhole from an inch back of the shoulder seam on a perfect bias. The point reached on the front of the waist is the guide to put the front seam of the sleeve at.

The inside seams of a sleeve should be bound or overcast to correspond to the finish of the seams of the waist and never left raw.

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The binding for waist seams will be much easier to sew on evenly if the seam binding is creased in the center before it is placed on the edge of the seam. The stitches should be short on the right side and longer on the under side.

Bone casing makes a very nice finish in place of bands of silk to cover raw edges; seam binding serves the purpose where there is no strain or wear brought to bear on it.

Shields or dress protectors should be placed in the armhole so that they fit the round at the front armscye. They should never be put in tightly, and four tackings, one at each end of the shield, one on the under-arm seam, and one on the seam of the sleeve, are quite enough. The tacking should be done through the little tape which finishes the shield. If the rubber is punctured the perspiration will come through and possibly ruin the waist; small safety pins are sometimes used to hold the shield in place.

When sewing on a collar to a waist do not have any fullness across the back of the waist unless the waist is designed for it; if the neck has stretched hold it in to the collar from the front to a little in front of the shoulder seam.

The shoulder seams should turn toward the
front, to avoid any tightening which the reverse would make.

When the sleeve is sewn in try to keep the shoulder and under-arm seams from being tightened by the armhole stitching, as this often affects the fit of the waist.

When cutting very fine, soft materials, such as chiffon, it is well to draw a thread, as it is next to impossible to cut them otherwise, as the material creeps away. Lawn and fine white goods should be cut in the same way; it is a good guide to draw the thread whenever it is possible.

Some materials tear perfectly straight, but that is not the case with cheap or inferior qualities. Chiffon will tear beautifully if it is cut a short distance, sufficient for one to get a good hold on both sides of the opening; the motion must be a quick one or the chiffon will not respond to it.

When plaids or stripes are made up they should be very carefully matched; if a bias seam is made, every line or check must match.
Washable materials should be shrunken before being made up. They need not be washed; placing them in a tub of water until they are thoroughly wet will suffice. They should not be wrung out, but hung on the line by the selvage and allowed to drip. A little salt in the water will set the color.

Pale pink, blue, lavender, or green, should be hung in the shade when put out to dry, as the sun will fade them.

Dresses buttoned or hooked in the back should be fastened from right to left.

Hand work is so much in vogue that every woman can have her clothes very attractive if she will but use her spare time in making them. Drawn work, tucking, featherstitching, hemstitching, etc., may be used instead of lace. Books on embroidery and stitchery may be had from the Art Embroidery Department of any of the dry-goods houses for a very small sum.
PLAITING AND SHIRRING

When the band is being placed on a gathered skirt the gathers must be held toward the person; a more even arrangement of them is obtained in this way.

When full skirts are shirred in more than three rows of gathers, a staying piece must be placed under them. This piece should be fitted around the upper part of the hips, though not too closely, as every row of shirring must be invisibly sewn to this yoke or stay, and will tighten it if it is fitted too snugly; one can easily see how very necessary a stay is under cording or shirring; otherwise the fullness will not remain in its proper position. The skirt lining, if it is attached at the band to the upper skirt, will make a fine stay, both for the hip shirrs or cords and for those that are placed lower on the skirt, if there should be any.

If one intends to have a plaitted back in a waist or shirt waist, the tucks should extend the full length of the back. When the tucks or plaits end at the back yoke the fullness made by them gives a round-shouldered effect, unless when the tucks are so tiny that there is scarcely any fullness.
When the plaits or tucks are large the piece of material should be tucked perfectly straight from top to bottom; when arranged at the waist line or belt they should be folded over until they taper with the figure from the arm’s eye to the waist. Tucks made on the bias to give this slope are never successful, as they are bound to stretch on the edge, either in the laundering or wear.

When tucks are stitched by machine the upper thread should be left long enough to draw through to the wrong side and tie to the under thread; the reason for doing this is to prevent the stitches from loosening and spoiling the line which is made to carry out the design.

**BRAID TRIMMING**

Skirt braids of mohair or worsted should be shrunken before they are sewn on the skirt. Mercerized braids may be sewn on without shrinking. A very nice way to sew on a skirt braid is to baste it to the bottom of the hem, allowing about one eighth of an inch to extend beyond to protect the edge of it; ease the braid on the skirt; use a strong silk or cotton thread to sew it the first time near the edge; these stitches should be fine running stitches; they can be made almost invisible
as the thread sinks into the braid. The top edge of the braid should be hemmed to the hem of the skirt with a fine, firm stitch, being careful to take no stitches through to the right side. The braid should be joined where the ends meet in this way: a small end should be left on one side to lap over and turn in; this should cover the little joining. Hem all around this little lap and press it flat. While sewing on the braid, it should be held in as flat a position as possible.

CHILDREN'S GARMENTS

Many mothers of young children have much difficulty in procuring the proper undergarments for their little ones. There are special bazaars and stores which make it their aim to help in this matter. All sorts of good ideas are gotten from consulting their catalogues and much satisfaction in purchasing their goods. The standard magazines advertise them and it is an easy matter to get in touch with them through this medium.

A very good idea one economical mother has is to reënforce the knees of her children's stockings, as it is a most difficult problem for her to keep them from breaking into holes. She takes a piece of an old stocking and places it on the
inner side of the new one, well over the knee, and
darns very neatly back and forth; this darning is
almost invisible and saves much time later on.
Extra feet for stockings may also be procured for
a very few cents; all mothers of growing children
must face the same situation, and the darning of
stockings does not help their good humor. The
whole new foot seems to me quite a boon for them.

STORING AWAY CLOTHES

When the time comes to put clothes away
either for summer or winter, a special place or
room should be cleaned and cleared where they
should be placed before they are packed up.
Plenty of tar paper, camphor, or some other moth
destroyer should be at hand when the winter
clothing is being packed away. The very best and
most secure place for storing woolens, etc., is a
cedar chest; this, however, is not available to
most of us. Shawls and other heavy woolens
should be hung out in the air and sunlight, and
brushed free of every vestige of dirt or dust, and
allowed to hang there all day if possible.

Blankets should be thoroughly washed in a
fine soft soap lather, rinsed and hung out to dry;
a brisk warm wind will dry them quickly. Muslin
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bags large enough to completely cover the blankets or other woolens after they have been folded to a reasonable parcel should be ready for them. Lump camphor should be put in the folds, and it is well to be generous with it; the bag should be sewn together and put aside for final disposal.

**Woolen dresses and coats, men's and boys' clothing,** should be placed on the clothesline, thoroughly brushed, and if very heavy a beating with a rattan stick will do them no harm. Look over every portion of them, turn out pockets, sew on buttons, and make any repairs necessary, unless the article is to be made over when taken out in the fall. Make bags, or old dress skirts or petticoats, which have been washed and saved for this purpose, may be slipped over these articles after a liberal supply of camphor has been placed in the folds and pockets. If the article will admit of hanging up it is wise to do so. Little bags of camphor may be sewn in dresses or coats on the inside. Dress shields should always be removed from a waist before putting it away for any length of time. Newspaper if freshly printed is also a preventive against moth.

All *closets* should be dusted and scrubbed before anything is packed away in them. Cedar
oil, which is a deadly poison, if sprinkled on shelves and floors will keep any sort of bug or moth from the closet. Many people use moth balls, but the odor is so very disagreeable that I cannot recommend them. Lavender flowers are also said to be a preventive, and this odor certainly is a refreshing one. Salt is said to be very good to put in parcels which are being stored. Furs should be sent to the furriers, if possible; they have many methods of keeping them free from moth, cold storage being the best. If stored at home, leaf tobacco may be packed with them. Common salt and camphor should be thickly dusted into the fur.

**Summer clothes are not such a problem when the end of the season arrives.** Wash dresses should never be put away soiled nor should they be starched and ironed. A good washing which will remove all the traces of starch will be sufficient. They should be folded and put in bags or sheets, and labeled so that there will be no chance of upsetting other bundles which may look like them. In fact, every parcel which is being stored should have a description of its contents written on the outside where it can easily be seen. Dresses which are not to be washed, such as fancy
soft organdies, etc., should be carefully folded, tissue paper put between the folds and in the trimming to keep them from crushing; together these gowns and waists should be put in paper suit boxes and labeled.

**Velvet coats and suits** should be carefully brushed and aired. Tissue paper should be placed between every fold in skirt or waist; if velvet is trimmed with buttons or passementerie, extra thicknesses must be placed in the folds, as these trimmings mark the pile in such a way as to make it impossible to remove them.

Pieces of **passementerie**, jet trimmings, beads, etc., should be wrapped separately in tissue paper and labeled before putting away. **Patent leather** should also be put away in tissue paper. **Steel ornaments** should be kept in a box of powdered starch when not in use; should they become rusty, rub with spirits of wine and brown paper, polishing them afterwards with chamois skin. Gilt braid may be kept untarnished for a long time in an air-tight tin box.

**CUTTING DOWN AND MAKING OVER**

When a garment has gotten out of style or worn in such a way as to become useless to a
grown person, it may make a very serviceable dress for a child or growing girl. Woolen goods may be washed (see Renovating) and pressed to look almost like new goods. Skirt linings may be washed and allowed to get thoroughly dry before ironing; to iron muslin linings while damp would stiffen them. All threads and bad parts should be cut out so that the pattern may be planned.

The old waist lining is of very little use except to be kept for a pattern if the waist was a good fitting one. Bones, hooks and eyes, should be saved if they are in good condition. Sometimes new material of a contrasting color is a very practical addition. Plaid or striped material is a good combination with a plain color. The blue cloth of which officers’ clothes are made is most excellent goods and can be cleaned beautifully. Little boys’ suits can be made of it. A boy’s trousers may easily be made of the larger pair, and a blouse or jacket can be gotten out of the coat nicely. When a lady’s coat is cut in all the forms with pockets, it seems almost impossible to make anything out of it except an Eton jacket. Old jacket linings are never of very much value; a new lining in a jacket makes it seem so much nicer and cleaner.
SHORTENING SKIRTS

When shortening a skirt, do so from the bottom, either by making tucks or cutting off the number of inches from the ground to make it the desired length. When a skirt is to be lengthened do not piece it at the top; one way to lengthen a skirt is to turn it off evenly from the floor; measure the difference between the length desired and that which the skirt has after it is trimmed evenly; cut a piece of material twice the number of inches in width required to make the desired length and as many inches around as the skirt measures; allow one half inch on all seams; join this extra piece to the skirt proper, with the seam on the right side; press it flat with the edges down; turn the added piece up on the right side; measure from the waist line down the length of the skirt and turn the balance of the piece up on the right side; fold in the half inch at the edge and baste the edge over the joining. Stitch a double row of stitching sewing on the applied hem; one at the extreme edge and the other about one quarter of an inch from it. Press this flat and you have a trimming as well as an added length.
REMODELING CIRCULAR SKIRTS

When remodeling a circular skirt the most important thing about it will be the hanging of it or the turning up from the bottom. Place the skirt on the person for whom it is intended; measure with a cardboard or ruler as many inches from the floor as is desired; go all around the skirt, using the floor or whatever the person is standing on as the base; move the ruler or marker along, making a line of pins or chalk at the number of inches on the ruler as you move it. This will prove the simplest and quickest method of marking a skirt length. Baste the hem up according to this line. Very little can be done with a circular skirt or cape in the way of making it over, except for a small child's dress or waist for a larger girl, on account of the bias which necessarily comes in a circle.

MAKING OVER GORED SKIRTS

Gored skirts make over to better advantage; a guimpe dress for a girl of ten may be made from a woman's seven-gored skirt. Cut the child's skirt about twenty-four inches long out of the five front gores, including the center one; join them to-
gether, hem them, and either gather the top or lay it in plaits at the gores to fit her waistband. Cut the waist and sleeves out of the wider back gores; cut the fronts of the waist in surplice fashion so that they make a V to show the guimpe beneath the back; also slope to a point at the waist line, but do not lap; the waist is joined in an under-arm and shoulder seam; this last measures about two and one half inches in width when the sleeve is sewn in. The sleeve is one piece, slashed at the center of the top. A very attractive trimming for such a little dress is a narrow plaeting of silk put in to outline the surplice and edge of sleeve; the belt should be a few folds of the silk to correspond with the other trimming.

MAKING OVER COVERT COATS

The skirts of a three-quarter-length covert lady's coat, such as was worn a few years since, would make a very comfortable box coat for a little girl. The coat needs very little fitting, as it falls loose from the shoulders. The fronts are double breasted and must not be pieced, but the back may be seamed down the center and finished by a row of stitching on either side of the seam. If there is not sufficient material for sleeves the
old ones may be cut down to the necessary size. The coat may be trimmed with six buttons on the front placed in two rows, and the collar a turned down one, with a strap of velvet of a darker shade.

REMODELING FURS

The home dressmaker should not attempt to cut fine fur unless she has had some instruction from a furrier. However, if she finds herself in a position where she has to cut the fur, these suggestions may help her. Have a cutting board before you; dampen the pelt of skin of the fur, stretch it on the board and tack it there, using small tacks. Have a very sharp penknife at hand; mark the pelt with pencil and ruler just where you wish it cut; make the cuts with precision, getting a straight line. If bands are wanted, the pelt should measure when cut about half an inch less than the apparent width of the band, as the hairs will fall about that much below the edge of the pelt. Furs should be top sewn together with a coarse cotton thread; the hair must fall in the same direction. The edge of the pelt should be bound with a tape or a piece of silk.
INSERTION

When insertion is sewn in a design on a piece of material it may be sewn once by machine on either side of the insertion to the material throughout the design. The material between these lines of stitching should then be cut through the center and each side turned or folded back on a line with the stitching and basted there. A second row of stitching should be made as nearly as possible on the first row, thus making a firm hold for the lace and fabric; the edge of the material should be trimmed down to one quarter of an inch, no less, as it might break away from the sewing should it ravel. All corners should be trimmed out and sewn flat; the edges made in this way should be closely overcast.

Many very pretty corset covers and chemises are drawn in at the top by a narrow ribbon run through a succession of tiny buttonholes about one inch apart and three quarters of an inch from the edge, which is usually scalloped and button-holed. This is a pretty change from the usual beading.
LACES

Very few of us ever handle "real lace"; but with few exceptions the possession of even a small quantity of it is a great pleasure; it is handed down from generation to generation, mended and often transferred from one background or mesh to another; this process is particularly adapted to lace with a fine mesh when the flower or design is heavy or raised, such as appliqué laces.

The most popular laces at the present time are the different styles of Irish crochet and point, Duchesse, Valenciennes, Bruges, Venetian, and Maltese laces. However, machine-made laces are so cleverly made now that very good imitations may be had at reasonable prices. Many of the imitation laces are made in our own country. We often see a combination of laces on one gown. Irish lace with edgings of German Valenciennes, or batiste medallions on a baby Irish mesh. Black lace is used as trimming and is usually of the heavier patterns, such as guipure, although black filet combined with French lace and Princess lace is also quite fashionable. Hand-run Spanish lace is an exquisite lace not used much at present, but considered very valuable. The flowers or pat-
terns are quite large and are outlined by a silk thread run in by hand; hence the name—hand-run. Escurial lace is another kind of silk lace which is outlined by a heavy cord; Russian lace is a heavy lace, the pattern of which is outlined by a heavy cord.

Real laces should never be cut; they are usually made in patterns which may be ripped apart and joined again when used in a different manner. The joining should be made with the finest silk or cotton.

**ROBES FOR ROOM WEAR**

Every woman should have close to her bed some sort of long wrapper or robe which may be slipped on in an emergency. The gown called a kimono, if long, will answer this purpose very well; so, too, will the bath robe; in cases of fire or sickness a robe of this kind is invaluable. Eiderdown, a sort of rough woolen fabric, may be made into a bath robe, or the less expensive double-faced outing flannel. This may be had in very pretty patterns of tan and pale blue, brown and white, red and black, etc., and when caught at the waist with a cord and tassel the bath robe is quite attractive. With this robe a pair of bedroom slippers should be provided.
THE FACE VEIL

A face veil adds much to a woman’s appearance, as it keeps the loose hairs from falling in an untidy way about the face, and adds much to the appearance of the face in hiding any blemishes which may mar it; altogether it gives a lady-like air. Of course, the veil must be suited to one’s face; very extreme designs, such as large checks in the mesh or extra large dots, are hideous on most women; there is, however, a type of woman to whom these bizarre effects are becoming; she is usually of a large, Spanish type, dark hair and eyes, with a high color. White veils may be worn with impunity by the dark-haired, dark-eyed woman. So, too, is the lace veil with the scalloped edge becoming to her. A maline veil is often sufficient to keep the hair in place and will make the face look very well; then there are many small dainty meshes which serve the purpose and are inconspicuous. The black-and-white “beauty” veil may be worn by almost any type of woman. White maline veils are quite attractive, but should not be worn by a woman whose complexion or hair has a faded appearance, as they tend to make the hair look gray. Some very attractive
effects are produced by a double veil: a face veil placed close over the face, and a flowing chiffon or lace veil attached to the hat. The veil should be changed often, as it is a catch-all for dust and must necessarily be unsanitary.

A very nice way to keep a veil in good condition is to make a book of pieces of cardboard, about one half dozen pieces six inches deep by eighteen inches long, cover the pieces with thin silk or other soft, thin material; both sides of the cardboard must be covered, the edges turned in, and the top sewn together. Two ribbons are attached to the open side and the back tied together with three sets of ribbons. The veil should be removed from the face or hat very carefully and straightened out with the hand at the ends where they were pinned on, then wound around the cardboard and pinned there carefully with three pins to keep the ends from stretching. The veil should not be allowed to remain pinned on the hat when not in use; this practice will make a veil look shabby in a very short time, and there is scarcely anything more untidy in a woman’s appearance than a shabby veil.
CARE OF GLOVES

To begin with, cheap gloves are not a bargain; a reliable glove costs at least $1 for a short glove and a higher price according to the length which is designated by the number of buttons—a twelve-button glove will reach about to the elbow—sixteen, above the elbow. There are various styles of gloves, buttoned, laced, or Biarritz, one which slips on the hand and crinkles or crushes at the wrist, and is neither buttoned nor laced, having no opening at the wrist. The materials of which gloves are made are different kinds of skins, kid being the most popular. Glacé kid is a smooth-dressed kid, undressed kid or suède has a smooth back and a rough or undressed surface. Silk, silk and linen, and cotton suède are the materials used principally for summer gloves.

Great care should be taken of gloves if one wishes them to serve any length of time. The proper size should be selected, one that does not press the hand out of all semblance to that member. We often see this disfigurement which defeats its own purpose. Instead of making the hand look smaller it makes it conspicuous by its distorted appearance. The glove should be fitted
at the shop where it is purchased, as then any defect may be detected and much annoyance saved.

When the glove is put on for the first time, talcum powder should be sifted over the hand, the glove should be worked on easily, and the glove fingers worked from the tip to the hand with the thumb and forefinger of the other hand, keeping the seams straight; the fingers of the other hand should be slipped in between the glove and the hand, and the glove gently pulled into position across the knuckles. The opening should be gently drawn together and fastened; if it does not meet, a little fastener may be gotten for ten or fifteen cents a pair which will keep the glove in its proper place.

CLEANING GLOVES

White and light-colored gloves may be cleaned with naphtha or gasoline; both of these are very explosive when exposed to fire or in a closed room. They may be cleaned on the hand in this way: put on one glove and rub it with a clean piece of white flannel which has been dipped in the cleansing fluid; wet it all over and then rub it nearly dry with a second piece of clean flannel. Do the other glove in the same manner; leave
them on the hands until dry in order to keep them in shape. Put some talcum powder on them and hang them in the air until all the odor has left them. A nice sachet powder should be placed in the glove box in little bags; this will counteract the least vestige of the odor of gasoline or naphtha. Gloves should never be drawn off the hand, placed together and the fingers turned inside; the gloves are nearly always moist and should be allowed to dry in the air; a great help to this end is to make a habit of turning the gloves back over the hand, gently pulling the gloves off the hand by the tips of the fingers; in this way the glove is turned inside out and the air will get in.

Chamois gloves, worn principally in the summer, may be kept perfectly clean by simply washing them on the hands, using a lather of white soap and water; if they are very much soiled in spots, these may be removed by rubbing them with magnesia; before washing rinse them in warm water and then in cold. Keep the gloves on the hands until nearly dry, then pull them off carefully in their proper shape and hang them in the air to dry. Another method of cleaning chamois gloves, said to be very good, is to rub the soiled gloves with equal parts of powdered alum and
fuller's earth; using a clean paint brush, wipe off the powder, sprinkle the gloves with bran, and then shake them well.

Black kid gloves which have become white at the seams or finger tips may be renewed by dipping a feather in a little olive oil in which a few drops of black ink have been dropped; brush lightly over the white places. This suggestion is intended for black glacé gloves. Worn spots may also be renovated by going over them with black ink and then rubbing with a flannel dipped in olive oil. Light-colored suède or undressed kid gloves may be cleaned with corn meal or dry bread crumbs, dusting them off with a piece of clean white flannel.

**BOXES FOR GLOVES**

Gloves should be kept in a long glove box or a box kept for this purpose; they should be allowed to dry before being put away. Lay them out flat in the box after they have been aired and drawn into their proper shape. One will be greatly repaid for this precaution both in the appearance of the glove and in the length of time it will wear. A very dainty habit is to perfume the glove box with sachet bags, using with other
sachet powder some orris root powdered. This retains its scent longer than any other that I know of. Never roll the gloves in a ball, as it spoils the shape of them.

CARE OF SHOES

Having two or more pairs of shoes which can be worn alternately is not an extravagance but a very economical move on the part of the wearer; not only is it better from a sanitary standpoint, but from the economical point also; to change the shoes every day or so, the shoe does not settle to the foot and lose its good appearance, and will wear more evenly. The shoe, if worn day in and day out, does not get a chance to be properly aired, which is necessary for comfort. I have found two pairs of shoes to wear me a year easily by this method—using one or the other every day. The shoes should be changed in the house for appearance and comfort. Low shoes are not always advisable, particularly if the ankles are weak; although some physicians argue that one should not cover the ankles except in very cold weather, protecting them by cloth gaiters or spats.

Vanity should never influence the choice of shoes as to the size; a well-fitted shoe, even if
large, looks much better than a small one which pinches and distorts the foot, thereby attracting attention to it and giving no end of discomfort and distress. If we unfortunately find ourselves with a pair of shoes which pinch, lay a cloth dipped in very hot water over the spot where it pinches, renew the heat as the cloth cools, as this will shape the leather to the foot. If shoes creak, bore little holes in the first or outer sole and pour in some oil. Shoes should be kept in a ventilated box; they should not be thrown or piled in carelessly, as this will scuff them more than the actual wear; place them in order and in pairs.

Heavy calfskin shoes, while very serviceable, are very hard to keep looking well. They are worn in stormy weather without rubbers, and may be rendered waterproof by rubbing them all over with mutton tallow and then with ink and sweet oil or blacking. When we can afford the expense there is nothing better to keep shoes in good condition and shape than foot trees; forms which may be adjusted to the size and shape of the shoe and may be had for seventy-five cents a pair. Slippers and ties may be kept in very good shape if stuffed with tissue paper. Tissue paper will make a soft covering for fine slippers. Cream
specially made for patent-leather ties and shoes may be had at the shoe stores. This cream should be rubbed into the leather with a piece of flannel, and then rubbed off with another fresh piece of flannel. Before putting a patent-leather tie or shoe on the foot rub it with the palm of the hand, as that will warm the leather and possibly save it from cracking. Patent-leather shoes should be rolled in a piece of flannel and not exposed to damp, dust, or outside air. An occasional rubbing with cold cream or a bit of soft flannel before any prepared dressing is applied will keep any shoe soft and flexible.

Light-colored suède slippers may be cleaned with corn meal, bran, or powdered magnesia. Tan shoes may be cleaned with any of the pastes prepared for them or with a flannel cloth moistened with a little turpentine. When shoes have become wet and muddy they dry very stiff and hard unless rubbed at once with a piece of flannel to remove the mud. Rub kerosene oil well into the leather, let them partly dry, then rub a second time with oil or vaseline. Put them in a warm place to dry, and finally apply a liquid dressing or paste to give them the desired polish.