

CHAPTER V

STAPLE MILLINERY MATERIALS

I. MATERIALS USED

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QUESTIONS

I. MATERIALS USED

The definitions and tests given in this lesson apply to millinery fabrics only. The qualities desirable for hat fabrics, such as velvet or satin, are very different from the qualities desired in the same fabrics when they are to be used for dresses. Hat materials must be nicely finished; the velvet pile, deep; the satin, lustrous. They must be light in weight. They need have no enduring wearing qualities. There is no strain on hat materials as there is on material for other wearing apparel.

FABRICS

1. Velvets.

Process of manufacture. Velvet is a soft, thick fabric with a deep silk pile. The warp is woven on a cotton woof. In a very expensive quality there is a silk back, or woof.

In weaving the warp the silk is passed over fine wires in such a way as to form rows of loops which project from the cotton back. When the wires are withdrawn there is left a fine, soft, silk pile.

In uncut velvet these loops are left intact.

For most millinery velvet the loops are cut with a sharp tool to make what is called cut velvet.

The best quality of millinery velvet is silk Lyons. The name is derived from the city of Lyons, in France, where much of it is made. For this, first-grade silk stock, called the first spinning, is used.

The trade of velvet weaving is a closed trade handed down from father to son. Velvet manufacturers say that "a velvet loom improves with usage. It takes one hundred years to perfect one of the looms for the finest weaving." During the World War many of these looms were allowed to rust and ruin.

For cheaper velvets, called chap velvets, the second spinning is used. For this second grade of silk velvet, the knots, ravelings,

and ends of silk left from the first spinning are boiled and dissolved in a prepared solution and respun. A cheaper grade of cotton wool is used than for the Lyons velvet.

Tests of quality. Millinery velvet must have a close, soft nap which does not allow the wool, or back, to show through. It must be very light in weight but have body which holds it up. It should be silky in effect, showing light and shadow in such a way as to give an appearance of depth to black velvets and an effect of many shades of the same color to colored velvets. This effect is the result of the play of light on the deep silk pile.

Varieties. The varieties used for millinery are the only ones given.

Silk Lyons velvet is used for fitted and draped hats, both large and small. It is also used for handmade flowers and appliqué embroidery.

Chiffon or *uncut velvet* is really a dress fabric but is occasionally used for draped hats and often used for children's hats.

Chap velvet is used for less expensive hats. It has a higher lustre than Lyons velvet and is used for juniors' and children's hats.

Soleil or *panne* is Lyons velvet which is mirrored, or panned, by machine on the bias. To mirror on the bias gives a different gloss than to mirror on the straight of the material.

Paon velvet is chap velvet which has been mirrored on the straight. It has a high lustre but is a cheaper and a heavier-weight material than soleil.

Plush is woven of silk and wool. The weave is the same as for velvet. Only very lightweight plushes can be used for hats. Usually satin or taffeta is used in combination to keep the hat from being heavy or thick-looking.

2. Silks.

Tests of quality. Tests of quality for silks in millinery are the

same as those for dress silks. None of the very thin grades of silks and satins is good. Messaline satin or thin taffeta, for example, are not fit to use because they draw needle slits wherever a stitch is taken on a frame. Even with an interlining it is impossible to make a nice hat from them.

Varieties of silks. There are, nevertheless, a number of silks that can be used.

Crêpes. Crêpe is a silk fabric woven with a spongy surface. Raw silk or a silk and wool mixture is used for the weaving.

Georgette is a very thin crêpe of silk and wool. The texture, though thin, is very strong. It is used for summer hats, for transparent hats, for children's hats, for facings in straw and velvet hats, and for handmade flowers. Folds of georgette are used in embroidery designs.

Canton crêpe is a very heavy crêpe with a rough surface. It is used for summer and mid-season hats and for facings in velvet hats.

Crêpe de chine is a medium-weight, dull crêpe used for summer hats, for children's hats, and for facings in straw and velvet hats. For all-over-embroidery hats crêpe de chine makes a good foundation.

Taffeta is used for early spring hats, for combination with straw braids, and for facings in straw and velvet hats.

Satin should always have a high lustre for millinery use. It is used for fall and midwinter hats and in combination with velvet and straw, both as a drape and for facings.

Chiffon is a silk gauze-like material used for transparent hats and for shirred children's hats.

3. Cotton and linen fabrics.

Tests of quality are the same as for dress goods of the same type.

Varieties used for hats are many. Only the chief ones are listed.

Organdies, plain and embroidered, are used for lingerie and sport hats and for handmade flowers.

Linens, plain, figured, and embroidered, are used only for sport hats. The colors and textures are very lovely and lend themselves to fancy appliqué and stitchings.

Cretonnes, in figured designs in both cotton and linen, are used for sport and lingerie hats.

4. Laces.

Tests of quality may be limited to appearance. A tinsel lace must not have cotton threads and must not be too heavy. Black laces should be silk, as cotton fades to a dull green in the sun.

Varieties. There are three kinds of laces used in making hats.

Silk laces are used in black for transparent dress hats and for trimmings. Écru silk laces are used for lingerie dress hats.

Cotton laces are used in écru or in tints for trimmings on children's hats and for lingerie hats.

Tinsel laces are used in winter for making dress hats in transparent models, for draped turbans, and for cut-out appliqués on fabric hats.

5. Straw cloths. Straw cloths are made of various compositions, made to look like straw. *Candy cloth*, *visca cloth*, and *hair cloth* are the ones in greatest usage.

BRAIDS

1. Tests for quality. The tests for quality for braids are mainly those of appropriateness, of beauty, and of weight. For dress hats, smooth braids with a high lustre are most effective. Beauty of color and texture in braid always makes for a better looking hat. Weight is always a problem to be considered. A braid loosely

woven needs an interlining, so it must not be both loose and heavy.

2. Varieties. The braids used in millinery are of many kinds.

Chenille braid is a soft woolen braid woven in a variety of colors. It comes in lovely shades and is used for sport hats and for embroidery.

Yarn braids are used entirely for sport hats. Crowns at least may be sewn without a foundation.

Visca braid comes under the class of straw braids, but is really a composition. It has a high lustrous finish and is appropriate for both dress and street hats.

Celophane braid is made of a celluloid composition. It has much the same finish as patent leather and is used for dress and street hats. A combination of hair braid and celophane braid is very effective.

Hemp braid is woven from hemp straw and is used for sport and street hats and for facings in summer fabric hats. It comes in fine stripping $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{16}$ inch wide. This is used for machine-sewn hats and for embroidery. When used for hand-sewn hats the stripping is machine stitched in rows to form a braid of $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{7}{8}$ inch wide. It is then sewn by hand as any other braid is sewn.

Lisère braid is woven of fine wheat straw. It comes in stripping which is very narrow. This is sewn by machine for pressed-hat work. For hand-sewn hats the stripping is sewn up by machine to make a braid $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide. The finer qualities are very narrow.

Milan braid is woven from fine wheat straw. It derives its name from the city of Milan where it is extensively manufactured. It is used in the same way as hemp and lisère. See paragraphs above.

Hair is a transparent braid woven from a composition.

There are three qualities: (1) Swiss hair, the best quality; (2) German, a medium grade; and (3) domestic, a very inferior quality. The better grade has a fine hair, a good lustre, and body. The cheaper braids are shiny, sleazy, and have not much body.

Hair braid is used for transparent hats in summer and for combination with silk and taffeta on early spring hats. The latter are made on pressed frames.

BODY HATS

Body hats are hats that have brim and crown woven in one.

1. Process of manufacture. The process of manufacture varies with the kind of hat. Most of the better straws, such as panamas, leghorns, and tuscan straws, are hand-woven by native workers. Felts are made almost entirely by machinery, as are sewed bodies.

2. Tests of quality. *Straw bodies* vary in quality with the fineness of the straw used and with the expertness of the weaver.

Among *felts*, the better grades are fine and close and need little sizing. The cheaper felts are loose and coarse. A great deal of sizing is used to give them body.

3. Varieties. *Felts* are made of a wool or wool and cotton composition, which is subjected to beating, heating, and pressure processes. The felt composition is rolled out into sheets. Body hats are blocked from sheets of felt with specially made steel machines. Felt manufactures form extensive industries in France, Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium. The finest felts are made in France and Switzerland.

Beaver and *velour* hats are made of felts which use the fur of rabbit, beaver, and raccoon in their composition. For beaver finish fine furs are drawn through the felt by an electric process.

The finest grade of velours and felts is made in Switzerland.

Leghorn hats are woven by hand in Leghorn, Italy. A very fine, bearded-wheat straw is used. The town gives the hat its name. Straw weaving is the principal industry. The finer the straw and the smoother the weaving, the better the grade of hat. Children start with coarse weaving and work up to the better grade as they grow older. The straw is woven into braid strips and these are woven into hats.

Tuscan is a very finely woven, golden, natural-straw-colored braid, usually made in lace-like patterns. It is sometimes woven into body hats and sometimes into braids which are sewn into body hats.

Panama hats are woven by natives of Panama, China, Japan, Cuba, and many of the southern islands. A fine grass is used. The weaving is done under water. Women's hats are sized and pressed into various shapes. They are used mainly for sport hats.

Sewed bodies are straw braids sewed by machine to form soft hats mainly used for sport wear. Hemp braid is sewn with angora yarn or visca straw outlining the seams. Yarn braids are sewn with silk strips or folds. Felt is cut with a pinking machine and sewn like a braid. Silk folds are sewn up into soft body hats on a box machine which gives the effect of handwork. They make lovely sport hats.

TRIMMINGS

1. **Tests of quality.** Tests of quality vary with the trimming. Finish, shape, fabric, quality, and good construction are the most important points. Where special points are important, they are given with the article.

2. **Varieties.** *Feathers* may be roughly divided into two classes :

a. Those used in their natural state. Ostrich, pheasant, many

quills, and aigrettes are dyed but are often used without further change. The plumage of the male ostrich is of better quality than that of the female. The feathers of the male have larger, longer, and more glossy fiber.

b. Those made into fancies. Under this head come feathers that are mounted into wing shapes, and bird and fowl feathers that are glycerined, dyed, and mounted in fancy shapes and bands, such as peacock, ostrich, and goose.

Flowers. The best flowers are made of linen, fine satin, silk, and velvet.

Cheaper flowers are made from coarse cotton. Careful attention should be given to the color effects and glue construction, when choosing flowers.

Embroideries. Chinese and much peasant embroidery come already made and ready to be appliquéd on fabric and straw-cloth hats. Many fabric and cloth hats are trimmed with hand embroidery.

Ribbons. Ribbons are measured by the number of lignes in their width. For example, No. 9 ribbon has nine lignes, No. 12 has twelve lignes. Ribbon is used for tailored trimming, for binding, for finishes, and for handmade flowers and embroidery.

The varieties are grosgrain, satin, cire, tinsel, taffeta, silk fiber, and velvet. Each variety has hundreds of variations and patterns.

Ornaments. Ornaments come in many different shapes and forms. They are made of metal, celluloid, composition, glass, jet, and straw. They are used mainly on tailored hats and draped dress hats.

Pins. Pins are made of pearl, brass, gold, jade, platinum, rhinestone, jet, and glass. They are used on many different hats, usually as a finish.

Handwork. Handwork trims many street and dress hats. Under this heading come embroidery, braiding, beading, ribbon work, appliqué, and cutwork.

FRAMES

See Frames, Chapters I, II, and III.

1. **Process of manufacture.** See Frames, Chapters I, II, and III.

2. **Varieties.** The varieties used are *wire*, *willow*, *net*, and *buckram*.

FINDINGS

1. **Covering.** Covering or interlining is used under many satins, crêpes, silks, and straws.

Mull is a lightweight cotton material with a close weave and smooth finish.

Crinoline is used as an interlining where body is desired. It is also cut on the bias and used for frame bindings.

Cotton flannel is the best interlining for fabric hats and soft fabric crowns. It gives a much softer finish to the hat than a thinner covering.

2. **Wire.**

Steel wire is a heavy, sprung-steel wire covered or uncovered, which is used for edge wires on sailor brims or mushroom brims. It comes both in a round and square finish.

Cable wire is a fine steel wire covered with a padding and silk wrapping. It is used mainly for trimming braces and in machine work.

Brace wire is more used than any other one wire. It is a silk-wrapped, medium-fine wire which is very firm. It is used for wiring frames and for facing edges.

French wire is much like brace wire but is finer and not so stiff. It is largely used for wire-edge finishes and for many soft hats.

Lace wire is a very fine, silk-wrapped wire used for wiring lace, ribbon bows, and for very soft sport and children's hats.

Wire joiners are tiny steel cylinders used for joining the ends of steel-edge wires and facing wires. When wire ends are slipped into this joiner and the joiners are clamped with wire cutters, there is no chance of the wire ends slipping. A facing edge is much more finished looking when these are used.

3. Threads.

Geneva thread is a strong, smooth, cotton thread with a mercerized finish. It is well adapted to frame wiring and to all millinery sewing except finishes.

Sewing silk for millinery varies little from that used for dress-making. The best grade is much stronger and better to use because there are fewer breaks and fewer knots to hide.

Embroidery threads are *silk*, *tinsel*, *yarn*, and *fiber*. Usually they are heavier than those used for other embroideries.

4. Liquid preparations.

Millinery glue has a great deal of dryer in it because it is chiefly used on velvets and satins which must not mar.

Shellac is a finish used on *lisère* and other fine, shining straws to restore their lustre after the braid has been sized or soaked.

Gilt and *silver* preparations are used to tint flowers and to metalize wire frames for tinsel hats.

Colorite is used to dye straw hats and braids.

5. Needles.

Embroidery needles with long eyes rounded at the ends are best for millinery purposes. *Crewel* and *chenille* needles are good because the eyes make large holes so that the fabric is not torn by the embroidery thread.

For sewing braids ordinary milliner's needles (a long, strong needle with a large eye) Nos. 4, 5, and 6 are used.

For fine work as for edge finishes and slip-stitching, Nos. 7 and 8 milliner's needles are best.

For frame work Nos. 4 and 5 milliner's needles are best adapted.

For sewing fabric on a frame Nos. 4 and 5 milliner's needles are used.

For trimming no needle is so satisfactory as a No. 4 milliner's needle.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the points of importance in choosing millinery fabrics?
2. How is velvet woven?
3. How does Lyons velvet get its name?
4. What are the most undesirable qualities in straw braids?
5. Define body hats.
6. How and where are leghorns woven?
7. How are panamas woven?
8. What differentiates a beaver felt from other felts?
9. Name the kinds of wire used in millinery.
10. Name the needles used for embroidery, straw sewing, and edge finishes.