CHAPTER 6

MATERIALS—SPONGING—STEAMING—CUTTING—ETC.

Right Side of Material—Sponging—Steaming—Nap or Pile—Cutting Stripes, Plaids, Figures and
Diagonals—Cutting a Kimono Sleeve Garment—Handling Velvets—Silks and Chiffons

THE RIGHT SIDE. Most materials have a right and wrong side. In double-fold
materials the right side is folded inside to protect it from becoming shop-worn.
In materials where it is difficult to tell the right side from the wrong the selvage is
usually smoother on the right side than on the wrong side. In serge or diagonal weaves
the twills run downward from left to right on the right side of the material.

SPONGING. Almost all the wool materials should be sponged before they are used.
Sponging shrinks the material and if it were not done before the material was made up the
material would shrink the first damp day and ruin the appearance and possibly the usefulness
of the garment. Sponging also prevents the ordinary spotting from rain, drops of
water, etc. It is a necessary protection to your material.

There are certain wool materials such as velours, duvetyne, wool plush and materials of
similar character that should not be sponged. Very thin, open-meshed materials should
not be sponged either, but most wool materials should be sponged either at the store where
you buy them or at home. Most large shops will do the sponging for you, but it is easy to
do it yourself. If you are uncertain as to whether your material should be sponged or not
experiment with a small piece of it first. If it shrinks too much or changes its appearance
or color, do not sponge it.

For sponging you will need a large table and ironing blanket and a strip of heavy un-
bleached muslin the width of your material and one-half its length.

Before sponging your material cut off the selvage or clip it at intervals. Lay your
material face down on the table. Wet the muslin with cold water and wring it out.
Spread it out, pulling out all the wrinkles and lay it over half of your material. Fold
the other half of the material over it, roll the material and sponging cloth together in a
tight roll and let it lie overnight, covered with a piece of muslin and some newspapers so
that the moisture will be retained.

In the morning unroll the material, pressing it dry on the wrong side as you unroll it.
In sponging material of double width open it out its full width and sponge it in the same
way, using a double width of muslin for the shrinking process.

The heavier wash materials of the cotton and linen order should be shrunk in the same
way before they are made up.

Voiles, fine mulls, organdies, swisses, etc., are not to be shrunk, for the shrinking changes
them too much and they are not as pretty afterward.

STEAMING. Certain wool materials, such as velours and duvetyn should be steamed
instead of sponged. Use the same table, ironing blanket and unbleached muslin as for
sponging. Lay the material face down on the blanket as for sponging. Wet the muslin
and lay it over the material as for sponging. Hold an iron so that it just touches the
material enough to let the steam go through the material. Pass it over the muslin, but
do not let it rest on it or it will mark the material. It must just touch the muslin.

NAP OR PILE. Velvet, velveteen, panne velvet, corduroy and plush, and a few wool
materials like broadcloth have a distinct pile or nap. Except in the case of a kimono
sleeve garment the nap or pile must run the same way in every part of the garment. In
materials with a pile such as velvet, velveteen, corduroy or plush, the material must be
used with the pile running up so that the nap will fall out and show the full richness and
depth of color. If the pile ran down it would flatten down and lose its appearance of thickness and depth.

With panne velvet in which the pile is purposely flattened the pile should run down. You can tell which is up and which is down by running your hand across the material. When the material feels rough the pile is running up, and when it feels smooth under your hand it is running down.

Some velvets have straight pile with no up or down. They can be cut either way.

In broadcloth the nap must run down, otherwise it will roughen up, become woolly and wear badly.

In all materials with a nap or pile the material takes the light one way with the pile running down, and another way with the pile running up, so that if all parts of the garment were not cut with the pile running the same way the garment would look as though it were made from two shades of the same material.

In kimono sleeve garments that are cut without a seam on the shoulder or in one piece it is impossible to have the nap or pile run the same way at the front and back. Get the best effect possible at the front, the back is less noticeable. In the pile fabrics let the pile run up in the front, in broadcloth and panne velvet have the pile run down in the front.

CUTTING STRIPES AND PLAIDS. Stripes, plaids and figured materials require more care in cutting than plain materials.

AN IRREGULAR PLAID can rarely be used on the bias, consequently the ways of making it up are limited. A dress made of irregular plaid requires more material than one made of regular plaid. The darkest stripes should run across the bottom with the lighter tones up, as the shading in this direction is better.

It must always be borne in mind throughout the cutting, that all pieces of the pattern must be placed with the upper part in the same direction on the material. An amateur had better use an even plaid.

In the beginning decide which stripe, plaid or figure is best for the center of the front and back.

In making a waist of striped or plaid material the stripes or plaids must match. It is advisable to cut and fit your waist lining first, if you are using one. Then if alterations were made you can alter the pattern of the outside waist before cutting your material. If you altered it afterward the alteration would spoil your arrangement of the stripe or plaid.

A plaid waist should be cut with as few pieces as possible. It can be made either on the straight or the bias of the material. Before you cut out your material decide which stripe, plaid or figure will look best at the center front and center back. In considering the position of the lines of the stripes and plaids you must consider the crosswise as well as the lengthwise lines of the material so that it will look well on the figure. In a plaid waist match the heavy lines of the plaid where the waist is joined at the underarm seam. (Ill. 61.) Arrange the plaids
so that when the waist is closed the closing will not break the perfect succession of the plaids. The crosswise plaids in front must be on a line with the plaid in back so that when the underarm seam is joined the plaids will match perfectly. (Ill. 61.)

When making a waist of striped material, if the stripes of the material are cut bias or if the waist itself is cut on the bias, follow the same rules given in the paragraphs above for cutting the plaids.

CUTTING A SKIRT OF PLAID. In cutting a gored skirt of plaid material decide on the line or stripe that will look best at the center front. After the front is cut, lay it on your cutting table and place the uncut material beside it with the lengthwise and crosswise stripes matching. (Ill. 62.) Place the pattern of the side gore on the material, matching the front, and cut it.

Matching a plaid or stripe in this way frequently means wasting some of your material. That is unavoidable, however, for the plaid or figure must match even if the pattern has to be moved the width of a plaid or figure before the correct position is found. Cut each gore of the skirt in the same way so that the stripes and plaids will match in every gore.

Illustration 62 shows a skirt cut of plaid material. In this case the uncut material had to be lifted up in order to match the crosswise plaid, making it necessary to waste some of the material at the top. (Ill. 62.) This happens so frequently in cutting plaids that you must buy extra material for a plaid skirt or dress.

Striped, checked and plaid materials are very good-looking in a two-piece circular skirt with a bias seam down the front. (Ill. 63.) The pattern will give you explicit directions for cutting it in plaid or striped materials, so that you will get the proper bias at the seam. Follow the directions carefully.

In cutting a circular skirt of plaid or striped material cut one side first and then remove the pattern. Lay the piece that you have cut upon the material and match the plaid or stripes at all points before cutting other half of the skirt. When the skirt is put together the prominent lines of the plaids or stripes should have a mitered effect as shown in Illustration 63 and Illustration 64.
FIGURES AND FLOWERS. Materials with figures and flowers must also be matched carefully at the seams. Usually one line of flowers runs up and the next line down, but when they all run the same way you must decide whether you want them to run up or down in your dress and use them in the same position in every piece. Otherwise your dress will have a very peculiar effect. In cutting a skirt, etc., where several breadths are joined together it is important that the pattern or figures should match at the seams. This can not always be done by simply joining breadths at the selvedge. It will sometimes be necessary to lap the second breadth over the first, as shown in Illustration 65, to bring the corresponding figures together at the seam. Turn under the edge of the second breadth and pin it in the correct position. Join the other breadths in the same way for both sides of the skirt. Slip-stitch the breadths together from the outside by slipping the needle along inside the fold edge of the upper breadth and then taking a stitch in the under breadth as shown in Illustration 66. When the skirt is turned inside out it will be found that the slip-stitching forms a basting of the joining. It is usually better to cut off the selvedge, for the material will give more if the selvedge is cut.

In cutting a gored skirt if there is a decided figure in the material, fold the front breadth lengthwise through the center of the figure so that the design will balance and not make the skirt look one-sided.

If the skirt has no seam at the front lay the front edge of the pattern even with the fold and cut the gore. Place the pattern of the first gore upon the second gore and mark the design of the material upon the pattern. Lay this second gore pattern on the material so that the figures marked on the pattern will match those on the material. Cut each gore as directed here.

CUTTING DIAGONALS. Diagonals should not be cut with two bias edges meeting as the lines will come together at entirely different angles. (See Illustration 68.) This difficulty can be overcome if you have wide enough material. A diagonal rarely has a perceptible nap and the lengthwise and crosswise of the material are so alike that there is no dissimilarity either in appearance or in wearing qualities between them. So if you want the diagonal to run the same way in both sides of your garment cut one-half lengthwise of the material and the other half crosswise. (Ill. 67.) Before doing so you must make certain that there is no perceptible difference in color and shading between the crosswise and lengthwise of your material. Take it to a strong light and turn a bit of it at right angles to itself. This brings the lengthwise and crosswise thread in the same position they will take in the garment and you can easily tell if it is safe to cut your material that way or not.

Each half of the garment will have to be cut separately and neither the front nor the back can be cut on a fold of the goods.

First cut one-half of the garment lengthwise of the material, then lay this half on the material crosswise with the right sides together and the diagonals of each piece exactly over each other, and running exactly in the same direction. (Ill. 67.)
CUTTING A KIMONO SLEEVE GARMENT. Often in cutting a garment with kimono sleeves the material will not be wide enough to cut the pattern without piecing. This piecing seam can be made to appear part of the design by trimming it to match the trimming of the garment. The seam can be hemstitched, fancy-stitched, piped, machine-stitched, and, in the case of thin materials, trimmed with lace insertion, etc., so that the seam will really add to the effectiveness of the sleeve.

HANDLING VELVETS, SILKS AND CHIFFONS. In using velvets, plusses, corduroy, or silk be very careful about using pins. Use fine steel pins or needles, so as to mark the material as little as possible. Ordinary pins make holes in silks and chiffons and scar velvets, plusses, etc.

A fine needle and silk thread should be used in basting velvets, etc., and also in basting silks, for cotton thread leaves a mark.

When stitching velvets, plusses and corduroy, loosen the tension on the machine and lighten the pressure of the presser foot by holding the finger under the presser bar lifter.

Clip your bastings every four or five inches or even closer when you are ready to take them out. Pulling long basting threads from silks, velvets or fine thin materials is likely to make a bad mark or tear the material.

In stitching sheer materials like chiffon, silk crêpe, crêpe de Chine, etc., that are likely to pucker while the stitching is being done place a narrow strip of tissue-paper under the material where you are going to stitch it. After it is stitched tear the paper away.

When using materials that fray easily allow an extra quarter of an inch on all ordinary three-eighths of an inch seam edges. This extra one-quarter of an inch allowance must not be overlooked when you baste up your garment. No extra allowance is necessary on the outlet seams. (Marked by large single perforations.) As soon as you have cut out the garment overcast the armhole and neck edges.

In silk materials like taffeta, crêpe de Chine, charmeuse, satin and materials of similar character the selvedge edges are often used as a finish. Of course this is only possible when the edge of the pattern is straight as in the case of a straight-edged tunic, straight-edged flounce, etc.