CHAPTER FIVE:

THE OFF THE FACE HAT

Hats of this type are known either as “upsweeps” or “sidesweeps”. As their names imply, each has a portion of the brim turned up off the face, the brim of the “upsweep” being turned up off the forehead to an equal distance on either side and that of the “sidesweep”, obviously, turned up at the side—the left-hand side, of course. Almost the same procedure is involved in making either the upsweep or the sidesweep; the fact that the turned-up, or upswept, portion of the brim is in a slightly different position relative to the front mark makes but little difference. Although there is practically no limit to the extent to which the brim of either of these styles may be varied, the beginner is advised not to be too ambitious with the first effort. The hat which follows, therefore, is only a relatively modest example of the upsweep.

THE UPSWEEP. The upsweep, like the sailor, is moulded on a sparterie brim shape and, if you have already made the sailor brim shape in sparterie, described in Chapter Four, the practice derived therefrom will serve you in good stead when making the brim shape for this hat. Moulding the shape will demand the utmost patience and, for a successful result, skill in manipulating sparterie and judgment for line and shape will be tested to the full.

Cut a headband on the bias out of a sparterie sheet: this should be 22 in. long, or slightly more or less as required, and 1½ in. wide (fig. 18). Join the back with the muslin-faced side
facing outwards and mark the front, back, left and right sides. The front of this headband has to be shaped so that its width from left and right sides gradually decreases towards the centre. From a height of 3\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. from the bottom edge of the headband on the centre mark, pencil a line tapering gradually downwards so that it reaches the bottom edge of the headband at the left side mark. Repeat for the right side, remove the headband from the block and cut along the pencilled line. Replace the headband on the block.

The headband must now be made to take the shape of the upsweep. Push the centre upwards about 1 in., pin it in place, and ease the sides down into the required position and secure them in place with drawing pins. Take great care to pin the bottom edge into a shapely, symmetrical curve; if you are dissatisfied with the first effort, remove the pins and adjust the line of the curve where necessary (fig. 19).

Damp the shaped portion of the headband with a cloth and press the headband with a hot iron to shrink away the fullness caused by shaping and to make it fit flush against the block. Ironing will also immediately dry out the slight dampness, so that the headband may be unpinned and removed from the block at once. Wire the top and bottom edges of the headband, remembering to run the wire between the thumb and finger of one hand in a circular movement to remove any kinks and to assist in forming a good shape.

Cut a strip of sparterie on the bias and about 4 in. in width completely through a sparterie sheet, and wet it by dabbing it with a cloth soaked in water. Whilst this sparterie strip must be thoroughly wetted, do not soak it to such an extent that the muslin facing is loosened from the sparterie backing. Grasp each end of one edge and pull until the weave of the sparterie ceases to “give”. The wavy line which develops on the other edge may be ignored for the time being.

This strip, which forms the brim piece, must be pinned to the headband. The stretched edge will form the outline of the brim and the other, fluted, edge, has to be eased into the headband. Find the centre of the strip and pin it (muslin-faced side outwards), to the inside of the front mark of the headband, placing the pin horizontally. Working from the front around one side to the back, pin the brim piece inside the
Fig. 18. Plan of upsweep brim piece and headband in sparterie

Fig. 19. Headband pinned to block; side & front views

A. Pinning upsweep brim piece to headband

B. Turned up brim showing bevel from side view
headband, allowing plenty of fullness between each pin and pulling this fullness away towards the other, outer, edge of the brim as you go. Allow a fairly generous fold between each pin; the fullness will pull away quite easily. The success of the turned-up brim depends entirely on sufficient allowance being made between the pins; therefore do not skimp, and do not drag the brim piece into the headband. Repeat for the other side (fig. 20A).

Fit the work on the crown block, pinning the headband into position with drawing pins at the front, back and at the left and right sides. For this purpose the crown block must be placed on a block stand to allow room for manipulation. Take hold of the brim piece and turn it up in the front, so that it stands slightly away from the headband. If the edge of the upsweep recedes too sharply, insufficient fullness is the cause. It will be of no avail to attempt to right this state of affairs by stretching, since this edge has already been fully stretched and will fray and split if any further strain is imposed on it. If necessary, therefore, remove the work from the block and re-pin the brim into the headband, allowing more fullness between each pin for pulling out into the brim piece. Whilst the material is still damp, mould the brim piece into the required shape. The back requires no moulding; just slightly stretch the edge to prevent it from drooping. The upsweep in the front should be bevelled; avoid making a sharp line where the sparterie turns. Pin together the over-laps at the back and cut off the surplus sparterie. Smooth away all irregularities in the brim with a hot iron and pressing pad, taking care to preserve the smooth curved fold at the front. This will also dry out any remaining dampness.

Mark the front, pencil the actual outline of the edge of the brim, and cut right round the pencilled line. When pencilling the shape remember that too wide a brim at the back will leave very little room for head movement, and that the hat, when worn, may be jolted out of position by the back of the brim touching the neck. Where a fairly wide brim at the back is required (provided, of course, that such a brim is consistent with the rest of the shape), stretch the edge; this will alter its angle sufficiently to clear the neck (fig. 20B).

Remove the shape from the block, stitch the headband and
brim together, and wire the brim edge on the inside. Reinforce
the shape with supports made from odd pieces of sparterie,
fitting them to the brim shape as described in Chapter Four.
Do not, however, fit them to the under-brim as the blocking
surface will, on the upsweep, be on the reverse side. They
should therefore be fitted on the top of the brim shape. If
difficulty is experienced in supporting the brim as turned up,
it may, if quite dry, be turned gently down. If this expedient
is adopted the work must be handled lightly and the brim
turned back again so that each support can take its proper
shape. Remember also that damping and stretching assists the
fitting of the pieces. Remove one at a time, wire it and re-pin
it in place. When they have all been wired, stitch them into
place and remove the pins. Stitch the wired supports into place
with the upsweep in the correct position. Do not try to make
this task easier by turning the brim down in front. It can, of
course be done this way, but only at the expense of losing the
line of the brim.

Heavily coat the supported surface of the brim shape with
Spartalac and leave it until thoroughly dry. Cover the under-
brim with lawn cut on the bias to make a smooth blocking
surface, renew the front and back marks and the shape is
ready for blocking the straw hood.

A finely-woven coarse straw is the easiest and cheapest type
for the beginner to use, and the method of blocking is the same
as that employed with a felt capeline, with the exception that
the blocking, in this instance, is carried out on the reverse
side of the brim, i.e., the under-brim.

Present the straw hood to the brim-shape with the inside of
its crown facing towards the under-brim. If the straw has a
circular weave the hood must be turned into such a position
as will ensure that the finishing point of the weave comes
exactly on the back mark of the brim shape. Make a ¼ in.
turning on the outside edge of the straw brim, pin one half
to the brim shape from front to back on the outside edge and
then repeat for the other side (fig. 21). To make the fullness
which has been brought to the back stand up in a tight fold,
secure it with a pin at each side. The weave of coarse straw is
easily spoiled by cutting and any variation in the width of the
turning cannot be rectified without risk of spoiling the hood;
therefore make sure that the turning is of an absolutely uniform width.

Having pinned the entire outside edge, tack all around, using back stitch, and matching brim to brim exactly. Remove the pins. Push the crown of the hood right through the hole surrounded by the headband, and spread the fullness at the sides as evenly as possible. Pin the hood to the brim-shape entirely around the headband just above the headline, placing the pins vertically, not horizontally (fig. 22). Tack all round the head line and remove the pins.

Completely sever the brim from the crown in the following manner. Commencing from one side of the fullness at the back of the under-brim, cut the straw, allowing a margin for turning of at least 1 in., along one side of the fold and around the headline on the inside and finish off at the other side of the fold. The margin of 1 in. must be maintained throughout the entire cut. Block the shape by pressing the straw brim, a portion at a time, with a hot iron, pressing pad and damp cloth until all the fullness has disappeared. Straw requires intensive pressing because of its resilient nature, therefore block thoroughly.

Allow the brim to dry, then coat it lightly with straw stiffener to keep the weave intact. Again allow to dry. Remove the tack lines round the edge of brim and headline and, whilst the brim is still on the block, pin together the back join at brim level. Sew a tack mark in the front, lift the work off the block, tack the back join and remove the pins. Release the ½ in. brim edge turning at each side of the back join sufficiently to allow the back join to be machined together along the tack line. If no machine is available make the back join by hand, using close back-stitches. Open the turnings and press them down with a hot iron and damp cloth. Make a corded seam at ½ in. distance from each side of the back join (fig. 23).

As a precaution against the straw fraying, machine one row just above and right around the headline. Carefully cut the turnings away from the back join almost to the machined line. Open the ½ in. turning of the brim edge and lay a length of lace wire in the fold around the entire circumference, with a 2 in. overlap at the back. Secure the wire in position by lock-stitching it to the straw, picking up only a small portion of the
Figs. 21-22
Straw hood pinned
to brim shape and interior
view showing pinned headline

Fig. 23
Corded seam

Fig. 24
Slip-stitching

Fig. 25. The Off The Face

Fig. 26. The Sidesweep
straw underneath the wire with each stitch to avoid, as far as possible, the risk of the stitches showing on the right side. Replace the turning and press it flat, using a damp cloth. Replace the work on the brim shape.

Lightly pin it into position—there is now no need to tack since the work has been thoroughly blocked—and give a final press with a hot iron and damp cloth. When it is thoroughly dry and whilst still on the shape (never attempt to stiffen a straw whilst it is even only slightly damp), give the completed shape a fairly liberal application of straw stiffener. The amount to be applied varies with the type of straw, but it will be found, in practice, that coarse straws require a heavier application of stiffener than the finely woven varieties. Leave the brim to dry thoroughly. Drying will take about half hour or so, but if the work is wanted quickly it may be dried in an oven. Do not, however, expose it to a naked flame. Whilst the brim is drying the straw crown must be blocked. Any crown shape may be used, but the dome shape is especially recommended as the crowns of upsweeps are usually very shallow. This shape has the additional advantage over other shapes of allowing more scope for the introduction of such variations as pleats and folds in the crown.

Having chosen the block, pull the straw crown over it and secure with drawing pins around the base. Press with a wet cloth and a hot iron to shrink away the fullness in the crown, keeping the cloth wet whilst pressing to retain the freshness of the straw. Coarse straws in particular quickly deteriorate in appearance if they are pressed without moisture. Press, re-pin, and press again until all the fullness has disappeared.

The measurements of the crown must now be determined preparatory to cutting it to size and joining it to the brim. These will be governed by the size and shape of the head to be fitted, and by the position on the head in which the hat is to be worn. If this is a first attempt at an upsweep use, for measurement purposes, another hat which fits the head closely. Measure its crown from front to back and side to side. The dimensions of the average crown, for a hat of a normal fitting, are 11 in. from front to back (called the depth), and 10½ in. from side to side, and it is assumed that these dimensions will be used. The crown of the upsweep is always worn deeper
at the back than the front, therefore its centre is nearer the front than the back. Having sewn a tack mark on the front of the straw crown, push a pin perpendicularly through its natural centre, i.e., the point at which the weave begins, measure 5 in. from centre to front and 6 in. from centre to back, and mark each distance with a pin inserted horizontally. Using the same method, mark the side to side distances at $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. from the centre pin. Sew a tack line at the marked depth, inserting, if required, further pins as additional guides, roughly shaping the contour of the upsweep across the front between the side to side marks. Give the crown a coating of straw stiffener and leave it to dry.

When it is thoroughly dry, lift it off the block and cut away the surplus straw from a depth of 1 in. below the tack line. Fold the 1 in. turning inside the crown and pin it in position all around. Remove the brim from its shape and lightly pin crown to brim, with the front tack marks matching. The base of the crown should meet the headline of the brim around its entire circumference; if the front curve on the crown is faulty in shape, adjust the turning accordingly. Before stitching brim and crown together, the hat should be tried on with a view to making any final adjustments to the crown which may be considered necessary.

The method of joining brim to crown in straw differs from the method used in joining felt. When working with straw, especially coarse straw, its tendency to fray at cut edges is an ever-present difficulty. As the student will have noted, straw should always be turned at a cut edge; and the turning of the crown must accordingly be retained. When brim and crown are joined therefore, they should not be hemmed, they should be slip-stitched.

Use a No. 7 millinery needle and Sylko to match. Starting at the back, push the needle through the brim from the inside so that it emerges directly on the headline and immediately beneath the edge of the crown. The needle should be close enough to the crown’s edge as to actually touch it. Pull the thread right through and, at a point in the crown exactly opposite, “slip” the needle in the centre of the folded turning. Push the needle along the fold about $\frac{3}{8}$ in., bring its point out slightly underneath the fold, pick up about $\frac{1}{8}$ in. of the brim in
a parallel line and in the same direction, and complete the stitch by drawing the thread through (fig. 24). Continue slip-stitching around the entire headline to the back and finish off securely on the inside of the crown. Reduce the width of the turnings of both brim and crown to $\frac{1}{2}$ in. by trimming with the scissors.

Sew in a headlining of $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to 1 in. petersham ribbon to match. Fit the crown block to a stand and place the hat over the block at the angle at which it is intended to be worn. First press the base of the crown all round to finish off the joining of brim to crown and to smooth the ribbon headlining, then press the brim very lightly, holding a pressing pad at the back for support. The hat is now ready for trimming.

**THE SIDESWEEP.** From the milliner’s point of view there is no more in making a sidesweep than in making an upsweep; each requires a certain amount of skill in making the sparterie brim shape, particularly at the supporting stage, and in the consequent cutting, fitting, moulding, pressing and stitching. The sidesweep, however, makes a further demand on its maker. Whereas the upsweep brim is symmetrical in form in so far as its shape from the front to left side is identical with that from front to right side, the upswept part of the sidesweep brim is rarely, if ever, symmetrical in shape: and its correct positioning, relative to the remainder of the brim, is dependent solely upon good judgment.

It will be remembered that the primary shaping of the upsweep headband consisted only of trimming off a narrow piece at an equal distance on either side of the front mark. The shaping of the sidesweep headband extends from a point about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. or more from the back mark on the left side to a point about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. past the front mark towards the right side. Cut and join the headband to size and pin it over the dome-shaped crown block, tilted up on the left side at the angle at which the hat is to be worn. Mark the starting and finishing points as described above and then mark the maximum height of the part to be shaped at a point roughly equidistant between the front and left side marks. Commencing from this point, pencil a line which tapers down to the edge and finishes past the front mark. Draw the remainder of the curve from the same point
around to the finishing point near the back mark. Cut along the pencil line. The piece trimmed off will not be symmetrical in shape as the widest part of the strip is off centre; in other words, the shaping is accentuated between the left side and the front. (Keep this in mind when establishing the line of the brim on the block.)

Push the headband about 1 in. up towards the top of the block and pin it there in a smooth flowing curve, the highest point of which is midway between the front and the left side. Where it has been shaped on the lower edge the headband will tend to stand out from the block; press it with a hot iron, and, if necessary, a slightly damped cloth to persuade it into a good shape. Remove the headband from the block and wire both edges.

Cut the brim piece on the bias and mould it into the headband, using exactly the same method as that used when moulding the upsweep brim. It is emphasized that although the centre of the sidesweep is situated at a point just behind the left temple, and the brim piece shaped accordingly, the actual centre of the brim piece must be matched to the front mark of the headband, and the brim itself moulded from either side of this mark around to the back.

Before removing the brim shape from the crown block, press it with a hot iron and pressing pad to remove any wrinkles and to give it a smooth surface. In order to avoid making a sharply-defined fold, take particular care when pressing the upswept portion; always support, with the pad, the part which is being pressed. Mark the outline of the brim with a pencilled line and cut away the surplus material, leaving a margin of about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. above the line.

Remove the shape from the block, and, again using the same method as for the upsweep, stitch the headband to the brim, wire the brim edge on the upper (or inner) side, and reinforce the brim shape with wired supports. Heavily coat it with Spartalac, and, when thoroughly dry, finish off by covering the under (or outer) brim with a strip of lawn or muslin cut on the bias. Renew the front and back marks. Block the straw hood in exactly the same way as the upsweep, and the hat is ready for trimming.

The off the face hat may suitably be trimmed with many sorts
of ribbon, flowers in clusters and sprays, large single flowers, net, tulle, veiling and artificial fruit. These may be used as single trimmings or in such combinations as ribbon velvet with artificial cherries, and grapes or red currants with veiling of contrasting hue. When choosing the trimming, bear in mind that this type of hat, the upsweep perhaps more than the sidesweep, tends to add to the height of its wearer. Obviously a tall person should endeavour to select a trimming which can be arranged at the side or across the back of the hat. If, however, increased height is desired, it is equally obvious that the trimming should be arranged either on the upsweep or the sidesweep as the case may be.

The finished upsweep, as illustrated (fig. 25), is trimmed, quite simply, with large artificial cabbage roses and the sidesweep (fig. 26) has a large chou of striped taffeta.