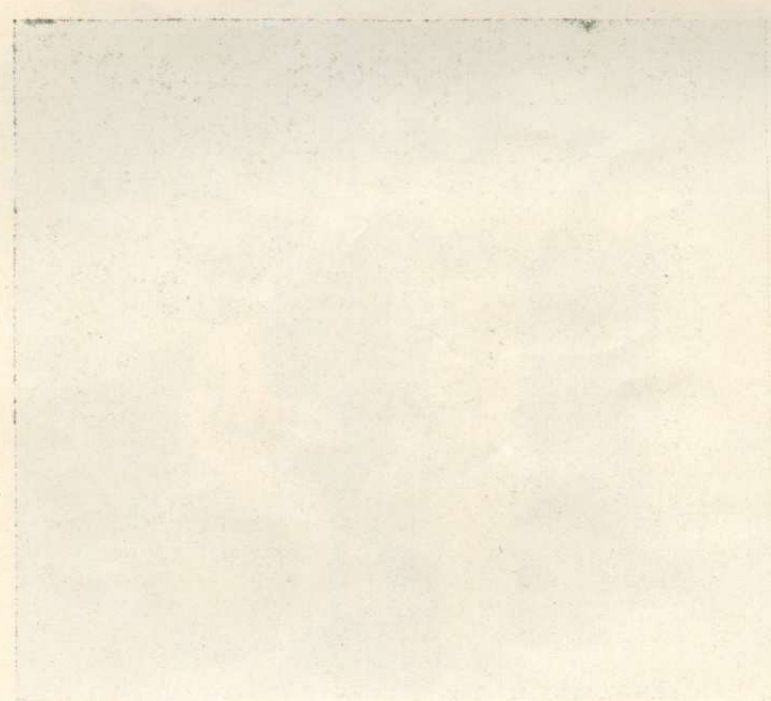# PLANNING THE COSTUME

Some Made Over Dresses

IOWA STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND MECHANIC ARTS

Agricultural Extension Department

R. K. Bliss, Director

Ames, Iowa

PLANNING THE COSTUME*

Adapted from various sources, by Mary B. Richardson.

In planning a costume it is first necessary to study the figure of the person for whom the costume is designed. The Ancient Greeks had the ideal of the perfect female figure, as shown in their statues. In the picture of the Greek statue of Venus, notice carefully the beautiful proportion of bust, waist and hips and the graceful curves (fig. 1). This gives a standard with which to compare the figure for which the costume is being designed.

STUDY OF THE FIGURE

After studying the figure and discovering where it is out of proportion or defective, plan by skillful arrangement of line, form and color to conceal or correct the defects and to bring out all the best lines and proportions of the figure as well as the coloring of the face.

The first question in regard to a gown is, does it bring out in the greatest degree possible, the best features of the wearer? If the costume is well planned it will not be said "What a beautiful gown," but "What a beautiful woman." A gown may be a beautiful one in itself, but may be so striking in color and design as to assert itself above the wearer. A woman of strong characteristics with dark hair and eyes and high color may wear a somewhat striking costume and still keep it in the subordinate place to which it belongs while the same gown worn by a woman with colorless hair, dull eyes, little coloring and an insignificant figure would cause the wearer to accept a place secondary to that occupied by the gown, or to sink into insignificance. In order to be sure that the gown may keep its proper place, it must be harmonious and restful in color and edsign.

RELATION

Every part of the costume must be related and the whole related and subordinated to the wearer. No costume that violates this principle can be successful. The subordination of the costume to the wearer and the harmonious relation of the whole must be the result of the study of art principles. Costume designing is an art problem. It is the fine relation of form, lines, light and dark, and color that gives the artistic costume.

*Note. The dresses shown in these illustrations were made by the girls in the Home Economics Department of Iowa State College.

When these are not well related, the commonplace costume so often seen is the result.

GENERAL OUTLINE

The first attention should be given to the general outline or silhouette of the figure as this is observed by a greater number of people than are the lines within the costume. In judging this general outline, compare the outlines with the lines of the figure. While it is not desirable that the lines of the figure be reproduced, yet the lines of the costume should be in harmony with and not contradict or falsify them. The lines should flow the one into the other and not present a series of jerks and angles. The costume should conceal rather than accentuate defects. For instance, a long, thin neck seems more thin if a low neck gown is worn, while a short, thick neck is emphasized by a gown with a high collar. Stripes tend to increase the height of the figure, hence should not be worn by very tall, thin figures, while checks or plaids seem to decrease the height and should not be worn by short figures inclined to be stout. Short skirts apparently decrease the height while long skirts increase it.

BALANCE

The outline of the figure

Fig. 1.—Venus of Milo.

should be well balanced. This can only be done by studying the individual figure. As figures differ in their proportions the matter of balance becomes an individual problem. If a short, close fitting skirt is worn, a small hat worn with it usually presents a better outline than does a larger one because there is not width enough at the bottom of the skirt to balance the width of the hat. The large hat is usually better when worn with the long, full skirt.

When selecting a hat its becomingness to the figure as well as to the face should be considered. To test this it should be selected when wearing the gown for which it is intended and when standing a little distance from a long mirror so the entire figure can be viewed. The hat should appear well balanced on the head, and also in the placing of trimmings. If the trimming is massed on one side the other side should have extra width or turn of brim to preserve the balance.

LINES OF THE COSTUME

A good design in costume as in any design is ''the orderly arrangement of lines and masses for the sake of decorative effect.''

The surface of the gown is broken into spaces by lines produced by bands of trimmings, rows of buttons, seams, pockets etc. For good results there must be a general plan carried out thru the entire costume so that there is an orderly arrangement to these lines and spaces. Trimming arranged in points or scallops on the skirt, horizontally on sleeves and in curves on the yoke shows no design and is confusing and unpleasant to the eye.

If trimming is used on the gown in the form of bands, it is better to place it horizontally on skirt and sleeves with a belt at the waist and in the form of a square at the neck with, perhaps, bands running from shoulders to a little below waist line. This gives a harmony that is becoming and pleasant to the eye.

If diagonal lines or curves are desired they should be used uniformly thruout the gown. The trimming on the skirt should be arranged in the form of points, while on the sleeves it may be arranged diagonally. Cuffs with lines sloping toward the wrist on the inside of the arm, and a pointed collar may be used. The belt should not be emphasized in this costume.

To obtain the greatest effect of height, the longest possible vertical line should be arranged to pass thru the center of the figure. Such a line may consist of a narrow vest and under skirt of different material extending the full length of the

figure. With such an arrangement is worn a small hat with a vertical or slightly oblique bow or feather in the front.

To broaden the figure, make prominent the outside of sleeves by large cuffs of different material and the shoulders and sides of the skirt by such arrangement of trimming, that the eye is carried across the figure instead of up and down.

Fig. 2.—Afternoon dresses and hat illustrating balance in the selection of hat and gown.

MATERIALS

The material should be selected with reference to the individuality of the wearer, the purpose for which the costume is intended and the design of costume. For instance, a material suited for a plain tailored costume is wholly unsuitable for a costume with draperies and a general fluffy appearance.

Materials with a slightly rough or dull surface are better for stout figures and are more generally becoming than materials with a smooth, shining finish such as satin. The latter reflects the light and makes the figure seem larger and is very trying to both figure and complexion.

COLOR

The white light of the sun is made up of a number of color elements, as is shown in the rainbow or by passing a ray of sunshine thru a prism. When the ray passes thru the prism it becomes decomposed or separated and if the colors are thrown upon a white screen or wall, among the colors will be seen a pure blue, a pure red and a pure yellow. These colors must be kept in mind as standards with which to compare others when thinking color.

Tho the prismatic colors before separation constituted the white light of the sun, it must be remembered that these are mere spectrum colors—vision colors—and in actual work with pigments and colored materials any attempt at blending or mixing colors results not in producing white but a very dark gray. See neutral gray in center of circle in color chart.)

There are three essential qualities in every color—hue, value and intensity.

Hue is simply a synonym for color.

Value or tone is the degree of light or dark in the color.

Intensity is the purity of color.

A shade of color is produced by the addition of black to the original color.

A tint is produced by the addition of white to the original color.

Colors are neutralized or grayed to produce more subdued and softer tones or values by adding gray to the colors. Such colors are said to be grayed. This is shown by the colors in the inner circle of the chart.

PRIMARY COLORS

Yellow, red and blue are known as the three primary colors. From these three colors are derived all the other colors with their varying tones and shades. The primary colors are marked "p" on the chart.

SECONDARY COLORS

By observing the color chart it is seen that green is obtained by combining blue and yellow. Yellow and red when combined give orange, and red and blue give violet. The colors green, orange and violet are known as binary or secondry colors, and are marked "b" on the chart. These colors may vary in tone —as if more yellow is added to the green it gives a yellow green, if more blue is added a blue green is obtained and so on with all the colors. This is shown by the position of these colors in the circle. Notice that yellow green is between yellow and green, blue green between blue and green and so on.

COMPLEMENTS

As the three primary colors are the foundation for all other colors, they are arranged in the circle in the positions shown above and the color found directly opposite in the circle is known as the complement of that color. Thus red is the complement of green. As green is made up of blue and yellow, (two of the primary colors) when the complement red is associated with it, the three primary colors are present. Orange, which is a combination of yellow and red, is found opposite and is the complement of blue; while violet, a combination of red and blue and the complement of yellow, is found opposite to yellow in the circle.

Any color with its complement represents the three primary colors. This is shown by the following outline:

COLOR		COMPLEMENT
Green	{ Blue { Yellow	Red
Orange	{ Yellow { Red	Blue
Violet	{ Red { Blue	Yellow

The three primary colors have nothing in common with each other and the eye demands the presence of the three colors. The warm or advancing colors are those having yellow or red predominating, as yellow green, yellow, yellow orange, orange, red orange, red, and red violet. They are called warm colors because they are associated with the sun and fire. They are spoken of as advancing colors because they arouse the nerve sense quickly, hence seem to meet one. They are found on the left of the color chart.

The cool or receding colors are blue, and the colors in which blue predominates as blue green, green, violet and blue violet.

A COLOR CHART

Yellow—P.

Yellow-Orange

Yellow-Green

Orange—B

Gray-Yellow

Green—B

Gray-Orange

Gray-Green

Red-Orange

Neutral Gray

Blue-Green

Gray-Red

Gray-Blue

Red—P.

Gray-Violet

Blue—P.

Red-Violet

Blue-Violet

Violet—B

COLORS IN FULL INTENSITY
AND GRAYED COLORS

P indicates Primary Colors.
B indicates Binary Colors.

They are called cool colors because of their association with water, ice and the sky and are spoken of as receding colors because they do not arouse the nerve sense quickly, also because they are associated with the blue of the distant sky and the haze of the distance. These are found on the right of the color chart.

HARMONY OF COLORS

There are two kinds of color harmony—the harmony of analogy and the harmony of contrast.

The harmony of analogy consists of the harmony formed by use of the adjacent colors in the circle.

The harmony of contrast consists of the harmony of the complimentary contrasting colors or those colors directly opposite in the circle as red and green. The eye demands the presence of the three primary colors, hence the pleasing effects of harmonies of contrast.

Yellow and red have nothing in common when used together and present too sharp a contrast to be pleasing unless they are gradually blended by the use of orange. For example, the use of yellow, yellow organe, orange, red orange and red gives a gradual blending of the two colors that produces a harmony of analogy that is very pleasing.

Red, green and blue may be combined by starting with crimson (which is red with a tinge of blue) and combining the colors in the following sequence: Crimson, red, scarlet, orange, yellow, greenish yellow, bluish green, blue, violet and with added red, come back to crimson again. With this arrangement each color has something in common with the one next to it, and the effect is pleasing, while if the red, green and blue were combined without the use of the other colors, the ffect would be antagonistic and startling.

Nature furnishes suggestions for delightful harmonies, starting with the brown of the earth and running into several shades of green, and from that touching upon yellow; and changing from red to orange and from orange to red, from red to the violet of the distant horizon or the clouds and from the violet to the blue of the sky. Nature makes no mistakes. One may follow the colorings and the proportion of colors in the flowers and never go astray.

The combination of violet and yellow gives a harmony of contrast. In constructing such harmonies one color should be chosen as the prevailing color and only small touches of the other used, as equal proportions of colors having nothing in common give an effect that is startling and unpleasant.

If a color is lightened by the addition of white or darkened by the addition of black, it is removed to another scale of value

and can only be harmonized by contrast with its complement by adding to the complement the same amount of white or black that was added to the color itself.

White placed by the side of a color heightens or intensifies the color. To put black beside a color has the opposite effect— that of dulling the color. Black is always good with warm or bright colors, but does not associate as well with two colors, one of which is warm and the other cool as it does with two warm colors. For examples, orange and black may be combined with black or yellow and red with black with good effect, while the combination of yellow black and violet or orange black and green would not be so good.

White is better when used with a warm and a cool color. Examples: red, white and blue, yellow white and violet.

Gray is a medium between black and white. It makes an adjacent color less brilliant, but at the same time it takes to itself a color that is the complement of the adjacent color. Gray by the side of green appears faintly pinkish.

COLORS FOR COSTUMES

Colors of full intensity or those in the outer circle of the chart are not suitable for costumes but those that are very much subdued or grayed, as found in the inner circle, produce a much better effect. There are other values of these colors which could be arranged in other circles between the outer and inner circle and between the inner circle and the neutral gray in the center. These would be the same colors only varying in their intensity.

The general background of distance against which objects are viewed is very gray. Intense colors stand out from this background and cause the outlines of the figure to be seen very plainly.

In selecting a color for a costume the wearer must first be considered, for color is the most important factor in her costume. It is by the color more than any other one thing that her appearance will be improved or injured. The color should always be grayed enough to allow the characteristics of the individual to stand forth. This grayness of the chosen color may vary according to the coloring in the face of the wearer but it should always be dull enough to form a background for the face to show to the best advantage.

The refinement and culture of a woman is expressed by the colors she chooses in her costume and too much attention cannot be given to the choice.

Black and white stand out strongly from the gray background and cause the outlines of the figure to be very plainly

observed, hence, should be worn only by those possessing very good figures and a good degree of color, as black makes the face look pale as it absorbs whatever color there is in the face. Any dark color will absorb color. The lighter the color the less absorbent it is.

White makes the figure appear larger and as a mass, tho every face looks better with white or cream worn next to it, hence, the almost universal use of white for neckwear for men

Fig. 3.—Afternoon or informal evening costume and street dress.

and women. White intensifies whatever color there may be in the face and is generally becoming.

Gray makes the figure appear smaller as it is so much like the general background that the outlines of the figure are not easily observed, thus making the figure appear smaller.

Blue, green and violet when used in dull tones and much grayed are well adapted to stout figures as they melt into the general background and do not cause the outline to become conspicuous.

Certain colors when carefully selected bring out the coloring of the face. For example, a blue the color of the eyes will make the eyes seem more blue. A soft pink will sometimes heighten the coloring of the cheeks. Of course, the other characteristics of the person must be taken into consideration when using such colors.

When viewing a pronounced color the eye unconsciously sees the complement of that color when turned away from it. For this reason red gives a pale face a greenish cast—the eye when turned from the red to the face sees unconsciously the complement of the color and the face becomes green. In the same way a pale face takes on a tint of red as the complement or contrast of a green dress.

The blue dress, where the blue is of full intensity, gives sallowness (orange) to the face. The yellow dress gives a blue and the violet a yellow tinge to the face.

These results are greatly changed by the intervention of white between the dress and the face. White intensifies the color. If there is a tinge of pink in the face the white brings it out. If there is a sallowness in the face, white accentuates it. For this reason yellow or cream is often worn about the neck instead of white so that the yellow of the face becomes less conspicuously contrasted.

However, in matters of dress rules cannot be applied too strictly because color has an influence apart from the purely visual. Some people are depressed by certain colors and such should be avoided regardless of any results of color theory.

COLOR GUIDE

The list following shows the colors that may be worn by women of the characteristics given.

(Brown is really a grayed orange.)

BLACK OR DARK BROWN HAIR, BROWN, GRAY OR BLUE EYES, FAIR SKIN

Black.
White—Cream and ivory.
Brown—Golden and golden tan.
Blue—All shades.
Gray—All shades and blue gray.
Red—Dark.
Yellow—Mustard, amber.
Pink—Shell.

The more subdued shades are better for this type than the strong colors.

BROWN OR BLACK HAIR, BLUE OR GRAY EYES, OLIVE SKIN

Black—Only with cream and a touch of bright color.
White—Cream and pure white.
Brown—Chestnut and golden.
Blue—Navy.
Gray—Only warm shades.
Red—Crimson.
Yellow—Maize, amber.
Pink—Old rose.

The dark sallow type must choose carefully from among the dark or dull shades with touches of bright color in trimmings. Rose and flame (or orange) are particularly good.

In selecting color, the age of the wearer should never be neglected. Pink is only for the young, except in very small touches. Elderly women with gray hair find white, black, dark blue, gray and violet in all shades and tints very becoming. All ages can wear white.

AUBURN HAIR, BLUE OR BROWN EYES

Black—Especially in transparent materials.
White—Cream and ivory.
Brown—Only the rich, deep dark shades,
          matching the hair.
Blue—Blue gray, navy, peacock, and soft old shades.
Green—Not used unless skin is white with good color.
Gray—Only pearl and dove.

SANDY HAIR, BLUE OR BROWN EYES

May wear any of the above colors, but in wearing brown must keep to the deep, dark shades and avoid all others.

Sallow blondes must be careful in choosing colors but cream white (not dead white) gray in soft, rich tones combned with

burnt orange or ecru lace and bright, dark reds and yellows with creamy lace will be found generally becoming.

BLACK OR DARK BROWN HAIR, BLACK OR BROWN EYES, DARK SKIN WITH COLOR

Black—Especially with touches of color and ecru lace. Velvet best material to use.
White—Cream and ivory.
Brown—Golden brown, tan.
Blue—Pale and dark
Green—Dark
Red—Cardinal, crimson clear red.
Yellow—Any shade.
Pink—Coral, pale old rose

FOR FLAXEN OR GOLDEN HAIR, FAIR SKIN, BLUE EYES

Black—Very becoming, especially with touches of blue-gold or cerise.
White.
Brown—Only very dark shades.
Blue—Nearly all shades.
Green—Both light and dark.
Gray—Warm shades—pearl and dove·
Red—Dark.
Yellow—Very delicate shade almost cream.
Pink—Pale and old rose.

LIGHT OR GOLDEN BROWN HAIR, BLUE OR GRAY EYES, HIGH COLOR IN LIPS AND CHEEKS

Black—Jet not blue black.
White.
Brown—Very dark not golden.
Blue—Dull old blues.
Green—Dark and light shades.
Gray—Pale shades.
Violet—Dull tones.
Yellow—Palest buff.
Pink—Palest.

APPROPRIATENESS

Inappropriate gowns and hats are the most common means of making a woman appear ugly. A thing may be good in itself but exceedingly ugly when its relation to its surrounding is taken into consideration. The old party dress does not make an attractive street, school or kitchen dress.

None but neat, simple, attractive washable dresses should be worn when working in the kitchen.

The street or business dress should be neat, simple, of good cut and adapted to the purpose for which it is intended.

Another point to guard against is imitation. Garments of cheap, coarse material covered with cheap lace and embroidery are never in good taste. Far better have plain garments of good material, simply made in a good style and untrimmed. The best material that can be afforded should be purchased and made up simply and attractively when economy is to be prac-

Fig. 4.—Simple cotton dresses.

tised and all garments should be kept neat and clean. Uncomfortable, untidy, soiled clothing is irritating to the wearer and to all observers and does not cultivate good nature nor good health. Clean, neat, appropriate clothing cultives self respect.

Kinne and Cooley say, "The artistic gown is appropriate to the occasion on which it is worn. It is of good material, neat, convenient, graceful, healthful, allowing for free movement of the body. It is free from superfluous trimming it is restful to look at rather than disgusting, in color and design it is alluring and persuasive, not self-assertive; it emphasizes in every possible way the charm and personality of the wearer. Such a costume requires intelligent thought and study which is more than justified by the results."

JEWELRY

Very little jewelry should be worn when about the daily tasks and that should be simple and apropriate. The wearing of many rings, bracelets and other jewels should be reserved for very formal occasions and even then the wearing of much jewelry shows lack of culture and refinement on the part of the wearer.

No jewelry should be worn while at work in the kitchen, as rings and bracelets worn on the hands afford lodging places for dirt and bits of food that may cause unsanitary conditions.

ACCESSORIES

The shoes, gloves, veil, girdle and ornaments such as jewelry and beads must be selected to harmonize with the costume itself and with a view to making an attractive and becoming effect when taken together.

FITTING LININGS

Many figures are not so proportioned as to be able to use the commercial patterns without alteration. The figure may be long from the neck to the fullest part of the bust and short from the bust to the waist line, or it may be short from the neck to the bust and long from the bust to waist line. In either case the full part of the bust lining will not come on the right place on the figure.

TESTING THE PATTERN

Use a good commercial pattern of a plain shirt waist. Measure figure from collar seam at center of back to waist line. To get the under arm measure, hold a pencil, in a horizontal position, close up under the arm of the figure fitted. Measure from the pencil to the waist line. This gives the under arm measure.
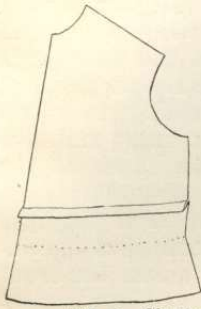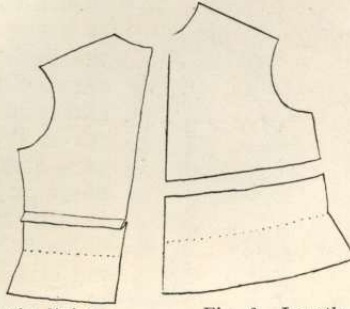
Fig. 5.—Shortening the lining.   Fig. 6.—Lengthening the lining.

LONG OR SHORT WAIST

Compare these measurements with those of the commercial pattern. If the figure is not the same as the pattern at the under arm, the pattern must be altered at the lower part. If the pattern is too long at the lower part, lay a pleat across each piece of the pattern 2½ inches above the waist line. The size of the pleat is one-half the difference in the measurements. If the figure measures two inches less than the pattern, a one-inch pleat will be required.

If the pattern is too long between neck and under arm, the pleat must extend across half way between neck and under arm. If the pattern is too long at both above and below the bust, it must be altered in both places two and one-half inches above the waist line and half way between neck and under arm.

If the pattern is too short at one or both of these places, it must be slashed and separated sufficiently to make it long enough. After the alterations have been made, cut the lining, baste, try on and fit according to the directions which follow.

LARGE BUST

Figures having the bust large in proportion to the rest of the figure may have only an average bust measure. The bust measure may be only 36 inches, and yet the figure may have a very full bust. To adjust the lining, take a piece of material six
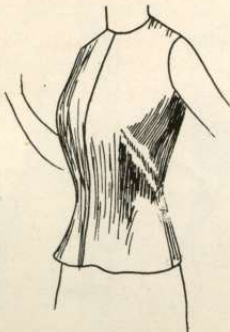
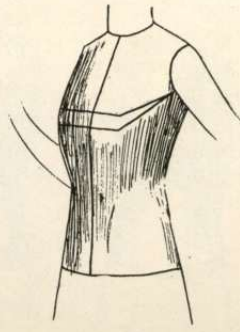

Fig. 7.—Full busted figure and wrinkles formed in lining.

Fig. 8.—Adjusting the lining by slashing to give more room across bust.
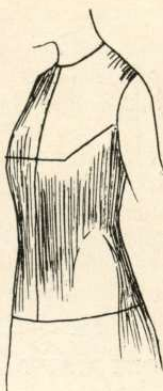
Fig. 9—Small busted figure and wrinkles

Fig. 10. — Lining slashed and fullness taken up.

inches wide and long enough to reach across the front of the figure to the under arm seam. Place it over the bust and pin smoothly to corset cover. Try on lining and take care that the edges of the hems on the front are even at the neck. Pin together down the front. Cut the lining straight across the front at bust line and upward toward the armhole to within $\frac{3}{8}$ inch of the notch in the edge of the armhole. See fig. 8. Pin the edges of the slash carefully to the piece underneath. If the back is too wide it should be taken up at the under arm seam taking in only the back. To remove the lining, slash the piece in front on a line with the closing.

SMALL BUST

Proceed as for a figure with large bust, but in this case it is not necessary to place the piece of material under it. Here the fullness not taken up will fall in wrinkles under the full part of the bust. See fig. 9. Slash as for full bust. Lap the slashed edges until the lining fits smoothly. Do not make it too snug. It should not cramp or confine the figure, but should be perfectly comfortable. Pin the edges of the slash into place.

Fig. 11. — Square shoulders and wrinkles formed.

Fig. 12.—Lining adjusted to take out wrinkles.

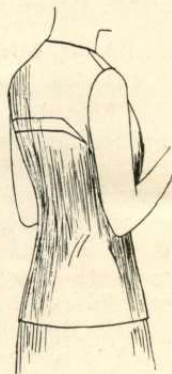Fig. 13. — Round shouldered figure and wrinkles formed.

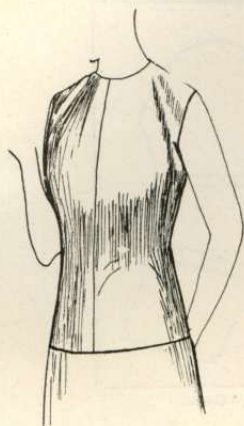Fig. 14.—Lining adjusted to give extra fullness.

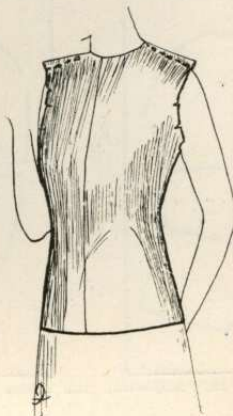Fig. 15. — Sloping shoulders and wrinkles formed.

Fig. 16.—Lining adjusted to take out wrinkles.

Fig. 17.—Darts taken up to make a fitted lining.

SQUARE SHOULDERS

Square shoulders cause the lining to wrinkle across the chest. This is remedied by taking up at the shoulder seams near the neck as much as is necessary to remove wrinkles, gradually sloping off the alteration toward the shoulder. This raises the neck of the lining so it must be slashed at interval until it fits comfortably. Figs. 11 and 12.

After removing lining, trim the neck out to bottom of slashes.

ROUND SHOULDERS

Pin a strip of material about 3 or 4 inches wide to the corset cover in the back from armhole to armhole. Try on the lining. If the figure is round shouldered, wrinkles will appear at the under arm seam running up toward the back and the lining will stand out across the back at the bottom. Slash the lining across the back between the shoulders and down to within $\frac{3}{8}$ inch of the under arm seam. The lining will spread apart as much as the figure requires. Pin the edges to the piece below. Figs. 13 and 14.

SLOPING SHOULDERS

If the shoulders are very sloping, wrinkles will appear running from neck toward under arm. The remedy is to take up the lining at shoulders near arm, gradually sloping toward the neck. This will raise the armhole and cause it to bind. Slash the armhole at the edge until it is comfortable. Care must be
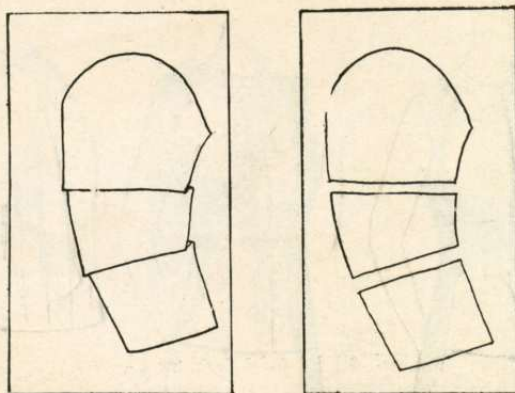
Fig. 18.—Adjusting the sleeve pattern.

taken that it is not slashed too much and the armhole made too large. Remove and trim to bottom of slashes. Figs. 15 and 16.

If it is desired to make a fitted lining, take up darts as indicated in illustration, making side darts about one inch apart at waist line and making side dart about ¾ inch higher than the front one. Fig 17.

SLEEVES

Measure the inside of the arm, from the pencil held under the arm, to the elbow and from the elbow to the small bone in the outside of the wrist, keeping tapeline in same position.

Compare these measurements with those of the sleeve pattern and make the necessary alterations as shown in fig. 18.

After lining is properly adjusted, rip apart and cut paper pattern for future use as the lining is apt to pull and stretch out of place.