

Which is the Right Side of a Fabric?

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Whoever has to do with textile fabrics has to face this question practically every day. Years of practice and a fine judgment are, generally speaking, the most important guides, but any such judgment only carries conviction when it can be proved.

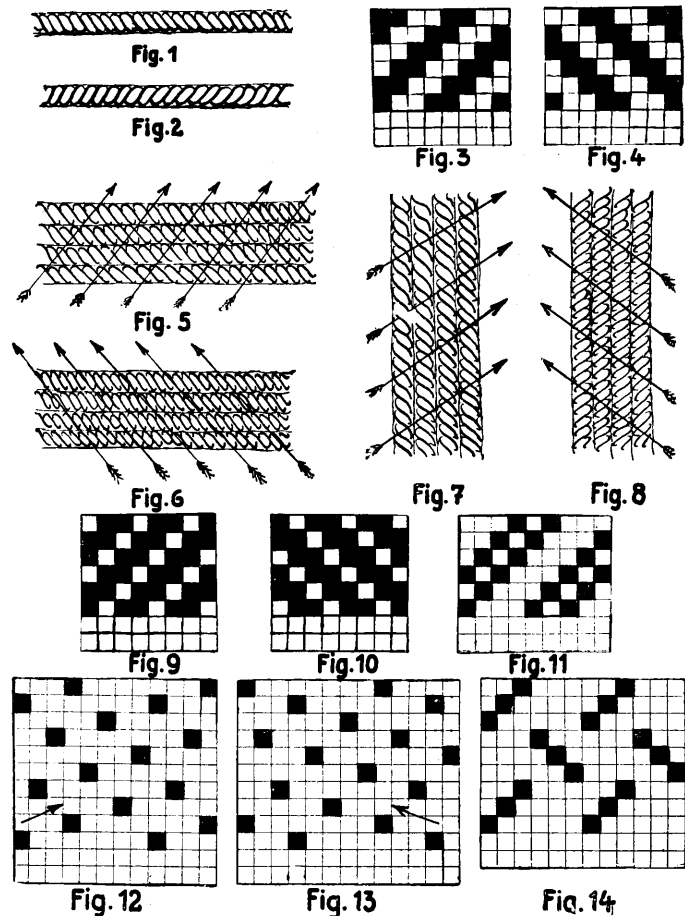
The right side of a cloth is, as a rule, that surface which has a superior appearance to the other side. The one surface is sometimes called the side with the good pattern, and the other side that with the inferior pattern. This indicates that that side is viewed as the upper side which is better in appearance, that is to say has better material, is better finished and is thus more impervious to external influences. These general characteristics are to be found in woollen goods, in raised goods, in velvet, and so on; smooth articles, however, which are two-sided, that is to say, the two sides of which show the same, or, rather, practically the same characteristics, for instance, linen, double twill, twill the same on both sides, etc. offer considerably more difficulty.

Every expert is aware that a mathematical sameness on both sides in nowhere to be found. Neither nature nor art can produce such an article. The same principle applies to fabrics, so that the manufacturer supplies all his products with two different sides, one of which is called the right side of the cloth and the other the back of the cloth.

In most cases attempts are made to find the right side by comparison, laying both sides of the cloth, for this purpose, beside one another. The face of the cloth has the more agreeable appearance, it is better finished, the lay of the wool is smoother, the fibres are arranged regularly and are more uniform in length. This can be particularly well observed, if the cloth has been sheared or singed, by holding it against the light. Shirtings and dress goods, on the other hand, have often the same finish on both sides and it is then necessary to understand something

of the technique of the art in order to come to a judgment.

It should first of all be mentioned that the threads which go to make up the fabrics are composed of single fibres which hold together by having been twisted. For practical reasons based upon the nature of the fibres single yarn is twisted as shown in Figure 1, while



doubled yarns composed of such single yarns are best twisted together in the opposite direction, Figure 2. If special value is attached to the twill line in a twill fabric, it must show up well on the surface of the cloth and look fresh even if the goods have been stored for some time. Figure 3 shows a Cashmere twill with the line running to the right, and Figure 4 a similar cloth with the line running to the left. If the goods have weft effects and

single yarn, as is generally the case with dress goods, the direction of the twill line will be prominent when it runs to the right, as shown by the arrow in Figure 5, but it will be indistinct when the line runs to the left as indicated by the arrow in Figure 6, that is to say, when the twill of Figure 4 is taken.

The fabric shown in Figure 5 is therefore considered to be the better and more agreeable in appearance, while that of Figure 6 is less appreciated if the surface of the cloth should be smooth. But if it is a woollen fabric or has a rough surface which does not show the twill and the twill line so prominently, then the cloth of Figure 6 will be considered the better and that of Figure 5 the less suitable quality for wear.

If a doubled warp produces the chief effect in the cloth, so that the surface is mainly warp which lies as shown in Figure 7, then the twill line must run to the right, that is, Figure 3 must be accepted as the face of the cloth. A fabric with doubled yarn in the warp and a twill weave will look better as shown in Figure 9 than in Figure 10 when the yarn twist of Figure 7 forms the face of the cloth, but the better cloth must have the twill line of Figure 10 when the warp yarn is twisted as shown in Figure 8.

In the same way cloth which has been woven as shown in Figure 11 looks better

when the weft, which is generally twisted as shown in Figure 1, runs in the opposite way to the twill line of the weave. This applies to all smooth fabrics which have not been raised, such as linings, serge, and so on, but it is more advantageous when the weave line and the twist line of rough or woollen goods coincide.

Further it is not a matter of indifference whether the sateen weave of Figure 12 is taken or that of Figure 13 for a cloth with weft effect. If attention is paid to the direction of the arrows and the order of the picks, it will soon be seen that the one sateen weave has a more agreeable effect and that the other is inferior, according to the way the yarn has been twisted.

Figure 14 shows a weave without a twill line. The roughened effect plays the chief part in such goods and in this case it is advisable to choose the goods with the best staple and clearest in appearance.

It will be seen from the foregoing remarks that the instructions given in various books on the subject to choose the twill line in the direction in which the German letter "i" is written, that is to say, obliquely slanting to the right, are only conditionally correct. The face of a cloth always depends upon the nature of the material and the finish. A little practice will often be of great value here.