

SUITINGS—BY THE YARD

By HONEY HOOSER

Weaving which usually starts out as a hobby can truly become an obsession. And why not? Can anyone name a more useful or an older craft? We find reference to it in the first chapters of the Bible, yet with all our modern inventions we are learning to weave, a job which our primitive folk did as a matter of course without the many gadgets we have to do the job with. Many people take one look at the loom with all its threads looking so very complicated, yet like most things very simple when you know how, and say, "Such a lot of work", and from their glances you are almost convinced that you are either a lunatic or a genius.

I started out to do me a dress length, knowing nothing whatever about an even beat and so on, only to discover that plain weaving is one of the most difficult to do. From that I went gaily forward to a suit length. Then many friends became interested in having a length made from their own selection of color, texture and design or pattern, truly individual suits. That seems to be how I started to do yardage.

First; I always make a sample of the material which I am to do, if possible of the same wools or other material; otherwise make it of the same texture and as near to colors as possible. Then you know just what the finished piece will be like, its color after washing, shrinkage, etc. Many weavers think they are saving by making samples of any old materials they happen to have on hand, only to find that when they have completed the finished order it is a very different thing as to texture. A good collection of samples is invaluable.

Selection of your material depends on your finished product and its purpose. Light weight wools for ladies dresses and suits and a heavier wool for men's suitings. Shrinkage must be allowed in all cases. Many think materials which are beaten heavily are much better; this does not apply at all times as some materials when washed, if too many picks used to the inch or beaten too hard will be very harsh and heavy. A good thing to remember is that it is better to have the material on the loose side as washing will always shrink it.

Most men's suits require $7\frac{1}{4}$ yards material 32 inches wide. This cuts to best advantage. So it should be put on the loom 36 inches wide, this allows for your shrinkage. Ladies' 36 inches wide finished and put on loom at 40 inches.

After the material is removed from the loom, if there is any tendency to ravel stitch each end on the sewing machine. I put it directly in the washing machine with Lux or any good washing preparation. If the wool is in oil, as many from the old country are, a little ordinary washing soda is of great help. The water should be about 110 degrees, or just so you can place your hand in it comfortably. Rinse very well, hang it out so that most of the water drips out of it as it is better not to wring. Then place it on curtain stretchers, as they can be adjusted to the width of your material; you may have to put this on in several thicknesses, but that does not matter. By doing this many creases are eliminated and it is much easier to press afterward using a cloth between the iron and the material.

Some people may wish to cravenette or waterproof top-coat material, an excellent method is as follows:

Dissolve $2\frac{1}{4}$ pounds of alum in 20 gallons of water boiling in another vessel $2\frac{1}{4}$ pounds of sugar of lead in ten gallons of water. When dissolved mix the two solutions. Then dip fabrics in solution and work over and over until thoroughly saturated, then dry in a warm room; then wash in cold water and dry in the air when they are ready for use. For smaller amounts reduce the above proportions accordingly. Using same ratio of ingredients to amount of water.

If working with very fine or fuzzy wools, some breakages may result, this can be remedied by boiling flaxseed and water, straining then applying to warp as it comes over the back beam with a small brush. Apply lightly, just to dampen. This is of great assistance and washes out very easily.

If washed and shrunk properly there is very little raveling when cut. A beautiful length may be ruined by poor tailoring, so above all have it well tailored.



Cut No. 1

Illustration No. 1 is of plain weave, using hand spun wool, 15 dents to the inch. Bernats Homespun is of similar texture.

Illustration No. 2 is of double face twill, 30 ends to the inch of Cheviot wool from Scotland. Bernats weaving special could be used.

Illustration No. 4 is a white coat in plain weave, 24 ends to inch, wool from Scotland. Bernats fabri would give excellent results. The dark coat in the same Illustration is



No. 2



No. 4



No. 6



No. 7

hand woven in a herringbone of Harris Tweed, but not woven by me.

Illustrations No. 6 and 7 are both of black and white twisted wool for both warp and weft, 15 ends to the inch. Plain weave.

These are a few of the suits I have woven and enjoyed making the materials as much as the wearer's pleasure in

wearing them. Tasks of one generation may be the pleasures of the next. Weaving was work when necessity forced our grandmothers to spend long hours at the loom. Now it is a profitable pastime offering us relaxation, interesting employment for mind and hand, as well as practical, useful and attractive results from our efforts.