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**RENOVATION OF MILLINERY**



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## CIRCULAR NO. 248

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### Renovation of Millinery

By ISABELLE M. STORY

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Nothing detracts more from a satisfactory general appearance than a dowdy out-of-shape hat; yet few women give even their best hats the care necessary to keep them in good condition thruout one season. A hat that is brushed and put away carefully each time after it is worn will retain its freshness and color much longer than if left exposed to light, and dust-laden air. An occasional sponging with carbon tetrachloride or a similar solvent, will keep the parts of the hat that come in contact with the head or the hair from becoming grease soaked. A hat crown should be kept on a mold or else be stuffed with tissue paper to preserve its shape. If it is then rested on a stand or a form of the same shape as the brim, the desired droop of the brim will be kept. Such forms can be quickly and easily made by rolling cardboard to form a cone and then leveling the cone at each end.

#### RENOVATION OF FELT HATS

A felt or fabric hat, either trimmed or untrimmed, may be home drycleaned by washing it in naphtha, white gasoline or drycleaning solvent. The work should be done out of doors and away from fire. Use a deep vessel and sufficient solvent to allow the hat to be worked up and down in it without crushing. A second or rinsing bath should follow, and if the hat is very dirty, a third also. Take the hat from the rinsing bath, drain and place it on a standard in the open air to dry. Do not reblock until all traces of the cleansing fluid have evaporated. About twenty-four hours will be necessary for this.

#### WASHING A FELT HAT

A felt hat may also be washed, but if it is slashed for trimming arrangement, or if the original shape of the hat is to be

retained, it should be dry cleaned instead. Better grades of felt hats are made of fur, less expensive ones are of wool. Felt hats should, therefore, be washed in the same way as woolen garments. This means that the same temperature should be maintained in the successive baths used and that the soap should not be rubbed on them.

*To Wash.* Make a strong suds by dissolving mild soap flakes in hot water and then add cold water until the temperature of the water is lowered to a point a little above blood heat. Wash the hat, from which the lining, band, etc., have been removed, by sousing it up and down in the suds for about fifteen minutes. Squeeze it out and carry it thru a second suds in the same manner. Rinse thru two waters and allow to partially dry before blocking.

After putting the hat on a block and cording it tightly at the head size line, stretch the brim into the shape desired and place the hat in the open air to dry. A day, or even longer, may be required for it to dry thoroly. A hat will not retain its shape if it is taken off the block before it is dry thru and thru. Finish the surface of the hat, as described below, before removing from block. A faded hat is ready for re-dyeing only after it has been washed as just described.

A man's hat can be satisfactorily washed, dyed and re-blocked for a woman's hat. A very dirty or grease-soaked hat should first be soaked for about thirty minutes in a suds to which a tablespoonful of household ammonia has been added.

#### TO BLOCK A FELT HAT

All hats, regardless of the materials of which they are composed, must be more or less damp before they will conform to the shape of a modeling block. In working over old hats one often comes across a felt that is so stiff and heavy that it must be dipped into water to make it soft enough for blocking. The usual way for hats not too stiff, however, is to steam the hat over the spout of a teakettle.

*To Steam.* Put a pint of water into a teakettle which has a large base. Fit lid on tightly and bring the water to a rapid



boil. Steam the hat from the inside by holding it close over the live steam from the spout, turning the hat about the while. When it is thoroly damp it is ready for blocking.

*To Block.* Stretch and pull the hat crown down over the block until the hat fits the block smoothly and closely. If the crown does not slip over the block readily, additional steaming may be necessary. If so, remove the hat from block and concentrate the steam at points where more stretching is needed. Repeat this until the hat can be made to mold the block smoothly and tightly at all points, especially at the tip and the head size line. Now cord tightly at the head size line, using for this purpose a stout window cord with a slip knot in one end. This can be quickly and easily adjusted and it will hold firmly. Steam the hat and stretch it to the desired shape.

*To Finish Surface of Hat.* With a stiff bristle brush go over the outer surface of the hat until it is quite smooth. If the surface of the hat is very rough, first rub it with fine sandpaper, then brush. Always begin at the tip of the crown and brush around and around in one direction working outward until the entire surface is smoothed evenly.

*To Burnish.* Soleil felts and others which have a heavy pile should be polished also, to give them a lustrous surface. This should follow the brushing just described. For burnishing you will need a very hot iron so placed that its smoothing surface is exposed, and a thick pad about six inches square made of drill or other heavy cotton material that will not shed lint. If the hat has been allowed to dry after the steaming given it for blocking, moisten lightly with a cloth wrung out of water. With the upturned surface of the iron convenient to your right hand, hold the pad against it until it is very hot, then transfer the pad quickly to the hat and brush firmly, beginning at the tip and working outward, as described above. Have surface of the hat damp and keep the pad very hot, if best results are to be obtained.

#### TO STIFFEN A FELT HAT

A felt hat that is too soft to hold its shape satisfactorily may be stiffened in the following manner. Make a sizing by

dissolving a small quantity of white sheet glue (obtainable at any hardware store) in a half pint of water by heating it over a slow fire and stirring it constantly. (The weight of a twenty-five cent piece in glue is sufficient for a hat of average size.) Add to this one heaping tablespoonful of mild soap flakes and stir until dissolved. Remove from fire and cool sufficiently to bear your hand in it. Immerse the hat, which should be clean and dry, in this sizing and work for about fifteen minutes, kneading and squeezing it to force stiffening into the felt. Squeeze out, stretch and shape the hat by hand, allow the hat to partially dry, then block and finish as described above.

#### TO DYE A FELT HAT

Select a dye suitable for woolen material, and a color that will cover the color already in the hat. If the hat is badly faded, only a very dark color or black will give an even color. Follow directions for dyeing woolen fabrics.

#### TO RENEW A WHITE OR LIGHT-COLORED FELT

*Method 1. To Scour.* Rub the surface of the hat with a fine sandpaper, 00 if it is available. This removes the soiled and faded surface and leaves the hat smooth and fresh, provided the strokes made in scrubbing are all in one direction.

*Method 2.* Saturate corn meal with gasoline and rub the mixture into the felt with a stiff white brush. When the gasoline has all evaporated, shake the hat and brush out the corn meal.

#### RENEWING STRAW, HAIR AND HEMP HATS

A trimmed hat that shows signs of having been crushed may be greatly improved by holding it over steam, using the fingers meantime to adjust and reshape body and trimming where needed.

Unless very much faded, the color of a hat may be greatly improved by covering it with a cloth wrung out of a half pint of water to which a teaspoonful of ammonia has been added. When the color is too far gone to restore by this process, dip the hat into tube paint and gasoline dye. (See Waterless Dyeing, which

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follows.) If one has a hat block of correct shape and size so that the hat can be reblocked, the hat may be dyed in a water solution. The hat may be bleached preparatory to dyeing to insure an even color or to change the color altogether.

*For Bleaching.* Follow the directions accompanying the bleach used, except that the bleaching bath should be kept below the boiling point.

*For Dyeing.* Select a dye that will color vegetable fibers, or one that will color all fibers. Follow directions usually found on the dye container, and in addition observe the following points: (1) Use a very weak dye bath; (2) add the required amount of salt when the dye bath is prepared; (3) place the hat in a tepid bath and keep below boiling point until the desired depth of color is obtained. Keep the hat constantly in motion by agitating with a wooden spoon. When a dye bath maintained at below boiling point is used much longer time is required for even coloring than when boiling temperature is maintained, and the hat must take up the dye very slowly to insure an even color. Avoid crushing or breaking the hat. Remove the hat from the dye bath, immerse the hat in cold water, drain it for a few minutes, then block.

Batik or Cold Water Dye also can be used successfully on this type of hat provided one uses a very weak bath so that the hat will take up the dye slowly. Dyes with a shellac base are not, as frequently advertised, satisfactory for changing the color of a hat, but can be used to advantage on hats of matching color, if diluted with alcohol until very thin—about measure for measure of alcohol and dye—and a very thin coat is applied. (See directions following for “Sizing hair, straws, etc.”)

*To Wash Summer Hats.* Hair and other very open-mesh hats may be washed by sousing them up and down in lukewarm, soapy water for ten or fifteen minutes. Put thru a second suds if badly soiled, then rinse in tepid water. Drain for a short time before blocking. Panama, leghorn and closely woven straw hats can be more satisfactorily cleaned by scrubbing them with a brush or cloth.

*To Block Straw, Hair and Fiber Hats.* If the hat is not already wet, soften it by immersion in cold water for an instant and letting it drain for about five minutes. Hats of this type are very tender when wet, so care must be taken not to tear them. The process is more of a pushing and molding with the hands than pulling and stretching as with felts. Mold the hat to the block smoothly and cord at headsize line. Next stretch and mold the brim by hand to the shape desired, creasing it sharply along the headsize line. Leave the hat on the block until it is thoroly dry. Before removing from block mark the center of front of crown with a knot of thread, and do not remove this marker until the hat is trimmed and ready for wear.

*To Press Brim.* Place a small section of the brim, wrong side up, on an ironing board, and cover, first with a dry cloth and then with a wet one. Press lightly with a hot iron to steam brim, remove wet cloth and press until dry. Keep point of iron turned toward inside of brim, pressing only a small section of the brim at a time.

With the exception of leghorns and panamas, the hats of this group should be finished with a light coat of shellac to give them luster and body. This is applied after the hat has been removed from the block and its brim pressed and shaped. This process is called "sizing".

*To Size Straw, Hair, and Fiber Hats.* White shellac should be used on white or light-colored hats, but either orange shellac or colorite of a matching color may be used on black or dark-colored hats. Dilute the shellac until it is quite thin, using, generally, about an equal measure of alcohol and shellac or colorite. Apply to the hat with a flat, one-inch brush. With only a small amount of the thinned shellac on the brush begin at the tip of the crown and work out and around in circles, rubbing the shellac well into the fabric. Too much shellac on the brush as well as too thick a shellac will prevent one's getting an even coat and may also clog the mesh in hair or other openwork hats.

*To Bleach.* A solution made by dissolving one teaspoonful of oxalic acid in a pint of water may be used to clean and bleach

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panama and rough straw hats that have become yellow with wearing. Apply the acid with a small scrubbing brush and scrub quickly, working out from the tip of crown, until all parts of the hat have been reached. Rinse thoroly, and wipe the hat with a cloth before blocking. Leghorn hats are seldom bleached, but if they become badly sunburned the following preparation may be used, but it will not bleach them white. Make a paste of the juice of a lemon and two tablespoonfuls of sulfur. Apply this to the hat with a soft cloth. When dry, brush off the powder. The hat may then be dampened and blocked in the usual manner.

#### TO FRESHEN FLOWERS

Flowers of silk, velvet, muslin or sateen can be made to look as good as new by holding them in the steam from a tea-kettle, eight or ten inches from the spout, and shaking them gently. If crushed they should be reshaped by molding them lightly with the fingers.

*To Clean Feathers.* Wash the feathers in high-test gasoline and shake them in the open air until they are dry. White feathers should be rinsed in gasoline to which flour has been added (one tablespoon of flour to one cup of gasoline). The curl in ostrich feathers may be restored by holding them in steam and then shaking them in the heat from an oven until dry. If more curl is desired, use a warm (not hot) curling iron.

*To Press Velvet.* Wring a heavy pressing cloth (drill is best) out of water and place over a hot, upturned iron. Hold the velvet over the steaming cloth with wrong side next to the cloth. As the velvet is steamed, brush it in the direction of the nap.

#### WATERLESS DYEING

For *tinting* feathers, flowers, laces, maline, chiffon, velvet, silk, satin, and summer hats of hair, hemp and light braids and straw, use a bath made by dissolving tube paint in naphtha or white gasoline. It is difficult to obtain dark shades by this method, and results are not satisfactory if applied to felt and

other heavy materials. Tube paints may be bought in a variety of colors, and by combining various colors almost any desired shade may be obtained.

Articles to be dyed should be clean and dry before dyeing. A gasoline-soaked article will not take up the dye properly, and the least drop of water or moisture in the bowl or on the article to be dyed will cause poor results.

Good paints in perfect condition flow freely and are easily dissolved in gasoline. To test, remove top of tube and squeeze out a small portion. Should it be solid and break off in small pieces, do not buy or use it, as this indicates that it is not fresh.

Work out of doors and away from fire.

To prepare dye bath, open the tube and squeeze a small amount of paint into the bottom of a mixing bowl. Pour over this a small quantity of gasoline and mix and dissolve the paint thoroly in it, using a small bristle brush or artist's spatula. Continue to add gasoline in small quantities, blending thoroly each time, until the mixture is quite thin. Strain this thru a closely-woven cloth into a large mixing bowl and add sufficient gasoline to cover the material to be tinted without crowding it. Dip into this a small sample in order to see the exact shade that the dye will produce. Should it be too dark, add more gasoline; should it be too light, add more paint which has been blended with a small amount of gasoline, as just described.

Dip the articles to be dyed into this bath, exposing all parts equally to it. The dye penetrates very quickly and scarcely an instant is necessary to produce the desired depth of color. Fabrics should be thoroly squeezed and hung up to dry out of doors. Flowers and other articles that will crush should have the excess of liquid shaken out of them and then be placed to dry.

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