

A GIRL'S WINTER COAT: New Life for an Old Garment

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A WINTER coat is usually the most expensive item of a schoolgirl's wardrobe, and one that recurs as she grows, so making her coat at home can be a real economy. Many mothers think that making a coat is too big a task to tackle, but there are plain, straight-line styles which are not difficult to make successfully. There may be an adult's coat which can be adapted, and remaking or even just relining an old coat are good ways of learning a great deal about coat construction.

BEFORE deciding to remake any garment, inspect it carefully to make sure its condition is sufficiently sound to make the work worth while. Hold it up against the light to find moth holes; look at the wrong side to see whether the colour is better; examine the wearing points—the cuff edges, collar, elbows, and hem.

Then consider the shape of the parts in relation to the new style proposed. The man's coat illustrated had a Raglan sleeve cut in three sections, so any other style of sleeve was ruled out for the girl's coat. Similarly, if the coat under consideration has a set-in sleeve, it is most unlikely that a different type will be possible in the remade coat unless it is for a much smaller person.

Pockets can be a problem, too. The man's coat had long, slanting, slit pockets which would have been in the wrong place on the girl's coat, as it was to be shorter.



The original—discarded and forlorn.

The slits needed disguising, and patch pockets are the obvious solution in a case like this, though the material is often hard to find. This time the ends of the front facings were used, with an added outline of velvet to make them large enough and more important. If the coat already has patch pockets they will probably be worn and baggy; then the new model can have straight slit pockets with flaps made of the better parts of the old pockets.

The collar is another point to consider. When it is badly worn or discoloured, a top facing of velvet, soft leather, fur fabric, fur, or closely-woven woollen material in a plain toning or contrasting shade will be smart on the new coat. Brown velvet was used on the girl's coat, matched by pocket trimmings and the bound buttonholes.

If the old coat has no belt, it is hard to find sufficient material to make one unless a strip can be taken from the hem line. A half belt at the back might be possible, but the straight-hanging styles suit most young people, and usually a belt can be omitted.

Preparing the Material

When all these details have been considered and the knotty points debated, the work begins with careful unpicking. Take every seam undone, remove all linings, stiffenings, and buttons and save them for later use. Make a note of the methods of construction and details of finishing as a guide in making up the new coat. There will almost certainly be little piles of fluff at the hem lines, in the seams, and at the ends of the sleeves; scrape them off with a blunt knife and brush the material well.

If the coat is very soiled, washing is indicated. First mend any small holes or tears, using threads of the



Model and new garment bright and cheerful.