

# WEAVING FABRICS FOR MEN'S WEAR

By ALICE VARNEY JONES



Miss Jones of Union, New Hampshire, also weaves apparel fabrics for women.

**T**HE SUCCESS of handloomed cloth for men's wear depends in the first instance on obtaining fine yarns in various weights and colors. In the final instance, upon fine tailoring.

My work comes in between: the designing, weaving and finishing of the cloth.

Imported tweed yarns are now available. But our American tweeds, though sometimes different in texture, have been improved and refined and are as easily worked and as sturdy as imported tweeds.

It is my theory that men's suitings need not be limited to tweeds. Hand

loomed worsteds or a combination of worsted and tweed suit some purposes better than pure tweed. Worsteds are softer, lend themselves to more subtle patterns, offer more variety in weights. There are many excellent domestic sources of worsted yarns in all weights and colors.

All my fabrics, from winding the warp, designing the pattern and setting up the loom to the preshrinking and finishing, are done entirely by myself, each with the particular customer in mind. My suitings are designed and woven to order. I try to go further, to design what the customer *should* order. No two lengths of men's suitings are alike. To be truly custom designed they cannot be alike for two different men.

There are many factors besides the design itself which the handweaver considers in styling a fabric to an individual: Is the cloth to be used as a jacket only or for a full suit? The purpose of the suit—for work or play? What does the man work at, play at? His height, weight, coloring? Where does he live? The well-dressed man of Oregon or Arizona will wear suits of colors and patterns, different from the man in Virginia or New York. The more exactly the cloth suits the purpose and personality of the man, the easier it is for his tailor to find the perfect style and line for him.

My three brothers, who have worn my suitings for years with evident satisfaction, demonstrate the variance in individual needs although all live in New York, all are somewhat similar in coloring and build.

My eldest brother is in insurance. He should look friendly, casual in his clothes. He can wear the rich rough tweeds of solid colors in his daily work. But he is fond of the browns too often synonymous with "tweed" in men's ideas of fabrics. And he is turning gray. He is now ready for the blues and dull taupes which will by themselves make him younger, more alive.

My second brother is the stage designer. As a recognized artist, his clothes are remarked. He is fond of combining solid grays and blacks and pays great attention to different weights

and lines for different occasions.

The third brother is minister of a large New York church. No scarlet hound's tooth or plaid in his career, perhaps, but how much richer and solid for him is the fine-woven twill than the dismal broadcloth, though both are black. He is an ardent fly-fisherman, however, and can enjoy the rough comfort of a heavy tweed on the spring streams as much as any other sportsman.

At present I have a challenging commission for a jacket for a dog breeder who plans to show his dogs at the large dog shows. He wants to be seen easily in the crowd. Pattern? What better than a hound's tooth? Color? The brightest, orange with rich brown or blue, for he is fair. Weight? Not too heavy, as he is not tall. Well done, his jacket will stamp him as not only a dog man, but a successful one.

The average man likes comfort above any other consideration. But to be truly comfortable, the fabric of his clothes must make him feel well dressed, neither conspicuous nor drab nor drained of vitality. A stocky man needs a plain weave, solid dark colors, perhaps with a fine light or bright vertical stripe. A lanky man can stand proudly erect in a coat which complements his coloring and squares his shoulders with horizontal lines in subtle plaids.

Men are not conservative. They just do not wish to look foolish.

Men's suitings run 30 inches wide, preshrunk. Four yards are required for a jacket of plain pattern, four and a half for patterns which require fitting when tailored. Seven yards are needed for a suit. Twill weaves (which are solid and wear longer as a rule) require more picks, or threads, per inch. Patterns obviously take more time. Each different color used in the woof requires a separate shuttle, careful counting of threads when setting up and while weaving. The price per yard must depend upon the time consumed in weaving. Unpatterned tabby weaves are of course less expensive. A plain tabby weave goes quickly, five yards a day. A complicated pattern may slow production to two yards a day.

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