

# 59 Authentic Turn-of-the-Century Fashion Patterns



Kristina Harris

# 59 Authentic Turn-of-the-Century Fashion Patterns

Kristina Harris



DOVER PUBLICATIONS, INC.  
NEW YORK

## INTRODUCTION

It is a common belief that ladies throughout the nineteenth century sewed all or most garments for themselves and their families; however, truth be told, most women of the middle and upper classes sewed far less prolifically - often making only undergarments and a few accessories. This was due, in part, to the lack of sewing patterns available. Although many fashion magazines from as early as the 1850s regularly included patterns and diagrams, these were difficult to use without some in-depth training in dressmaking. By the 1860s, Butterick was offering patterns as we know them today, but these, though within the grasp of many home sewers, were produced for only a few select garments.

Professional dressmakers, on the other hand, were usually trained and had at their disposal not only the patterns and diagrams readily available to the public, but also a myriad of patterns produced specifically for their trade.

The scaled patterns reprinted here, originally published in a quarterly magazine called *The Voice of Fashion*, were among the dressmaker's patterns offered in the 1890s.

With each issue of *The Voice of Fashion* came a poster depicting every garment in the magazine. These posters were put on display for clients to choose garments from. Once a client decided which garment she wanted, the dressmaker or her assistant (called a "cutter") would enlarge the scaled pattern onto either heavy paper or cardboard or directly onto fabric.

Possibly, these were the last patterns of their kind. Though dressmaker's patterns had thrived since the late eighteenth century, they would quickly be made obsolete by a rash of full-size paper patterns that would take over in the early 1900s. Though *The Voice of Fashion* would continue to be published well into the twentieth century, its slant would change - no longer would professional dressmakers be the publisher's target market. The home sewer would become the target market for the new century.

Today, these patterns remain as a testament of fashion - not the fashions pictured in fashion magazines and worn only by a select group of society, but the fashions worn by "everyday" people of the middle and upper classes. They are a means of documenting existing period garments, as well as accurately recreating fashions of the past.

## HOW TO USE THE PATTERNS

The patterns given in this book are scaled. There are a number of different ways to enlarge them. For either of the two methods described here, you will need a pencil, a ruler, transparent tape and a roll of wrapping or shelf paper. If all the patterns for a particular garment piece (such as the bodice) are in the same scale, the patterns can be enlarged by the grid method. An easy way to check whether they are in the same scale is to measure the line running along the right-hand side of the pattern. Divide this measurement into the number given at the bottom of the line. If the patterns are in the same scale, your results should be roughly the same for each piece. If the pattern pieces are to more than one scale or size, be sure to read the instructions for "The Grading Method."

### The Grid Method

Begin with a major body measurement such as the waist. Next, add an appropriate amount of wearing ease (for most waistlines of this period, about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " is appropriate). Now, in order to figure your scale, compare this total measurement with the corresponding measurement on the scaled pattern; be sure to take seam allowances and pattern pieces that represent  $\frac{1}{2}$ " or less of the garment into consideration. If, for example, the intended wearer has a  $23\frac{1}{2}$ " waist, plus  $\frac{1}{2}$ " for wearing ease, and the scaled pattern's waist measurement is 2", the proper scale to use would be  $1\frac{1}{12}$ ". In other words, every inch on the scaled pattern would equal 12" on the full-size pattern.

Next, draw a grid on top of the scaled pattern (in this example, a 1" grid), and then draw a grid on the shelf paper (in this example, a 12" grid).

Now, transfer the lines of the scaled pattern onto the shelf paper, square by square. Whenever necessary, tape the shelf paper together to make it large enough for a full-size pattern.

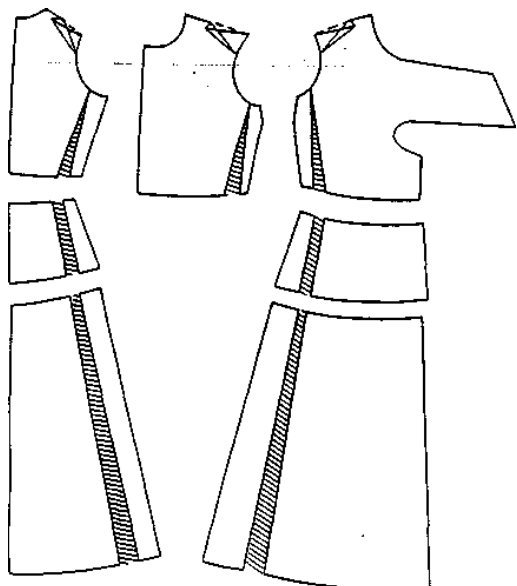
### The Grading Method

When garments illustrated show pattern pieces given in more than one scale, you should use the grading method. Notice that each pattern includes sets of numbers running along all pattern lines. The numbers running along the right-hand edge of the pattern indicate length measurements; the other numbers indicate the width. Draw the pattern lines onto your paper, following all measurements carefully. It may be helpful to draw a 1" grid onto the paper before transferring pattern lines onto it, but it is not necessary. Where curves are shown, you may draw them freehand or with the aid of a French curve (available at dressmaking stores).

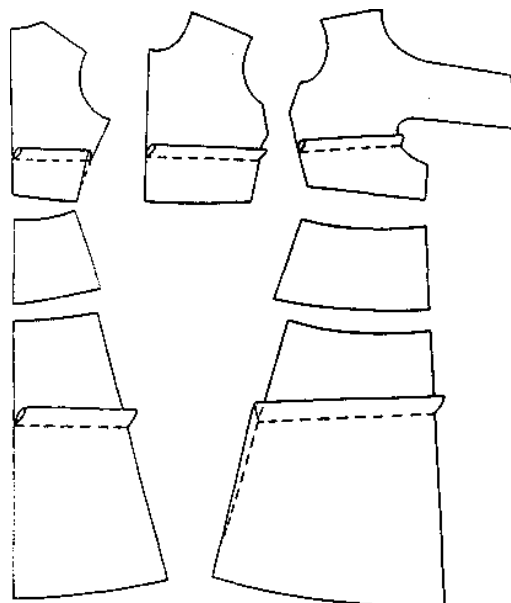
Once you have carefully drawn out each pattern piece according to the measurements given, you have created a "standard size" sloper for the garment. This, by modern standards, is quite small and will need to be graded to fit the modern figure. If you are unfamiliar with the practice of grading patterns, follow the instructions given below or consult a dressmaking book at your local library.

**To Adjust Width:** Changes will almost certainly need to be made in the width of your pattern. To determine how much change is necessary, subtract your actual measurements (including wearing ease and seam allowances) from the corresponding pattern measurements. For example, if your waist measurement is  $25\frac{1}{2}$ " and the pattern measurement is 19", you need to enlarge your pattern by  $6\frac{1}{2}$ " in the waist area. Now, divide the amount you must

enlarge the pattern (in our example  $6\frac{1}{2}$ " ) by the number of bodice pattern pieces (for our example, say 4). This will tell you how much to enlarge each pattern piece (in our example,  $1\frac{5}{8}$ "). Slash the pattern pieces as illustrated in Fig. 1, and spread in a triangular fashion. Place a piece of paper behind the slashed section and tape it into place.



**Fig.1. To adjust width**



**Fig.2. To adjust length.**

To take in the pattern, make a tuck in the pattern as shown in Fig. 1 and redraw the cutting and seam lines. **To Adjust Length:** If your garment needs adjustment in length, either fold it (if too long) or slash and spread it (if too short) (Fig. 2).

**Remember:**

- In most cases, allowances for closures (hooks and eyes, buttons, plackets) and facings are not included on the pattern and must be added before cutting out the pattern in fabric.
- Carefully label all pattern pieces and transfer any construction markings to the full-size pattern.
- If a corset and other undergarments are to be worn, the body measurements should be taken in these undergarments.
- It may be necessary to use different scales for different parts of each garment even if the pattern pieces for each part are in the same scale. For instance, the bodice may require a larger scale than the skirt, especially if a corset will not be worn beneath the finished garment.
- The length of most skirt patterns is not proportional. Regulate the length of skirts by personal length measurements.
- Always remember to add wearing ease to your body measurements before figuring the scale on which to enlarge your pattern. If you make your pattern to your exact measurements, the resulting garment will be skin tight, and will probably rip with every movement. Ease must be added to make clothes fit comfortably. The typical 1890s waistline had about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1" ease, and the average snugfitting bustline had about  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " of ease. Because there is no "standard" body, testing and perfecting the pattern in muslin before cutting out the fashion fabric is advised.

## GENERAL DIRECTION.

### TO TAKE MEASURES.

Great care should be taken in getting measures. (See illustration below.)

#### TAKE BUST MEASURE

with the tape measure straight around the largest part of the bust, as shown below, high up under the arms; take a snug, close measure neither too tight nor too loose.

#### TAKE MEASURE AROUND THE WAIST

as tight as the dress is to be worn.

#### TAKE LENGTH OF WAIST

from the large joint where neck and body join, down to the waist. Care must be taken to get this measure.

#### SLEEVE MEASURE

is taken from the center of back to wrist joint, with arm raised and elbow bent.

#### IN CUTTING

a garment look carefully at the drafts being copied; use numbers and curves as shown in draft.

#### THE ARROWS

are used for two purposes— one to show which way to turn the curve, the other the number of points to be connected with the curve.

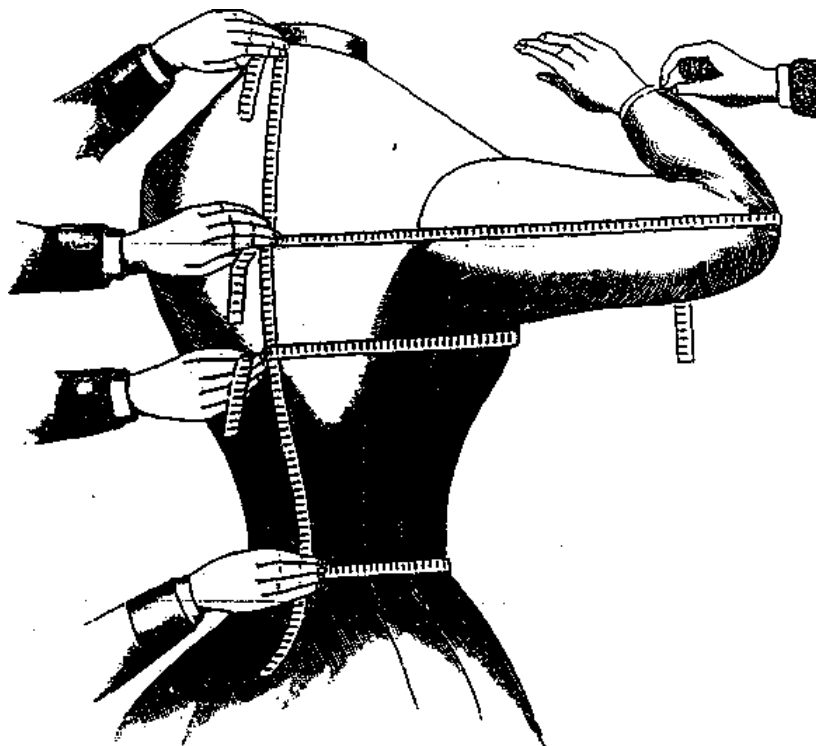
#### THE CURVE

should always be turned with the largest part in the direction in which the arrow points.

When the arrow is placed *between* two lines it shows that only two points are to be connected.

When the arrow is placed upon a *cross line* it shows that three points must be connected with the curve, that the point by the arrow is the middle one, and the points nearest on each side must be connected with the curve at the same time with larger part of the curve turned in the direction the arrow points.

The letter A in corner of draft is the starting point in making draft.



TAKING

MEASUREMENTS.

### **DIRECTIONS FOR BASTING.**

FIRST : - Smooth, even tracing is very necessary. Place the pattern smooth on lining crosswise. Trace each line carefully. Cut out the lining same as pattern. Place the lining straight on the goods, the nap, if any, running down. Pin the lining at the waist line. Full the lining (from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches) each side of the waist line, from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches below the waist line to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches above, the greatest fullness coming at the waist line; this shortens the lining, but when boned it will be stretched to place. Leave the lining easy each way, from top of darts to shoulders, and one-fourth of an inch full at center of shoulder line. Never backstitch in basting or draw the thread tight.

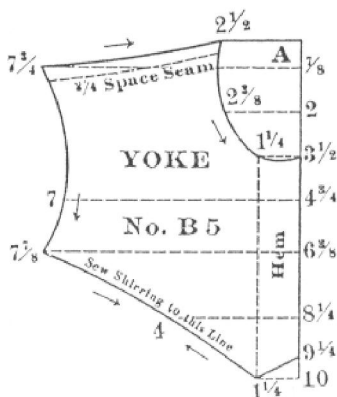
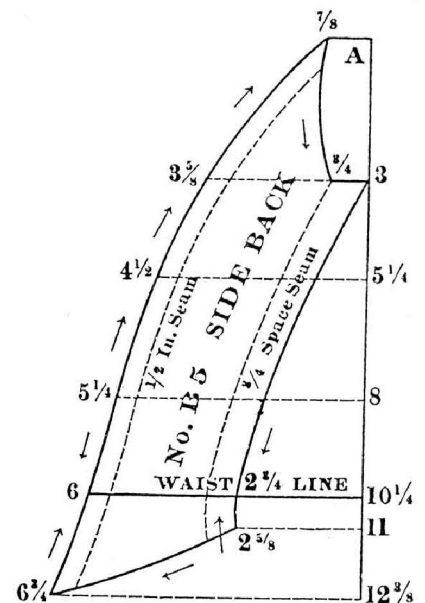
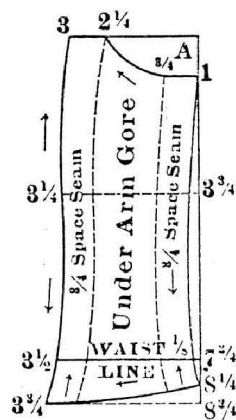
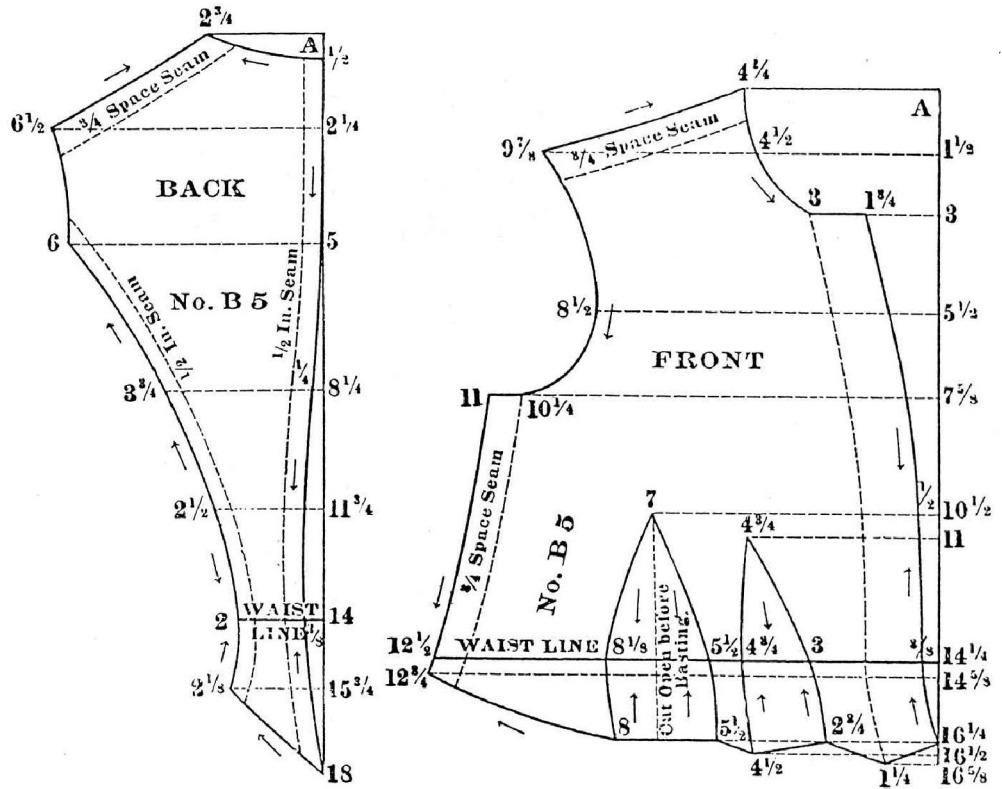
In joining the different parts together, care must be taken, as smooth, even basting is necessary. Pass the needle exactly through the traced seam lines on both sides of the seam, as many garments are ruined by careless basting.

In joining the back and side-back, hold the side-back to you, thus you will baste one up and the other down. It is a good idea to pin these pieces before basting. If the shoulder blades are prominent, hold the back piece a little full where the shoulder blades strike to within  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches of arms-eye. In basting the shoulders, hold the back to you. Baste evenly for one inch, then stretch the front shoulder to match the back, for the Lack is always cut longer.

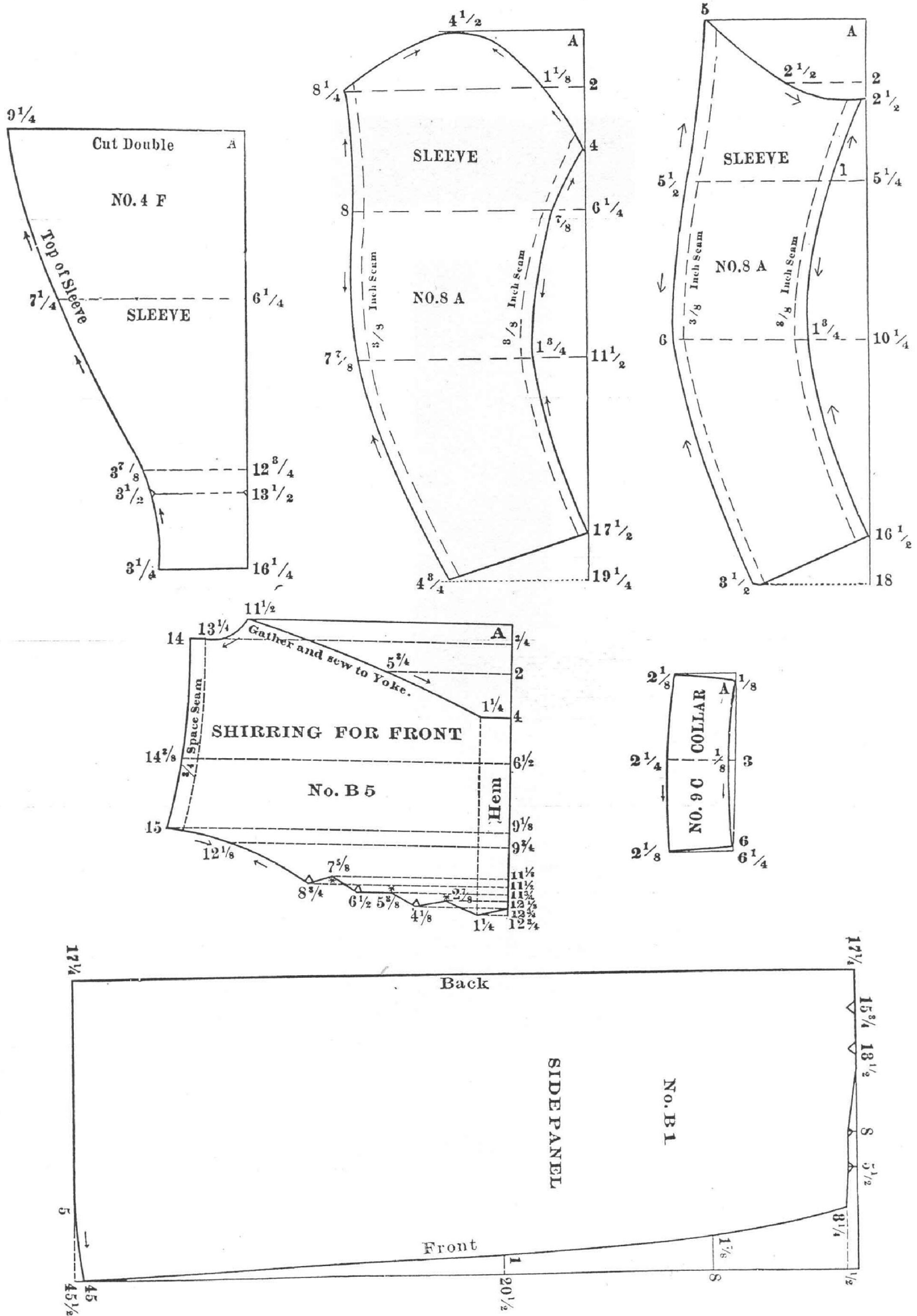
## LADIES' COSTUME.

Use the scale corresponding with bustmeasure to draft the waist and sleeves which consists of Front, Back, Side Back Under Arm-Gore, Yoke, Shirring, Collar, Puff for the Sleeves and two Sleeve Portions.

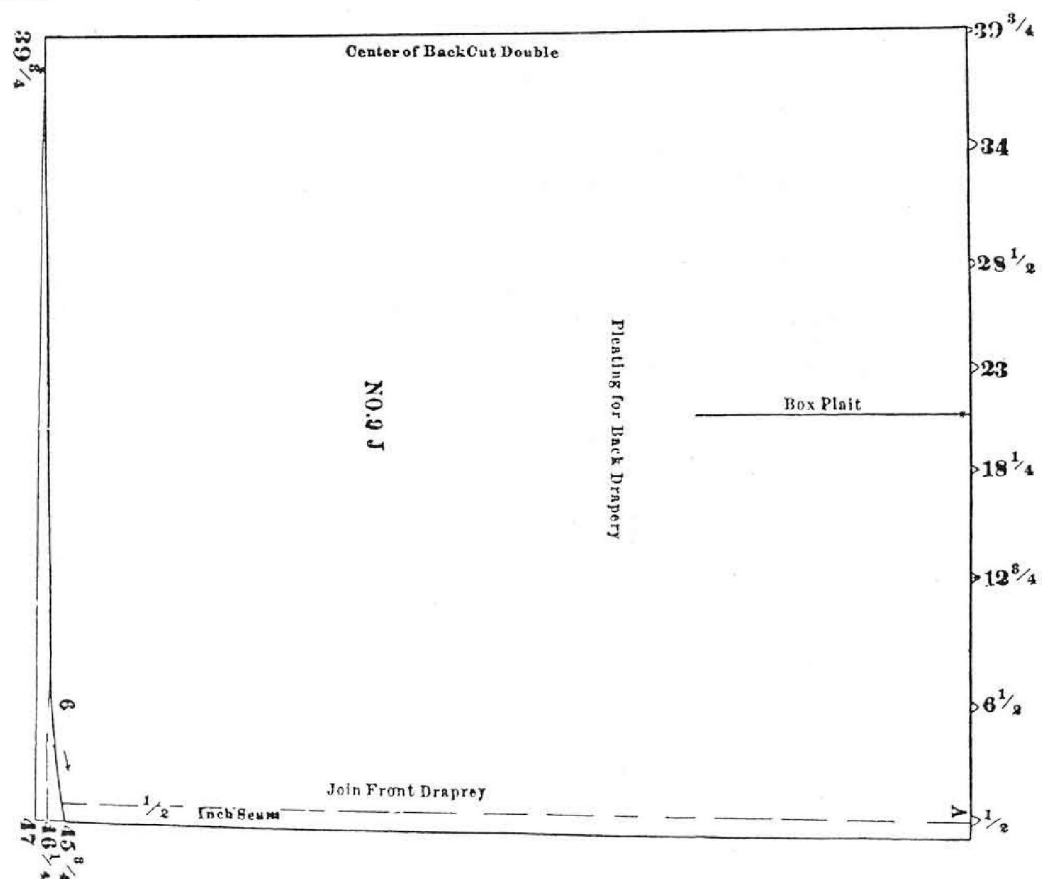
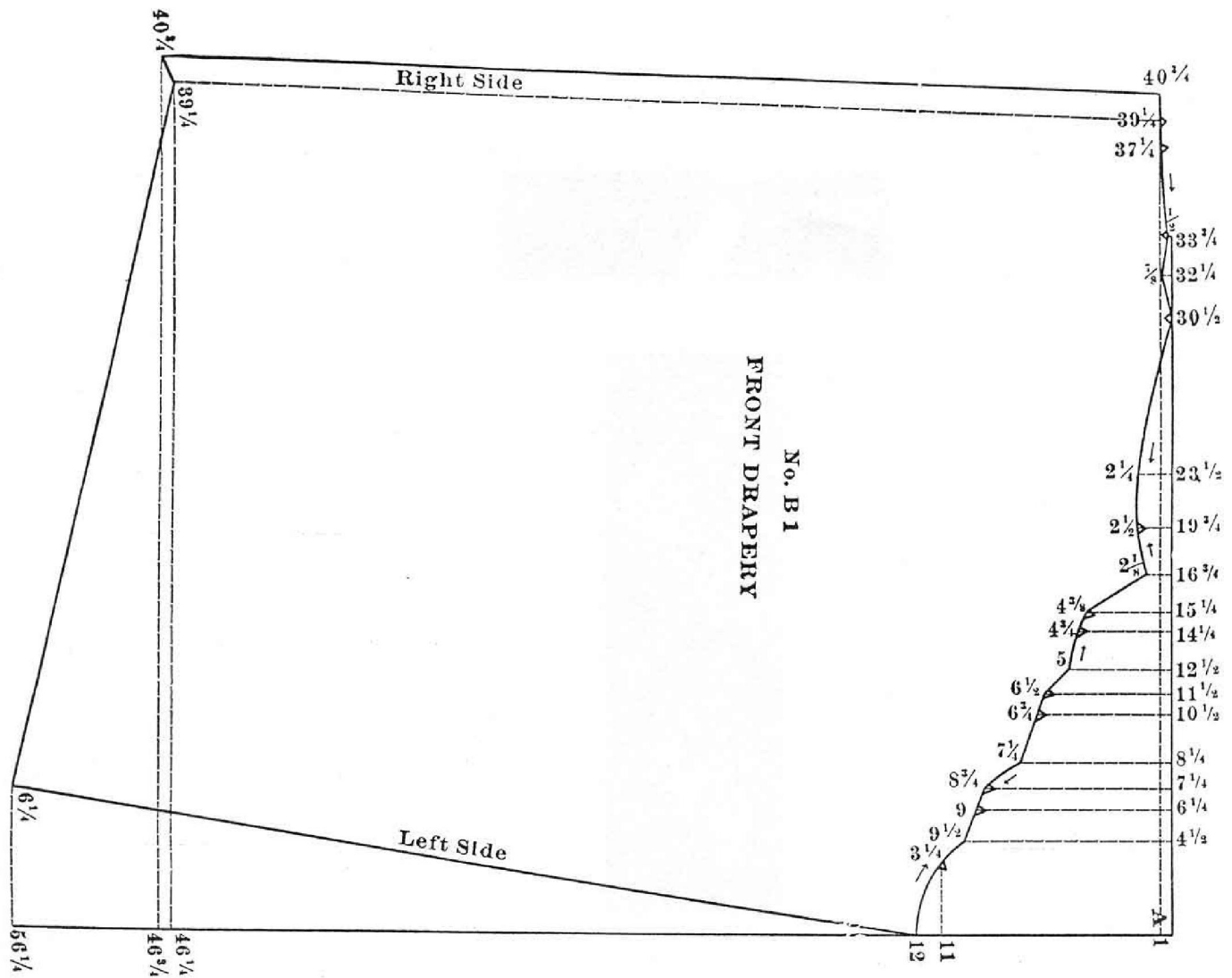
Gather the portions for the full front at the top and sew to the yoke. Lay the pleats at the bottom according to the notches; join to the under front at the under arm and shoulder seams; close in front with hooks and eyes.



## LADIES' COSTUME—Continued.

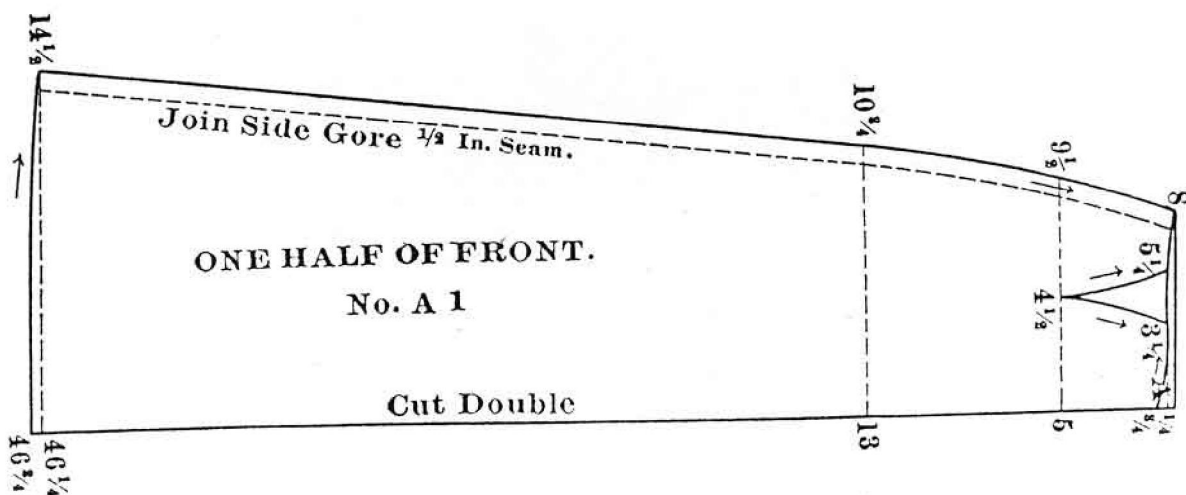
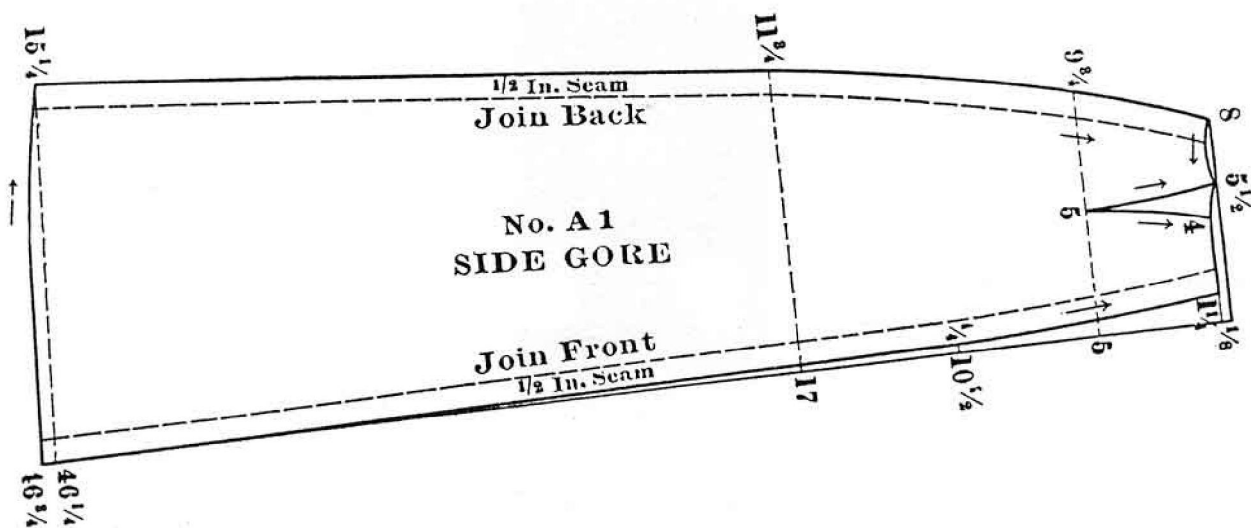
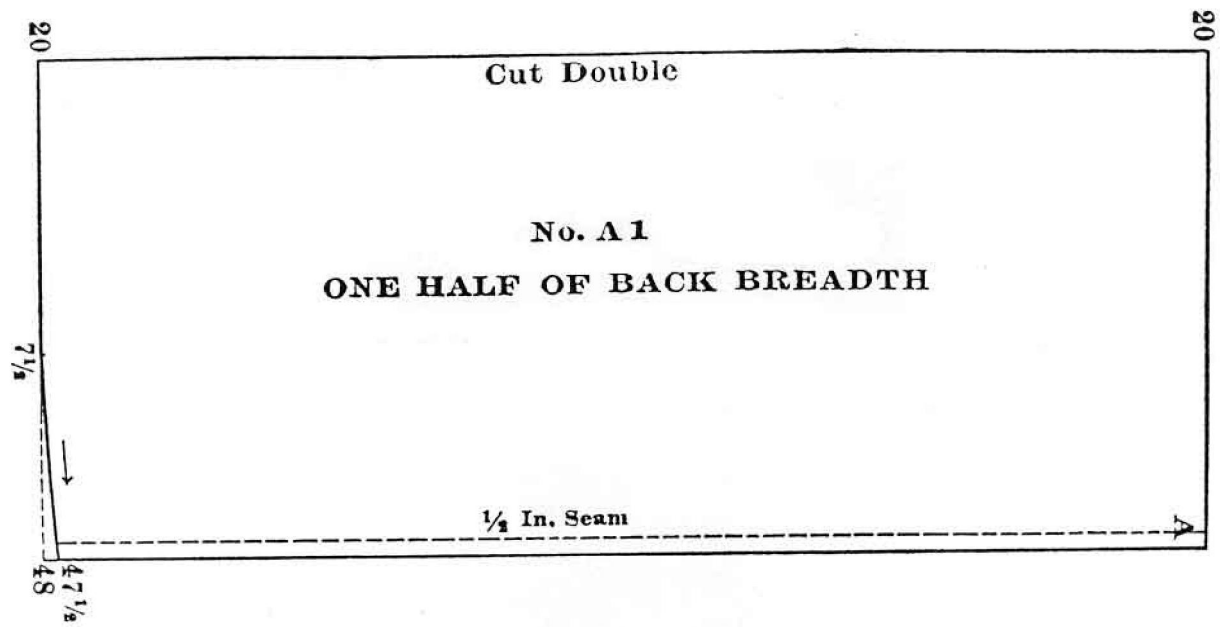


## LADIES' COSTUME—Continued.



Fall 1890

## LADIES' STREET COSTUME – Continued.

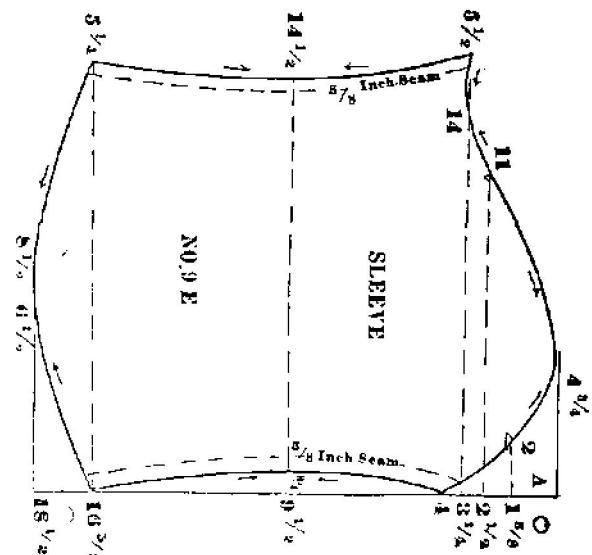
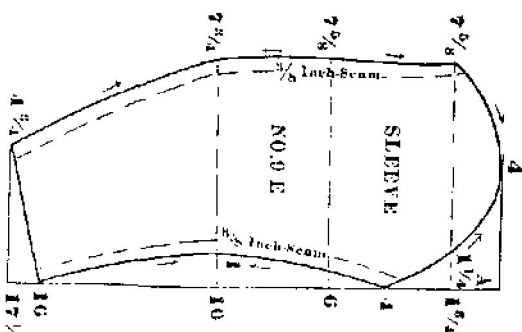
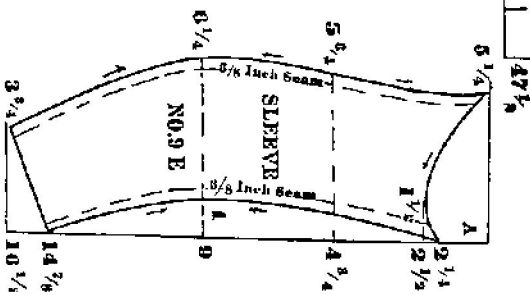
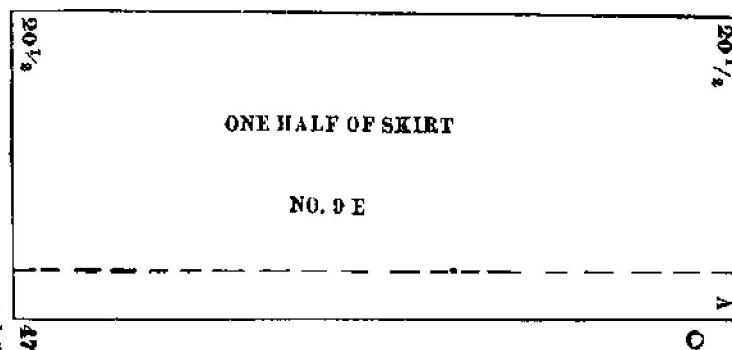


## CHILD'S BLOUSE COSTUME

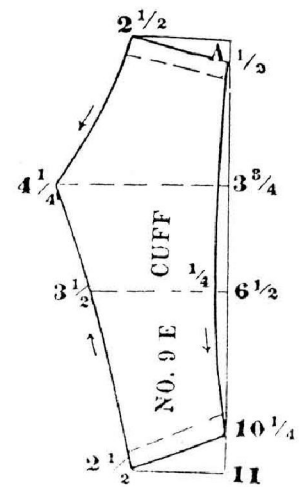
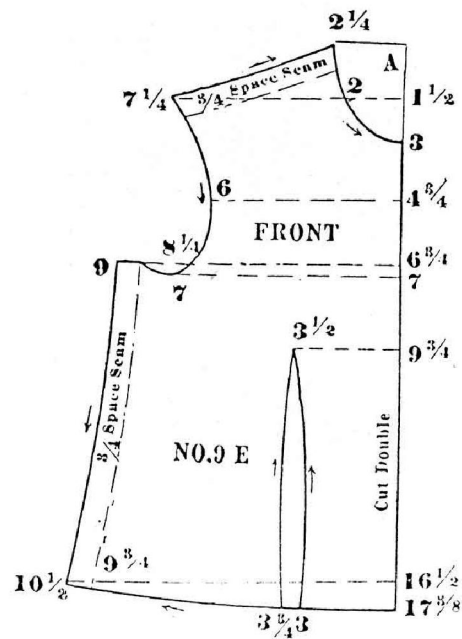
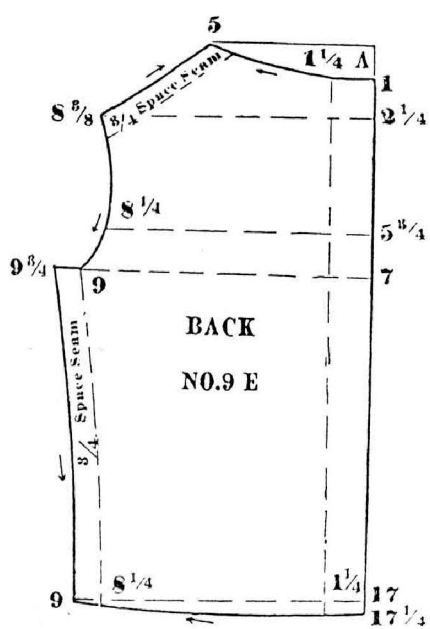
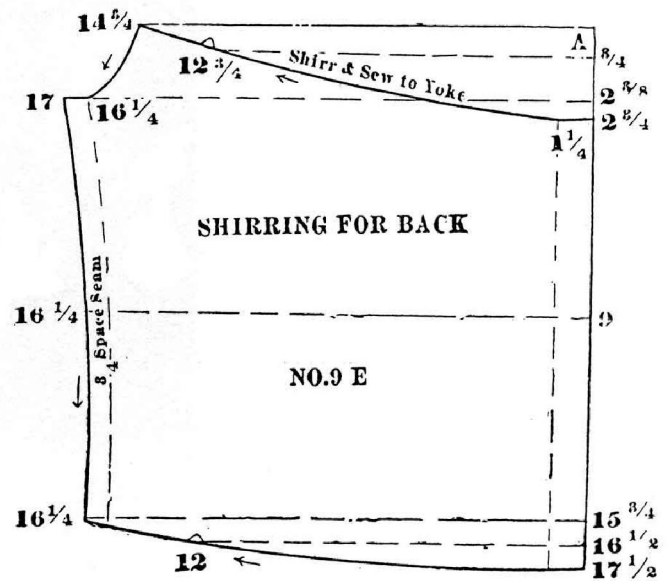
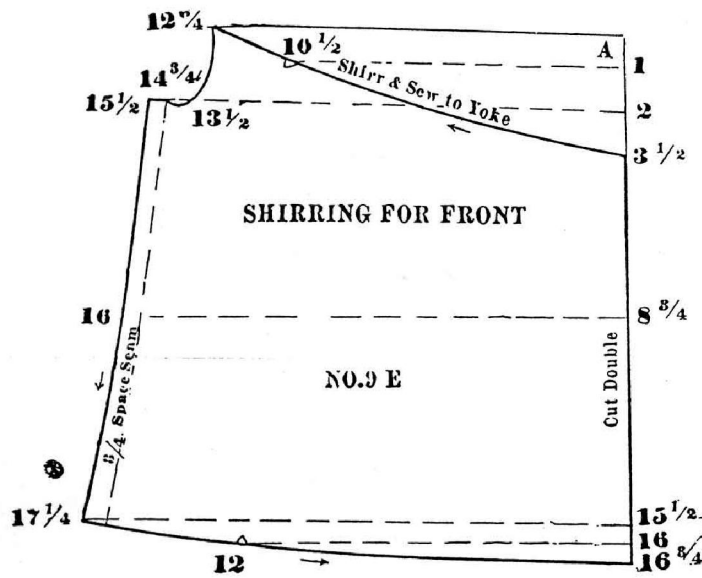
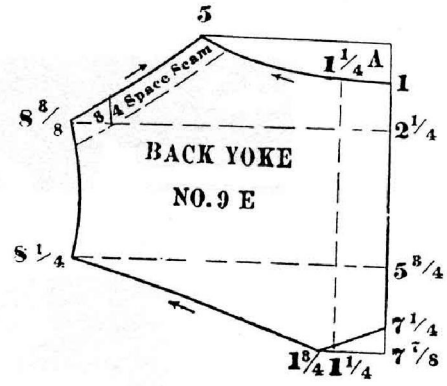
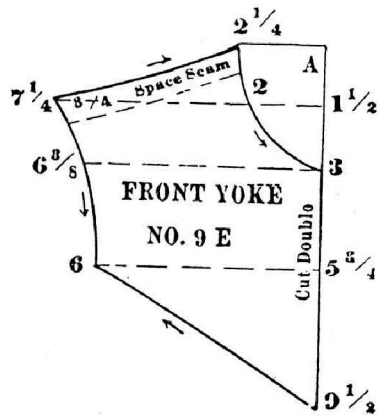
Use the scale corresponding with the bust measure to draft the waist and sleeves. It consists of nine pieces.

The blouse consists of front and back yokes, shirring for front and back, cuff, and three sleeve portions. Gather the front and back portions, and sew to the yoke; also gather the lower edge and sew to under waist. If made to wear during the warm season, omit the under waist; simply gather and sew to the skirt; bind the seams underneath to keep it in place. Gather the full sleeve at the top and bottom, and baste on the tight sleeve at the top and bottom.

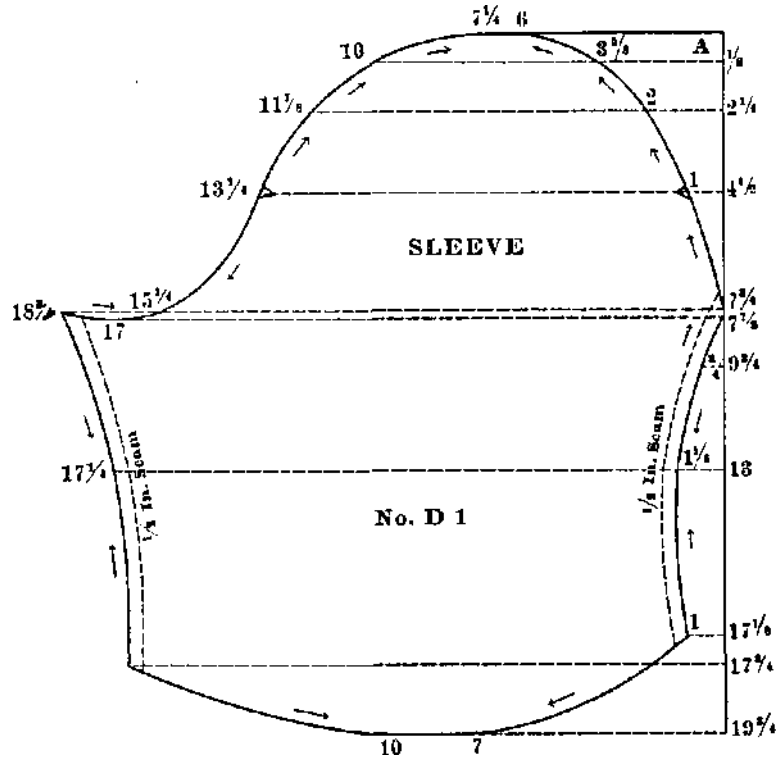
The skirt is drafted by the waist measure. Regulate the length by the tape measure.



## CHILD'S BLOUSE COSTUME – Continued.



## LADIES' WRAP.

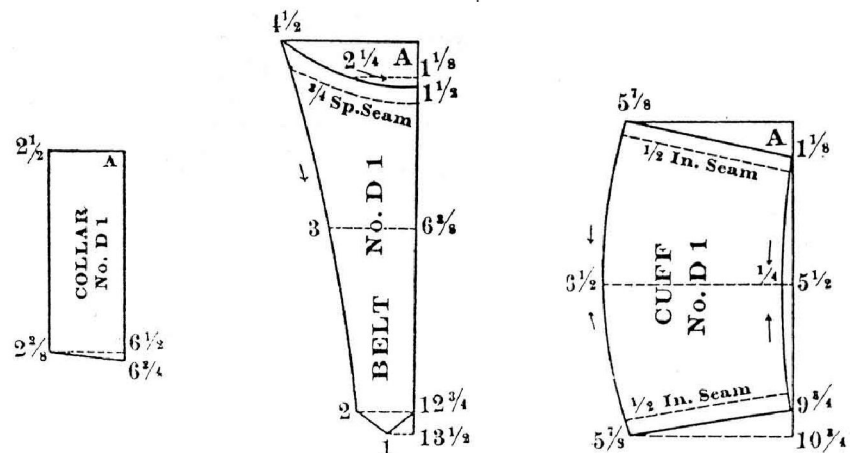
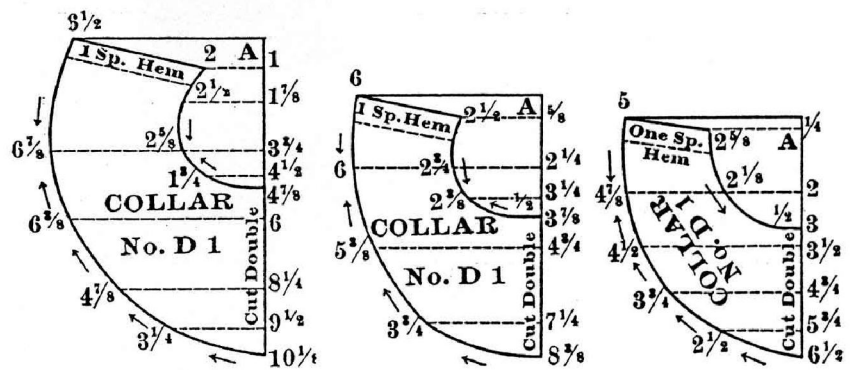


## LADIES' WRAP.

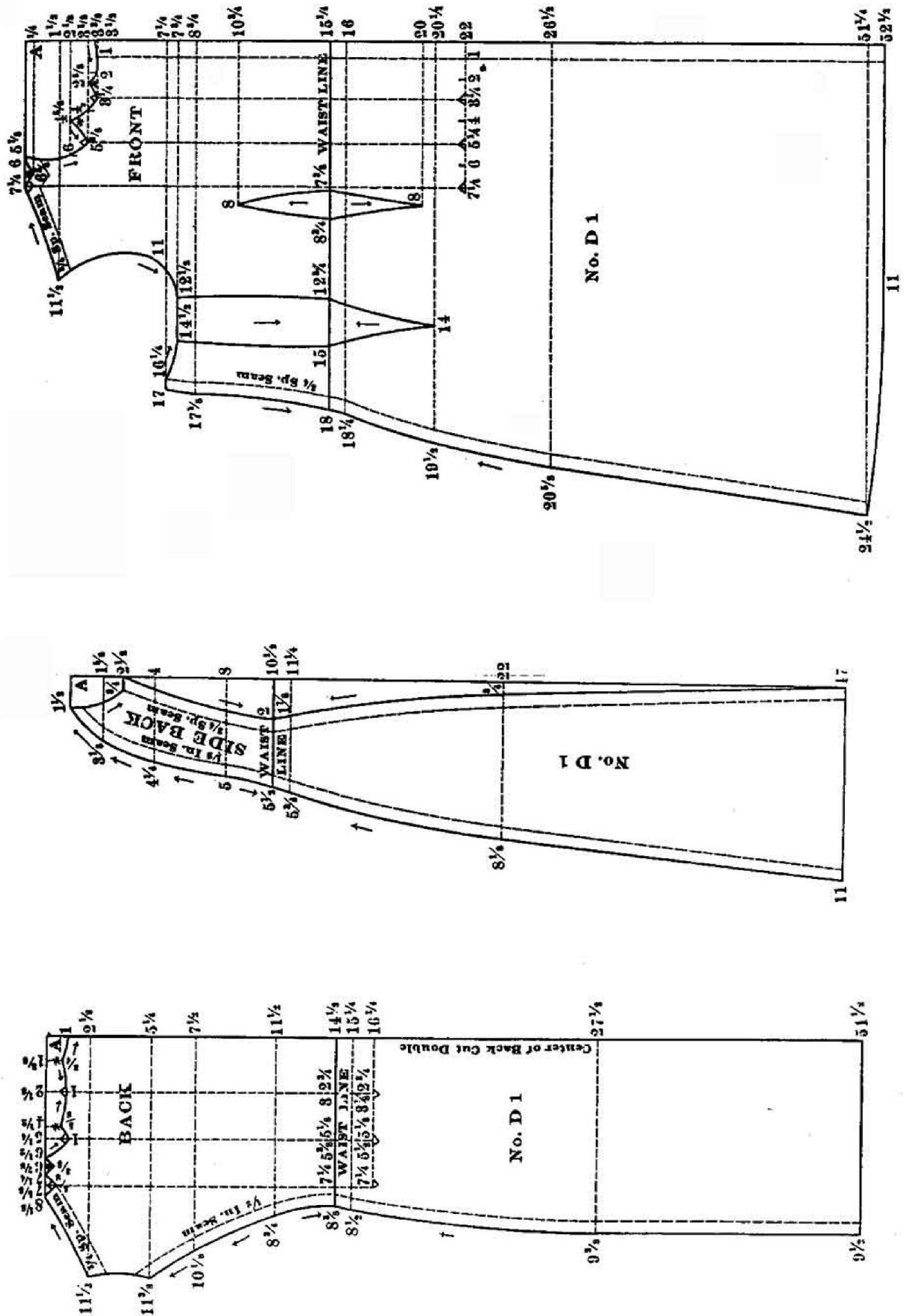
Use the scale corresponding with the bust measure to draft the entire costume, which consists of Front, Back, Side-Back, Sleeve, Cuff, Belt, and four Collar pieces. Lay pleats in the back and front according to the notches, turn the pleats toward the center, stitch each pleat down as far as the notches; press carefully. Sew the belt in the under-arm dart. Gather the sleeve at the top between the notches, and sew in the arms eye. Gather at the bottom and sew on the cuff. It would be better to make a tight lining. Cut from any of the tight sleeve patterns.

The three collars, or capes, are faced with silk.

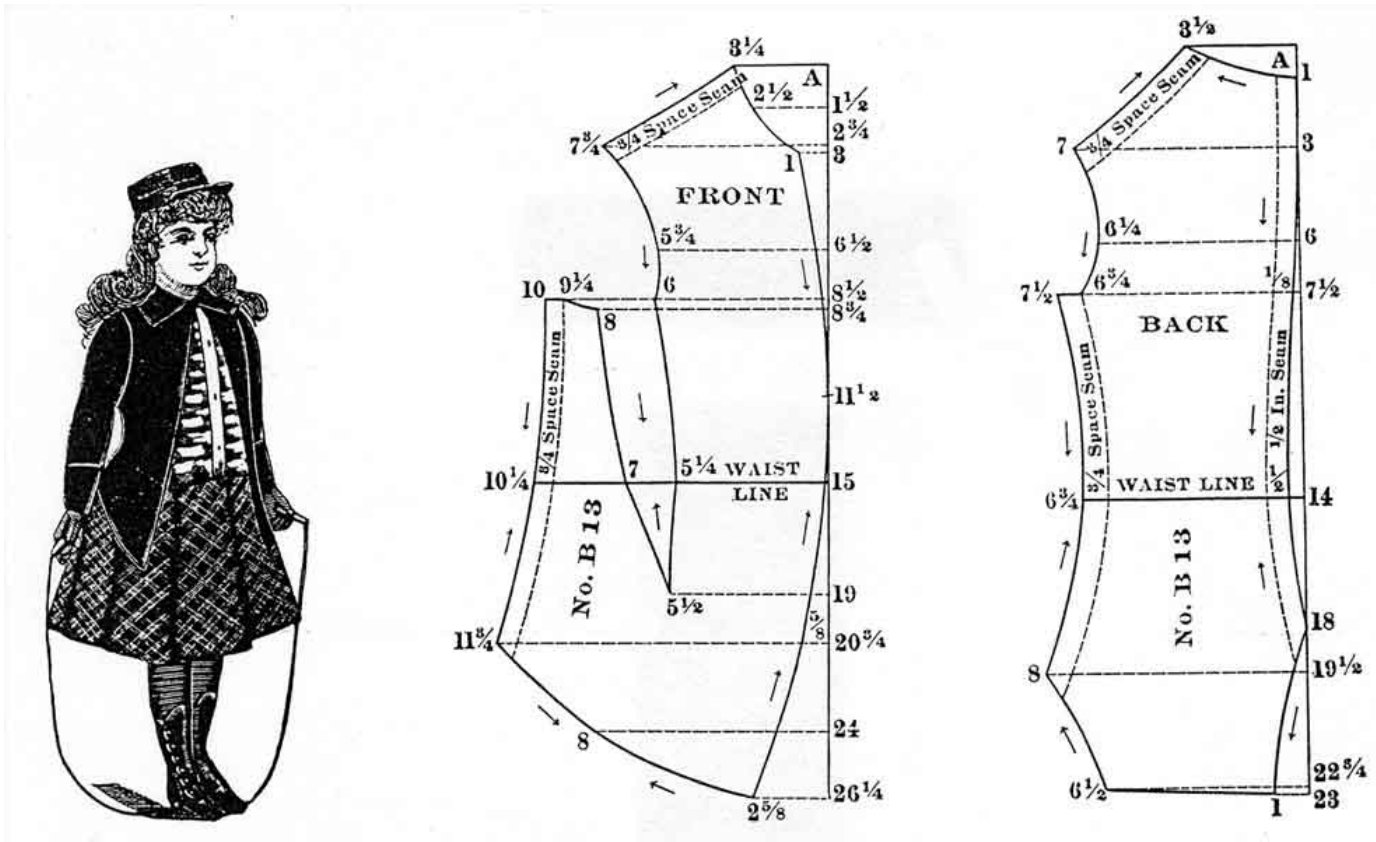
This makes a very stylish looking garment, as well as comfortable. Regulate the length 'by the tape measure.



## LADIES' WRAP—Continued.



## CHILD'S STREET COSTUME.

**CHILD'S STREET COSTUME.**

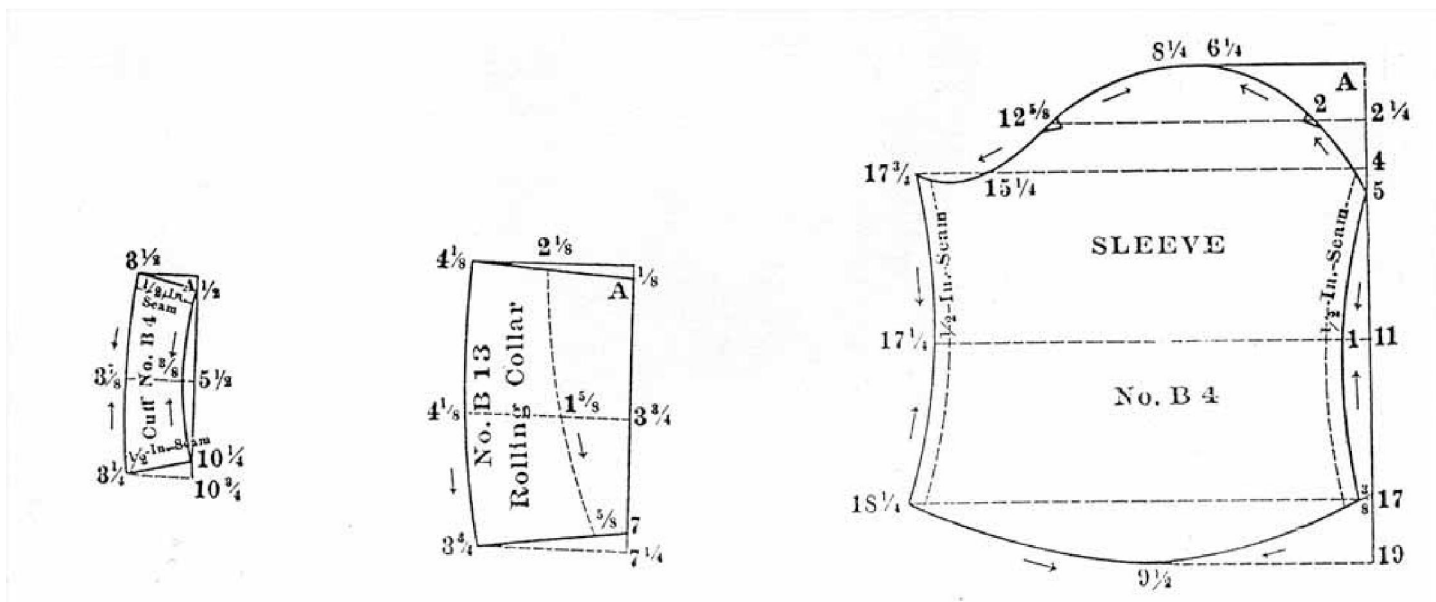
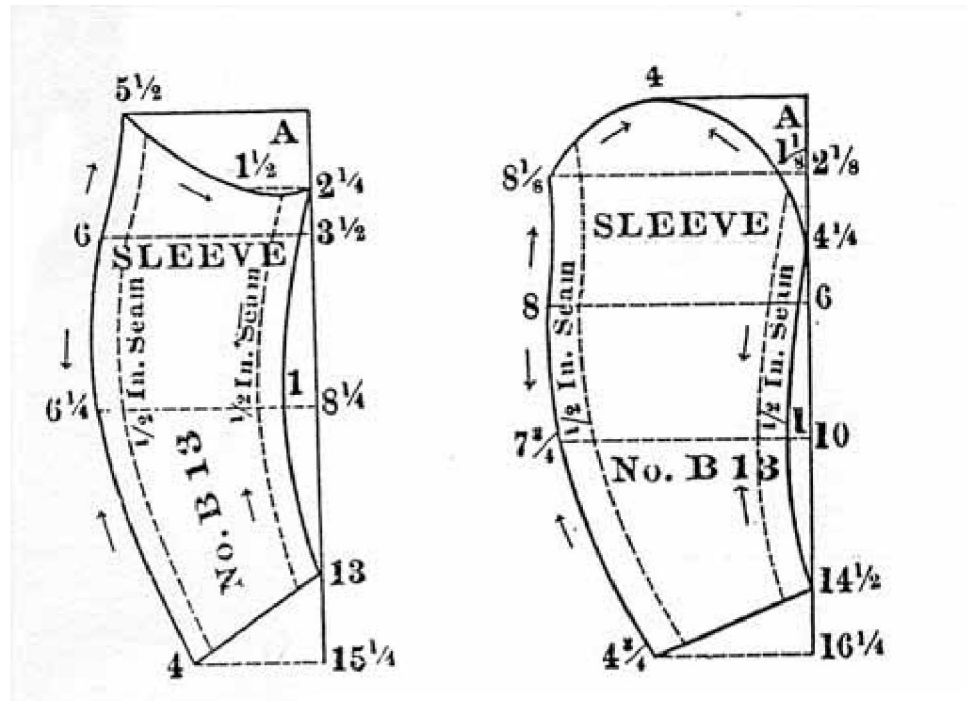
Use the scale corresponding with the bust measure to draft the jacket, blouse, waist, and also the under-waist.

The jacket consists of five pieces: Front, Back, Collar, and two Sleeve portions. Finish the bottom of this with a very fine silk cord.

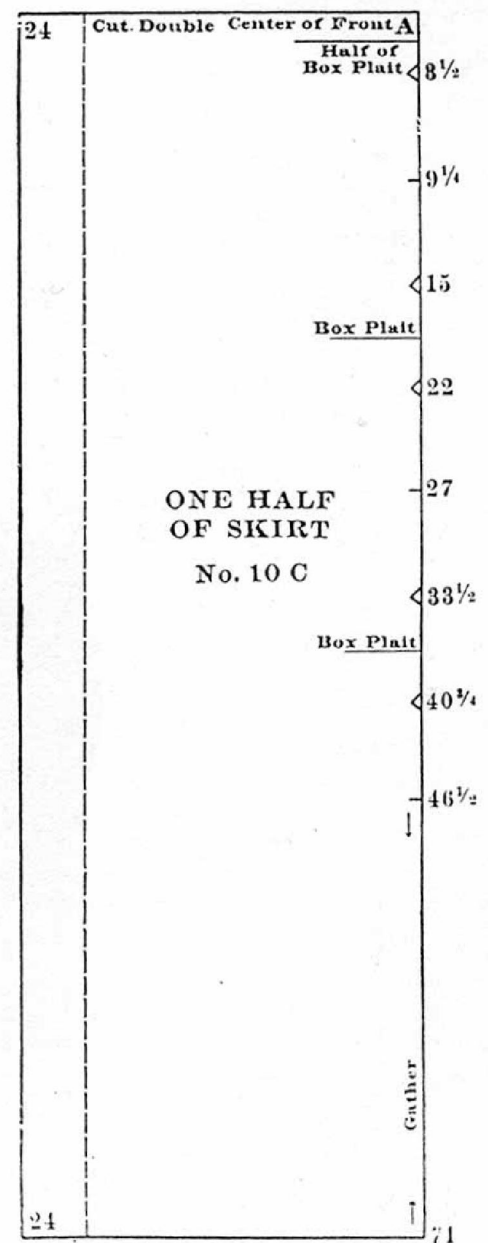
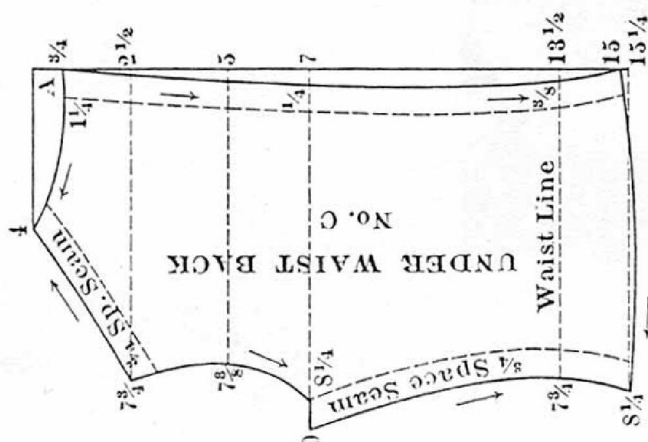
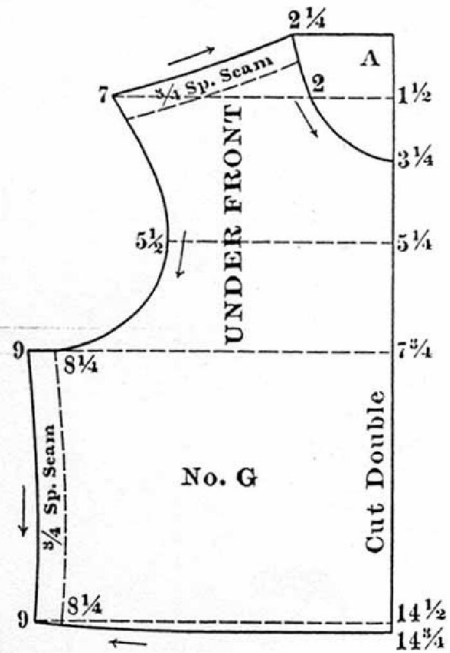
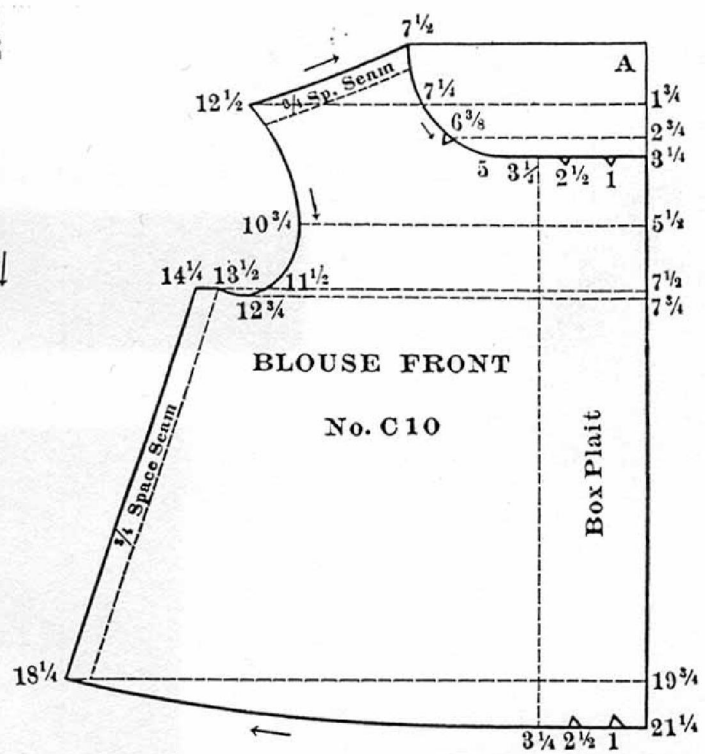
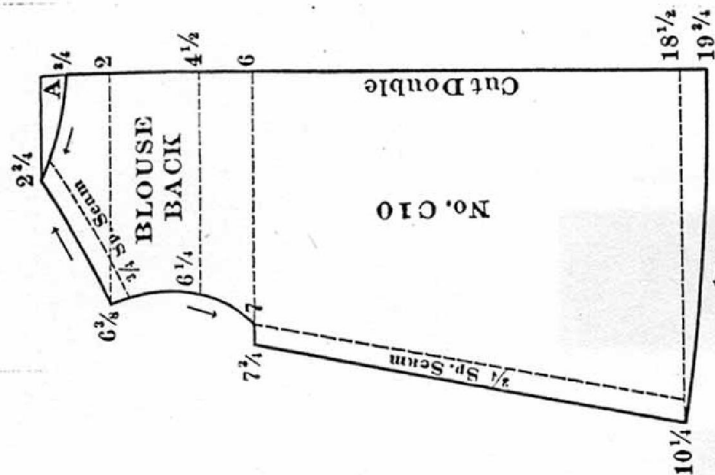
The blouse waist is in four pieces: Front, Back, Sleeve and Cuff. Gather the front to fit the neck, face the bottom, and insert a rubber cord.

The under waist is in two pieces: Front and Back. Close in the back with buttons and button-holes. The skirt is drafted by the scale corresponding with the waist measure. Lay the pleats according to the notches. Press carefully and sew to the under-waist.

Regulate the length by the tape measure.



## CHILD'S STREET COSTUME—Continued.



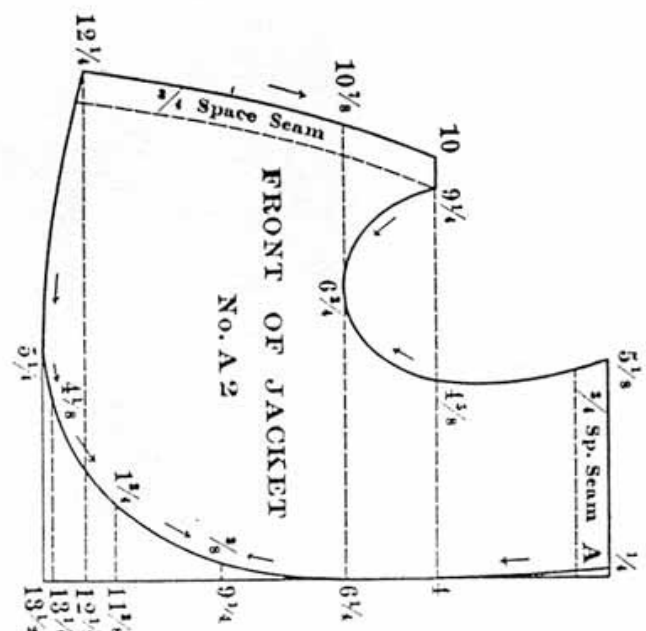
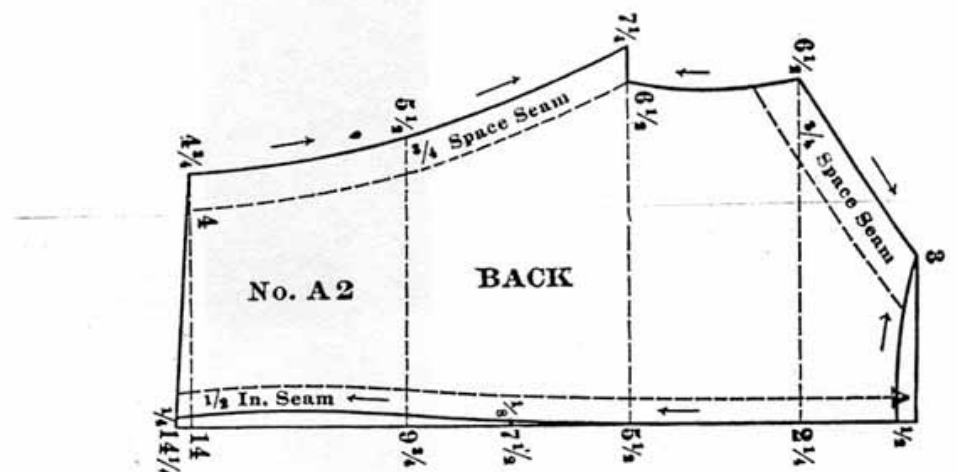
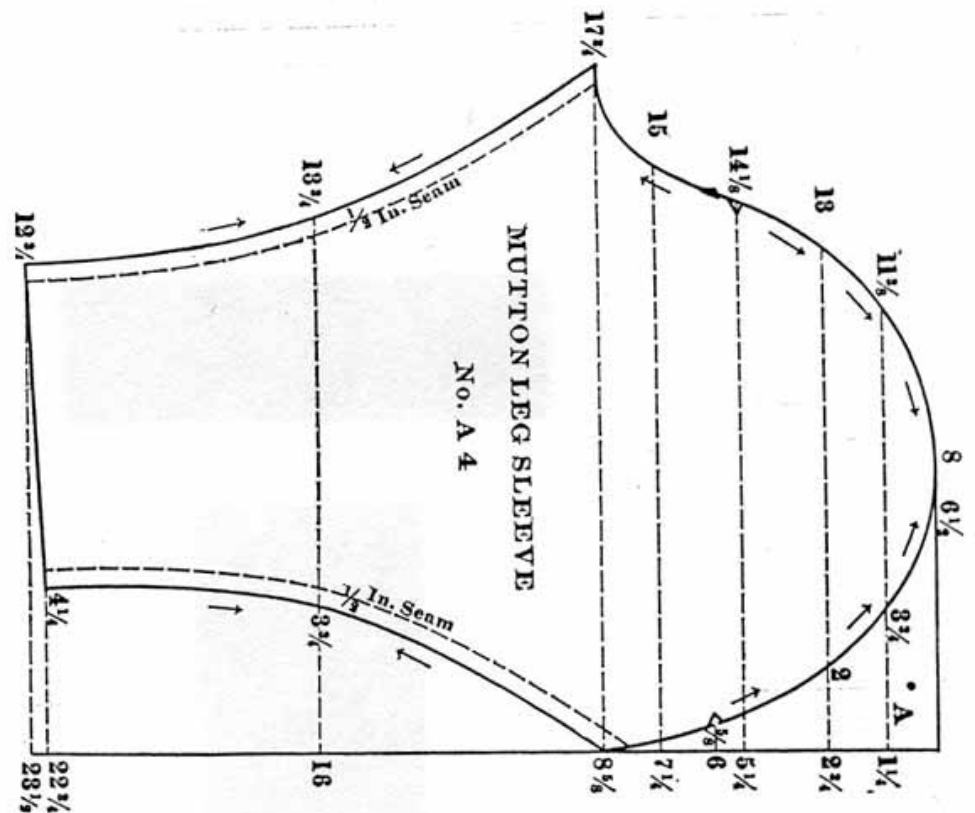
## LADIES' STREET COSTUME.

Use the scale corresponding with the bust measure to draft the waist and jacket. The waist consists of Upper and Under Front, Back, Side Back, and Under-arm-gore.

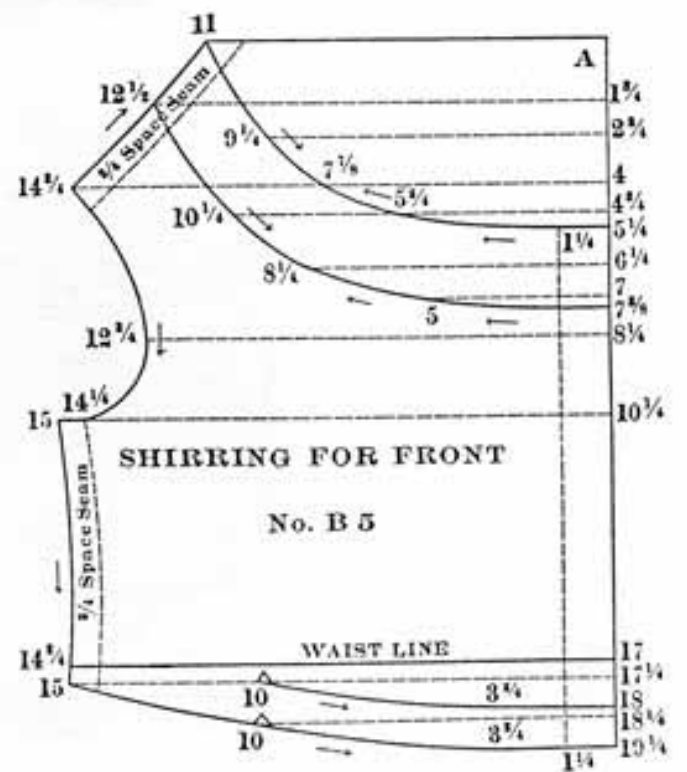
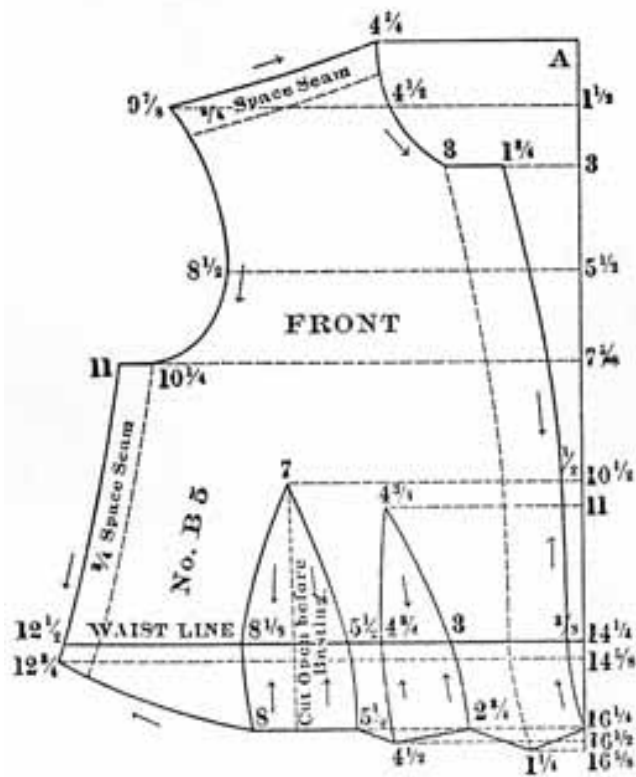
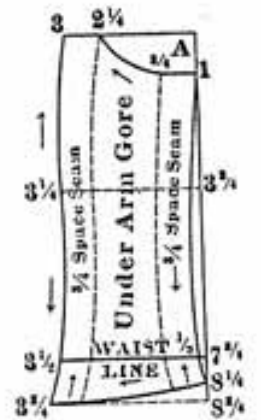
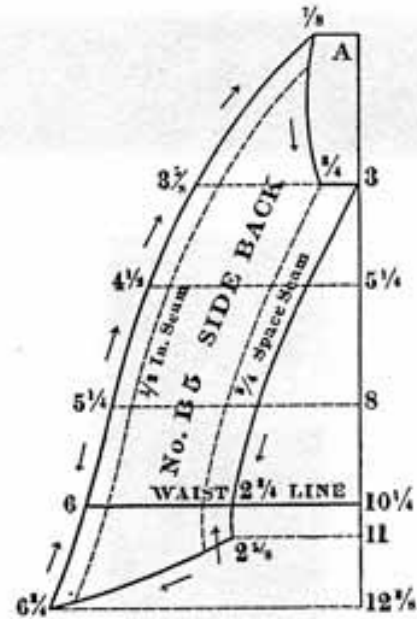
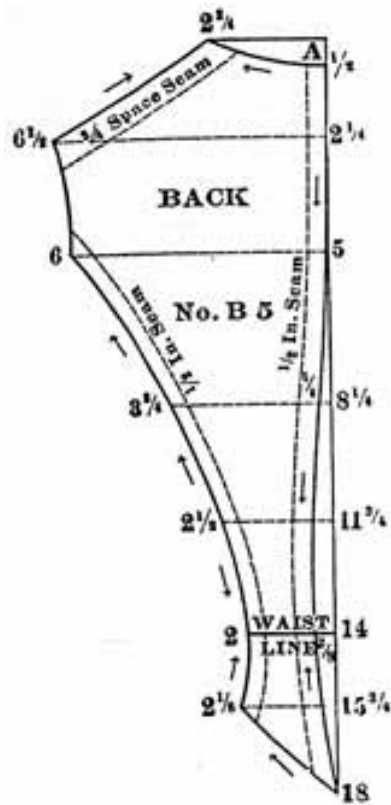
The full front is simply turned down at the top and shirred one or more times. Gather the bottom between the notches and join to the under front at the under arm and shoulder seams. Finish the bottom of the waist with a pointed or rounding belt. The sleeves may be made of the same material as the waist, if preferred. The Jacket consists of two pieces: Front and Back. Make it as long in the back as the waist can be made, of velvet or lace.

The drapery is given on page 14. Draft out by the scale corresponding with the waist measure. Is in two pieces: Front and Back. Lay the pleats according to the notches; make it as long as the skirt.

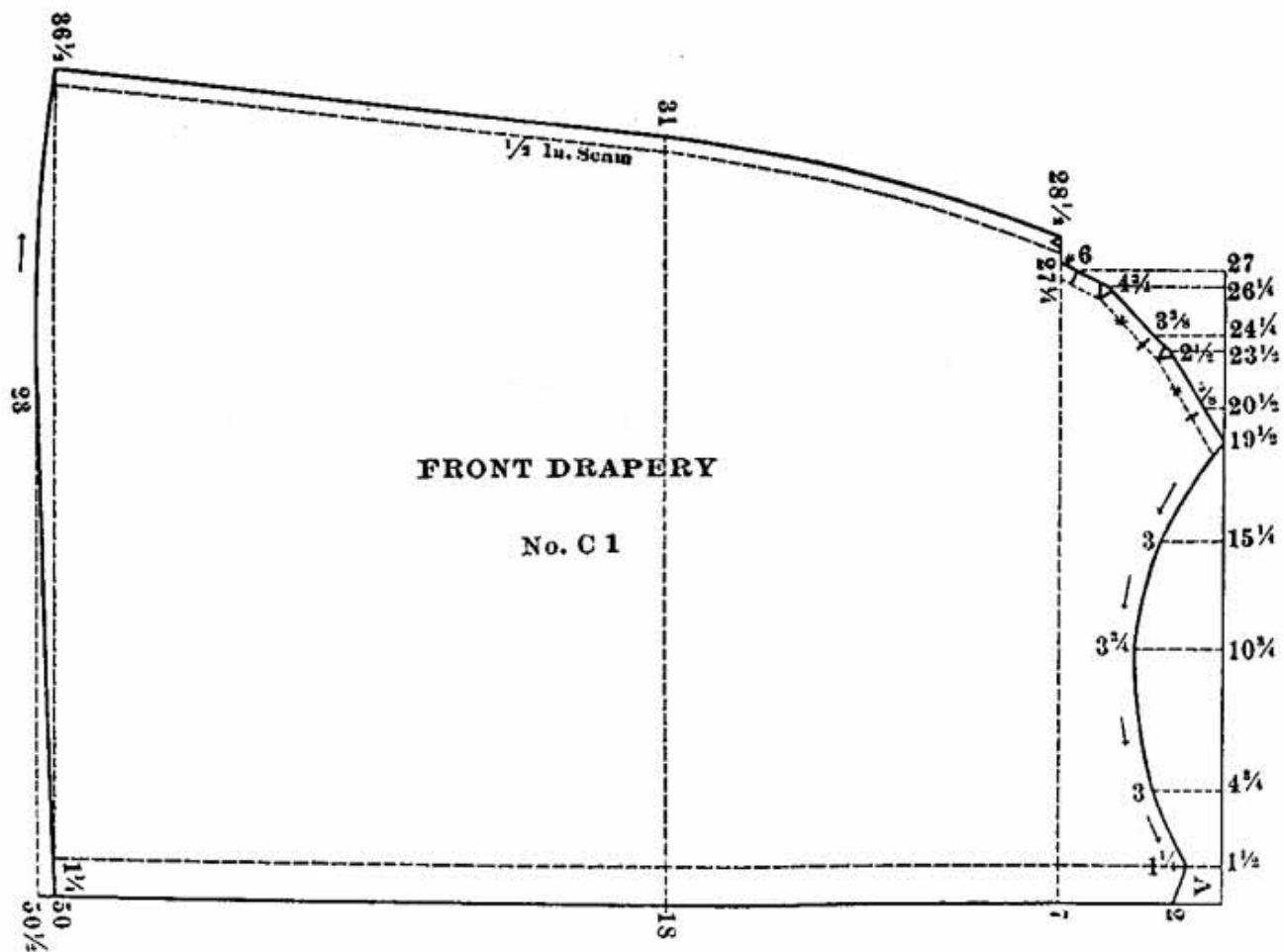
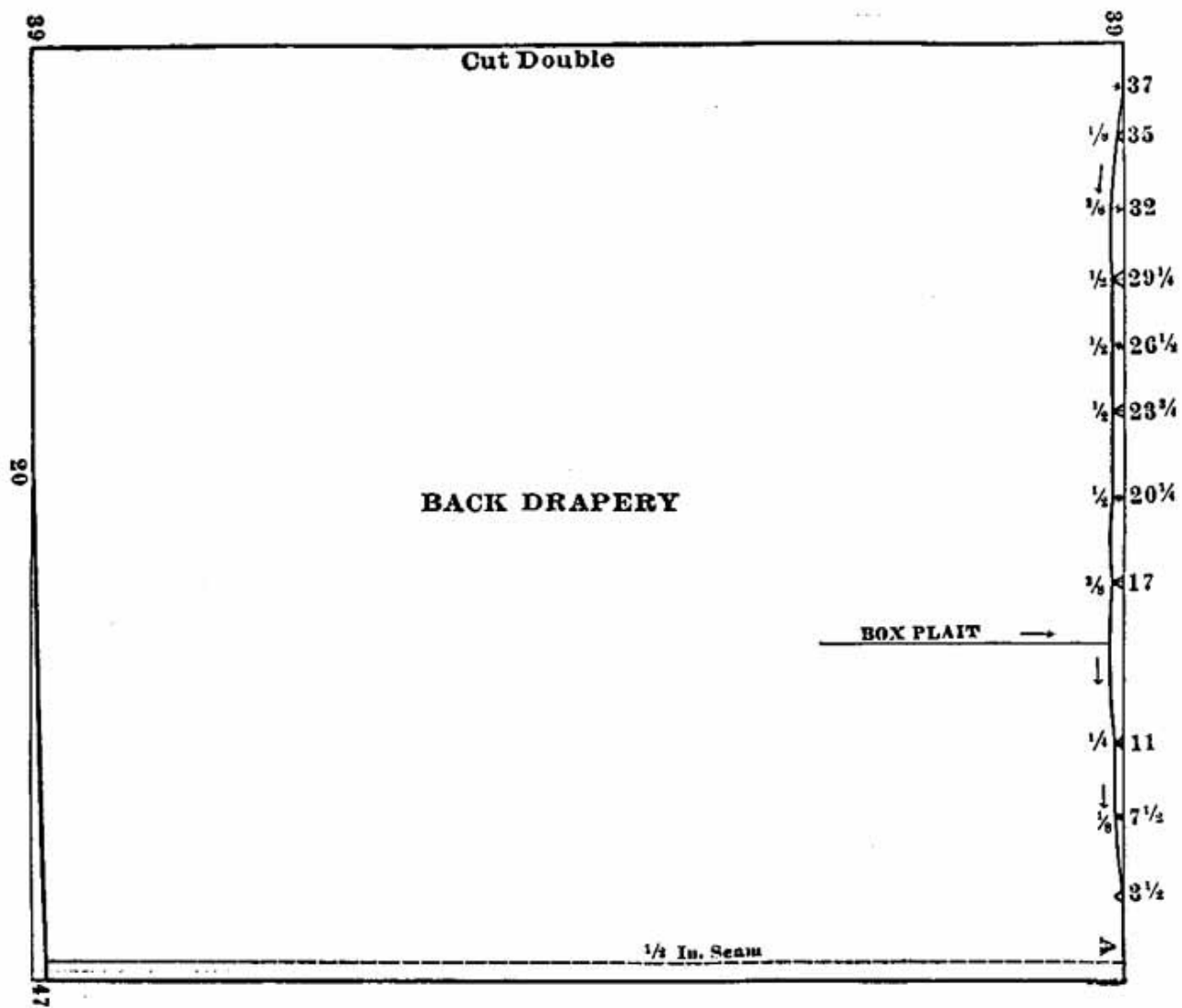
Draft the skirt from any of the plain skirt patterns given in this issue.



## LADIES' STREET COSTUME – Continued.



## LADIES' STREET COSTUME—Continued.

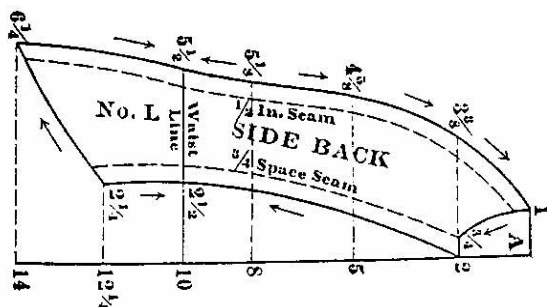
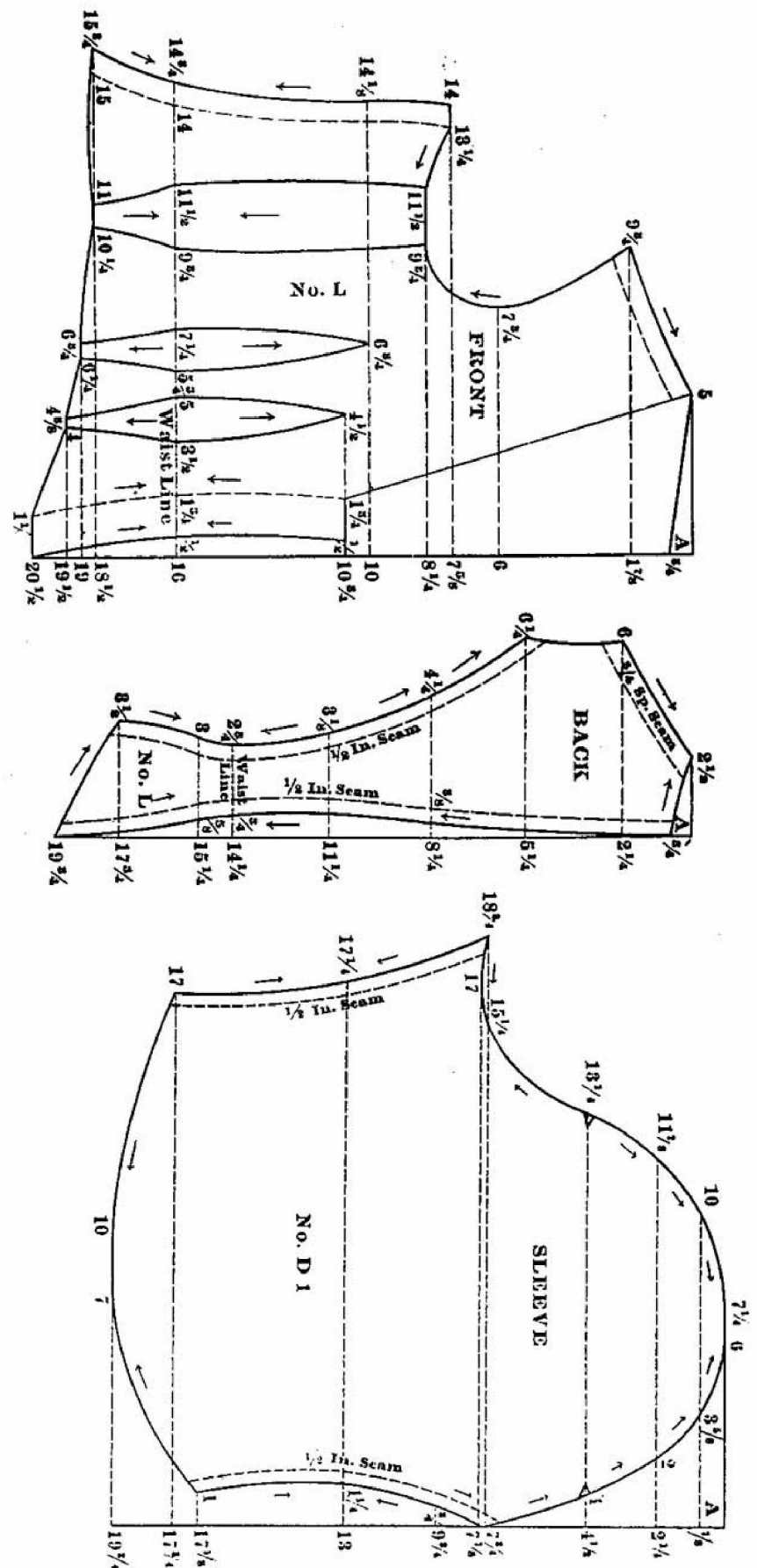


## LADIES' STREET COSTUME.

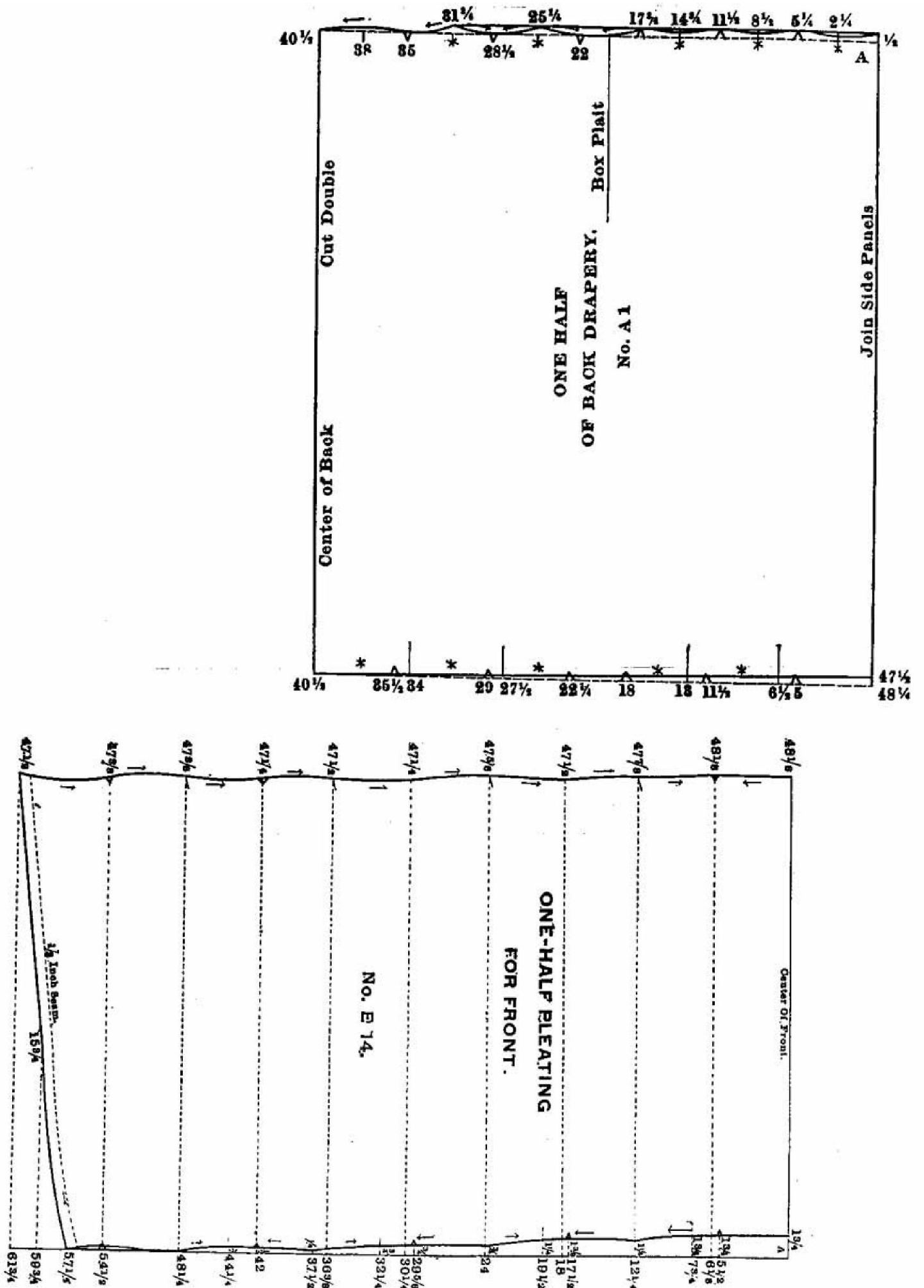


Use the scale corresponding with the bust measure to draft entire basque, which consists of front, vest, back, side back, rolling collar, cuff and sleeve.

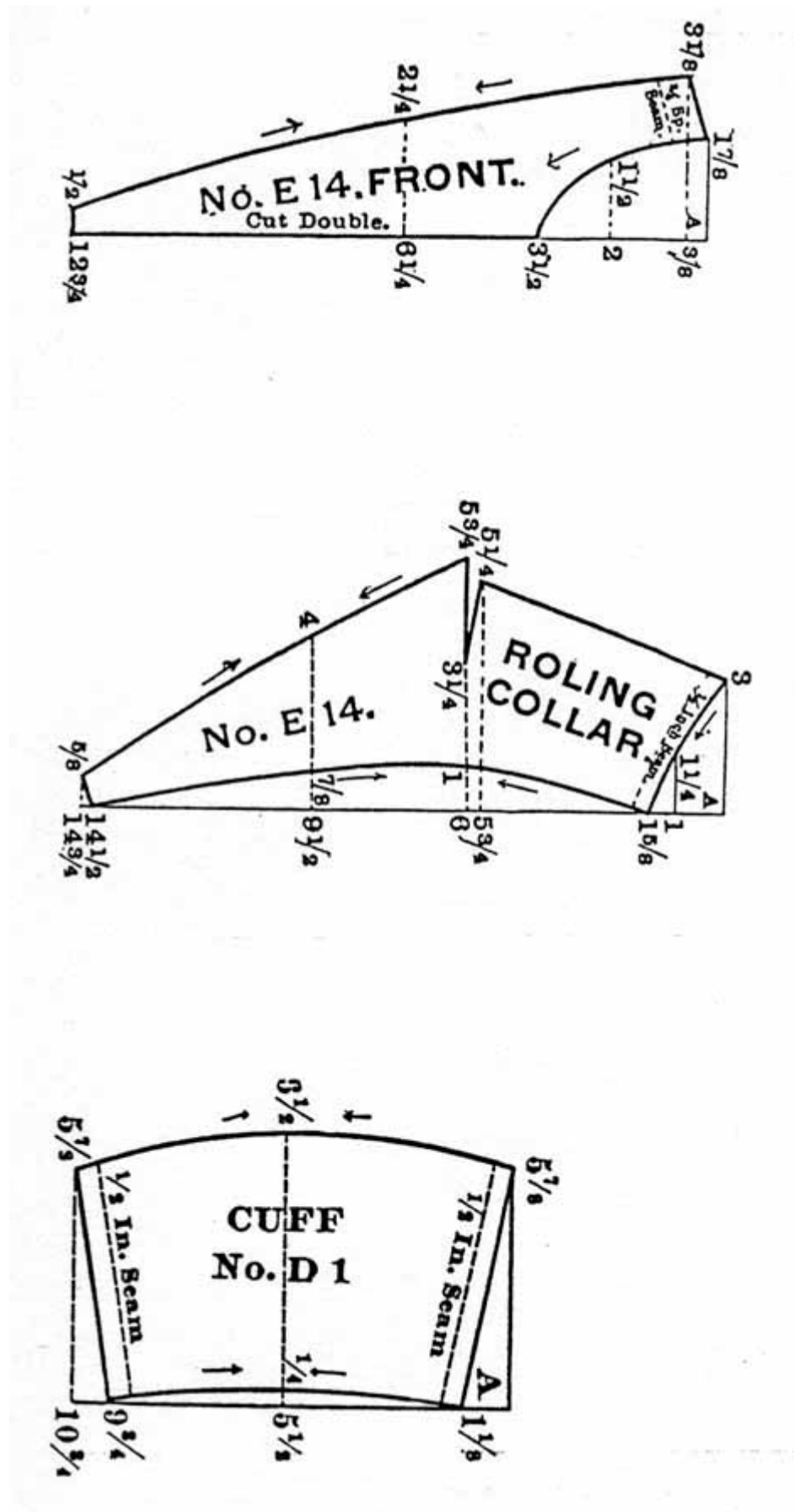
Sew rolling collar on the line running from 5, on top line, down to  $1\frac{3}{4}$ , on the seventh cross line. Sew the vest in; close with hooks and eyes. If the front is to be made as represented here without darts, cut the lining from the front given. Cut the outside on the bias and stretch it to fit the figure perfectly. Finish all around with a fold or heavy cord. The diagrams for the pleating of the skirt is given on page 16. Draft by waist measure. The foundation skirt is given on page 17. Draft by waist measure also. Regulate the length by the tape measure.



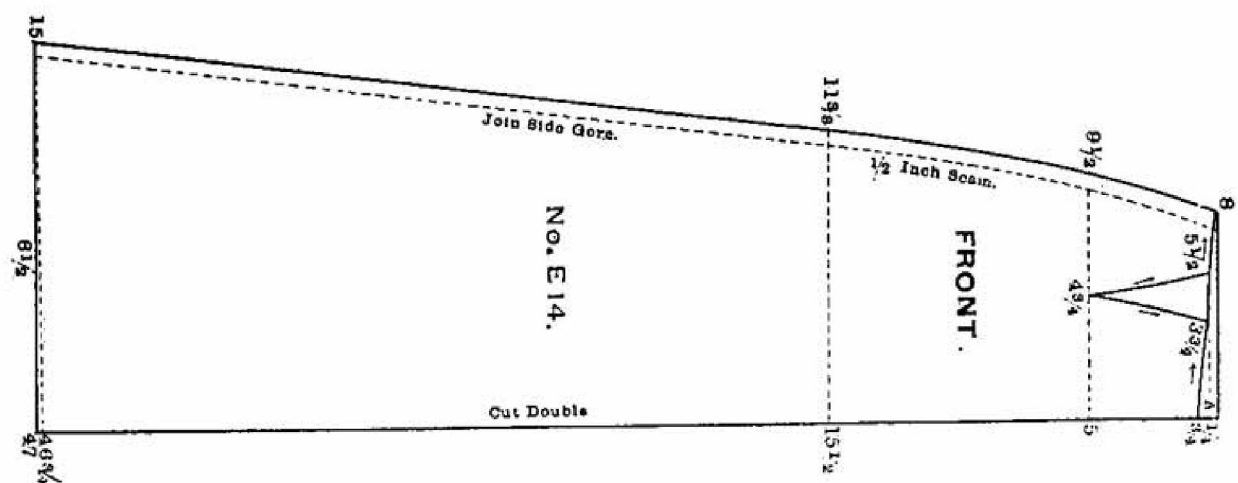
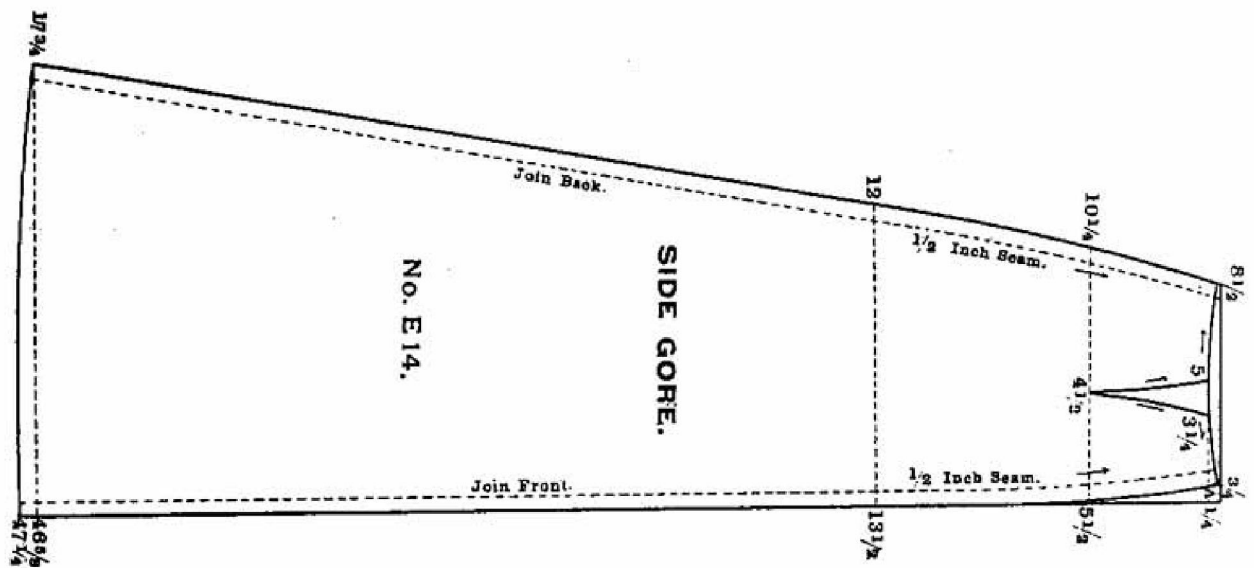
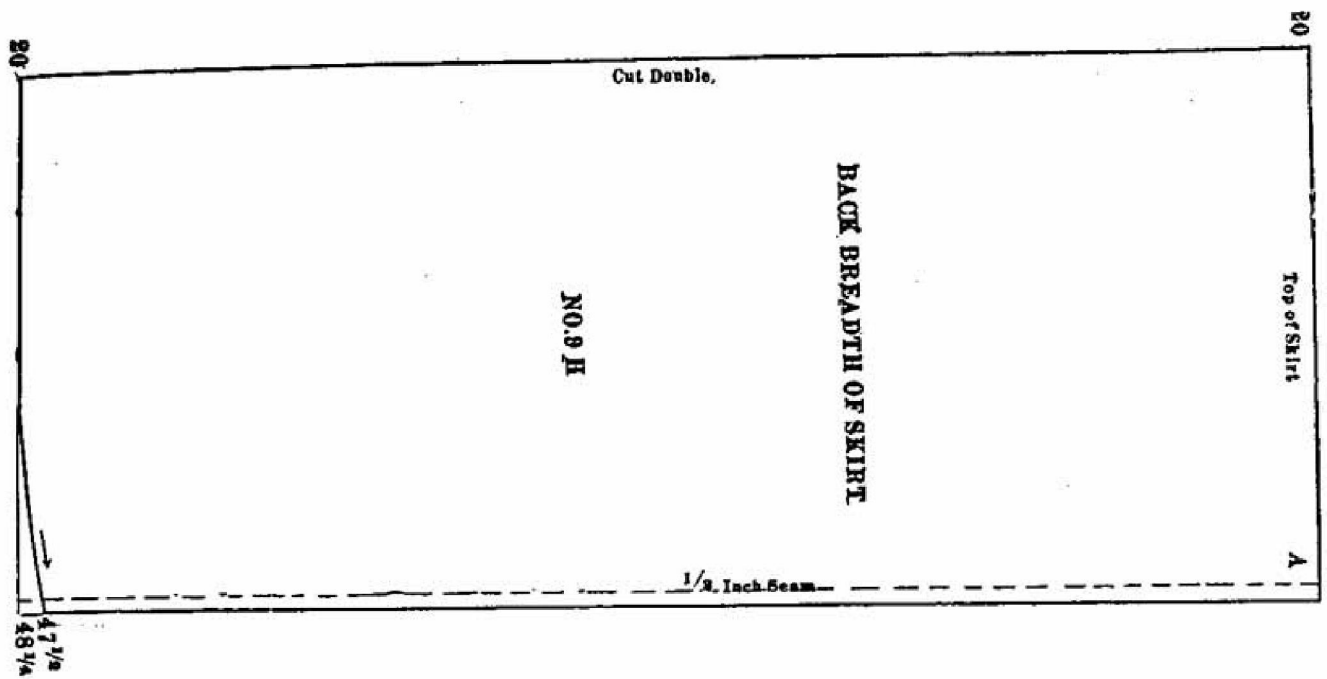
## LADIES' STREET COSTUME – Continued.



## LADIES' STREET COSTUME – Continued.



## LADIES' STREET COSTUME – Continued.



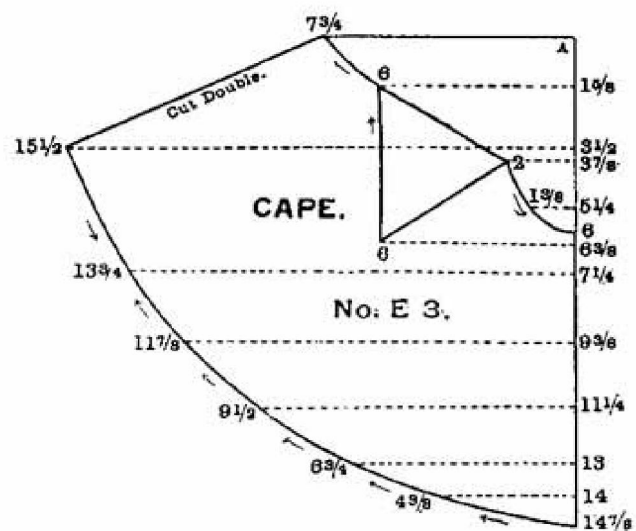
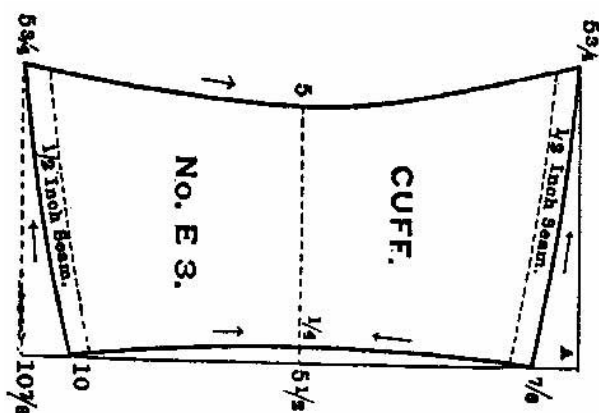
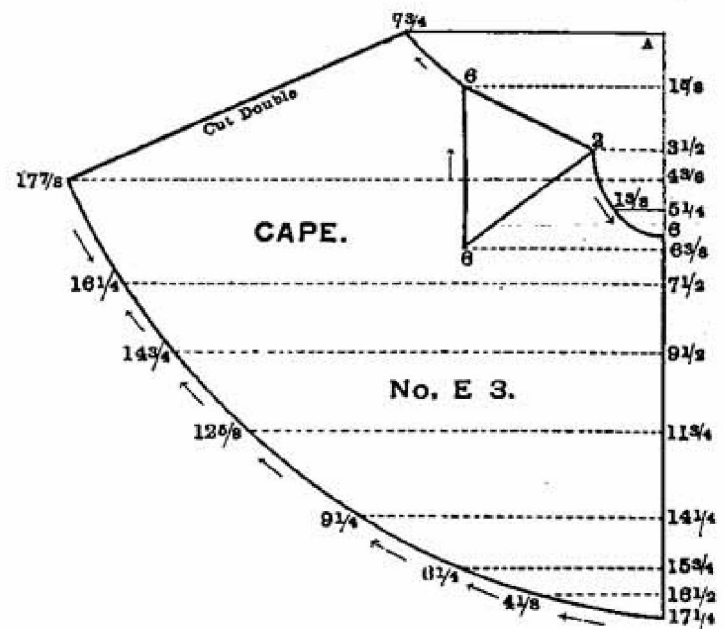
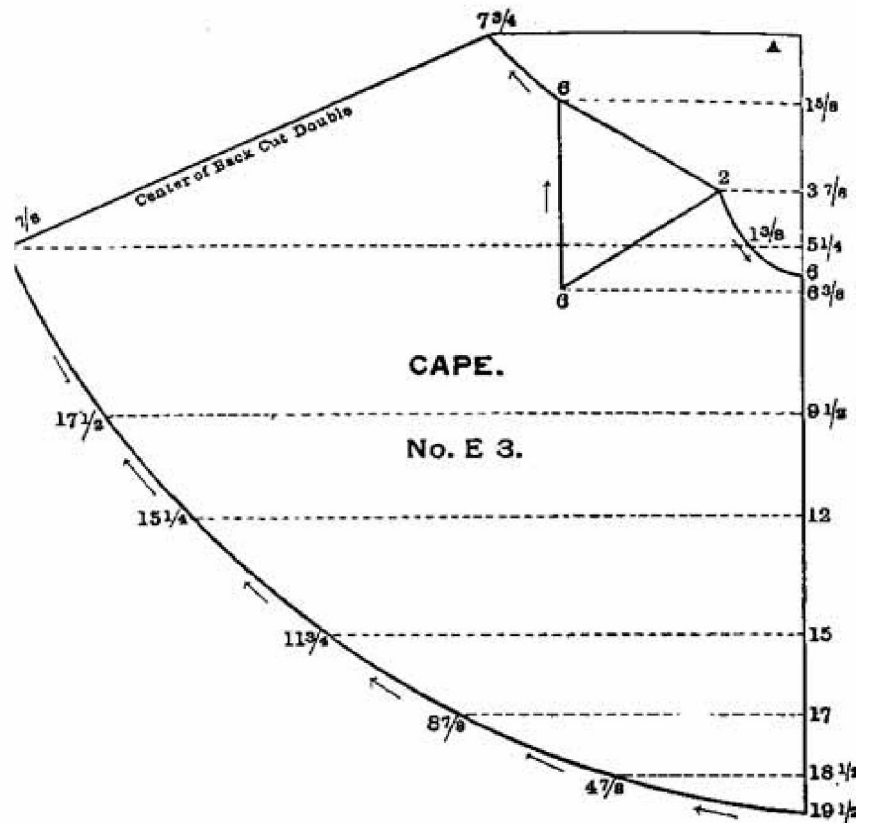
## MISSSES' CLOAK.

Use the scale corresponding with the bust measure to draft the entire garment, which consists of front, back, side-back, two sleeves, cuff and three cape portions.

Draft the same as all other garments; put the parts together as they are marked, take up the dart on the shoulders of the cape.

Make of any suitable material.

Regulate the length by the tape measure.





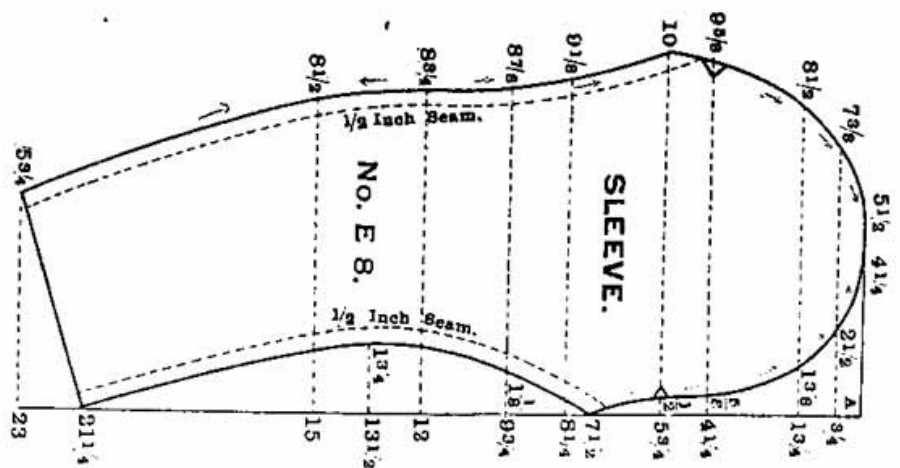
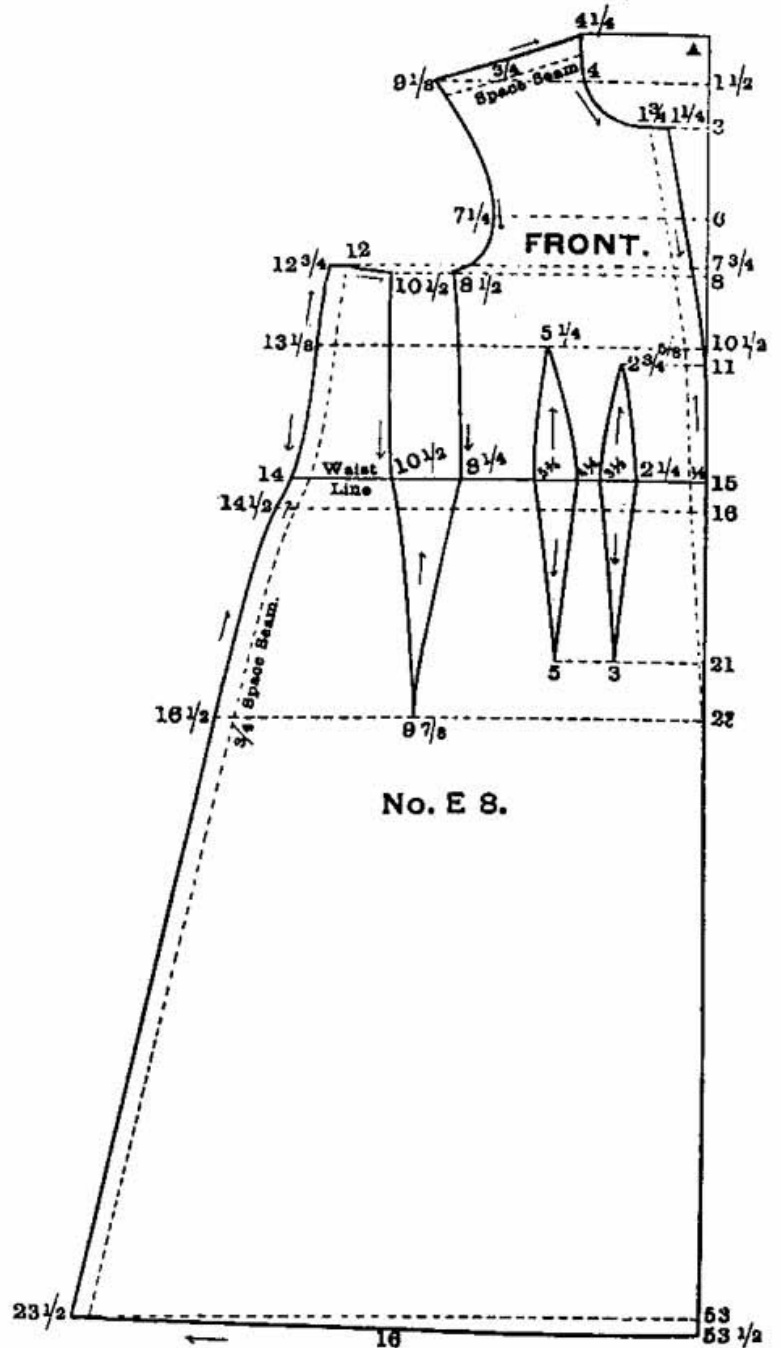
## LADIES' TRAIN WRAPPER.

Use the scale corresponding with the bust measure to draft the entire garment, which consists of front, back, side back, collar and two sleeve portions.

Lay the pleats in the back according to the notches.

Close in front with hooks and eyes; trim the foot with a pleated ruche, made of the same material as the dress. This may extend just across the front or all around.

Regulate the length to suit.

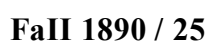




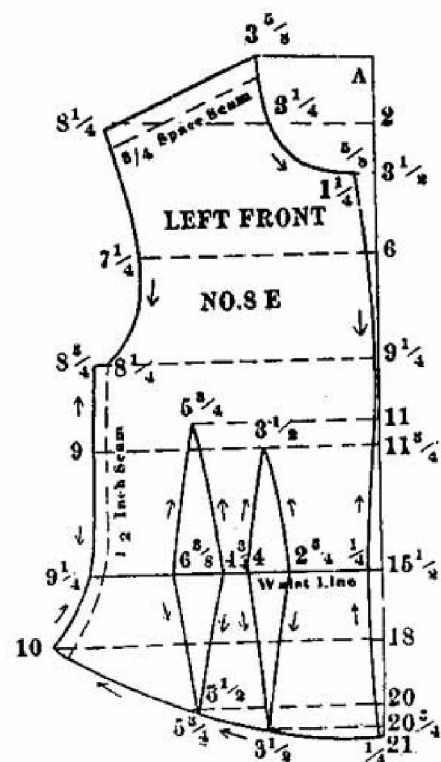
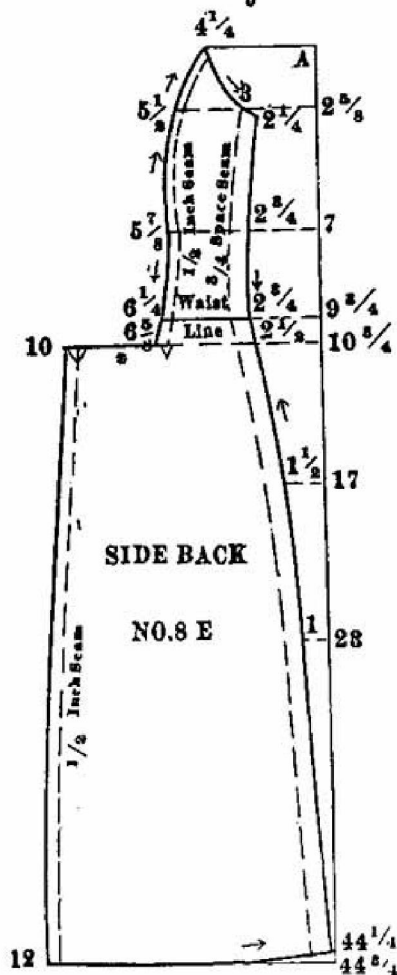
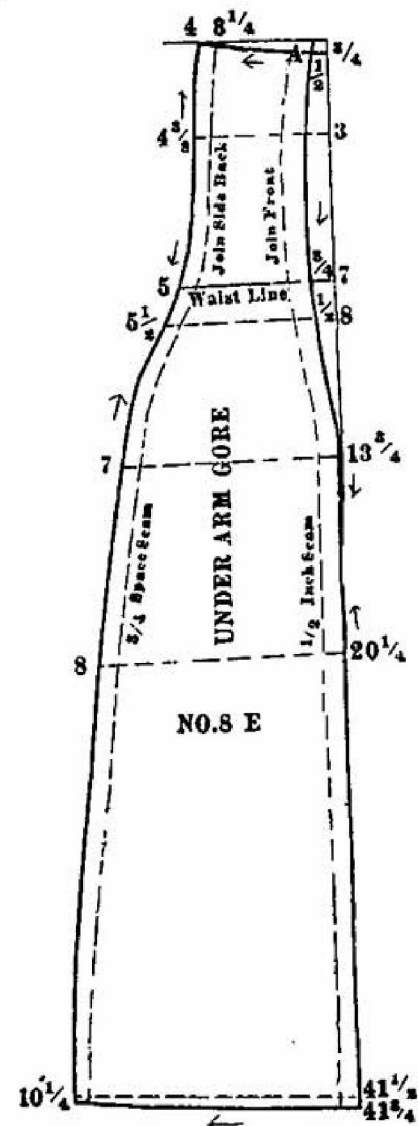
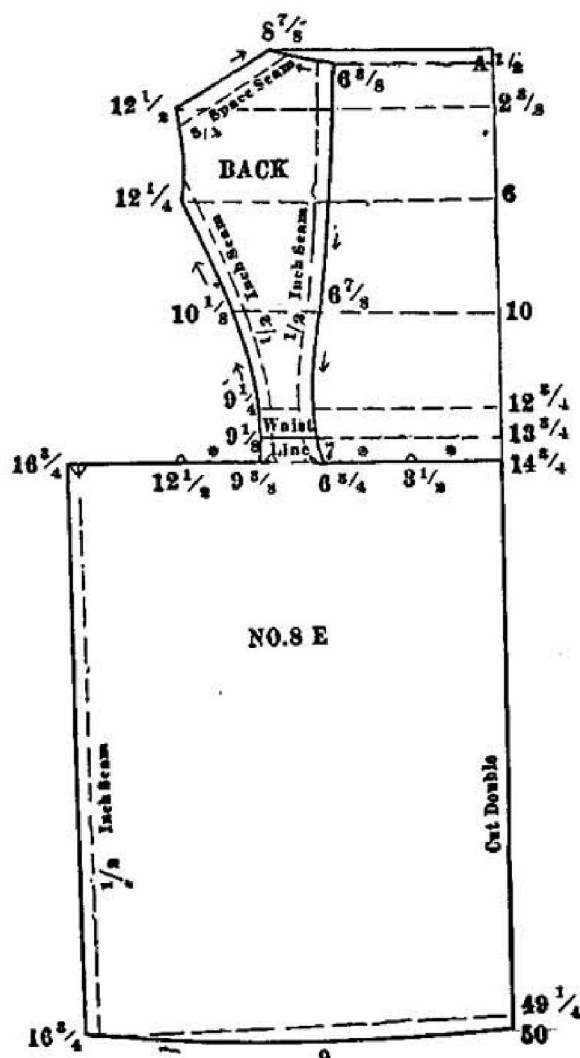


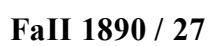






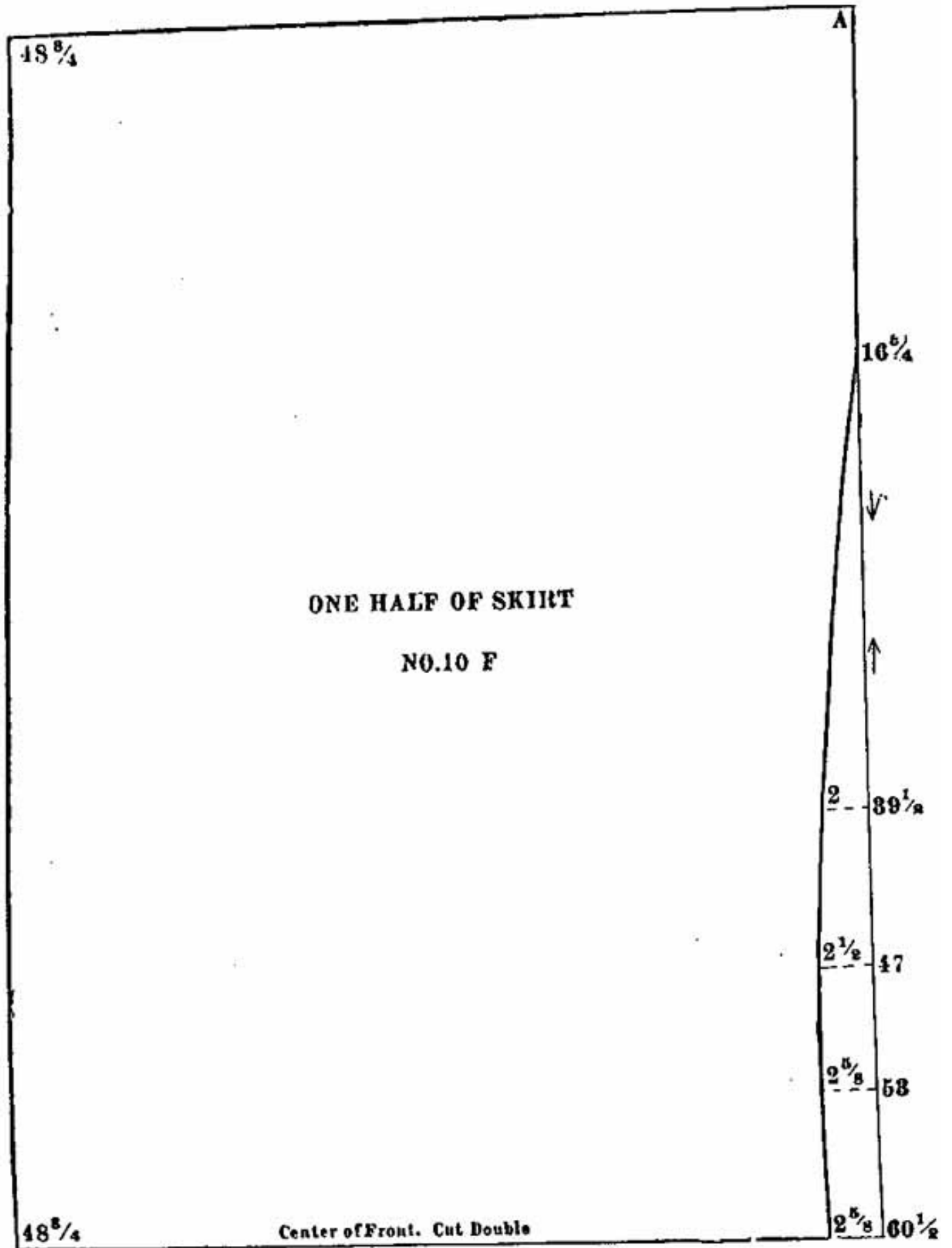
## LADIES' POLONAISE.







MISSES' COSTUME—Continued.

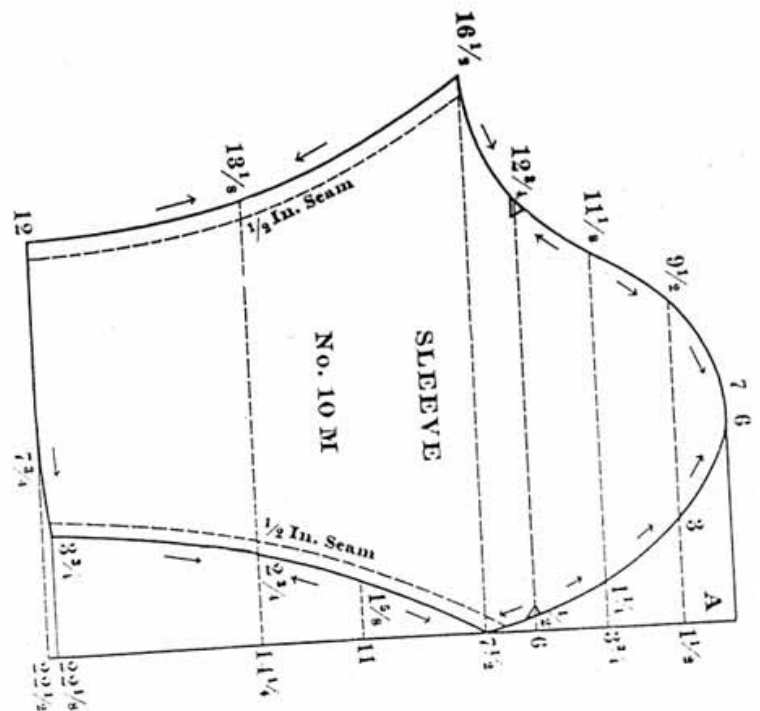
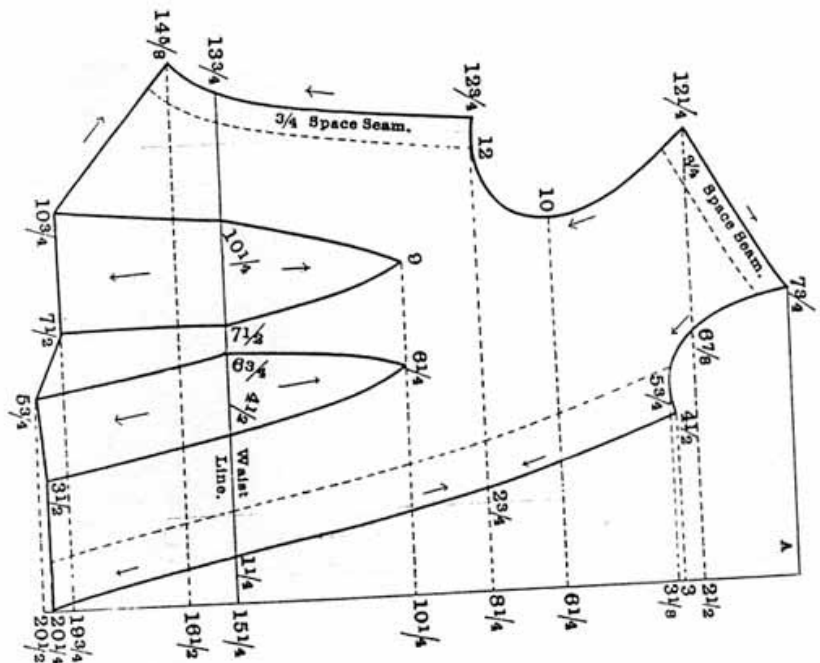
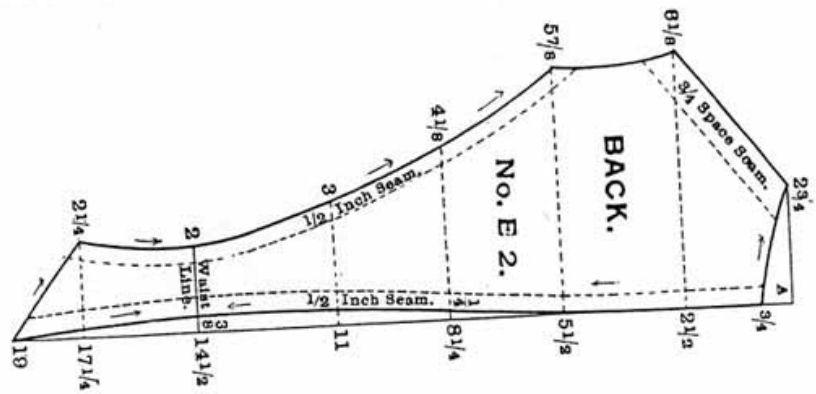


## LADIES' STREET COSTUME.

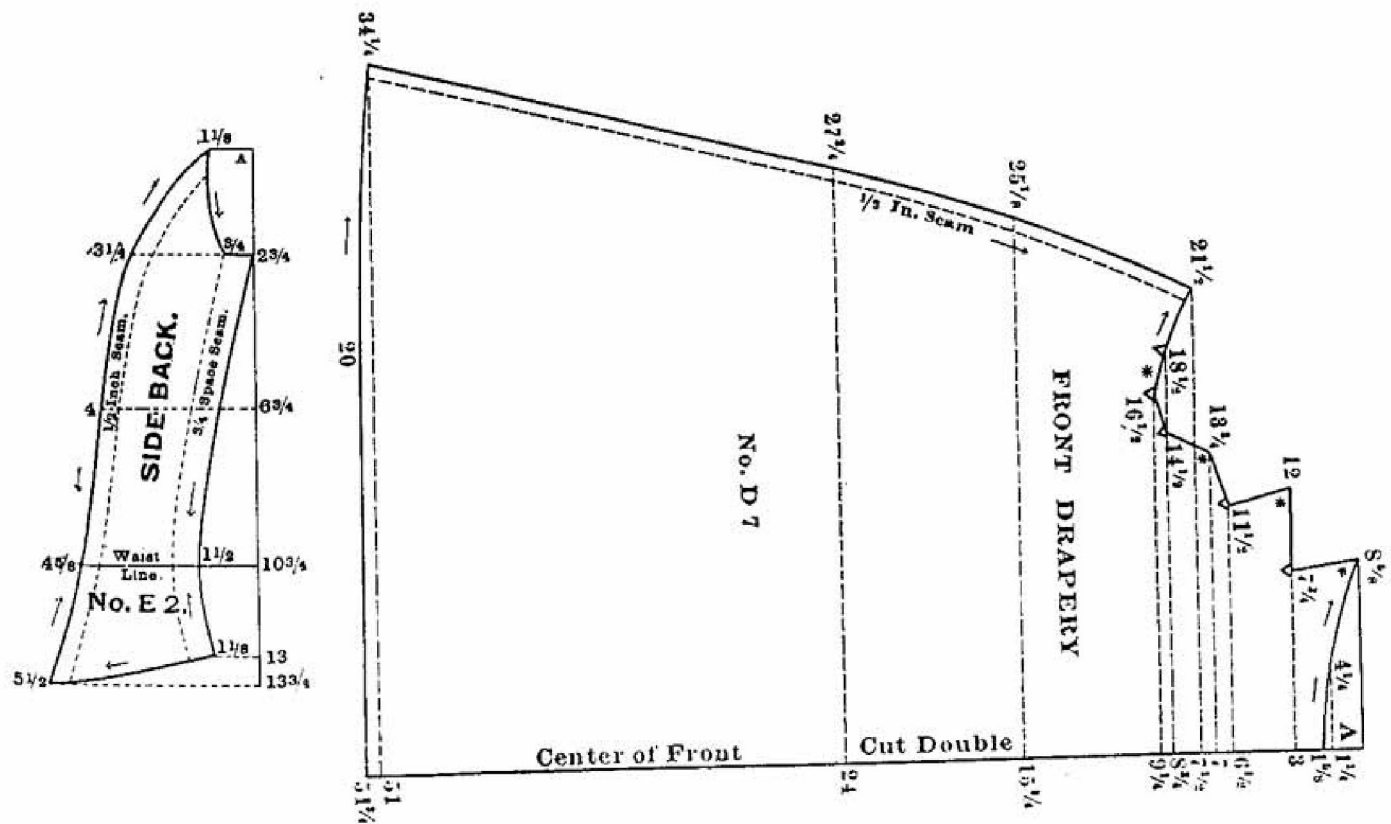
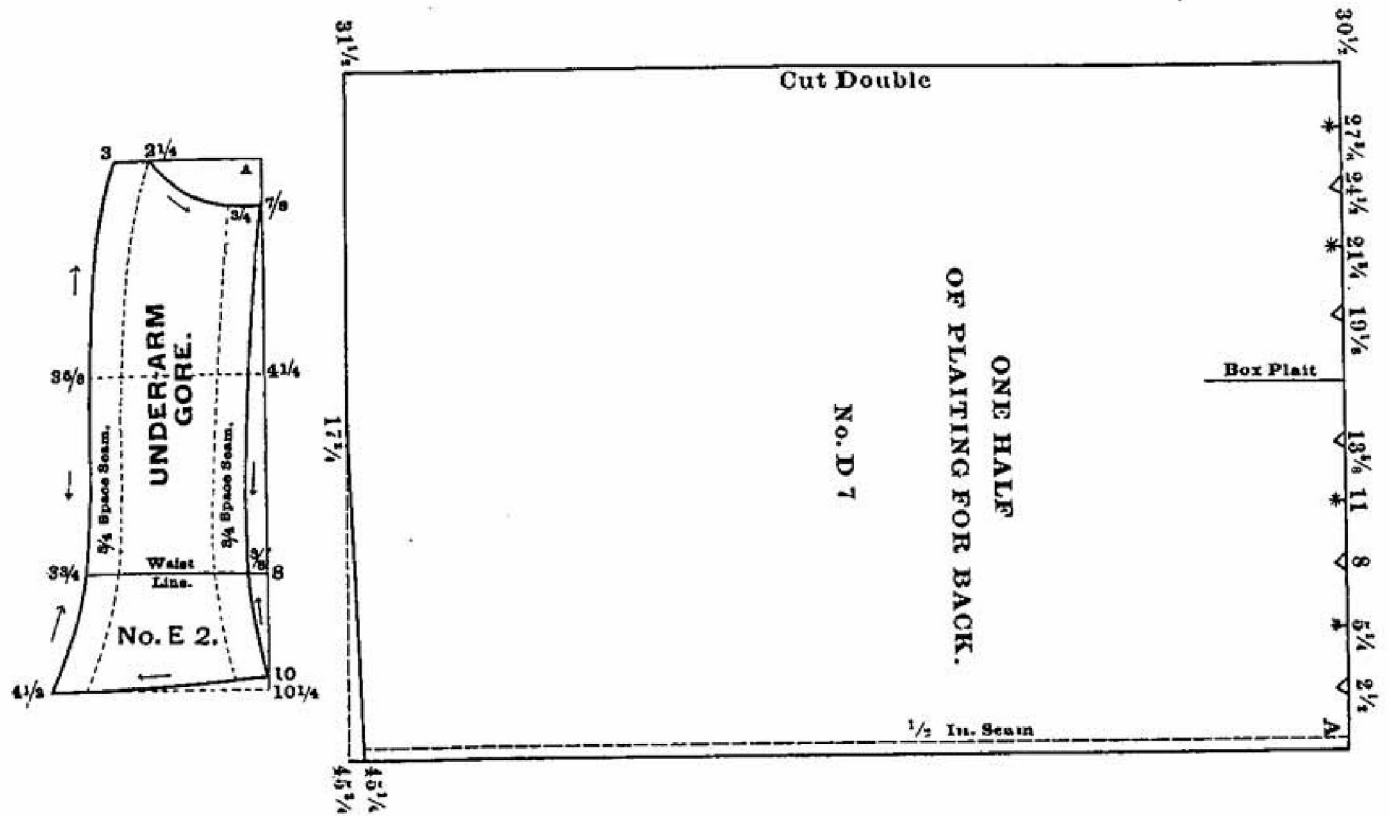
Use the bust measure to draft the basque, which consists of five pieces: Front, back, side-back, under-arm-gore, and sleeve.

This basque gives the bias effect. In cutting the front lay the front edge of the pattern on the straight edge of the goods, which will bring it bias under the arm..

The skirt is given on page 31- Draft by the waist measure; is in two pieces, front and back. Lay the pleats in the front according to the notches, lay the back in two double box pleats, cut the foundation skirt from any plain skirt pattern, trim the bottom of the skirt with pleating, velvet, astrachan or braiding. Regulate the length by the tape measure.

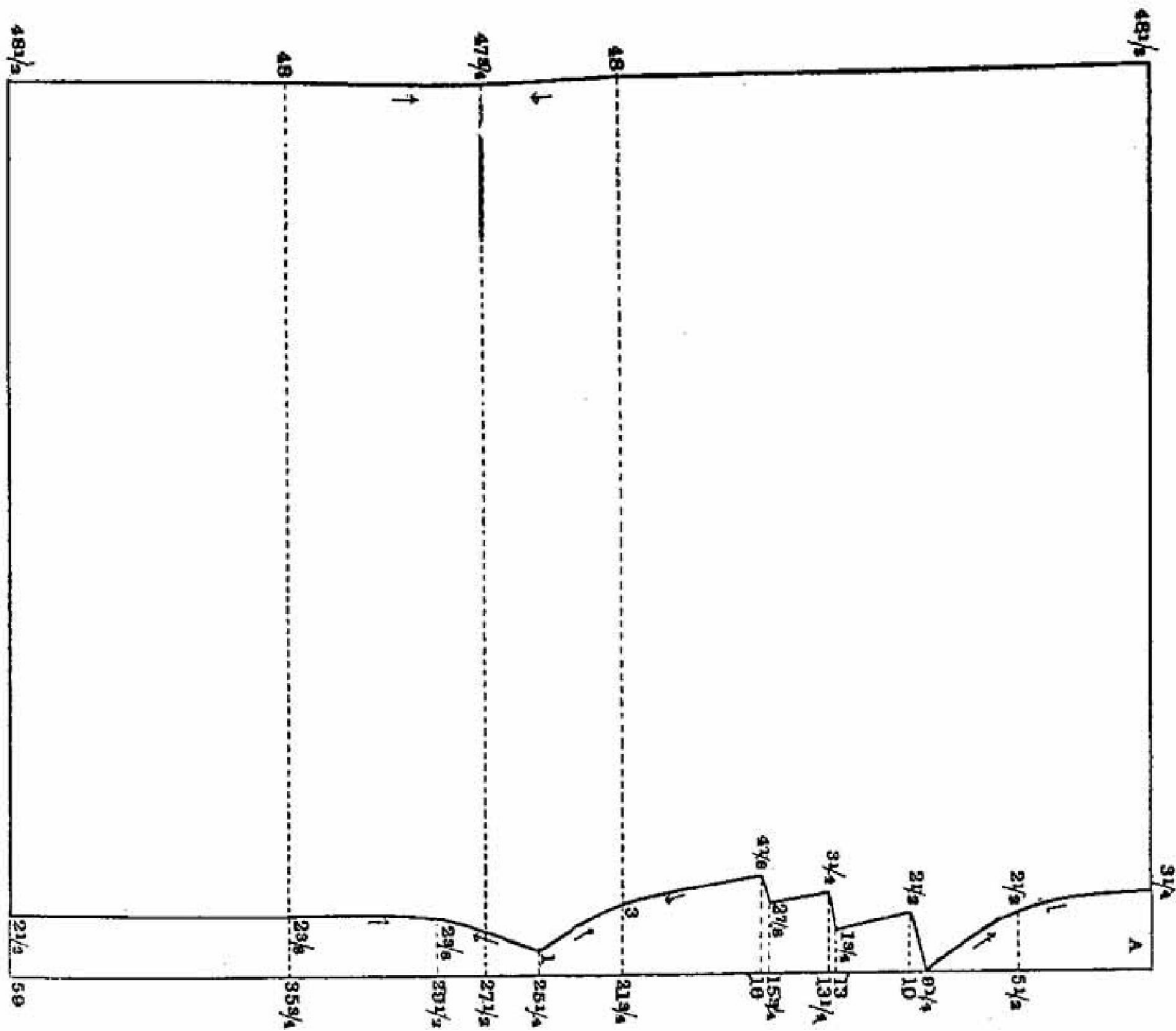
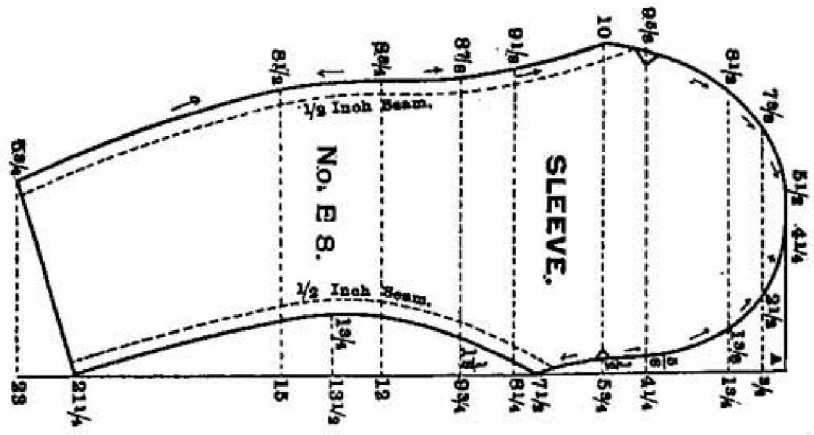
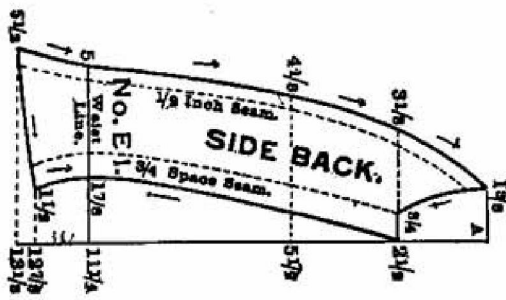
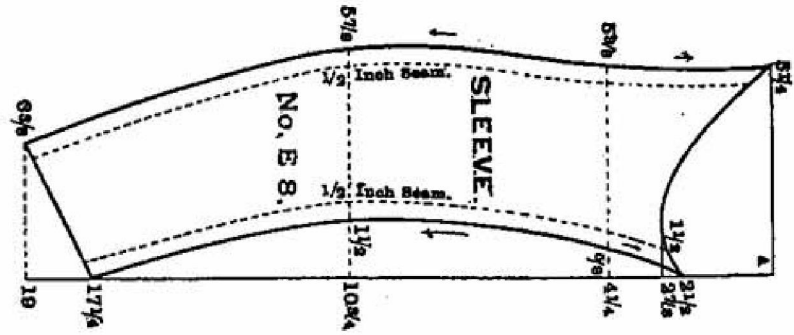
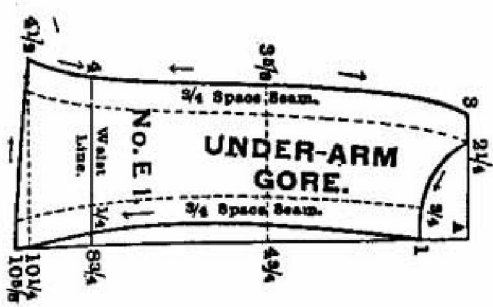


LADIES' STREET COSTUME.—Continued.



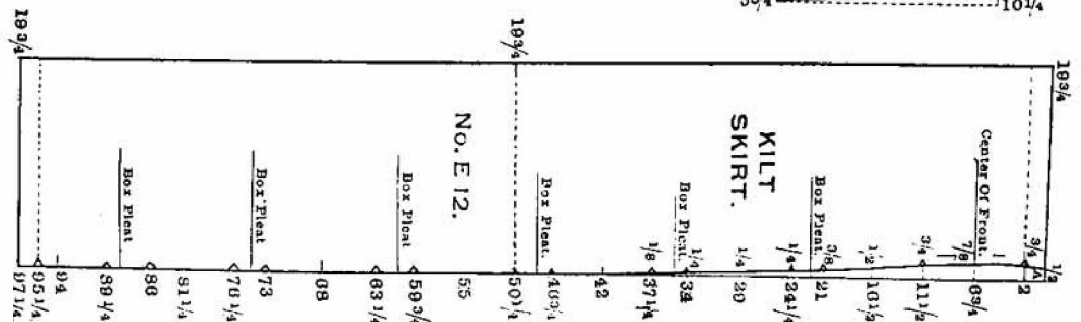
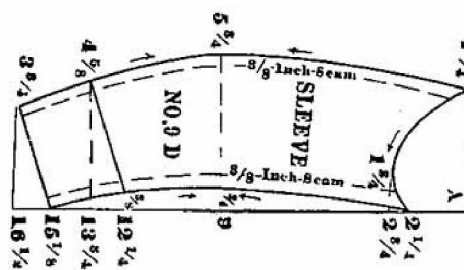
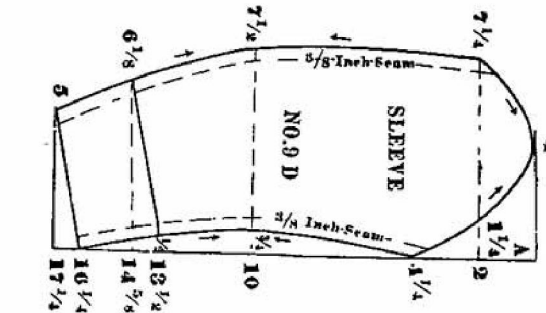
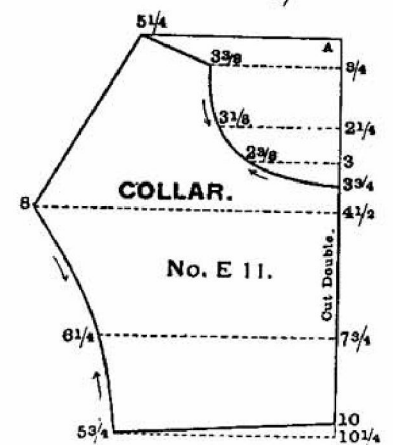
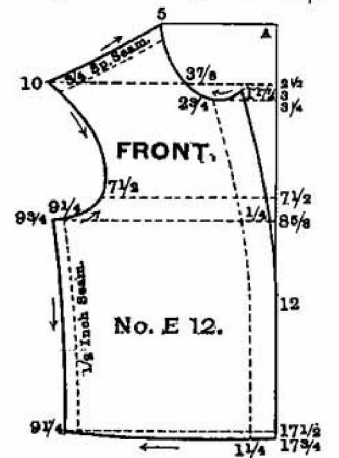
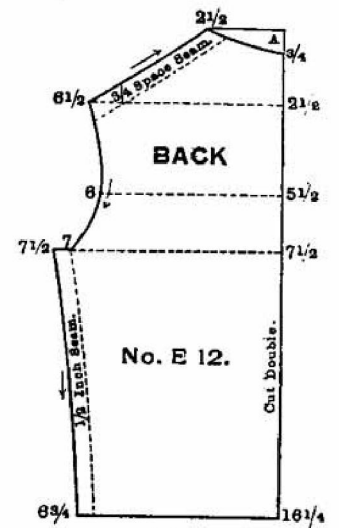
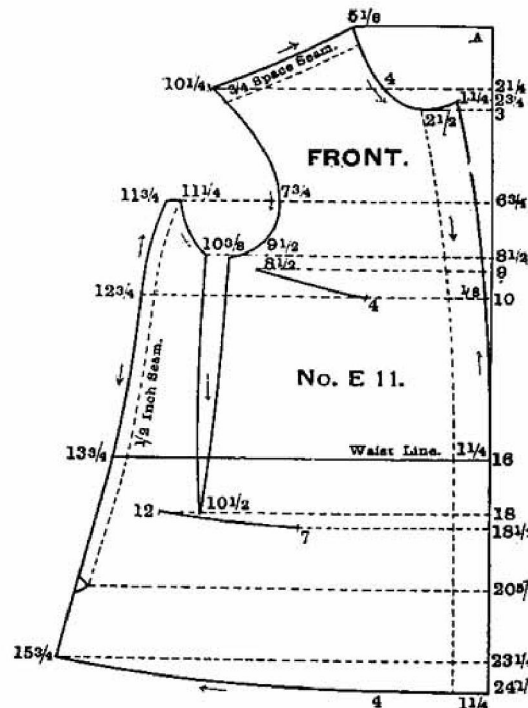


## LADIES' COSTUME—Continued.



BOYS'  
COSTUME.

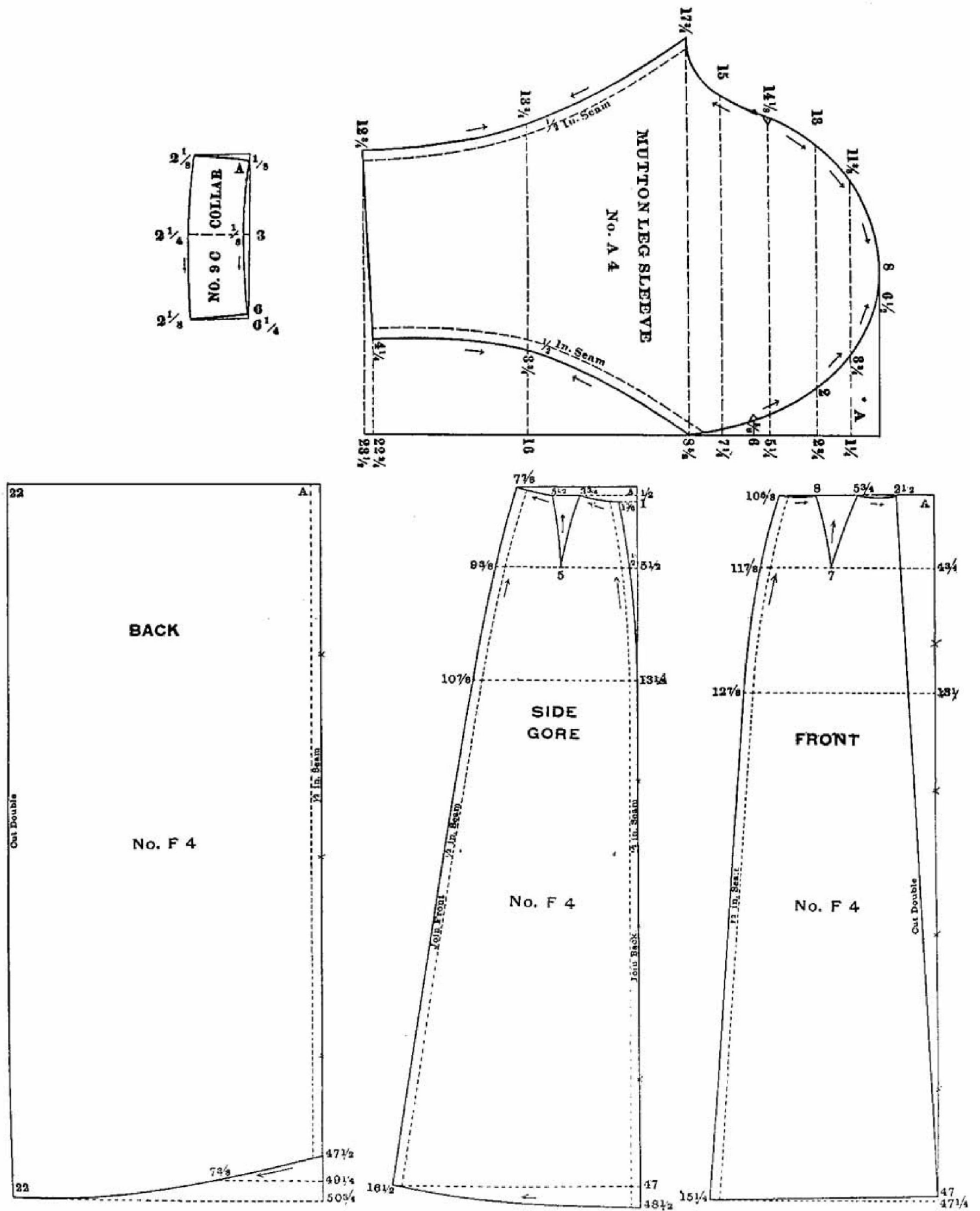
Use the scale corresponding with the bust measure to draft the entire coat and under waist. The coat consists of front, back, collar and two sleeves. The under waist is in two pieces, front and back. Draft this the same as all other garments. Finish the edges of the coat with a binding or stitching. Draft the skirt by the waist measure. Lay the pleats according to the notches, one large box pleat in the front and smaller ones in the back. Press care-fully and sew to the waist. Regulate the length by the tape measure.



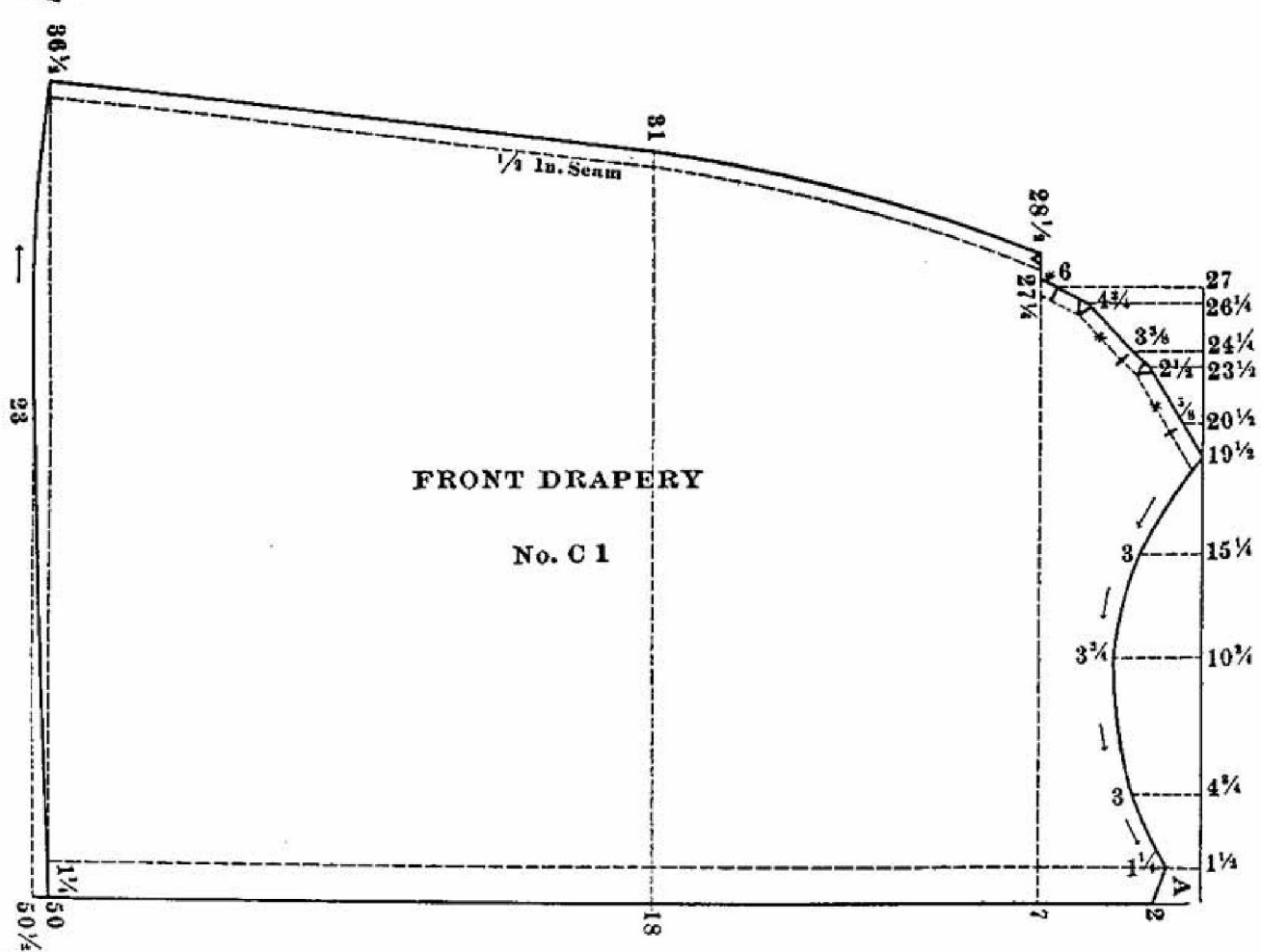
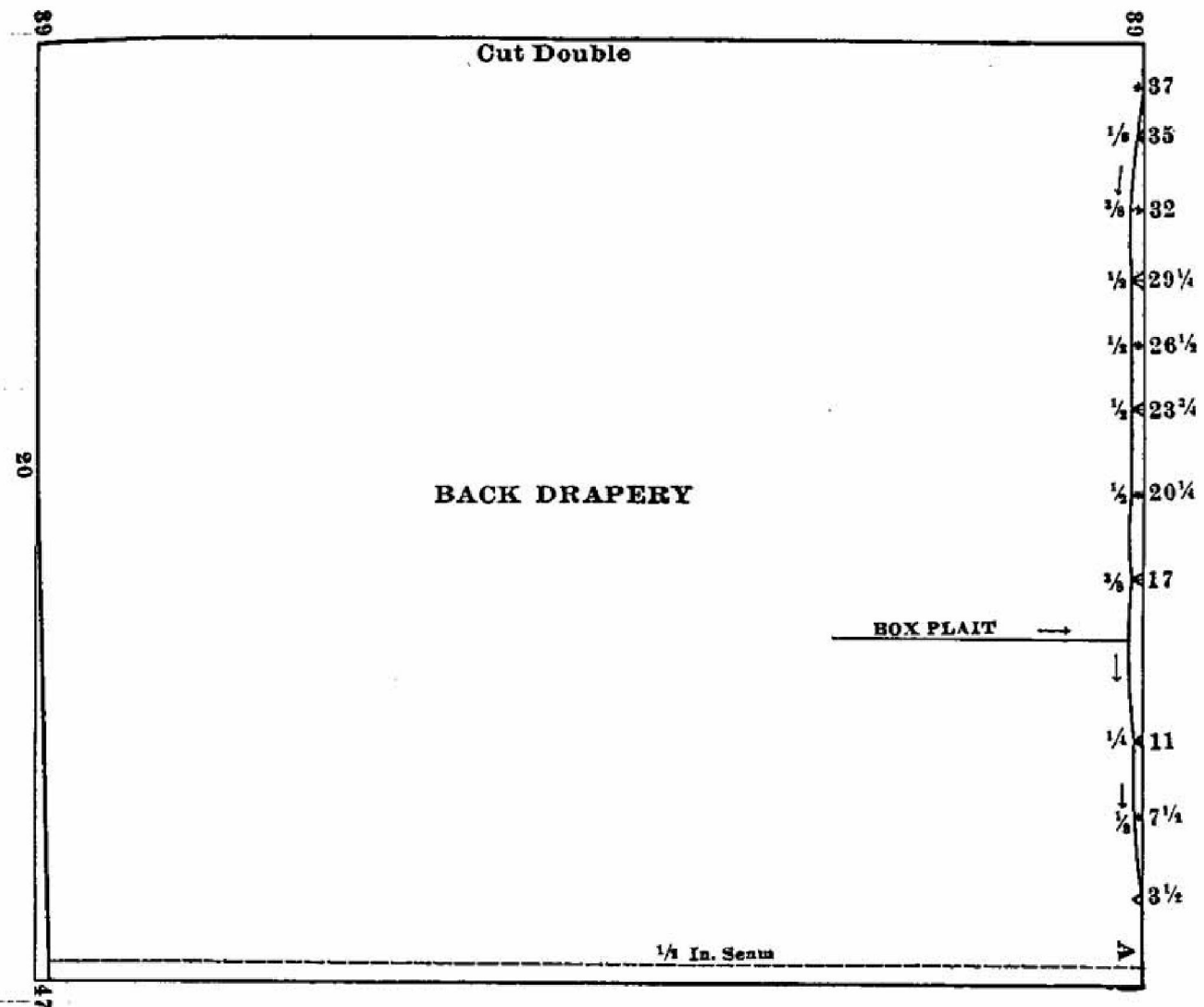
The drapery is given on page 37. Draft by the waist measure. Is in two pieces, front and back. Make the pleats on the front to come on the right or left side, just to suit the wearer. The back is laid in two double box pleats.

Trim to suit. Regulate length by the tape measure.

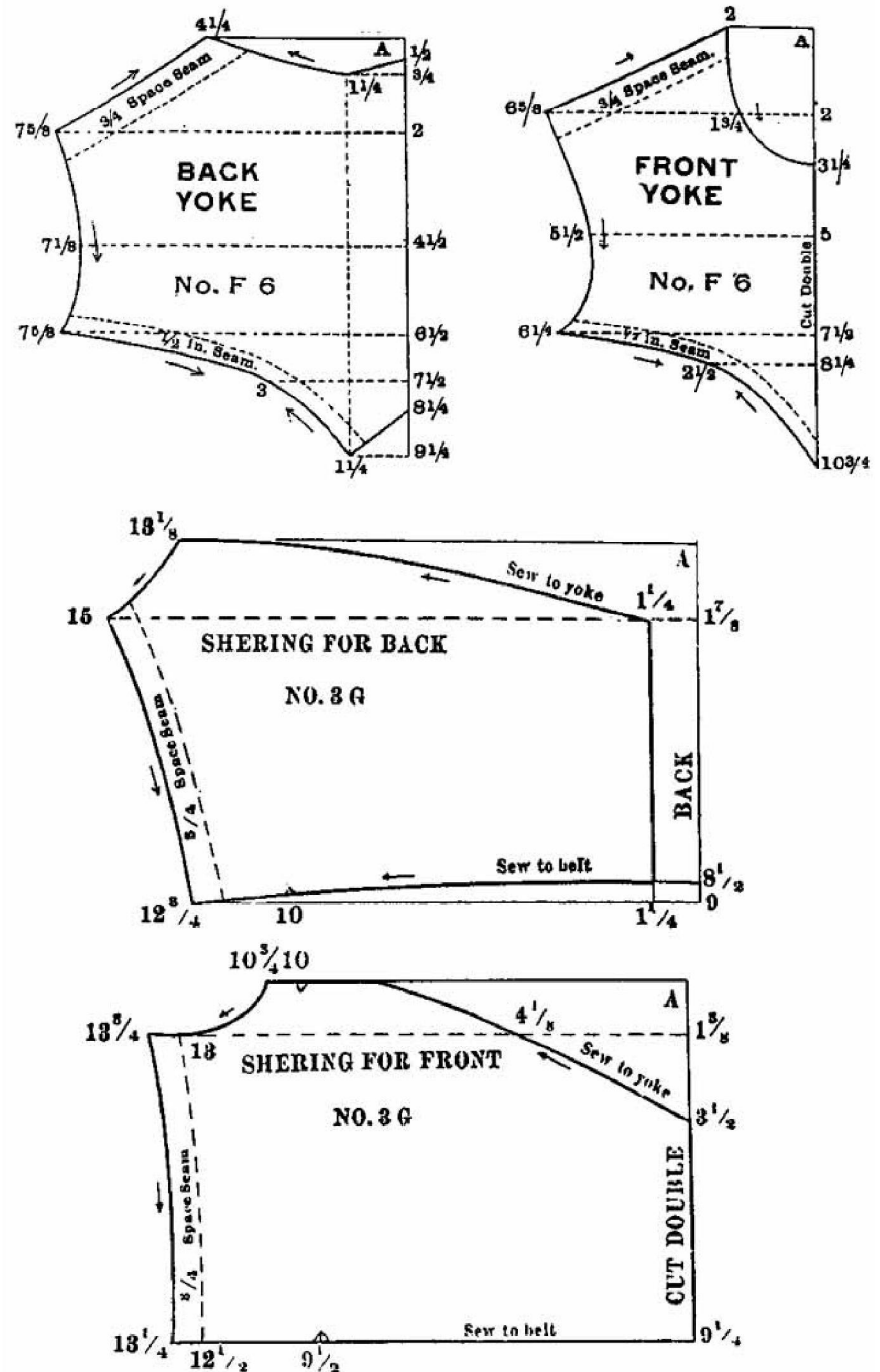
## LADIES' STREET COSTUME—Continued.



## LADIES' STREET COSTUME—Continued.



## LADIES' HOUSE DRESS.



Draft the waist and sleeves by the scale corresponding with the bust measure, it consists of yoke and shirring for front and back collar and two sleeve portions. Gather the shirring portions at the top and sew to the yoke. Gather the bottom between the notches and sew to the belt. This may be made to open in the back for a miss or in front for a lady. If it is made to open in front take the hem off the back and cut the goods double, and allow the hem in front 1 1/4 space hem. Gather the sleeves at the top between the notches.

Draft the skirt by the scale corresponding with the waist measure, it consists of front and back. Take up the darts in front, lay small pleats in the back turning toward the center of the back. Do not make the back over 6 inches wide after it is all pleated. Trim the bottom to suit. Regulate the length by the tape measure.

