THE DRESSMAKER

CHAPTER I

SEWING STITCHES

To make a knot, hold the threaded needle in the right hand. Take the end of the thread between the thumb and first finger of the left hand, stretching the thread tightly. Wind it around the top of the first finger, crossing it over the end held between the finger and thumb. Roll the first finger down the ball of the thumb about half an inch, carrying the thread with it, and with the second finger push the knot thus formed to the end of the thread. If a larger knot is required, wind the thread around the finger twice.

Bastings are temporary stitches used to hold two or more pieces of material together while putting in the permanent stitches. The thread should be smooth and rather fine. Careful bast ing is essential to successful sewing and dressmaking. There are four kinds of bastings.

Even Bastings start with a knot on the right side so that they may be easily removed. Pass the needle over and through the material, making the stitches and spaces the same length. To fasten the

Fig. 1. Even Bastings

Fig. 2. Uneven Bastings

Fig. 3. Combination Bastings

Fig. 4. Diagonal Bastings
RUNNING STITCHES are shorter than bastings. They are used on seams that do not require the firmness of machine or back stitching. (Fig. 5.)

THE BACKSTITCH is made by taking up a short stitch back on the upper side and a longer one forward on the underside of the material, bringing the needle out a space in advance. Insert the needle to meet the last stitch, passing it under the material and out again a space in advance of the last stitch taken. (Fig. 6.) Fasten by making two or three stitches over the one last made. The backstitch is used on seams requiring strength and firmness.

THE HALF-BACKSTITCH is made in the same manner as the backstitch, except that it is taken halfway back instead of all the way, leaving a small space between each stitch on the right side. (Fig. 7.)

THE COMBINATION STITCH consists of one backstitch and two or more small running stitches. It is fastened like the backstitch. Figure 8 shows a combination stitch with one backstitch and two running stitches. It is used on seams requiring less strength than the backstitch.

OVERCASTING is a slanting stitch used to keep raw edges from raveling. (Fig. 9.) In taking the stitch the needle should always point toward the left shoulder. Hold the material loosely in the left hand. Do not use a knot, but turn the end of the thread to the left and take the first two stitches over it. Make the stitches about one-eighth of an inch apart and one-eighth of an inch deep.

Keep the spaces between the stitches even and slant all the stitches in the same direction. Before overcasting, be sure that the edges are trimmed off evenly. In overcasting a bias seam, begin at the broad part of the piece and work toward the narrow part, to prevent its raveling while you are working on it.

OVERHANDING, top, or over sewing, as it is sometimes called, is used to join folded edges or selvages. (Fig. 10.) Baste the pieces with the folds or selvages exactly even and sew with close stitches over and over the edges, taking up as few threads as possible, so that when finished the seam will be smooth and flat and not form an awkward ridge or cord on the wrong side of the garment.
CATCH-STITCH, sometimes called cat stitch, is a cross stitch used to hold down seam edges. It is the preferred finish for the seams of flannel garments, for it does away with the clumsiness of a French or felting seam, takes the place of overcasting and prevents raveling.

Place the edges together and run a seam, taking an occasional backstitch. Trim off one edge close to the line of sewing and press the other edge flatly over it, holding the work as shown in Fig. 11.

Make a knot and insert the needle under the edge at the lower left corner, cross the edge and take a small stitch a few threads to the right. Cross back again and insert the needle, taking a similar stitch through all the thicknesses of the material.

Always point the needle to the left and make the cross stitches encase the raw edges. The stitch is done from left to right. If preferred, these seams may be pressed open and catch-stitched, working the stitches over the raw edge at each side of the seam, thus holding both down as shown in Fig. 12.

A quicker method of catch-stitching is shown in Fig. 13. This stitch has not the strength of the first method and is only used in millinery and in dressmaking where the work is concealed. This style of catch-stitching is done from right to left.

A FLAT FELL SEAM has one edge hemmed down to protect the other raw edge. It is used principally for underwear. Baste the edges together, and sew with combination stitch. If the edges are bias, sew from the broad part of the pieces to the narrow, to prevent raveling and stretching.

Remove bastings, trim the edge toward you close to the sewing line, and turn the other edge flatly over it, pressing hard with the thumb nail. Make a narrow turning, baste and hem. (Fig. 14.)

A FRENCH SEAM is a double seam encasing the raw seam edges. (Fig. 15.) Place the edges evenly together and sew close to them on the right side of the garment. Trim off all ravelings from the edges.

Turn the wrong side toward you, crease exactly at the seam, and make a second sewing of sufficient depth to entirely cover the raw edges. This seam is generally used in making garments of wash materials.
A HEM is a fold made by twice turning over the edge of the material. (Fig. 16.) Make a narrow, even turning, and mark the depth for the second turning on the material with a coarse pin, chalk or basting, using as a marker a card notched the desired depth of the hem. Fold on the line, and if the hem is wide, baste at top and bottom.

Hold the edges you are going to sew on, toward you; place the hem over the forefinger and under the middle finger and hold it down with the thumb. Begin at the right end and insert the needle through the fold, leaving a short end of the thread to be caught under the hemming stitches.

Pointing the needle toward the left shoulder, make a slanting stitch by taking up a few threads of the material and the fold of the hem. Fasten the thread by taking two or three stitches on top of each other.

If a new thread is needed, start as in the beginning, tucking both the end of the new and old thread under the fold of the hem and secure them with the hemming stitches. Train the eye to keep the stitches even and true.

A Napery or Damask Hem is used on napkins and tablecloths. Turn under the edge of the material twice for a narrow hem. Fold the hem back on the right side, crease the material along the first fold, and overhand the fold and crease together. The needle is inserted straight as shown in Fig. 17. Open and flatten stitches with the thumb nail. If a square is used, turn the opposite side in the same manner. Hem the sides before folding back on the right side. No basting is needed for this hem. Take small stitches so that the work will look well when the hem is turned down. Directions for hemstitching will be found on page 12.
SQUARE CORNERS are made by turning under the edges as for hems. Turn the overlapping hem back toward the right side and crease the material along the first fold. Open the hems and cut away the underlapping hem to within a seam of the second turning. (Fig. 18.) Hem the overlapping edges to the hem underneath, but not through to the right side. (Fig. 19.) Overhand the ends of the hems. Finish all the corners in the same manner.

MITERED CORNERS are made by joining two bias edges to form an angle. Turn the edges as for hems, and crease. Open the material, fold the corner toward the center, and crease where the lines cross. Cut the corner off, allowing a narrow turning. (Fig. 20.) Fold the hems down all around, bring the mitered corners together, and hem the side. (Fig. 21.) Hem the corners, but do not catch the stitches through the material underneath.

A GUSSET is a triangular piece of material set into a garment to strengthen an opening. (Figs. 22 and 23.) Fold diagonally a piece of material two and one-quarter inches square and cut it on the fold. Take one of the triangles and fold it down a quarter of an inch all around, folding the straight edges first. Cut away the projecting points at the sides. Hold the wrong side toward you, with the right angle down and fold so that the point at the bottom will meet the fold at the bias edge. Make a narrow hem all around the opening. Pin the corner of the gusset to the end of the opening, right side to right side. (Fig. 22.) Beginning at the center, overhand to the hem as far as the crease in the gusset. Fold the gusset over at the crease and pin at the center and each corner, taking care that the warp and woof threads run parallel with those of the garment. Baste and hem all around. (Fig. 23.) The lower edge of the gusset will have to be stretched to fit the opening.

TUCKS should be marked with a measure so that they will be of even width.
Cut the gage from a piece of cardboard, and from the end measure down the width of first tuck, making a slash and a bias cut to meet the slash. (Fig. 24.) Make a second cut as shown in Fig. 24, allowing for width of space and second tuck.

It is quicker and more accurate to make a gage of this sort in measuring short spaces, such as hems, tucks and the spaces between them, than to use the tape measure, as sometimes the eye becomes confused at the small marks on the tape, and mistakes are made that will prove quite serious.

**FOR GATHERINGS,** make a row of small running stitches. The stitches may be the same length as the spaces, or the spaces may be twice the length of the stitches. Always begin by inserting the needle from the wrong side to conceal the knot. It is better to slip the stitches along on the needle and not remove it from the material.

When the gathering is completed remove the needle and draw the gatherings up tight. Place a pin vertically, close to the last stitch, and wind the thread several times around the pin in the form of an 8. (Fig. 28.) This holds the gathers firmly together and facilitates the stroking.

*In Stroking or Laying Gathers* the work is held between the thumb and fingers of the left hand, with the thumb below the gathering thread. Put the side of the needle well above the gathering thread and press the little plait under the thumb, drawing the needle down. (Fig. 26.)

Do not use the point of the needle, as it scratches and weakens the material. Continue entirely across the gathers, putting the needle under each stitch and holding the plait firmly with the thumb. Stroke the material above the gathering thread as well as below it to make the gathers firm and even.

*Two Rows of Gathers* are often used in dressmaking and do not need stroking. A skirt joined to a band, a sleeve set in a cuff or sewed into the armhole, should be gathered twice so that the gathers will stay in the proper place.

The second row is made with the stitches directly in line with those of the first row and one-quarter or three-eighths of an inch below them. (Fig. 27.) If there is much fulness to be gathered, the spaces between the stitches may be lengthened.

**EMBROIDERY EDGING USED AS A FACING** is shown in Fig. 28. The plain material above the embroidery is applied as the facing. Crease the edging off at the depth it is to extend beyond the garment. Baste the material along the crease so that the seam will come toward the inside of the garment. Then stitch the seam. Now turn the edging down, fold in the raw edge at the top, and hem down as a facing. The facing should be no wider than necessary to make a neat joining.
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TO JOIN EMBROIDERY IN A TUCK, make several tucks in the plain material above the embroidery if it is wide enough. Then measure carefully the amount for the space between the tucks, the under part of the tucks, and the seam. Cut away the superfluous material and join the edging to the garment. Crease the tuck with the seam directly in the fold so that the raw edges will be encased in the tuck. When the materials of the garment and the embroidery are similar, and there are several tucks above and below the seam, the joining is imperceptible. (Fig. 29.)

A ROLLED HEM may be used as a dainty finish in joining trimming of any kind to a garment of sheer wash material. Hold the wrong side of the material toward you, and, after trimming off all ravelings, begin at the right end and roll the edge toward you tightly between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, keeping the edge rolled for about one and a half inches ahead of the sewing. (Fig. 30.)

EMBROIDERY MAY BE INSERTED by different methods. When a straight-edge insertion is used, the plain cambric may be cut away at each side of the embroidery. The material of the garment is then cut away under the embroidery, leaving a small seam, which is rolled and whipped to the embroidery as shown in Fig. 30.

If preferred, a small seam may be left on the insertion as well as on the garment and be put together by a tiny French seam. This is the finish most commonly employed.

Embroidery also may be inserted by a machine fell seam. (Fig. 31.) Baste the insertion to the material with a narrow seam on the wrong side. Trim off all ravelings and insert raw edges in the hemmer of the machine, and stitch as in hemming.

WHIPPING ON TRIMMING is generally done on an edge. If lace, it should be either gathered by pulling the heavy thread which is usually found at the top, or whipped and drawn as in a ruffle. Roll an inch or two of the garment material, place the lace with its right side to the right side of the material, and whip both together. (Fig. 32.) Lace may be whipped on plain if preferred, but it must be eased in. Insertion may be inset in the same way.

A RUFFLE USED AS TRIMMING may be whipped and gathered. Roll the raw edge and overcast the material as far as it is rolled, taking care to make the stitch below the roll,
not through it. (Fig. 33.) Draw up the thread, making the ruffle the desired fulness. Divide the ruffle in quarters and mark them with colored thread. Make corresponding marks on the edge to which the ruffle is to be attached. Roll the edge of the garment and overhand the ruffle to it, taking a stitch in every whipped stitch of the ruffle.

METHODS OF INSERTING LACE and insertion, when the material has a straight edge, are shown in Figs. 34 and 35. Fold the material for a hem, creasing the lower fold hard. Open the hem and baste the lace edge just below the lower fold, and stitch. (Fig. 34.) Turn back the hem and crease the material on a line with the top turning of the hem. Cut to within a small seam above this crease. Fold in the raw edge, insert the edge of the lace insertion, and stitch. Turn a second hem, following the preceding directions, baste the other edge of the insertion just below the lower crease, and stitch as before. As many rows of insertion may be used in this manner as are desired.

To Insert Lace Insertion in a garment, pin the lace in the position desired, and baste down both edges of the insertion.

Fig. 34. Showing Cut for Lace Insertion

Fig. 35. Finished Effect of Inserting Lace

Fig. 36. Lace Insert

Fig. 37. Lace Insert above Facing

If the insertion is narrow, the material is cut through the center (Fig. 36); but if the insertion is wide, the material is cut away from underneath, simply allowing a seam on each side. The edge is turned in a narrow hem covering the line of the basting. Stitch the insertion close to the edges from the right side, and at the same time catching through the material hemmed down.

Insertion above a Facing is first basted in position, and the upper edge is finished as shown in Fig. 37. The facing is generally used when the outline of the lower edge is curved or pointed so that it cannot be turned up in a straight hem.
The facing is cut to fit the outline of the lower edge and applied as a false hem, as shown in Fig. 37. When edging is used, it is basted to the bottom before the facing is added and all stitched in a seam together. Turn under the facing at the line of sewing, baste in position and stitch insertion from the right side.

**TO INSERT RUFFLES IN A HEM** turn the hem toward the right side of the garment and crease the fold hard. Divide both ruffle and hem in quarters and mark each division with colored thread. Insert the edge of the ruffle in the hem close to the fold (Fig. 38) with the right side of the ruffle to the right side of the garment and the corresponding marks together. Baste and stitch one-quarter of an inch from the fold. Turn the hem back to the wrong side of the garment, fold the second turning, baste and hem. (Fig. 39.)

**TO COVER THE JOINING OF A RUFFLE,** divide both ruffle and garment in quarters and mark with pins or colored thread. Gather the ruffle and baste it to the garment. Turn the raw edges up on the garment and cover with a narrow bias band which can be bought by the piece with the edges turned ready for use. (Fig. 40.) This finish may be used on either the right or wrong side of the garment. Frequently this finish is used on berthas or scalloped edges that are not lined or faced.

**TRIMMINGS MAY BE MITERED so that the joining will scarcely be seen.** If embroidery, fold it over so that the crease comes exactly in the middle of the corner, taking care to match the pattern perfectly. Crease firmly, and cut on the creased line. (Fig. 41.) Place the right sides face to face and buttonhole the raw edges together with short, close stitches. Fig. 42 shows the finished corner. The method of making the buttonhole stitch is shown in Fig. 48.
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Lace may be mitered in the same way, but it should be cut between the cords, not across them. Overlap the edges together, putting the needle back the depth of two cords. (Fig. 43.)

Fig. 44 shows the figures cut around the edge, lapped and hemmed around the figure on each side. If a stronger corner is desired, the lace may be mitered in a very tiny, flat hem.

HEMSTITCHING is a line of open-work made by drawing out parallel threads and fastening the cross threads in successive small clusters. Draw as many threads of the material as desired at the top of the hem, and baste it on this line. Hold the hem toward you and work on the side on which it is turned up. Fig. 45 shows the position of the hem with the stitching done from left to right.

Insert the needle in the underfold of the hem at the left-hand edge. Hold the work over the forefinger of the left hand, keeping the thumb over the thread. Take up four or five threads with the needle, and draw the needle through, holding the thread firmly by the left thumb. At the extreme right of these stitches take a short stitch in the fold of the hem, as shown in the illustration. Now take up the same number of threads as before, and repeat. Care must be taken to keep the warp and woof threads exactly parallel, especially in hemstitching a corner where the material has not been cut away.

Machine Hemstitching is a simple way of making imitation hemstitching on the machine as shown in Figs. 46 and 47. Fold the material for a hem, and cut the garment off one-quarter of an inch above the sewing line. Fold blotting paper or any soft paper to one-eighth of an inch thickness. Place the two cut edges of the garment together, as if to sew a seam. Slip the blotting paper between the two edges, loosen the tension of the machine and stitch a quarter-inch seam through all the thicknesses. (Fig. 46.) When the seam is stitched, cut the paper close to the stitching and pull it out. The stitches between the two edges of the material will then look like Fig. 47. The edge toward the hem is turned down and the hem is stitched by machine, close to the turning. The raw edge of the garment is turned in and stitched by machine.