CHAPTER II

BUTTONHOLES

A WELL-MADE GARMENT that is otherwise perfect may be greatly injured in appearance by badly made buttonholes. They should always be properly spaced and marked before they are cut. Mark the points for the top and bottom buttonholes, and divide the distance between these two points into the desired number of spaces. The slit must be cut on the thread of the goods, if possible, and must be large enough to allow the button to slip through easily, as a buttonhole becomes tighter after it is worked.

With the buttonhole scissors carefully test the length of the slit and make a clean cut with one movement of the scissors. One of the most noticeable faults in buttonholing results from an uneven or ragged slit. This may be caused by dull scissors or by the slipping of the fabric. To prevent the material from slipping, baste around the cutting line before using the scissors.

There are three kinds of buttonholes, one with the bar at both ends (Fig. 49), another with one round and one barred end (Fig. 50), and a third called the tailor's buttonhole. (Fig. 51.)

**BARRIED BUTTONHOLES** as illustrated in Figs. 49 and 50 are used for underwear, waists and shirts. If the buttonhole is in an upright position as in the center of a plait, or if the strain does not come at the ends of the buttonhole, as at the center back of a neck-band, the buttonhole with a bar at both ends (Fig. 49) is used. If the strain on the buttonhole comes at one end so that the button requires a resting-place as in a cuff or belt, use the buttonhole with the round end. (Fig. 50.) Buttonholes are stranded to prevent the edges from stretching. Bring the needle up at one end of the buttonhole, and, allowing the thread to lie along the edge of the cut on the right side of the material, stick down at the opposite end. Do the same on the other side of the cut and stick down opposite the first stitch, with a stitch across the end to fasten the thread. If the material is inclined to fray, the edges may be overcast before working the buttonholes.

To make the stitch, place the buttonhole over the forefinger of the left hand, holding it in position with the thumb and second finger as shown in Fig. 48. Begin to work the buttonhole close to the corner or starting-point. Insert the needle, and while it is pointing toward you, bring the double thread

![Fig. 48. Correct Position in Making Buttonholes](image)

![Fig. 49. Buttonhole with Bar at Both Ends](image)
as it hangs from the eye of the needle around to the left under the needle. Draw the needle through the loop, letting the thread form a puri exactly on the edge of the slit. Continue these stitches to the opposite end, being careful to take them the same depth and close together. Now pass the needle up and down through the goods until two or three threads cross the end of the slit quite close to the buttonhole stitches, thus forming a bar tack. (Fig. 72, page 22.) At the end, turn the work around so that the bar end is toward you and make several buttonhole stitches over the bar tack and through the material. (Fig. 49.) Work the other side of the buttonhole and the second bar.

**THE ROUND-END BUTTONHOLE** is stranded in the same manner as the double-barred buttonhole. Fig. 50 illustrates the steps in the making of this buttonhole with the opening first stranded and then overcast.

Begin the buttonhole stitch as in the first buttonhole, working down one side. When the outer end is reached, the stitches are taken on a slant, inserting the needle each time at a little different angle until the end is rounded. Continue the work on the other side. The inner end is finished with a bar tack. The different steps of this buttonhole are shown in the illustration.

**THE TAILOR’S BUTTONHOLE** is used for garments of heavy cloth, as the round end or eyelet provides a resting-place for the shank of the button or the stitches holding the button. Baste around the line of cutting so that the material will not slip, and cut the slit the desired length. At the outer end cut a small eyelet as shown in the top figure in the illustration, 51.

After cutting, the buttonhole should be stranded so that the worked edge of the buttonhole will be firm and distinct. This may be done with two threads of twist. Tailors follow the plan of using cord formed of several strands of the buttonhole twist, or linen thread twisted together, or a gimp cord. An end of this cord or thread is secured at the inner end of the buttonhole between the fabrics, and the other end is fastened to the knee or some convenient place and kept taut by a slight strain upon the work as it is held in the hand.

By this strain the cord is kept straight and in position just back of the edge of the buttonhole. The stitches are worked over the cord by the usual movements. After each stitch is drawn down, the loose twist should be picked up firmly by the thumb and forefinger quite near the stitch, and two or three circular twisting movements should be made so that the loop formed will settle securely and neatly into its proper position. Be careful to complete each stitch with uniform movements. When the eyelet is reached, the work is adjusted so that the stitches may be made at the proper slant. The stitches should radiate from the eyelet as the spokes do in a wheel.

The inner end of an eyelet buttonhole may be bar-tacked. Sometimes the bars are simply worked with an over-and-over stitch. This is done by passing the needle up through the fabric at one side of the bar and down through it at the other side until the bars are entirely covered with these stitches and the stays look like a fine cord. After the buttonholes are worked, their edges should be closely basted together by an over-and-over stitch made by pushing the needle up and down over the edges just back of the stitches. Then they should be pressed under a dampened cloth. In fact, all buttonholes should be pressed if the goods will permit. Before they are dry, a stiletto should be pushed vigorously through each eyelet until the opening becomes perfectly round.
and the stitches around its edges are regular and distinct. When the bastings are removed, the buttonholes will be symmetrical in appearance.

**BLIND LOOPS** are used on garments fastened with hooks and eyes, to take the place of the eyes. The process of making them is shown in Fig. 52. Mark the position of the loop opposite the hook, knot the thread and bring the needle up through the material. Make a bar-tack the desired length by taking three or more stitches one over the other. Working from left to right, hold the thread down with the left thumb, and insert the needle, eye foremost, under the bar and over the thread. The use of the blunt end of the needle facilitates the work. Draw the thread up, letting the purl come to the lower edge of the loop. Repeat the stitches, covering the entire bar-tack, and fasten on the wrong side. Sometimes the bar-tacks are made in the form of a cross-stitch.

**EYELETS** are holes made and worked in a garment to hold the cord or buttons. The method of making is shown in Fig. 53. Pierce the eyelet-hole with a stiletto. Make running stitches around the circle, place the hole over the forefinger of the left hand and buttonhole the edge, covering the running stitches. Work from right to left, as shown in the first figure of the illustration.

**METHODS OF SEWING ON BUTTONS** are illustrated in Fig. 54. Always use a coarse single thread in preference to a fine double one. In placing buttons in position, lap the edges of the garment, and push a pin through at the outer end of the buttonhole. This will bring the button exactly opposite the buttonhole. Make a knot in the thread, push the needle through from the right side so that the knot will be directly under the button. Place the button in position. Bring the thread up through a hole in the button and down through the hole diagonally opposite as shown in the second figure. Place a pin under the thread on top of the button in order to keep the thread loose, and make a cross-stitch through the remaining holes.

Repeat the stitches until the button is securely fastened. Remove the pin, draw the button away from the material as far as possible and wind the working thread tightly several times around the threads between the button and the material, thus forming a thread shank for the button. If a button is too closely sewed to the garment, it will not have room to rest easily in the buttonhole and will crowd the latter out of shape and make the spacing seem irregular. The loose sewing and the winding increase the durability of the work and lessen the strain on the button.

The first figure shows another way of sewing on a button in which the stitches are not crossed. This method is used in dress and coat making, as the stitches are considered more ornamental. The third figure shows the method of sewing on a shank button. Make the stitches parallel with the edge when sewing on this button so that the strain will come on the shank.
THE BOUND BUTTONHOLE. is shown in Figure 54 A. The length and position of the buttonhole should be marked on the garment with basting cotton. A bias strip of self or contrasting material about seven-eighths of an inch wide is used for binding it. Sew the binding to the right side of the garment with running stitches an eighth of an inch from the buttonhole mark (Figure 54 B). Turn in the other three edges an eighth of an inch and press them flat (Figure 54 B).

The binding should be fully the length of the slash.

When it is sewed on and the edges pressed, cut the buttonhole in the garment. Be sure to cut a clean, straight hole.

Push the binding through to the wrong side of the garment and slip-stitch it to position in the sewing line of the right side. Slip-stitch the corners of the binding so that they will not fray. Figure 54 A shows the finished bound buttonhole.

The bound buttonhole can be used on wool, silk, linen or cotton garments. It gives a finished look to a coat or dress and is particularly effective when the binding itself is in a contrasting color, though the binding is frequently of the same material as the garment.