CHAPTER IV

PRACTICAL AND ORNAMENTAL STITCHES

TAILORS’ TACKS are used in cutting out garments to mark seams, perforations, etc. They are used to give a clean exact line for the sewing. When laying out the pattern on the material, mark all the perforations as directed in the pattern instructions with chalk and cut the pieces. Then with a double thread baste through both thicknesses of the cloth wherever it is marked, alternating one long and one short stitch. Leave the long stitches loose enough to form a loop under which a finger can be passed. (Fig. 71.) Then cut every long stitch and separate the two pieces, cutting the threads that still hold them together as you go along. There will then be enough stitches in each piece to indicate the sewing line plainly, and both pieces will be marked exactly alike. For waistcoats or coats, or for any curved outline, the tack stitches should be quite short.

In using tailors’ tacks for marking long tucks or plaits in skirts, etc., the loose stitch may be an inch and a half long and not left in a loop, its length supplying the necessary thread for pulling through between the two pieces of cloth.

BAR-TACKS make a very neat and serviceable finish for the ends of seams, tucks and plaits, and the corners of collars, pockets and pocket laps of tailored garments. Fig. 72 illustrates the process of making the simple bar-tack, generally used as a stay for pocket openings. Mark the length desired for the tack; stick the needle through the entire thickness of the goods, down on one side, up on the opposite, and repeat several times, according to the required strength of the tack. Then without breaking off the thread, make one short stitch across one end of the long ones, and continue stitching closely all the way across, firmly covering the threads of the long stitches. Keep these cross-stitches close together, and while working, press the long stitches with the needle, to produce a cord-like effect.

On garments having a finish of machine stitches at pocket openings, etc., the bar-tack, with small bars crossing the ends of the plain bar, is more ornamental. (Fig. 73.) The process of making is similar to that of the simple bar-tack, with small bars worked in after the long one has been finished.

ARROWHEAD TACKS are used at the top or bottom of plaits and laps and at the ends of seams and pocket openings. (Figs. 74, 75, 76, 77.)

First make an outline of the arrow with chalk or pencil. Bring the needle up at point A, then take a small stitch at point B as shown by the position of the needle in Fig. 75. Bring the needle down at point C (Fig. 76), up very close to point A along the line
CA (Fig. 76), and take another stitch at point B close under the first one, and down very close to point C along the line CA. (Fig. 77.) The needle must go in on the chalk line BC and come up on the chalk line BA, keeping the outline of the triangle. Each successive stitch below point B will be a little longer than the previous one. Repeat this stitch until the entire space is filled. The finished arrowhead is illustrated in Fig. 74, on the preceding page.

**THE CROW’S-FOOT TACK** is the most ornamental of the fancy tacks ordinarily used at the ends of pocket openings and seams.

Outline the tack with chalk or pencil. The dotted outline seen in Fig. 79 shows the correct design for the tack. Bring the needle up at point A, pass it down at B, and up again at B outside of and close to the stitch in line AB; then down at C, up at C outside of and close to the stitch in line BC, and down at A just outside the stitch in line AB, as illustrated in Fig. 79. Now bring the needle up on the dotted line AC outside the stitch on line AC close to A; pass it down on dotted line BC outside the stitch on line BC close to B; up on dotted line AB outside both stitches on line AB close to B; down on dotted line CA outside the stitch on line CA close to C; up on dotted line BC outside both stitches on line BC; and down on dotted line AB outside both stitches on line AB, as illustrated in Fig. 80. Fill in the entire outline in this way until the completed foot looks like Fig. 78. It will be noticed in making this tack that all the stitches are taken on the dotted lines and always outside the made stitches, thus compressing the first stitches so as to curve the sides of the tack like the outline.

For working these ornamental tacks, coarse buttonhole twist or twisted embroidery silk is usually employed, and it is generally the same color as the material. With a little practise these tacks can be well made, and any of them will add greatly to the finish of the garment.

The crow’s-foot is generally worked in scarlet or dark blue silk on the pockets of serge sailor suits. When it is used to finish the end of a plait in a skirt it is worked in floss the color of the dress.

**A CHAIN-STITCH** is, as its name implies, a row of stitches resembling the links of a chain. Bring the needle up from under the material, hold down the thread under the left thumb, and insert the needle in the
same hole. Bring it up a stitch's distance below, on the upper side of the thread, thus forming a loop, or link. (Fig. 81, preceding page.)

THE FEATHER-STITCH is one of the most frequently used of all ornamental stitches, for it can be worked with the coarsest of yarn or the finest of silk or linen thread, according to the nature of the material on which it is used. It makes a most satisfactory trimming. The single, double and triple combinations are shown in Fig. 82.

Run a colored thread along the outline to mark the center line or mark it with a transfer design. To make the single stitch, knot the thread and then bring the needle up through the material. Hold the thread down over the line with the left thumb. Insert the needle a little to the left of this line, and take a short, slanting stitch toward the right, drawing the needle out while the thread is held down smoothly by the left thumb. Then hold down the thread on the center line and take a stitch of equal length on the right side, and draw it out as before.

For the double combination, take two stitches to the left, and two to the right each time before crossing the center line; and for the triple combination, three stitches. The beauty of feather-stitching depends on its evenness. Material may be marked for feather-stitching by a transfer pattern. Figs. 83 and 84 show ornamental designs.

THE BLANKET-STITCH is used to protect the edges of heavy woolen materials, and prevent them from fraying. In working, do not use a knot, but secure the thread by one or two running stitches toward the edge. Then, holding the thread under the left thumb, insert the needle to the depth required and bring it up from under the edge, allowing the thread to lie beneath the needle, forming an edge. (Fig. 85.) This stitch may be worked into various ornamental designs if intended for decorative purposes. (Fig. 86.)
FOR EMBROIDERED SCALLOPS the material may be marked with a stamping pattern, which can be had in various sizes for various purposes—handkerchiefs, towels, sheets, table linen, etc. This marking should be half an inch from the edge of the material. The work is very simple and easy, even for an inexperienced needlewoman. Directly on the line run a row of chain-stitching which serves as a padding for the scallops. (Fig. 87.)

The buttonholing is worked closely with the needle inserted just above the line of running stitches and enclosing the line of chain-stitches. Use silk or cotton, whichever is best suited to the material. The outer edge of the material is embroidered scallops after the stitching has been finished.

FRENCH KNOTS, which are used in embroidery for made as illustrated in Fig. 88. After bringing the thread up through the material, take an ordinary back-stitch. Wind the thread or silk twice around the needle, draw it through, holding the coils down with the left thumb. Then insert the needle over the edge of the coils, in the same hole, thus making the knot secure. Do not cut the thread on the under side, but pass on to the next knot.

THE FAGOT-STITCH is a style of hand-made trimming that is always popular and attractive. (Fig. 89.) The simple beading stitch or any of the more elaborate stitches shown in the illustrations, which are very effective for trimming dainty lingerie, may also be used as a beading through which to run narrow ribbon.

For fagoting, the design of the work should first be traced on a piece of stiff paper. Or, as in the case of a yoke or collar where a fitted shaping is required, a fitted pattern should be cut of stiff paper, and the ribbon, braid or folds of the material basted evenly in position, following all the curves. When the fagoting is to be applied to the garment in fancy design, and the material underneath the stitches cut away afterward, the entire piece of work should be smoothly basted over

![Fig. 87. Scalloped Edge. Butterick Transfer Design 2886](image)

The FAGOT-STITCH is done by crossing first from left to right, and recrossing from side to side between the folds of the material, taking a small stitch in the edge. The needle in crossing each time passes under the thread of the preceding stitch, thus giving the threads a slight twist at the edge of the material. (Fig. 89.)

Simple Beading Stitches are illustrated in Fig. 90 on the following page. To make the upper design, a buttonholed bar, take a stitch directly across the space between the two folds and work the buttonhole stitch over the thread back to the starting-point. Then stick the needle into the edge of the fold near the hole of the first stitch, to keep the bar from twisting, and on the under side pass on to position for the next bar.

In the lower design the thread is carried across as in the other case, and, returning, one
loose buttonhole stitch is made over the thread. Over this same loop, run two closer buttonhole stitches. Then make a second loose buttonhole stitch over the first thread, and again, as before, the two close buttonhole stitches over this loop. Catch the needle into the edge of the fold, and pass on to the next stitch. The link bar is not so difficult to make as it appears, and really can be done more quickly than the plain buttonhole bar.

More Elaborate Beading Stitches are shown in Fig. 91. The upper design is a combination of the link bar (described in the preceding paragraph) run diagonally across the open space, and a simple twisted stitch run straight across from the apex of each of the triangles thus made.

To make the second design from the top in Fig. 91, bring the thread up from one edge of the fold over to the opposite edge, take a stitch from the under side and draw the thread taut. Then insert the needle three-eighths of an inch from that point, allowing the thread to form a tiny loop. Insert the needle again directly opposite the last hole, and from this point make five buttonhole stitches in the loop. Now catch up the edge of the fold just where the first plain stitch began, and on the under side bring it over to the second plain stitch, and draw it up for the next loop.

In the third design in Fig. 91, the thread is first carried across from one fold to the other and left rather loose. Then the thread is brought up through the same fold one-fourth of an inch from the point where it was just inserted. Make five buttonhole stitches in the loop formed of the thread in crossing, and insert the needle in the opposite edge. Now carry the thread over again to form the next loop, running the needle into the same hole. Bring it up one-fourth of an inch below this point, and continue as before.

To make the buttonhole cross-bar stitch illustrated in the fourth design of Fig. 91, first make a buttonholed bar as described in the paragraph on simple beading stitches, but do not draw it tight; rather let it curve a trifle. Then proceed as if for the next bar, but when crossing catch into the preceding bar at the center buttonhole stitch, and then continue to the opposite edge. Make an even number of buttonhole stitches on each side on this thread. Allow a small space between the cross-bars.

**SHIRRING** is made of successive rows of gatherings. It is used as a trimming. There are several different kinds of shirring, the use of which must be determined somewhat by the character of the material and the style of garment. Before beginning, it is best to mark the sewing lines with a colored thread, to be sure to get the rows even. This thread can be drawn out when the shirring is finished.

A Simple Shirring is shown in Fig. 92 on the next page. The top edge is turned in and the first row shirred in close to the edge. The thread should be amply strong, with a good big knot at the end; for if the thread is weak and breaks, or the knot pulls through, the shirring will progress slowly, and the material will suffer unnecessarily in the working.

Shirring can also be done very successfully on the machine, by using the gathering attachment. In that case it is especially necessary to mark the sewing lines before beginning, as the machine does the work so rapidly that one is more apt to get an irregular line.
Gaging or French Gathers is a style of shirring generally applied at the back of skirts, etc., where a quantity of material must be adjusted to a comparatively small space. (Fig. 93.) The stitches in this case are made evenly: long ones on the right side and short ones on the under side of the material. Each successive row of gathers has its long and short stitches parallel, respectively, with those of the preceding row. The threads are all drawn up evenly, and fastened at the ends.

Tuck Shirrings should be made on the bias of the material. Baste the tucks in first, and then shirr along the line of bastings through both thicknesses of the material. Fig. 94 shows the tuck shirrings drawn up to fit over the shoulder. The length of the shirring thread determines the curve.

Scallops or Snail Shirrings are meant to be used as a band trimming. Make a narrow fold of the material, and run the shirring thread zigzag across from edge to edge. (Fig. 95.) As the work progresses, draw up the thread, when the fold will acquire a scallop edge on both sides. If a wider fold is used, two threads may be run in close together. This will produce a more even trimming and one that will be less perishable.

Cord Shirring (Fig. 96) is made much like the tuck shirring. Tiny tucks are basted in with a cord enclosed from the under side. (See Fig. 96, page 28.) Run in the shirring thread along the basting of the corded tuck, and when the entire number of threads have been run in, draw up the fulness.

SMOCKING (illustrated on two pages following) is a style of trimming particularly suited to children's dresses. It may be used in a pattern, forming yokes, etc. As a trimming it is sufficiently ornamental to make the addition of lace or other decoration quite unnecessary, and as an inexpensive trimming it can not be equaled. Delicate fabrics of cotton, wool or silk are best suited for this work, which is clumsy in too heavy materials.

To Prepare the Material for Smocking, spread it out on a table. With a transfer pattern mark the straight lines of dots spaced an even distance apart. (Fig. 97.) The rows of dots for the smocking are so evenly arranged that they form perfect squares. (Fig. 97.) Keep the lines of dots absolutely straight on the grain of the goods. When marking material for smocking by
a transfer pattern, use as many rows of dots as the width of the smocking requires. But it is always a safe plan to mark a row or two less, in case a change should be decided upon before the work is finished. Then the material will not be disfigured by the marks. Soft, loosely twisted embroidery silk is used on silk or woolen materials, and the best quality of French embroidery cotton on wash fabrics.

For the Simple Smocking, as illustrated in Fig. 98, take a thread and catch the material at the first dots of both the first and second rows; bring them together and catch the material securely at this point with two or three neatly made over-and-over stitches. Then, passing the thread under the material, bring the needle out at the third dot and do the same there. Continue down the row to the depth desired for the smocking.

In the second row of stitching, the alternate dots of the second and the corresponding dots of the third rows are caught together, always keeping the long thread on the under side taut but not so it will draw, and making the stitches as even in size as possible.

In Fancy Smocking the material must, of course, be marked with dots following the pattern decided upon. The needle is first run through each dot as for a gathering, drawing the material up in even folds (Fig. 99), similar to the method of making French gathers.

The Outline Stitch, as used in Fig. 100 is worked from left to right along the line of the gathering thread. The stitch is caught through from the under side of each small fold while the gathered material is held in the left hand, and brought up and over to the second one. A variety of arrangements can be used effectively in this way.

The Cable Stitch, used single and double, is illustrated in Fig. 101. Start the thread as for the outline stitch, taking a stitch from left to right through a fold from the under or left side; then through the next fold, from right to left, and repeat. The second row is begun with the right-to-left stitch, thus producing a V-shaped arrangement of the fold.

The double cable stitch is simply two rows of the cable stitch run close together.

The Diamond Stitch is begun like the cable stitch. Take one stitch in the first fold, from left to right, with the thread below the needle. In the second fold, a little above the line of the first stitch, take a similar stitch. In the third fold take a stitch from left to right, but with the thread above the needle. This stitch forms the apex of the triangle. Descending, take a stitch in each of two folds.
from left to right, keeping the thread above the needle. The stitch in the third fold again has the thread below the needle, and the line of stitches again begins ascent. Continue in this way as far as the smocking is desired.

Fig. 100. Outline Stitch

The second row of zigzag stitches is put in so that the two will form a line of diamond-shaped figures which can be increased to any depth desired by additional rows of smocking. (Fig. 102.)

If a yoke or pointed effect of the smocking is desired, it can easily be accomplished by omitting as many diamonds as necessary to make the points, as one proceeds with the work.

Smocking is not in the least difficult once the method has been thoroughly grasped. For some reason it is much more popular in England than in the United States. Abroad it is used a great deal for small children on little dresses of the simple smock order. They are very quaint and picturesque, extremely comfortable and becoming. Smocking done in colors on fine white batiste, silk mull, or nainsook makes pretty guimpes and dresses for children and very smart blouses for women.